

# Etnoparenting Influences the Moral and Religious Development of Early Childhood in the Sundanese Transmigrant Community in East Lampung

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## Abstract

This study examines ethnoparenting and its role in the moral and religious development of early childhood in the Sundanese transmigrant community in East Lampung. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis in Sukadana Baru Village, Gerem Cempaka Hamlet. Findings reveal that Sundanese cultural values—such as hospitality, cooperation, and respect for elders—are deeply embedded in daily parenting practices. Ethnoparenting significantly shapes children's morality and religiosity, fostering respect for parents and active participation in religious activities. However, modernization and social changes present challenges to maintaining these values. Despite these obstacles, the community continues to integrate cultural traditions into parenting to ensure their preservation for future generations.

## INTRODUCTION

The moral and religious crisis among the younger generation, particularly in early childhood, has become increasingly concerning in the face of modern developments. The influence of globalization, technological advancements, and the rapid flow of foreign cultures and information have reshaped children's perspectives and behaviors in understanding moral and religious values (Fahdini et al., 2021; McKenzie & Jensen, 2024; Mishra et al., 2023). This phenomenon is evident in the growing prevalence of behaviors that do not reflect moral and religious values, such as a lack of respect for parents, decreased social awareness, and increased individualism (Diana, 2023).

The weakening role of families and educational institutions in instilling moral and religious values from an early age has further exacerbated this condition. Busy parents often struggle to provide full attention to their children's character education, leaving them more influenced by external environments that may not align with religious values (Wuryandani, 2010). At the same time, formal education, which should contribute to shaping children's character, has yet to allocate sufficient attention to their moral and religious development (Maulida & Ismawati, 2021). Parenting is crucial in shaping children's character from an early age. In family education, the ethnoparenting approach, or culture-based parenting, is a potential model for effectively instilling moral and religious values (Sumarwan et al., 2010). Ethnoparenting emphasizes local values passed down through generations and practiced by specific communities. One community that still upholds cultural values in parenting is the Sundanese transmigrant community in East Lampung.

The Sundanese community is known for its parenting system, deeply rooted in cultural and religious values. Values such as *silih asah*, *silih asih*, and *silih asuh*, which emphasize togetherness, empathy, and cooperation, are integral to their child-rearing practices (Alhafizh et al., 2021; Fauzia et al., 2020; Wulandari, 2021). Within the transmigrant community in East Lampung, these values are integrated with Islamic teachings, forming a parenting pattern that emphasizes politeness, cooperation, and respect for parents and the social environment (Iskandar, 2020).

However, modernization and social change in transmigration areas present challenges for ethnoparenting practices. The increasing influence of technology, an individualistic modern lifestyle, and foreign cultural influences have shifted the traditional parenting patterns that have long been practiced (Sugitanata & Aqila, 2024). Children spend more time on gadgets, reducing direct interactions with their families and surroundings (Mukarromah et al., 2020).

In the context of transmigration, parents face a dilemma between preserving their ancestral parenting traditions or adapting to modern parenting styles. Research (Rachmawati, 2020) indicates that most transmigrant families struggle to balance maintaining cultural values while coping with contemporary realities. As a result, many children experience behavioral changes, such as a lack of discipline, diminished social empathy, and reduced participation in religious and traditional activities (Garcia & Lopez, 2023).

Several studies have demonstrated that ethnoparenting practices can help build stronger character in children to face contemporary challenges. Children raised with a culture-based parenting approach exhibited better morality than those raised in environments without strong cultural values (Novianti et al., 2023; Olakanmi, 2017). This finding is further supported by (Liu et al., 2023), who confirmed that families that uphold cultural values in parenting tend to have children who are more responsible and socially aware.

In Indonesia, various ethnic groups have distinct ethnoparenting systems. The Minangkabau ethnic group, for instance, emphasizes a strong matrilineal system in shaping children's character (Amelia & Faridy, 2023). Meanwhile, the Javanese prioritize teaching *nrimo ing pandum* (acceptance of one's fate) as a fundamental parenting value (Alfaeni & Rachmawati, 2023). The Sundanese community's ethnoparenting values reflect cultural teachings and closely align with Islamic principles (Halilah & Widjayatri, 2022).

