

Culture-Based Parenting in Indonesian Early Childhood: A Systematic Literature Review of Values, Transmission Mechanisms, Caregiving Agents, and Responses to Modernization

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Abstract

Indonesia's cultural diversity generates early childhood caregiving practices shaped by distinct values, symbols, languages, traditions, and family structures. Yet culture-based parenting studies remain fragmented across ethnic communities and often describe cultural values without clarifying how those values are translated into everyday caregiving. This review maps the cultural values underlying early childhood parenting in Indonesia, identifies transmission mechanisms and caregiving agents, examines developmental domains associated with such practices, and explores family responses to modernization and digitalization. The study is designed as a systematic literature review reported with reference to PRISMA 2020. Searches cover peer-reviewed empirical studies in Indonesian and English published from 2019 to 28 August 2026 using Google Scholar, Garuda, ERIC, and DOI cross-searching. The preliminary synthesis matrix contains 22 empirical reports representing Dayak, Sundanese, Javanese, Sasak, Mandailing Batak, Malay, Minangkabau, Bugis-Makassar, Madurese, Acehnese, Flores, Alor, and Sunda Wiwitan contexts. Five recurring transmission mechanisms emerged: modelling and habituation; cultural communication through language, advice, songs, and stories; children's participation in rituals and traditional activities; responsibility and social boundary setting; and collective caregiving by extended family and community members. These practices were most often associated with moral-character formation, socio-emotional development, cultural identity, religiosity, autonomy, and belonging. Modernization did not simply eliminate cultural parenting; instead, families selectively negotiated and adapted inherited values. The review proposes the Early Childhood Cultural Parenting Transmission Framework (KTPB-PAUD), linking cultural value sources, caregiving agents, transmission mechanisms, child experiences, developmental outcomes, and contexts of social change.

Keywords

culture-based parenting; early childhood; ethnoparenting; local wisdom; systematic literature review



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INTRODUCTION

Parenting does not take place in a socially neutral space. The ways adults understand children, determine which behaviors are considered good, set boundaries, express affection, distribute responsibilities, and prepare children to become members of a community are shaped by cultural value systems and practices. The developmental niche perspective positions caregiving practices, the physical-social environment, and caregivers' beliefs as three interrelated elements in child development (Super & Harkness, 1986). Therefore, early childhood parenting needs to be understood not only as a choice of individual parenting style, but also as a social and cultural process.

Indonesia provides an important context for such a study. Ethnic diversity and community structures produce parenting practices that are not always adequately understood when read only through universal categorizations such as authoritarian, democratic, permissive, or authoritative. In some communities, obedience, respect, social shame, mutual cooperation, responsibility toward the extended family, and participation in traditions may have developmental meanings that differ from similar constructs in individualistic cultures. A recent cross-cultural systematic review even confirms that Baumrind's framework does not always capture the flexibility, meaning, and context of parenting in collectivistic societies (Widiastuti et al., 2026).

In Indonesian literature, the term *ethnoparenting* or *culture-based parenting* is increasingly used to explain parenting rooted in local wisdom, traditions, language, beliefs, and community social practices. A study of Dayak Desa families, for example, describes patience, honesty, obedience, firmness, and responsible freedom as parenting expressions in the *betang* house (Fransiska & Suparno, 2019). Research in Sundanese, Sasak, Malay, Minangkabau, Madurese, Bugis–Makassar, Flores, and Alor communities shows that cultural values are manifested through interaction patterns, traditions, songs, games, rituals, role distribution, and extended-family involvement (Murniati & Rohayani, 2024; Nurhayati et al., 2024; Wirdanengsih & Wita, 2025; Bunga et al., 2026).

The growth of this research has not automatically produced a systematic understanding. Some studies focus on a single cultural community, some on a single developmental domain such as morality, social development, emotion, or character, and others position culture as a background without describing its transmission mechanisms. Recent literature on *ethnoparenting* as a source of cultural pedagogy has shown value habituation, modelling, cultural communication, local language, traditions, and family-community relations as important themes, but its orientation is primarily toward pedagogical implications for early childhood education (Agustina &

Rachmawati, 2026). On the other hand, a systematic review of cultural adaptations of parenting theories focuses more broadly on the limitations of Baumrind's model across societies and does not specifically map early childhood parenting processes in Indonesian ethnic contexts (Widiastuti et al., 2026).

Unfortunately, without a synthesis focused on mechanisms, culture can easily be reduced to a list of proverbs, ceremonies, or names of traditions. Yet the more important pedagogical and developmental question is how cultural values move from one generation to another: who transmits them, through what practices, in what situations, how children participate, and how families negotiate inherited values with present-day needs. These questions become increasingly relevant as digitalization, migration, parent education, urbanization, and changes in family structures transform the spaces in which parenting takes place.

