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A Content Analysis of the *Komik Seri Pengenalan Anti Gratifikasi* Media as Anti-Corruption Character Education for Early Childhood

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Abstract

This study analyzes the content of the *Komik Seri Pengenalan Anti Gratifikasi*, an anti-corruption comic series for early childhood education published by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia. It addresses the lack of educational media that introduce anti-corruption values to young children. The aim is to identify the character values presented in the comics and evaluate their relevance as tools for character education. The comics are intended to instill core anti-corruption values such as honesty, responsibility, hard work, and caring. Using a descriptive qualitative approach and content analysis, the study examines how these values are conveyed through storylines, characters, dialogue, and illustrations. Data collection was conducted through close reading and detailed note-taking of each comic in the series. Findings indicate that the comics effectively present ethical principles, especially honesty, which is consistently portrayed as a key value in preventing corruption. Through engaging stories and relatable characters, the comics promote positive behaviors like speaking the truth, returning lost items, and admitting mistakes. Responsibility and hard work are also illustrated in scenarios where characters take ownership of their actions and strive to reach their goals. The study highlights the comics' ability to connect with children through real-life situations, encouraging moral development in an age-appropriate and visual format. This makes abstract values more concrete and easier for early learners to understand. As a result, the comics are deemed adequate for early childhood character education. However, the research also notes the potential to expand the values represented, such as courage and independence, to strengthen the moral message further. Overall, the study supports the use of educational comics as a valuable medium for fostering anti-corruption awareness and building a strong ethical foundation from an early age.

Introduction

According to the 2024 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), Indonesia ranks 99th out of 180 countries globally, with a high level of corruption (Transparency International, 2025). Corruption is a serious issue deeply rooted in various aspects of life in Indonesia, significantly impacting the economy and social order (Aiman, 2024; Alfarizi, 2024; Ceunfin et al., 2024). Corruption is essentially a structural and systemic problem that involves institutional, cultural, and economic dimensions (Sarmini et al., 2018). However, sustainable anti-corruption reform must address not only systemic structures but also the moral foundations of individuals. Drawing on Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory and Bandura's social learning framework, the formation of ethical behavior in early micro-systems such as the family and school can gradually influence macro-level integrity systems. Early character education thus serves as the micro-foundation of societal integrity, where children internalize values of honesty and responsibility that eventually support broader institutional change (Hunady, 2017; Redo, 2016). Instilling honesty and responsibility in early childhood strengthens resilience against corruption in future generations (Nugroho et al., 2022; Sarmini et al., 2018). Corruption cannot be solved solely through legal enforcement; it requires a holistic approach, such as consistent anti-corruption

practices and education (Denisova-Schmidt et al., 2019). However, education cannot be seen as a quick solution to prevent corruption, as it is, by nature, a gradual process that requires time and continuous effort (Sanjaya et al., 2023). Nonetheless, education remains an effective tool for instilling norms, character, and fundamental values that underpin anti-corruption behavior among the younger generation, to shape a society that upholds integrity (Munro et al., 2020). Education plays a crucial role in shaping society's character, perceptions, awareness, and attitudes towards corruption.

Character education is important to be provided from an early age because it is the most fundamental stage for individuals to develop moral values and ethics that will have an impact in the future (Berges Puyo, 2020; Birhan et al., 2021; Han, 2014; Handsman, 2021; Maisyaroh et al., 2023; Maladerita et al., 2023; Minas & Charles, 2020; Muassomah et al., 2020; Osman, 2024; Pike et al., 2021; Sim & Tham, 2023; Suardi, 2023). The instillation of character values from an early age helps children become accustomed to and exhibit admirable behavior. (Masykuroh & Khairunnisa, 2022). Character education is an educational approach aimed at developing good moral values in individuals. Early childhood character education lays the foundation for values that will carry into the future. However, learning media that support anti-corruption education for early childhood remain limited, with most initiatives targeting primary, secondary, and higher education levels (Denisova-Schmidt et al., 2019; Drajat et al., 2020; Komalasari & Saripudin, 2015; Maskur et al., 2024). However, young children already possess the ability to imitate others' behavior, making anti-corruption education at this stage particularly crucial (Rais, 2022; Salam et al., 2024).

Anti-corruption character education from an early age has become an urgent priority for shaping an honest, responsible character (Windisany et al., 2018). Early childhood is a critical period where children learn moral values such as honesty, dedication, love, respect, trustworthiness, and responsibility from teachers, parents, and society (Amollo & Lilian, 2017; Mei-Ju et al., 2014). Early childhood is a crucial stage because children are active learners who quickly absorb information from their environment (Masykuroh & Wahyuni, 2023). Early education in honesty is essential for shaping children's character to be responsible and trustworthy, beginning in the family and educational environments. Anti-corruption character education for young children is expected to be an effective means of shaping individuals with high integrity. Studies show that anti-corruption awareness and initiatives significantly influence students' ethical values in Pacitan, Malang, Sumedang, and Purwakarta, Indonesia (Drajat et al., 2020; Mukodi et al., 2019; Najih & Wiryanim, 2021; Santoso et al., 2024). This finding suggests that anti-corruption education may be more effective when introduced at an early age.