Despite its many benefits, the implementation of ethnoparenting in transmigrant communities also faces challenges. The main challenge for parents is how to instill cultural and religious values in their children amid the influence of technology and foreign cultures (Smith & Ahmed, 2022). Additionally, the rapid social changes in transmigration environments have caused some cultural values to be overshadowed by more modern and instant parenting approaches (Alfaeni & Rachmawati, 2023).

In the context of early childhood education, the ethnoparenting approach can serve as a solution to address the moral and religious crisis in this modern era. Strengthening cultural values through ethnoparenting-based parenting can help shape children's character more effectively and enhance their engagement in social and spiritual life (Mukarromah et al., 2020).

This study explores how ethnoparenting practices within the Sundanese transmigrant community in East Lampung influence early childhood's moral and religious development. The primary focus is understanding how parents preserve cultural values in child-rearing and the challenges they encounter. Through this research, an adaptive parenting model can be identified—one that maintains cultural values without disregarding modern developments.

## The Rationale of the Study

Early childhood's moral and religious development has become a significant concern in the modern era due to the rapid influence of globalization, technological advancements, and shifting societal norms.

The Sundanese transmigrant community in East Lampung, which has long upheld cultural values through ethnoparenting, faces challenges in maintaining these traditions amidst modernization. Ethnoparenting, which integrates cultural teachings with religious values, is crucial in shaping children's moral character and fostering respect, cooperation, and religious adherence. However, external factors such as digital media exposure, changing family structures, and the declining role of communal institutions threaten the continuity of this practice. This study is essential in exploring how ethnoparenting continues to influence children's moral and religious development within the Sundanese transmigrant community and identifying strategies for preserving these values in contemporary society.

## **Objectives**

This study aims to examine the role of ethnoparenting in shaping the moral and religious development of early childhood in the Sundanese transmigrant community in East Lampung. Specifically, it seeks to (1) analyze the traditional values embedded in Sundanese parenting practices; (2) investigate the challenges faced by parents in maintaining these values in the face of modernization and technological advancements; (3) evaluate the impact of ethnoparenting on children's moral and religious behavior; and (4) propose adaptive strategies that integrate cultural preservation with contemporary parenting approaches to ensure the sustainability of moral and religious education in early childhood.

## **METHODS**

### **Participants**

This study involved participants from the Sundanese transmigrant community in East Lampung, specifically in Sukadana Baru Village, Gerem Cempaka Hamlet. The participants were selected using purposive sampling, consisting of 10 parents, five community leaders, three religious figures, and three educators with direct experience implementing ethnoparenting. These individuals were chosen to provide diverse perspectives on the role of ethnoparenting in shaping children's moral and religious development. The selection criteria included parents actively practicing cultural parenting, community leaders involved in preserving Sundanese traditions, religious figures responsible for children's spiritual guidance, and educators who observe children's behavioral development in an academic setting. This diverse sample ensured a comprehensive understanding of ethnoparenting practices, the challenges faced, and the strategies employed to maintain cultural and religious values in early childhood education.

### **Research Procedures**

The study employed a qualitative research design using a case study approach to explore ethnoparenting practices within the Sundanese transmigrant community. Data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Observations were conducted during daily family interactions, religious gatherings, and cultural activities to capture parenting behaviors in their natural context. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with parents, community leaders, religious figures, and educators to gather insights into parenting practices, cultural transmission, and challenges in maintaining traditional values. Family diaries, religious activity records, and traditional manuscripts were also analyzed to support the findings. To ensure data validity, triangulation was applied by cross-verifying information from multiple sources, and ethical considerations, including informed consent and participant confidentiality, were strictly followed throughout the research process.

### **Data Analysis**

Data is collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Observations are conducted during social and religious activities, while in-depth interviews, carried out semi-structured, provide deeper insights into ethnoparenting values. Documentation, including family

diaries, records of religious activities, and traditional documents, is also analyzed to reinforce the research findings. Triangulation techniques are employed across sources, methods, and theories to ensure data validity.