Based on this gap, this review addresses six questions: (1) what cultural values, beliefs, and local wisdom underlie culture-based early childhood parenting in Indonesia; (2) through what mechanisms are cultural values transmitted to children; (3) who are the agents involved in the parenting process; (4) which developmental domains are most frequently associated with culture-based parenting practices; (5) how do modernization and digitalization affect the sustainability of these practices; and (6) what methodological and conceptual gaps remain.

The novelty of this review lies in shifting the focus from an inventory of traditions to the transmission process. The synthesis does not assess one culture as better than another, but maps the relationships among value sources, caregiving agents, transmission mechanisms, children's experiences, reported developmental outcomes, and contexts of social change. From this synthesis, the Early Childhood Cultural Parenting Transmission Framework (KTPB-PAUD) is formulated as an initial conceptual tool for research and the development of culturally responsive parenting programs.

METHODS

Study Design

The study is designed as a systematic literature review (SLR) with reporting guided by PRISMA 2020 (Page et al., 2021). Because the literature on culture-based parenting in early childhood is dominated by qualitative, ethnographic, case study, and phenomenological designs, the synthesis is planned as a narrative-thematic synthesis. A meta-analysis is not planned because of the heterogeneity of cultural constructs, units of analysis, participants, and outcomes.

Search Strategy

The initial search was conducted through 28 August 2026 in Google Scholar, Garuda, ERIC, and DOI/journal cross-searching. The 2019–2026 period was selected to capture the development of the ethnoparenting concept and changes in parenting practices in the digital era, without excluding slightly earlier studies when they constitute important empirical references and explicitly focus on culture-based early childhood parenting.

- ("ethnoparenting" OR "cultural parenting" OR "culture-based parenting" OR "indigenous parenting" OR "parenting based on local wisdom") AND ("early childhood" OR preschool OR "young children") AND Indonesia

- ("ethnoparenting" OR "culture-based parenting" OR "local wisdom-based parenting" OR "cultural parenting patterns") AND ("early childhood" OR PAUD OR preschool OR kindergarten)

- (parenting AND "local wisdom" AND Indonesia AND child*) and searches using names of specific cultural practices, such as manjujai, bue-bue, dodaidi, Sunda Wiwitan, Sasak Sade, betang house, and local cultural parenting.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Aspect	Inclusion	Exclusion
Publication type	Empirical, peer-reviewed journal articles; qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, ethnography, case study, phenomenology.	Literature reviews, opinions, editorials, undergraduate theses/master's theses/dissertations, proceedings without full articles.
Context	Indonesia; families/communities with parenting practices clearly influenced by culture, ethnicity, local wisdom, traditions, or customary structures.	Culture is only a demographic background without parenting analysis.
Age	Early childhood/preschool; studies covering ages up to 8 years may be considered when the	Studies involving only adolescents or adults.

	main focus remains early parenting.	
Focus	Explains cultural values, parenting practices, caregiving agents, transmission mechanisms, or adaptation to social change.	Cultural research that only discusses learning at school without a family/parenting component.
Language & access	Indonesian or English; key methodological metadata can be verified.	Text/metadata is insufficient to assess relevance.

Table 1. PRISMA Protocol Locked in the Final Rerun

Stage	Number
Records identified from all sources	[n = to be filled after final rerun]
After duplicates removed	[n = ...]
Title/abstract screened	[n = ...]
Full texts assessed	[n = ...]
Empirical reports included in synthesis	Initial matrix: 22 reports; confirmed in final rerun

Selection, Extraction, and Quality Assessment

Selection was conducted through deduplication, title and abstract screening, followed by full-text assessment. Extracted information included author and year, cultural community, location, design and participants, cultural values, caregiving agents, transmission mechanisms, reported outcomes or developmental meanings, and responses to modernization. Methodological quality assessment was planned using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT) 2018 according to study design. Because this manuscript is a draft article based on an initial search, the number of records at each PRISMA stage needs to be locked in through a documented final rerun before submission.

Analysis Strategy

Coding was conducted in two stages. First, deductive coding was based on cultural parenting elements: value sources, caregiving agents, practices, and developmental outcomes. Second, inductive coding was used to identify recurring patterns of transmission mechanisms and forms of cultural negotiation. Several

articles from the same research groups and locations may represent different reports; therefore, the final analysis needs to examine possible sample overlap so that these reports are not interpreted as independent evidence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of the Preliminary Literature

The preliminary synthesis matrix contains 22 empirical reports representing variations in culture and the ecology of parenting in Indonesia. Most used qualitative approaches through ethnography, case studies, phenomenology, observation, and interviews. The contexts included Dayak Desa families in betang houses, Sundanese, Javanese, Sasak Sade, Malay communities in Kapuas Hulu and West Kalimantan, Minangkabau, Bugis–Makassar, Madurese, Acehnese, Flores, Alor, and the Sunda Wiwitan indigenous community. The dominance of qualitative designs provides depth of meaning but limits causal conclusions about developmental effects.