Teaching anti-corruption character from an early age is a long-term preventive strategy that is highly strategic for building a culture of integrity from the very beginning of a child's life. This anti-corruption character education not only equips students with knowledge but also shapes their psychological development, particularly in nurturing self-awareness, integrity, honesty, and responsibility (Sakinah et al., 2019). Children who receive anti-corruption education are likely to grow into critical, responsible individuals committed to honesty. Early education in honesty is vital for shaping children's character to be responsible and trustworthy, beginning in the family and in education.

Anti-corruption education emphasizes character values such as respect, responsibility, honesty, care, and justice, which need to be applied in everyday life and supported by families, schools, media, communities, and the government (Sutomo, 2014; Wijaya & Pertiwi, 2024). The anti-corruption attitude values developed in character education include honesty, care, independence, discipline, responsibility, hard work, simplicity, bravery, and justice. Through understanding these values, children are expected to develop strong moral awareness and a character aligned with anti-corruption principles.

Anti-corruption education can be taught through various media, such as films, songs, games, and comics tailored for children. Fun learning can be created by utilizing various models, strategies, and engaging learning media, which can enhance students' enthusiasm for learning

and make it easier for them to understand the material (Kozma, 1991). The Anti-Corruption Commission (KPK) has also published several media, such as films, board games, and picture storybooks, as tools to introduce anti-corruption character education to students and society. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia has published learning modules and the Komik Seri Pengenalan Anti Gratifikasi media for anti-corruption education at various educational levels. Although studies on anti-corruption educational media have been conducted (Denisova-Schmidt et al., 2019; Drajat et al., 2020; Komalasari & Saripudin, 2015; Maskur et al., 2024; Penu et al., 2025; Sri et al., 2023; Tasoin et al., 2025). Few have focused explicitly on learning media for early childhood education, especially books or comics.

Comics can be an effective learning tool as they combine elements of education and entertainment, making difficult-to-understand material more engaging and helping students grasp complex concepts in a more visual and accessible way, especially for young children who are more responsive to visual-based approaches (Alie et al., 2021). Comics allow children to visualize information that may be difficult to understand if presented only through text, providing them with a clearer picture of the material being learned (Diah et al., 2021). Comics can illustrate desired behaviors, such as honesty and responsibility, in a way that is easy for children to comprehend and accept. They can combine engaging stories with images that reinforce the moral message, making them an ideal medium for character education, especially among young children who need a more creative and interactive approach (Puspitasari et al., 2022).

Researchers have widely conducted research on anti-corruption education as an effort to prevent corruption (Mahrus et al., 2023). The role of education in curbing corruption (Sanjaya et al., 2023), fighting corruption in education: what works and who benefits (Borcan et al., 2017), and analyses of corruption and education in developing countries (Duerrenberger et al., 2018). However, most of these studies focus on higher education, policy implementation, or general character education frameworks rather than on specific learning media for early childhood. Research that analyzes anti-corruption character education media—particularly through visual and story-based media such as comics—is still very limited (Aulianti et al., 2021; Aziz et al., 2021; Kriyantono & Pratama, 2019; Mukhlishina & Galuh Danawati, 2024; Penu et al., 2025; Prihati et al., 2019; Sri et al., 2023; Tasoin et al., 2025). To date, there is no published content analysis of the *Komik Seri Pengenalan Anti-Gratifikasi* used in early childhood education in Indonesia. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by systematically analyzing the comic series's content to determine how effectively it embodies anti-corruption character education values suitable for young learners.

This study aims to analyze the content of Komik Seri Pengenalan Anti Gratifikasi, an educational medium that introduces anti-corruption values to early childhood learners through visual storytelling. The Komik Seri Anti Gratifikasi, published by the Ministry of Education and Culture, consists of five titles: *Jujur* (Honesty)*, Hemat* (Thrift)*, Ayo Bekerja* (Let's Work)*, Amalkan Budaya Kejujuran* (Practice the Culture of Honesty), and *Asyiknya Berbagi* (The Joy of Sharing). Specifically, the research seeks to identify how anti-corruption character values are represented within the comic's narratives, dialogues, and illustrations. By conducting a systematic content analysis, this study contributes to understanding the extent to which early childhood learning media can effectively embed moral and anti-corruption messages in developmentally appropriate ways. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on a government-published comic series that has not yet been academically examined, providing empirical evidence on how visual-based educational tools can support the formation of anti-corruption character traits from an early age. The findings are expected to enrich the discourse on anti-corruption education by offering insights into the use of creative media as an alternative pedagogical strategy in early childhood settings. This study will provide insights into value-based media content that can inform future curriculum development and early character education strategies.