Data analysis follows the Miles and Huberman model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. Collected data is selected based on its relevance to the research objectives and then presented thematically. The findings are analyzed using ethnoparenting theory, Piaget and Kohlberg's moral development theories, and religious socialization theory to understand how culturally based parenting practices impact children's development.

Ethical considerations are a primary concern in this study, including informed consent, anonymity, and the confidentiality of participants' data. Participants are informed about the research objectives and their right to withdraw at any time. Their names and identities are anonymized to protect their privacy. All research procedures adhere to ethical standards in social and educational research.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### The Implementation of Etnoparenting in the Sundanese Transmigrant Community

The research findings indicate that most Sundanese transmigrant families in East Lampung continue to uphold culturally based parenting practices despite various changes brought about by modernization. Observations of daily family life reveal that parents consistently instill values of politeness, respect for elders, and the principles of *silih asah*, *silih asih*, *silih asuh* in raising their children.

During an interview with a housewife, Mrs. RM (40 years old), she shared that she still adheres to traditional parenting methods. *"Every morning, my children must greet their parents and neighbors. This is a habit I learned from my parents, and I want my children to preserve it,"* she stated. This demonstrates that cultural practices remain a significant part of daily life despite the challenges posed by modern times.

Documentation collected during the study shows that many families still practice communal dining as an opportunity to teach children about etiquette and social values. During meals, children are taught to respect their elders by sitting properly, refraining from talking while eating, and beginning their meals only after receiving permission from their parents. This tradition is crucial in instilling respect and discipline from an early age.

However, sometimes, parents have abandoned these traditional practices due to work obligations. A farmer, Mr. AU (40 years old), admitted that he cannot always join his children for meals due to his farming responsibilities. *"Sometimes, my children eat alone while playing with their phones. I worry they are losing the good habits we inherited from our parents,"* he said. This highlights ethnoparenting's challenges in the modern era, where family bonding time is increasingly limited.

Culturally based parenting in Sundanese transmigrant families remains largely preserved, albeit with some adaptations and challenges. Traditional values remain fundamental guidelines in child-rearing, yet modernization gradually shifts certain long-standing habits. More intensive parental guidance is necessary to ensure that cultural values do not fade with time.

### The Role of Community and Religious Figures in Supporting Etnoparenting

Community and religious leaders are crucial in supporting ethnoparenting within the Sundanese transmigrant community. Field observations indicate that regular religious gatherings, cooperation activities, and traditional ceremonies are integral to social life, contributing to children's moral and spiritual education.

In an interview with UH (50 years old), a religious leader, he explained that children who participate in religious activities tend to demonstrate better discipline in their daily lives. *"We teach children about manners and the importance of maintaining good relationships with others. In Islam, respecting parents*

and teachers is considered an act of worship," he said. This suggests that integrating Sundanese culture and Islamic teachings significantly shapes children's character in this community.

Beyond religious activities, community leaders also help uphold social norms. A village elder, Mr. EM (55 years old), shared that he often reprimands children for using rude language or behaving disrespectfully. *"Nowadays, children are heavily influenced by social media. If we don't supervise them, they might lose our cultural values,"* he remarked. The role of community leaders as cultural guardians is vital in guiding children to respect traditions.

Documentation of village activities shows that children are frequently involved in social events such as cleaning the mosque, helping neighbors with community gatherings, and participating in the *Seren Taun* (a traditional harvest ceremony). Through these activities, they learn about solidarity, cooperation, and respect for traditions passed down from their ancestors.

Thus, community and religious leaders are the main pillars in supporting the moral and religious education of children in this community. Their presence helps balance Sundanese cultural values and Islamic teachings while providing social oversight to ensure children respect established norms.

### **The Influence of Social Environment on Children's Moral Development**

The social environment plays a significant role in shaping children's moral development. Observations within the Sundanese community in East Lampung suggest that children who frequently engage in socially active communities tend to develop greater empathy and respect for cultural norms.

In an interview with Mr. YS (38 years old), a father of three, he noted that his neighborhood greatly influences his children's character development. *"My children often play with their friends at the mosque after religious lessons. I see them learning how to speak politely and share with their peers,"* he said. Healthy social interactions help children understand the importance of norms and ethics in everyday life.