Table 2. Preliminary Synthesis Matrix of Empirical Studies

Study	Context	Design/participants	Main values & mechanisms	Relevant findings
Fransiska & Suparno (2019)	Dayak Desa, Rumah Betang Ensaed Panjang	Case study; parents, customary leader, hamlet head	Patience, honesty, obedience, firmness, responsible freedom; communal life	Parenting shows a combination of freedom and responsibility within the betang-house ecology.
Yuni, Kurniawan, & Widiatmak a (2024)	Muslim-Malay, Kapuas Hulu	Descriptive qualitative; family/community	Malay local wisdom, habituation and family interaction	Local values become the foundation of parenting practices and children's emotional development.
Nurhayati,	Sundanese,	Semi-ethnography;	Traditions,	Parenting is

Napisah, & Ramdaeni (2024)	Ciroke Majalengka	parents, paraji, community leaders	prohibitions, language, paraji role, advice and habituation	embedded in family-community networks and cultural practices from the beginning of life.
Situmorang et al. (2024)	Javanese culture	Ethnographic/descriptive qualitative	Respect, harmony, rituals since pregnancy, beliefs and family habits	Respect and harmony are important orientations of parenting.
Murniati & Rohayani (2024)	Sasak Sade, Central Lombok	Qualitative; parents of children aged 0–8 and customary elders	Nyesek tradition, family rules, intergenerational transmission of practices	Culture, environment, parent education, and economics shape variations in parenting patterns.
Handayani et al. (2024)	Mandailing Batak; bue-bue tradition	Phenomenology; families with children <3 years	Lullabies, prayers, hopes, affection, patience	Songs become a medium for emotional bonding as well as transmission of religious and moral values.
Mustabyiah	Ketro,	Ethnography;	Culturally	Children's

, Formen, & Sunawan (2024)	Central Java	parents/community	appropriate social habituation, adult and community support	social skills are shaped through daily habituation and social support.
Ratna & Irzalinda (2024)	Long Nyelong, Samarinda	Case study; parents of children aged 2–6	Integration of local wisdom with digital mediation; cultural narratives for digital safety	Traditions can be adapted into digital parenting practices without having to be abandoned.
Trisetiawati et al. (2025)	Madura, Bangkalan	Family case study	Togetherness, discipline, empathy; traditional practices	Ethnoparenting is associated with emotional development, empathy, self-confidence, and social development.
Aprilia et al. (2025)	Madura	Case study	Togetherness, mutual cooperation, respect, discipline	Cultural values are associated with children's social intelligence and

				interpersonal competence.
Wirdanengsih & Wita (2025)	Minangkabau, Nagari Kasang	Qualitative; 20 informants and family observation	Manujai: songs, simple games, interaction with the matrilineal extended family	Manujai stimulates cognitive, motor, emotional, spiritual, and cultural-identity aspects.
Suarja et al. (2025)	Bugis–Makassar, Palopo	Phenomenology; five families	Alempureng, amaccang, agenttengeng, reso, siri; integration of Islamic values	Local and religious values are used together for character and family resilience.
Dea, Lessy, & Purnama (2025)	Sundanese transmigrants, East Lampung	Qualitative case study	Hospitality, cooperation, respect; habituation and religious practices	Cultural values are associated with moral-religious development amid modernization.
Aqeela et al. (2025)	Cireundeu Traditional Village	Descriptive qualitative	Mutual cooperation; collective caregiving by extended family and community	Parenting is not carried out only by parents; the community contributes to morality and social

				self-confidence.
Munawwarah et al. (2025)	Aceh; Dodaiddi tradition	Qualitative case study; caregivers and community leaders	Dodaiddi lullaby as an oral medium for character values	Traditional songs function as cultural communication and character transmission according to caregivers.
Bunga et al. (2025)	Nagekeo, Flores	Explorative ethnography; parents, cultural/community figures	Mesu Re'e (affection), Papa (honesty), Pawe (modelling)	Local values guide parenting practices and children's identity.
Kurniawan, Ranti, & Maimunah (2025)	Malay Teluk Melano, North Kayong	Phenomenology; family, customary/religious figures	Malay local wisdom, inherited practices	Parenting is understood as a social heritage negotiated with changing times.
Bismillah, Muzakki, & Aghnaita (2026)	Muslim Javanese and Dayak parents, Palangka Raya	Qualitative; 20 parents of Group B children	Affection, social norms, religious-cultural values; comparison of two ethnic groups	There are differences in value emphasis as well as similarities in moral and social goals.
Fitroh et al. (2026)	Madura; three	Multiple case study; seven parents	Religious values, moral	Ethnoparenting operates