Methods

Design

This study employs a descriptive qualitative design using directed content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Assarroudi et al., 2018). The directed approach was chosen because the analysis was guided by an existing theoretical framework—the nine anti-corruption values established by the Indonesian Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK). Accordingly, initial coding categories were developed deductively from these values, serving as predefined codes for examining textual and visual elements within each comic panel. During the analysis, new subthemes or nuances that did not fit the initial framework were recorded as emergent categories to enrich interpretation while maintaining consistency with the directed approach.

Research Subject

The subject of this study is the *Komik Seri Pengenalan Anti Gratifikasi* (Anti-Bribery Introduction Comic Series), published by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia. This comic series is specifically designed for early childhood learners as a medium for anti-corruption character education. In this study, the unit of analysis is clearly defined to ensure analytical consistency and replicability. Each image panel is treated as one unit of analysis because it represents a complete narrative moment that integrates both visual and textual elements. Within each panel, dialogue lines, character expressions, and depicted actions are coded to capture the representation of anti-corruption and moral values. Panels are analyzed sequentially across the comic's pages to identify recurring themes, character behaviors, and moral messages. This approach allows for a detailed examination of how anti-gratification values are embedded through both the visual and verbal dimensions of the comic.

Data Collection

Data were collected using a reading-note technique. The researcher thoroughly read each comic and recorded content relevant to anti-corruption values, such as honesty, responsibility, hard work, and care. Both textual and visual elements were considered. The process involved documenting excerpts of dialogue, scenes, and character actions that reflect moral or ethical behaviors aligned with anti-corruption principles.

Data Analysis

The content analysis method in this study involves several key stages (Elo et al., 2008), including preparation, organization, and reporting. The analysis began by reading and segmenting the *Komik Seri Pengenalan Anti Gratifikasi* into units of meaning, such as panels, dialogues, and narrative descriptions, to identify themes and categories related to character education and anti-corruption.

The analysis began by reading and segmenting the *Komik Seri Pengenalan Anti Gratifikasi* into units of meaning, such as panels, dialogues, and narrative descriptions, to identify themes and categories related to character education and anti-corruption. The coding framework was developed deductively based on the nine anti-corruption values established by the Indonesian Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK)—namely honesty, responsibility, independence, discipline, hard work, simplicity, justice, courage, and caring. These nine values were selected because they represent the official normative framework for anti-corruption education in Indonesia and are consistent with the principles of moral and character education theories proposed by Lickona and Berkowitz & Bier, which emphasize the integration of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action in early childhood learning (Lickona, 2019)

Each value was further operationalized into specific indicators that guided the coding of both textual and visual elements in the comic. For example, characters who told the truth were coded as "honesty," while those who helped peers were coded as "caring." Meanwhile, "independence" and "courage" were operationalized through indicators such as showing initiative, expressing opinions, and standing up for what is right. A summary table of these codes, definitions, and indicators is presented in Table 1 to ensure analytical transparency and replicability. The inclusion of all nine KPK values in the coding framework was theoretically

justified to provide a comprehensive analytical lens, allowing the researchers to capture both individual and social dimensions of anti-corruption character formation. To enhance the validity and reliability of the analysis results, this study will employ validation steps, such as data triangulation and expert review of the coding.

Table 1. Operationalization of Anti-Corruption Values

	Category	Definition	Indicator
1.	**Honesty**	Reflected in truthfulness, respect for others' property, admitting mistakes, and reporting losses. It represents integrity in both speech and action, avoiding deceit or appropriation of what does not belong to oneself.	Truthfulness, Respect for property, Refusing gifts, telling the truth, admitting mistakes
2.	**Responsibility**	Fulfilling duties, taking care of belongings, returning items, and valuing time. It demonstrates accountability and reliability in both personal and social contexts.	Completing tasks, accepting consequences, group accountability, Carefulness, returning items, Time awareness
3.	**Discipline**	Consistent rule-following, proper resource use, and time estimation. It ensures orderliness, turn-taking, and awareness of the consequences of breaking the rules.	Time estimation, Turn-taking, Consequence awareness Following rules, punctuality, and maintaining order
4.	**Independence**	The ability to act autonomously with confidence and self-reliance. It also reflects the capacity to interact socially without overdependence on others.	Confidence, Sociability, Self-reliance
5.	**Hard Work**	Entails persistence, thoroughness, and effective time management in accomplishing tasks. It also includes innovative strategies and emotional control to overcome challenges.	Thoroughness, Time management, Smart work, Persistence in study or activity completion
6.	**Simplicity**	Shown through moderation in speech, action, and lifestyle. It promotes modesty, humility, and appropriate interaction with others.	Modesty, valuing effort over material reward
7.	**Courage**	Willingness to face risks, express opinions, and confront challenges. It involves controlling fear and upholding ethical principles in difficult situations.	Risk-taking, Challenge-facing, showing initiative, expressing opinions, and standing up for what is right.
8.	**Caring**	Emphasizes sensitivity to others' needs through helping, empathy, tolerance, and social action. It highlights compassion and virtue as foundations of collective harmony.	Helping peers, Empathy, Tolerance, Social action, Virtue
9.	**Fairness**	Entails sharing, listening, and acting impartially in decision-making. It requires open-mindedness and ensures justice in social relations.	Sharing, Listening, Fair sharing, equal treatment, non-favoritism