On the other hand, school discipline report documentation reveals that children with limited social interactions struggle more with adapting to school rules. A kindergarten teacher in the village, Mrs. NW, explained that children who frequently play alone or are primarily engaged with digital devices often find it more challenging to share and communicate with their peers.

Changes in play patterns also pose a challenge to children's character development. In an interview with a young mother, Mrs. ITW (39 years old), she mentioned that her children prefer playing with gadgets to interacting with peers. *"When I was young, I often played outside, but now children prefer watching YouTube or playing games,"* she noted. This indicates that modern environmental influences are reshaping children's social habits.

In summary, while ethnoparenting continues to be practiced among Sundanese transmigrant families, modern challenges such as busy work schedules and technological advancements are gradually reshaping traditional values. Community engagement and social interaction remain critical factors in maintaining cultural values and fostering moral development in children. Therefore, a collective effort from parents, community leaders, and religious figures is essential to ensure that Sundanese cultural values continue to thrive in the face of modernization.

### **The Impact of Etnoparenting on Children's Moral and Religious Development**

Based on observations, children in the Sundanese transmigrant community in East Lampung exhibit relatively high levels of discipline, particularly in obeying their parents. Many children spontaneously help with household chores, such as sweeping, washing dishes, and tidying their beds. This behavior stems from an early introduction to the values of cooperation (*gotong royong*) and responsibility within the family.

In an interview, Mrs. AA (45 years old), a mother of three, explained that she consistently teaches her children to respect their elders through simple gestures, such as kissing their parents' hands before

going to school and speaking politely. *"Children must learn manners from a young age. If they grow up with respect, it will stay with them into adulthood,"* she said.

However, challenges arise as children are increasingly exposed to digital media, where they often mimic inappropriate speech or behavior from the content they watch. Mr. BS (42 years old), a trader, shared that his child started speaking harshly after frequently watching videos on the internet. *"We need to monitor what they watch more closely because many online contents do not align with our cultural values,"* he stated.

School documentation also indicates that children from families that strictly uphold etnoparenting principles tend to be more disciplined and obedient to rules than those with less parental supervision. A kindergarten teacher, Mrs. NW, noted, *"Children raised with strong respect for their parents and teachers are easier to guide in learning activities and less likely to break school rules."*

Thus, etnoparenting plays a significant role in shaping children's discipline and respect toward parents and teachers. However, the influence of digital media needs careful supervision to prevent it from undermining the traditional values instilled within the family.

One method still widely used in etnoparenting is storytelling before bedtime. According to interviews with several parents, Sundanese folklore remains a popular medium for teaching moral values to children.

A housewife, Mrs. YS (38 years old), shared that she often tells her children stories such as *Si Kabayan*, *Lutung Kasarung*, and *Sangkuriang*. *"These stories teach intelligence, patience, and the importance of respecting elders,"* she explained. *This approach teaches children moral values through engaging and easily understandable narratives."*

However, in today's digital era, children are more exposed to stories from online media rather than traditional folklore. Observations in several households revealed that children spend more time listening to stories from animated YouTube videos or digital apps. Some parents have recognized this shift and have adapted to using apps that still incorporate moral lessons.

In terms of religious education, children who frequently listen to Islamic stories from their parents or actively participate in mosque activities tend to develop a stronger sense of religiosity. Documentation of religious activities shows that children who regularly attend Islamic studies sessions demonstrate a better understanding of Islamic values than those who rarely participate.

Social environments also play a crucial role in shaping children's character. Field observations indicate that children who often engage in social activities with their peers develop better communication skills and adapt more quickly to new environments.

In an interview, a community leader, Mr. MP (46 years old), explained that children involved in social activities, such as mutual assistance (*gotong royong*) or community clean-ups, tend to develop a higher sense of social responsibility. *"When children help clean the mosque or assist neighbors, they learn about responsibility and solidarity,"* he said.

However, there is a noticeable difference between children who frequently play outdoors and those who spend more time on gadgets. Observations suggest that children who spend excessive time playing mobile games tend to be more individualistic and less socially active.

School documentation further supports this finding, as teachers have observed that children who frequently interact socially are more inclined to share and collaborate in group activities. Conversely, those with limited social interaction often struggle to adjust to their peers.