	Islamic early childhood institutions		discipline, Madurese culture, home-school collaboration	through family relationships, early childhood institutions, and religious values.
Bunga et al. (2026)	Alor indigenous community	Explorative qualitative; cultural figures, elders, educators	Breast milk as blessing/prayer, Gada'as as substitute caregiver, Wakke Da'as as an expression of paternal affection	Parenting is collective and symbolic; culture regulates the meaning of care and father-child relationships.
Sapendi, Rizqina, & Hayati (2026)	Malay, Dayak, Madurese; Pontianak	Qualitative; customary institutions, parents of children aged 0–8, community leaders	Customary institutions as mediators of moderation values, family-community relations	Value transmission occurs not only through parents but also through customary social institutions.
Huliyah, Umayah, & Mu'awanah (2026)	Sunda Wiwitan, Kasepuhan Cisungsang	Spradley ethnography; parents, customary leaders, community members	Customary values, participation in traditions, identity, strategies for facing modernization	Parenting functions as a mechanism for value preservation and cultural adaptation.

1. Cultural Value Sources in Parenting

The values that emerge are not homogeneous but can be grouped into several orientations. First are relational values such as affection, respect, harmony, mutual cooperation, hospitality, and responsibility toward family. Second are personal-moral values such as honesty, discipline, steadfastness, hard work, patience, and self-control. Third are religious-spiritual values that are often intertwined with local traditions. Fourth are values of cultural identity and continuity that position children as successors of the community. In Flores, for example, Mesu Re'e, Papa, and Pawe provide cultural language for affection, honesty, and modelling; in Bugis–Makassar, alempureng, amaccang, agenttengeng, reso, and siri emerge; while Minangkabau communities transmit values through the manjulai tradition.

2. Transmission Mechanisms: How Culture Becomes Parenting

An important finding of this review is that culture does not operate merely as the content of advice, but as a mechanism of experience. Five mechanisms appear most consistently in the matrix.

- Modelling and habituation. Parents demonstrate the expected behavior and then provide children with opportunities to repeat it in family routines.
- Cultural communication. Values are transmitted through local languages, advice, stories, prayers, lullabies, symbolic expressions, and everyday conversations.
- Participation in traditions. Children learn by being present and involved in rituals, family activities, games, simple work, celebrations, or customary practices.
- Responsibility and social boundary setting. Children are introduced to rules, obligations, hierarchies, respect, and behavioral consequences understood within the community's logic.
- Collective caregiving. Grandparents, extended family members, customary elders, paraji, substitute caregivers, customary institutions, and communities take part in caring for and socializing children.

These mechanisms strengthen the argument that ethnoparenting is not identical to an "ethnic parenting style." Two families within the same culture may choose different approaches while still using similar repertoires of cultural values and practices. Therefore, a more productive unit of analysis is the relationship among values, meanings, practices, and children's participation.

3. Caregiving Agents: From Parents toward a Collective Ecology

The literature shows that parents remain the primary agents, but they are not always the only ones. Minangkabau manjulai is reinforced by the matrilineal extended-family structure; Dayak betang houses create communal caregiving spaces;

in Sundanese communities, paraji and community leaders are present within practice networks; in Alor, Gada'as serves as a substitute caregiver during transitional periods; and the Pontianak study shows that customary institutions can mediate value transmission. These findings challenge the tendency of modern parenting programs to focus too heavily on mothers or the nuclear parent couple. In several Indonesian cultures, the relevant caregiving unit is instead the family-community ecology.

4. Developmental Domains Associated with Cultural Parenting

The most frequently reported domains are moral-character and socio-emotional development. Values of respect, honesty, empathy, discipline, cooperation, and responsibility appear across communities. Some studies also associate cultural practices with religiosity, cultural identity, self-confidence, autonomy, language, cognitive, motor, and spiritual development. However, most evidence is descriptive and based on observations and interviews, so the word "effect" should be used cautiously. It is more appropriate to state that these practices are "associated with," "perceived to support," or "reported to contribute to" particular developmental outcomes.