Source: author's work, adopted from (BPS, 2024; Burhanudin, 2021; KPK, 2022)

Result
Synopsis of the Anti-Gratification Introduction Comic Series
Based on the content analysis, each comic in Komik Seri Pengenalan Anti-Gratifikasi was first summarized to capture its narrative flow and moral focus. However, beyond merely presenting storylines, this stage served as the foundation for identifying and coding thematic elements aligned with the nine anti-corruption values established by the Indonesian Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK, 2018)—namely, honesty, responsibility, independence, discipline, hard work, simplicity, justice, courage, and caring.

Each storyline was systematically segmented into units of meaning (dialogues, panels, and narrative events), which were then coded according to the presence of these values. The synopsis was thus not a descriptive retelling but a structured analytical summary highlighting how each plot embeds and communicates particular anti-corruption character values. The coding categories were derived deductively from the KPK's anti-corruption education framework and validated through expert review by two specialists in early childhood character education. This validation ensured that the interpretation of visual and textual cues accurately reflected the intended moral values rather than the researchers' subjective impressions. Therefore, the synopses presented in Table 2 serve as analytical abstracts that summarize how the comic's narratives illustrate and reinforce distinct anti-corruption character values for early learners.

Table 2. Synopsis of Anti-Gratification Introduction Comic Series

No	Title	Synopsis
1	*Anak Jujur Anak yang Hebat* (An Honest Child is a Great Child)	
		This comic tells the story of a child who always upholds the principle of honesty. In every situation, the child faces challenges that test their integrity. Through adventures and interactions with friends and adults, the child demonstrates that honesty is a valuable trait that can bring goodness to both themselves and others.
2	*Hemat* (Thrift)	
		This comic narrates the importance of managing finances wisely. The main character, a child, learns about saving money and managing expenses. Through various experiences, they discover that living frugally not only helps achieve financial goals but also brings freedom and peace of mind.

| 3	***Ayo Bekerja* (Let us work)**

In this comic, readers are invited to understand the values of hard work and dedication. The main character struggles to achieve their dreams by working various part-time jobs. Through this journey, they learn about responsibility, discipline, and the importance of collaboration in achieving success.

4	***Amalkan Budaya Kejujuran* (Practice the Culture of Honesty)**

This comic encourages readers to practice a culture of honesty in daily life. Through various inspiring stories, the comic shows how honesty can build trust and better relationships in the community. The characters in the story strive to apply the values of honesty in their interactions, both at school and at home.

5	***Asiknya Berbagi* (The Joy of Sharing)**
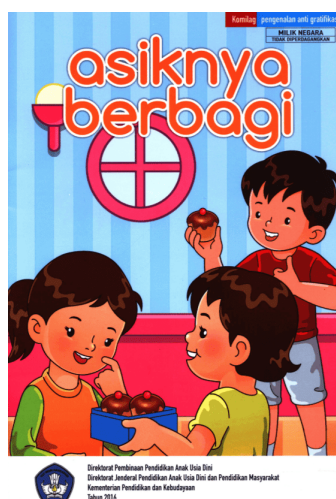
This comic depicts the joy of sharing with others. The main character finds happiness and satisfaction when they begin sharing with friends and people around them. Through various social activities, they learn that sharing not only benefits the recipient but also brings happiness to the giver.

Anti-Corruption Values in the Anti-Bribery Introduction Comic Series

Based on the researcher's content analysis in the second stage, the following values were identified in the table below.