Therefore, the role of parents and the community is essential in ensuring that children maintain healthy social interactions. One effective solution is to limit screen time and encourage children to participate in meaningful social activities.

## Challenges in Implementing Etnoparenting in the Modern Era

The advancement of technology and digital media has brought significant changes to parenting styles, including within the Sundanese transmigrant community in East Lampung. Observations show that many young children are more interested in playing with gadgets than interacting with their surroundings. Parents often express difficulties in controlling technology use at home.

In an interview with Mrs. NW (37 years old), a mother of two, she stated that her children now prefer watching YouTube videos over traditional bedtime stories. *"I used to tell them stories about Si Kabayan, but now they prefer watching animated videos on their gadgets. If I don't allow it, they become fussy,"*. This illustrates how digitalization is gradually replacing traditional etnoparenting practices that rely on direct interaction.

School documentation indicates that children frequently use gadgets without supervision and struggle with verbal communication. A local kindergarten teacher, Mrs. RM, observed that some children prefer using words and phrases they hear from videos or games rather than those used in daily conversation.

However, some parents are trying to use technology to preserve cultural values. Mr. AU (40 years old) mentioned that he selects educational apps containing Sundanese folktales to ensure his children remain connected to their cultural heritage. *"If they prefer screens, I find ways to ensure the content they watch is beneficial,"*.

Thus, while technology presents significant challenges to etnoparenting, parents can still harness it positively by carefully selecting content that aligns with cultural and religious values.

As a community that has migrated from its homeland, the Sundanese people in East Lampung have undergone significant lifestyle changes. Observations in the village reveal that some families gradually abandon traditional practices such as eating together on the floor or speaking Sundanese at home.

In an interview, a community leader, Mr. EM (55 years old), stated that the younger generation finds it increasingly challenging to maintain Sundanese customs. *"Children used to speak Sundanese at home, but now they mostly use Indonesian. Some even prefer using slang from the internet,"*.

Village event documentation shows that fewer children are participating in annual cultural ceremonies. Many parents say their children prefer staying home to attending traditional events such as *seren taun* (harvest festival). This suggests a shift in family priorities within the transmigrant community.

Additionally, social changes have impacted parents' work patterns, with many working longer than previous generations. A farm laborer, Mrs. LN (42 years old), admitted that she often feels too exhausted after work to teach her children about Sundanese culture. *"I want them to learn our traditions, but I also have to work. Sometimes, I just let them learn from the internet,"*.

With these evolving lifestyles, the primary challenge in etnoparenting is balancing the demands of modernization with efforts to preserve inherited cultural values.

One of the biggest challenges in modern etnoparenting is how parents can maintain cultural values while keeping up with contemporary developments. Field observations show that some families strive to preserve traditions but must adapt to modern realities.

In an interview, Mr. AA (45 years old), a father of three, mentioned that he wants his children to uphold Sundanese values while preparing them for the modern world. *"I want them to respect their elders and be diligent in their religious studies, but I also can't forbid them from using technology because everything is digital now,"*.

School parent discussion records reveal two main perspectives among parents. The first group believes that cultural values should be preserved without modification, while the second argues that traditions must adapt to remain relevant in today's context.

Most parents interviewed agree that character education rooted in culture is still necessary but should be delivered in ways that align with children's contemporary learning styles. Therefore, a more

flexible approach is needed to ensure that cultural and religious values are passed down without hindering children's ability to thrive in the modern era.

### Strategies for Adapting to Preserve Cultural Values in Parenting

Parents and teachers have begun integrating cultural education with religious teachings to preserve Sundanese cultural values in child-rearing. School observations indicate that some teachers use storytelling methods combining Sundanese culture with Islamic teachings.

In an interview with Ustaz Hadi (50 years old), he mentioned that he often incorporates Islamic teachings into Sundanese folktales when telling stories to children. *"Children love listening to stories, so I use this method to teach them about Islam and Sundanese culture simultaneously,"*.

Schools and the community play a vital role in preserving ethnoparenting. Documentation of school activities shows that some preschools in the village have started holding weekly sessions where children learn about Sundanese culture through traditional songs and games.