5. Modernization, Digitalization, and Cultural Negotiation

Modernization does not show a single pattern of tradition loss. Instead, three responses can be identified. First, preservation, namely maintaining practices because they are considered central to community identity and morality. Second, selection, namely retaining values while changing forms of practices considered less relevant or inconsistent with children's needs. Third, adaptation, namely translating inherited values into new situations. The digital parenting study in Long Nyelong shows that local narratives can be used to teach digital safety, while research in Sunda Wiwitan, Sasak, Malay, and Bugis communities indicates negotiation among traditions, formal education, technology, and changes in family structure. Therefore, cultural sustainability is more appropriately understood as a dynamic process rather than identical reproduction of tradition.

6. Early Childhood Cultural Parenting Transmission Framework (KTPB-PAUD)

Based on the preliminary synthesis, this review proposes the Early Childhood Cultural Parenting Transmission Framework (KTPB-PAUD). This framework is not a new typology for labeling families, but an analytical map that helps explain how culture becomes parenting experience.

Table 3. KTPB-PAUD Analytical Framework

Component	Analytical Question	Example Findings
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1. Cultural value sources	Which values, beliefs, symbols, traditions, languages, and norms are considered important?	Respect, mutual cooperation, siri, manjujai, affection, honesty, religious values.
2. Caregiving agents	Who carries and maintains these values?	Mothers, fathers, grandparents, extended family, customary elders, paraji, customary institutions, community.
3. Transmission mechanisms	How are values experienced by children?	Modelling, habituation, stories, songs, rituals, games, responsibility, rules.
4. Children's experiences	What is the child's position in the practice?	Observing, imitating, participating, choosing, helping, dialoguing, practicing.
5. Developmental meaning/outcomes	What development is reported as being associated?	Moral, socio-emotional, identity, religiosity, autonomy, language/cognitive.
6. Social change context	What strengthens, changes, or weakens the practice?	Digitalization, migration, urbanization, education, economics, policy, family structure.

The KTPB-PAUD framework positions children as active participants, not passive recipients of culture. Cultural values acquire parenting meaning when they are embodied through relationships and experiences accessible to children. The framework also avoids the romanticization of culture: traditional practices still need to be assessed in terms of safety, children's rights, developmental appropriateness, and the capacity to adapt to contemporary contexts.

Implementation Challenges and Ethical Issues

Culturally responsive parenting does not mean accepting all traditional practices without evaluation. Some values may have positive social functions, but their forms of implementation need to be assessed against the principles of non-violence, respect

for children's dignity, gender equality, inclusion, and the best interests of the child. Research also needs to distinguish between "values" and "ways of implementation." For example, the value of respect can be maintained without using degrading punishment; responsibility can be developed through age-appropriate participation; and a sense of cultural belonging can be developed without isolating children from social diversity.

Six major gaps were identified from the initial search. First, evidence remains concentrated in qualitative studies of single communities. Second, the definition of ethnoparenting is not consistent; some studies use the terms cultural parenting, local wisdom parenting, or cultural parenting for similar phenomena. Third, measurement of developmental outcomes remains limited and longitudinal designs are rarely used. Fourth, the roles of fathers, grandparents, and community caregivers remain less represented than the general focus on parents. Fifth, children's voices and participation in cultural research are almost absent. Sixth, research on cultural transformation in urban families, interethnic families, migrant families, and digital contexts remains limited.

This manuscript is an SLR draft supported by an actual literature search, but the matrix still needs to be locked through a final rerun and recording of the number of records at each PRISMA stage. Some articles use the term ethnoparenting without the same operational definition. In addition, several reports originate from related research groups or closely connected cultural contexts, so sample overlap checking is necessary. Limiting the review to articles in Indonesian and English may also exclude cultural documentation available only in local books, community reports, or regional languages.

CONCLUSION

Culture-based early childhood parenting in Indonesia is not merely a collection of traditions, but a value-transmission system operating through family and community relationships. Values of affection, respect, honesty, discipline, cooperation, religiosity, responsibility, and cultural identity are translated through modelling, habituation, cultural communication, songs and stories, participation in traditions, the assignment of responsibility, and collective caregiving. The literature most often associates these practices with moral-character and socio-emotional development, followed by cultural identity, religiosity, autonomy, and several aspects of holistic development.

Modernization does not always sever cultural transmission. Families demonstrate processes of preservation, selection, and value adaptation. The KTPB-

PAUD framework, which connects value sources, caregiving agents, transmission mechanisms, children's experiences, developmental outcomes, and contexts of social change, can serve as a basis for empirical research and the development of more culturally responsive parenting programs. Future research needs to move from cultural description toward testing processes and outcomes, involve children's voices, and examine cultural practices critically while remaining grounded in children's rights and best interests.

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