Table 3. The Result of Coding based on Anti-corruption value

Anti-Corruption Value	Anak Jujur yang Hebat (An Honest Child is a Great Child)	Hemat (Thrift)	Ayo Bekerja (Let's Work)	Amalkan Budaya Kujujuran (Practice the Culture of Honesty)	Asyiknya Berbagi (The Joy of Sharing)
Honesty	3	-	2	3	-
Responsibility	3	-	-	1	-
Discipline	-	-	-	1	-
Independence	-	-	-	-	-
Hard Work	-	-	1	-	-
Simplicity	-	4	1	-	-
Courage	-	-	-	-	-
Caring	-	-	-	-	2
Fairness	-	-	-	-	5

Source: author's work

Honesty

In the *Komik Seri Pengenalan Anti-Gratifikasi, honesty is portrayed as a fundamental character trait that guides the characters' actions and decisions*. Throughout the comics, honesty is emphasized through various scenarios where characters are encouraged to speak the truth, admit their mistakes, and refrain from taking what does not belong to them. The comics aim to instill a sense of integrity in young readers by depicting characters who demonstrate honesty, whether by rejecting bribes or returning lost items. These stories highlight how honesty builds trust and fosters positive relationships, making it an essential value in preventing corruption and promoting ethical behavior from an early age.

The indicators used to analyze the character of honesty in the *Komik Seri Pengenalan Anti Gratifikasi are: 1) Being able to speak the truth, 2) Not taking other people's belongings, 3) Admitting one's own mistakes, and* 4) Announcing found items. The honesty character values found in the Anti-Gratification Introduction Comic Series are the first, second, and third indicators.

The first indicator, the ability to speak the truth, is shown in the comic *Amalkan Budaya Kejujuran* on page 5, with the sentence, "Sorry, I did not accept the settlement money." Then on page 8, with the sentence, "Sorry, I did not accept the reward," and on page 10 marked by the sentence, "Sorry, I did not accept any gratification." The first indicator, being able to speak the truth, also appears in the comic *An Honest Child is a Great Child* on page 9 with the sentence, "It is better if I speak up... I must be honest." This narrative exemplifies honesty as a social capital that strengthens interpersonal bonds. It also demonstrates how ethical values are embedded in everyday practices, reinforcing character formation from an early age.

The second indicator, not taking other people's belongings, is shown in the comic *Anak Jujur Anak yang Hebat* on page 11, where the character returns a book with the sentence, "Your book, right? Here, I will return it." Additionally, the second indicator also appears in the comic *Ayo Bekerja* on page 6, marked by the child not wanting to take someone else's belongings with the sentence, "Even if it falls, this mango still belongs to Mr. Soleh. I do not want to take it." On page 7, there is a sentence that shows the value of honesty, not taking other people's belongings: "Hmm, it is better if I return this mango to Mr. Soleh." This representation exemplifies the operational code of honesty, highlighting truth-telling and accountability as

recurring moral lessons. It illustrates how ethical values are embedded in narrative form to reinforce character education objectives.

The third indicator, admitting one's own mistakes, is shown in the comic *Anak Jujur Hebat* on page 10 with the sentence, "Actually... the book is lost, Meilan."

Caring

The indicators used to analyze the character of caring in the *Komik Seri Pengenalan Anti Gratifikasi* are: 1) Providing help to those in need, 2) Having empathy, 3) Demonstrating tolerance, and 4) Engaging in social actions. The caring character value found in the Komik Seri Pengenalan Anti Gratifikasi is the first indicator.

The value of caring is shown in the comic *Asiknya Berbagi*, where the first indicator is demonstrated on page 3: "Mom, Cika wants to share her cake with her friends." Then, on page 4, it is further emphasized with the sentence, "Tomorrow, Cika wants to give her cake to the teacher." This reflects the operational code of caring, highlighting empathy and social responsibility as essential moral lessons. It further illustrates how altruistic behavior fosters reciprocity and strengthens communal solidarity among children.

Responsibility

The indicators used to analyze the character of responsibility in the *Komik Seri Pengenalan Anti Gratifikasi* are: 1) Completing assigned tasks, 2) Taking care of personal belongings and borrowed items, 3) Returning items to their original place, and 4) Valuing time. The responsibility character values found in the *Komik Seri Pengenalan Anti Gratifikasi* are the second and third indicators.

The second indicator: taking care of personal belongings and borrowed items appears in the comic An Honest Child is a Great Child on page 3, where the character promises to take care of a friend's book, saying, "Do not worry, Meilan! I will take care of the book." Additionally, the second indicator appears on page 10 in the sentence, "Sorry Meilan, I will look for it."

The third indicator, returning items to their original place, is shown on page 2 of the comic "An Honest Child is a Great Child," when the character says, "I will return the book this afternoon."

Hard Work

The indicators used to analyze the value of hard work in the *Komik Seri Pengenalan Anti Gratifikasi* are: 1) Diligence, 2) Ability to value time, 3) Ability to work smart, and 4) Ability to control emotions. The hard work character value found in *Komik Seri Pengenalan Anti Gratifikasi* is the third indicator.