Mrs. NW, a kindergarten teacher, stated, *"Children need to be aware of their cultural heritage, so we try to incorporate cultural elements into learning activities to ensure they don't lose their identity."*

Recognizing that technology has become an integral part of children's lives, some parents have started using it as a tool to help preserve cultural values. Observations in several households show that some parents download educational apps featuring Sundanese culture for their children.

In an interview, Mr. AU shared that he carefully selects videos and educational apps containing Sundanese folklore to connect his children to their heritage. *"Since they already enjoy technology, I should guide them toward something educational and culturally enriching,"*.

### Discussion

The findings of this study align with the theory of religious socialization, which states that a child's character development is strongly influenced by their family and community environment (Garcia & Lopez, 2023). Children who receive direct moral and religious education from their parents tend to better understand ethical and spiritual values.

Research Lestari (2020) also suggests that culture-based parenting can help shape children into more disciplined and responsible individuals. In the context of the Sundanese community in East Lampung, the principles of *silih asah*, *silih asih*, and *silih asuh* play a significant role in shaping children's mindset and behavior, teaching them to respect their parents, helping others, and maintaining harmony within the family.

However, the biggest challenge in maintaining ethnoparenting practices lies in modernization and digitalization. Swider-Cios et al. (2023) found that children who spend excessive time with technology tend to have lower social interactions, reduced empathy, and difficulty managing their emotions. This study reveals similar conditions within the Sundanese community in East Lampung, where technology is beginning to replace direct interactions between parents and children.

The findings indicate that families actively guiding their children in using technology can leverage digitalization for educational purposes. Some parents introduce Islamic and Sundanese culture-based educational applications to preserve cultural values in the digital age. This supports the findings of (Lim & Wardrip, 2024), who stated that technology can provide positive benefits when used under proper supervision.

Additionally, this study reinforces the role of educational institutions and religious communities in shaping children's character. Schools and mosques play a strategic role in sustaining cultural and religious values in parenting. A study by Elsayed (2024) emphasizes that community involvement in character education is crucial to ensuring that moral values remain ingrained in children, even as they grow up in an evolving environment.



In the context of transmigration, this study found that some families face challenges in preserving their cultural identity. Some children struggle to adapt to local cultures, necessitating a more flexible approach to ethnoparenting. These findings are supported by (Rachmawati, 2020), who noted that transmigrant communities often face dilemmas between maintaining their original culture and adapting to new cultural environments.

Therefore, implementing an adaptive and integrative approach is the best strategy for culture-based parenting. Parents and educators must be able to combine cultural values with parenting methods that are relevant to contemporary developments. This can be achieved through folktales, religious education, and the wise use of technology.

### Limitation

This study has several limitations that may affect the generalizability of its findings. First, the research is limited to a specific cultural context, focusing on the Sundanese transmigrant community in East Lampung, which may not fully represent ethnoparenting practices in other regions or ethnic groups. Second, the study relies on qualitative methods, including interviews, observations, and document analysis, which, while providing in-depth insights, are subject to participant biases and researcher interpretation. Additionally, the sample size, though diverse, remains relatively small, limiting the ability to draw broader conclusions. Another challenge is the rapid influence of modernization and digitalization, which continues to evolve and may affect parenting dynamics beyond the scope of this study. Lastly, time constraints prevented a longitudinal approach that could have provided a more comprehensive understanding of how ethnoparenting practices change over time in response to societal shifts.

### CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that ethnoparenting plays a significant role in shaping early childhood moral and religious values within the Sundanese transmigrant community in East Lampung. Culture-based parenting practices are still applied by most families, with values such as *silih asah*, *silih asih*, and *silih asuh* serving as fundamental principles in raising children. However, challenges such as the influence of technology, changes in lifestyle, and difficulties in balancing traditional values with modernization pose obstacles to maintaining culture-based parenting.

To address these challenges, adaptive strategies are needed, such as integrating cultural education with religious teachings, enhancing the role of schools and communities in supporting culture-based parenting, and utilizing technology wisely so that cultural values can continue to be passed down without hindering children's development in facing modern challenges. Thus, ethnoparenting can remain relevant and effective in shaping children's character, deeply rooted in cultural and religious values while also preparing them to navigate social changes in the modern era.

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