The third indicator, which emphasizes the importance of working to achieve something, is found on page 5 in the comic *Ayo Bekerja*, where the character's mother advises her child with the sentence, "If you want something, you must work for it first." Additionally, in the comic *Hemat*, the hard work character is also found on page 10 with the sentence, *"I am saving up so I can buy a new dress, Mom."* This narrative illustrates the operational code of hard work, underscoring persistence and resilience as formative ethical traits. It also highlights how collaborative responsibility is framed as a pathway to both personal achievement and collective well-being.

Discipline

The indicators used in analyzing the value of discipline are: 1) The ability to estimate the time required to complete a task, 2) Using objects according to their function, 3) Taking and returning objects to their proper place, 4) Trying to follow the agreed-upon rules, 5) Waiting patiently for one's turn, 6) Realizing the consequences of not being disciplined. The character value of discipline in the Komik Seri Pengenalan *Anti-Gratifikasi* is the second indicator.

The second indicator, namely using objects according to their function, is illustrated through the depiction of Father and Aldo wearing helmets while riding, shown on pages 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7 of the comic Amalkan Budaya Kejujuran. Although this action primarily relates to safety

behavior, within the framework of character education, it also reflects discipline—the consistent adherence to rules, awareness of consequences, and responsible use of resources. In the broader context of anti-corruption education, such discipline embodies respect for norms and regulations, discouraging negligent or opportunistic behaviors that may lead to misuse of authority or resources. Hence, the use of a helmet here symbolizes compliance and self-regulation, which are foundational dispositions of integrity and anti-corruption character.

Simplicity

The indicators used in analyzing the character value of simplicity are: 1) Demonstrating a non-excessive attitude in all things, 2) Being frugal, and 3) Being humble. The character values of simplicity found in the *Komik Seri Pengenalan Anti Gratifikasi* are the first and second indicators. The first indicator: demonstrating a non-excessive attitude in all things, is shown in the sentence on page 8, "If you still have good items, there is no need to buy more."

The second indicator, frugality, is reflected in the sentence on page 4: "The toys you have are still good; it is better to save your money." It is also seen on page 6, "Mom already told you not to be wasteful, dear!" On page 9, the importance of being frugal to become a great person is emphasized in the sentence, "If we want to be great people, we must be good at saving." This reflects the operational code of thrift, emphasizing moderation and the avoidance of waste as central virtues. It further demonstrates how financial literacy and ethical values are intertwined in character education for children.

Fairness

The indicators used to analyze the character value of fairness are: 1) Being able to take turns and share, 2) Being able to listen to all parties openly, 3) Being able to think openly, and 4) Being able to act correctly. The character value of fairness in the *Komik Seri Pengenalan Anti-Gratifikasi* is the first indicator.

The first indicator, being able to share, is seen in the comic *Asiknya Berbagi*, marked by the sentence on page 4, "Cika, sharing must be sincere. Do not expect a reward." Additionally, the first indicator appears in the sentence on page 8: "Instead of fighting over toys, it is better to share toys and play together." On pages 6 and 11, the value of fairness and the joy of sharing are shown in the sentence, "Sharing makes the heart happy." On page 7, the value of sincere sharing is expressed in the sentence, "Aldo, when giving, it must be sincere."

The coding results indicate that several anti-corruption values are strongly represented in the analyzed comics (see Table 3). Honesty emerges as the most dominant value, particularly in *"Anak Jujur Anak yang Hebat"* and *"Amalkan Budaya Kejujuran",* where characters consistently emphasize truthfulness and integrity. Responsibility is also visible, especially in storylines that highlight accountability and reliability, while simplicity appears frequently in Hemat, reinforcing the notion of living frugally as an anti-corruption principle. In addition, fairness is powerfully conveyed in *"Asyiknya Berbagi",* where the narrative emphasizes equity, sharing, and impartiality as social virtues. Tradisi antikorupsi di China sebagai negara maju dan berintegritas juga menekankan kejujuran, integritas, tanggung jawab, dan pendidikan moral sejak dini (Ling, 2011).

Conversely, other values appear weakly represented or are absent. Discipline and hard work only occur sporadically, while caring is limited to a few instances in *"Asyiknya Berbagi".* More critically, independence and courage are absent, despite their importance in cultivating resilience and resisting corrupt influences. The imbalance indicates a gap in how anti-corruption values are conveyed to children, as the emphasis on honesty and fairness is not sufficiently complemented by traits such as self-reliance, persistence, and moral courage. However, the characters' specific actions implicitly demonstrated elements of courage. For example, one character displayed the bravery to admit that a borrowed book had been lost, despite the risk of disappointing its owner. Similarly, recognizing that taking someone else's belongings would result in personal harm reflects an awareness of risk and consequences. This suggests that

although anti-corruption values of courage were not directly illustrated, aspects of bravery were nonetheless embedded within the narratives of several characters.

Discussion

In the Komik Seri Pengenalan Anti-Gratifikasi, honesty is consistently depicted as a cornerstone of character development, crucial for shaping ethical behavior among young readers. Stories that emphasize telling the truth, avoiding lies, and returning others' belongings are easily grasped by children. Consequently, honesty is frequently highlighted because it aligns with their cognitive and moral capacity. These portrayals align closely with current research on the importance of honesty in shaping children's ethical behavior. This is consistent with findings by Penu et al (2025), Sakban et al (2025), and Tasoin et al (2025), which shows that honesty fosters anti-corruption attitudes in schools. Similar results are also reflected in Islamic education, where honesty is emphasized as a foundation of anti-corruption values (Mukhlishina & Galuh Danawati, 2024; Suyadi et al., 2025).

The role of local cultural values in teaching honesty has been recognized as an essential factor in creating a sustainable impact on children's moral development (Parmini et al., 2024). Honesty plays an important role in building character and fundamental ethics as it fosters trust, social cohesion, and effective governance (Lepre et al., 2020; Tangtammaruk et al., 2024). The findings further demonstrate that honesty supports the formation of a character that upholds fairness and justice (Sakban et al., 2025b). and is integral to fostering a corruption-free culture in the future generation (Hasanah, 2021). Through these valuable lessons, the Komik Seri Pengenalan Anti Gratifikasi effectively supports the development of an honest, responsible, and ethical generation. The urgency of honesty education at an early stage is reinforced by the persistence of dishonesty violations among students in educational contexts (Chevtaeva et al., 2024).

Responsibility, simplicity, and caring also emerge as dominant values in the comics. Responsibility resonates with early childhood development as children begin to take on simple tasks such as keeping their belongings, completing assignments, and tidying up toys. Stories that depict responsibility help them understand consequences and are effectively illustrated through innovative learning media, such as comics (Drajat et al., 2020; Penu et al., 2025; Tasoin et al., 2025). Comics could be an effective medium for teaching children the values of care and responsibility, as they resonate well with children and provide clear, engaging moral narratives (Christina et al., 2019). The integration of responsibility as a core value in character education, whether through comics or other creative media, is effective in encouraging young students to adopt responsible behaviors, thus contributing to long-term anti-corruption efforts (Arwiyah et al., 2020; Fata et al., 2022).

Simplicity, often expressed through frugality or appreciating what one has, reflects everyday practices such as saving money and avoiding wastefulness. Research has demonstrated that simplicity is a key component in teaching anti-corruption values, as it fosters an appreciation for modest living and helps children develop the understanding that material wealth does not equate to happiness or success (Mahrus et al., 2023). Caring and fairness are similarly relevant, as children at this age are learning to socialize, making sharing toys, food, and turns tangible examples of these values. Recent studies support the idea that integrating caring values into comics fosters a sense of caring and responsibility in children, showing that visual storytelling can effectively engage young audiences in ethical learning (Aulianti et al., 2021; Br Ginting et al., 2025; Cindi Febriani Bianome et al., n.d.; Kriyantono & Pratama, 2019). For example, comics designed to encourage the development of anti-corruption values in children, such as caring for others and fostering responsibility, have been found to improve moral awareness and ethical behaviors in children (Rahayu, 2020).These dominant values are easier to visualize, align with cognitive-moral development, and directly connect to children's everyday social experiences. This also aligns with educational research that highlights the role of comics as an effective medium for teaching values like caring (Br Ginting et al., 2025). Children are expected

to have a character of care for their surroundings, which motivates students to always help others in need (Safitri et al., 2021). These findings are consistent with the Komik Seri Pengenalan Anti Gratifikasi, which uses relatable narratives and engaging visuals to instil values of caring, thus contributing to the broader effort of preventing corruption and fostering ethical behaviors from an early age (Udin et al., 2023). Their relation to anti-corruption education lies in establishing basic moral foundations, such as honesty, responsibility, frugality, and fairness, before children can grasp structural concepts, such as abuse of power or bribery.

Hard work value emphasizes the importance of working for anything that you want. Research shows that embedding the value of hard work in educational media, like comics, significantly supports children in understanding the importance of persistence and effort in achieving their objectives (Lewerissa et al., 2021; Pritaningtias et al., 2019). Furthermore, the portrayal of hard work aligns with educational strategies that develop values such as responsibility and discipline, which are essential to combating corruption. The character of hard work is an attitude that shows a genuine effort in overcoming various obstacles (Syapal et al., 2022). Hard work is also a core principle in anti-corruption education, as it teaches children that achieving success through honesty and effort is more valuable than taking shortcuts (Shobukhin, 2021). Character education emphasizes hard work as a core value, promoting discipline and perseverance among students (Maisyaroh et al., 2023).

One of the key discipline values highlighted in the comics is the importance of using objects according to their function. Studies indicate that promoting discipline through everyday actions like these helps children understand the value of self-regulation and responsibility, which are essential components of moral education (Rais, 2018). Additionally, the discipline value found in the comics emphasizes the importance of following agreed-upon rules and maintaining consistency in one's actions. The comics teach children to use tools and resources responsibly, which is crucial for instilling long-term habits of discipline. Research has shown that the integration of discipline values through media like comics can positively affect children's understanding of ethical behavior, particularly in the context of anti-corruption education (Khokhlova et al., 2025).

The interactions between characters in the comic provide a safe context for children to understand anti-corruption principles. For example, the main character in the comic Anak Jujur yang Hebat interacts with other characters and faces situations that challenge honesty. Through dialogue and action, children can observe the consequences of their choices. Albert Bandura's social learning theory explains that children learn through interaction and observation. By watching the comic's characters face moral dilemmas, children can learn positive behaviors and understand anti-corruption principles.

The relationship among anti-corruption values can be understood as complementary and interdependent rather than isolated. Honesty serves as the foundation; without it, other values lose significance. Responsibility and discipline reinforce honesty by cultivating consistency and readiness to accept consequences. Hard work and simplicity highlight the anti-corruption ethos of avoiding shortcuts (e.g., bribery or gratification) and rejecting excessive lifestyles. This is crucial to prevent the rationalization often observed among youth that success is achieved not through merit and effort but by cutting corners (Agwu et al., 2022; Chapman & Lindner, 2016). Courage supports these values by fostering the bravery to reject dishonest practices, while independence promotes resilience in maintaining integrity.

Caring and fairness, in turn, add a social dimension by emphasizing that anti-corruption is not only about individual morality but also about ensuring justice and collective well-being. Taken together, these values form an ecosystem of integrity: honesty at the core, discipline and responsibility as safeguards, hard work and simplicity as guiding ethos, courage, and independence as enablers, and caring and fairness as social orientation. Anti-corruption education, therefore, essentially cultivates this integrated moral foundation—honesty,

responsibility, simplicity, fairness, and care—preparing children to grow into citizens with strong integrity (Sakban et al., 2025a; Suyadi et al., 2025).

The findings of this study have different results on the folk tale from (Mukhlishina & Galuh Danawati, 2024) and (Sri et al., 2023), which explored similar anti-corruption values through cultural and educational media. While the folk tale emphasizes values such as courage, hard work, discipline, and honesty, the comics place greater focus on honesty, responsibility, simplicity, and sharing. This contrast highlights the role of medium and context in shaping which values are foregrounded: folk narratives often underscore heroic and moral struggles, whereas children's comics prioritize everyday practices and relatable behaviors. Together, these findings show the complementary potential of diverse cultural forms in fostering a holistic spectrum of anti-corruption values, combining heroic ideals with practical moral habits essential for early character development.

At the end, this study contributes by providing a comprehensive content analysis of anti-gratification comics specifically designed for early childhood character education. It highlights how visual media, particularly comics, can be effectively used to introduce anti-corruption values such as honesty, responsibility, caring, and simplicity. This study fills a gap in the literature. This study enriches the understanding of anti-corruption values by identifying how they can be represented in early childhood educational comics. The findings provide practical insights for designing value-based media that communicate honesty, responsibility, simplicity, and caring in ways that are relatable to children. For policymakers, the study emphasizes the potential of using child-friendly media to integrate anti-corruption education into early childhood curricula and strengthen character-building initiatives.

The main limitation of the study is its scope; it focuses solely on five comic titles published by the Ministry of Education and Culture, which may not fully reflect the diversity of anti-corruption messages across all educational materials. Additionally, the study uses qualitative content analysis without empirical testing on how children actually absorb and apply the values shown. This means the findings cannot be generalized to real-world behavioral outcomes. The analysis is also dependent on the researcher's interpretation, which could introduce subjectivity despite validation efforts like coding checks.

Conclusion

Based on the content analysis of Komik Seri Pengenalan Anti-Gratifikasi, it can be concluded that the series successfully incorporates several key anti-corruption values, which are essential in shaping young children's character. The values identified in the comic series include honesty, caring, responsibility, hard work, frugality, sharing, and discipline. These values align closely with the core principles of anti-corruption education, aiming to nurture ethical behavior and integrity from an early age. The comic series highlights how values such as honesty are crucial in rejecting corruption and promotes fairness through shared experiences, thus serving as an effective tool for instilling anti-corruption principles. However, the values of independence and courage were not explicitly found in the comic series, indicating that these aspects may require further emphasis in future educational content. These findings enrich the conceptual understanding of anti-corruption education by demonstrating how core values can be embedded in child-friendly narratives. In practice, the study provides valuable insights for educators and media designers. It offers policymakers guidance on integrating anti-corruption education into early childhood curricula as part of broader character-building strategies.

Declarations

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All authors contributed equally and approved the final manuscript.

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