# Exploring the Influence of Madura Etnoparenting on Social Intelligence Development in Early Childhood: A Case Study

# Winda Dwi Aprilia<sup>1⊠</sup>, Siti Fadjryana Fitroh<sup>2</sup>, Muhammad Abdul Latif<sup>3</sup>, Tarich Yuandana<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1234</sup>Department of Early Childhood Education, Universitas Trunojoyo Madura, Bangkalan, Indonesia

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# ABSTRACT

**Background of the study:** Ethnoparenting is a parenting model shaped by cultural values embraced by a community. In Madura, ethnoparenting plays a crucial role in nurturing children's character and social intelligence from an early age. Traditional Madurese parenting emphasizes togetherness, mutual cooperation, respect, and discipline within both family and community settings.

**Aims and scope of paper:** This study aims to explore how the values embedded in Madurese ethnoparenting contribute to the development of children's social intelligence. It focuses on the application of cultural practices in early childhood upbringing and their implications for interpersonal and social competencies.

**Methods:** This study employed a qualitative ethnographic approach to explore Madurese parenting practices in fostering early childhood social intelligence. Data were collected through observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis involving parents and educators from various early childhood education centers in Bangkalan. The data were analyzed using reduction, display, and conclusion drawing to identify cultural patterns and parenting strategies that support social intelligence development.

**Results:** The findings indicate that Madurese ethnoparenting fosters multiple dimensions of social intelligence in early childhood, including communication skills, empathy, cooperation, politeness, adaptability, and a sense of social responsibility. These attributes are instilled through daily routines and interpersonal interactions within both familial and communal settings.

**Contribution:** This study underscores the pivotal role of culturally informed parenting practices in cultivating socially competent children. It emphasizes the value of preserving and adapting Madurese ethnoparenting traditions in modern parenting contexts. By highlighting the connection between culture and child development, the research contributes to broader discussions on culturally responsive parenting and early childhood education.

# **INTRODUCTION**

Early childhood is often referred to as a critical period of development, as inadequate attention to education, care, parenting, healthcare, and nutrition during this stage can hinder optimal growth and development (Dewi et al., 2020). Early childhood is characterized by unique individuals undergoing rapid development across multiple domains, leading to significant changes. Between the ages of 0 and 6 years, children experience a complex and unique phase of growth that cannot be replicated later in life. This period is often called the "golden age," where children easily imitate and absorb various knowledge from their environment, both positive and negative. Hence, providing positive stimuli during this time is essential (Devianti et al., 2020).

Children at this age are highly sensitive to their surroundings, and the experiences they gain have long-term impacts on their development. From an early age, children are expected to develop social intelligence to adapt to societal rules and norms, build positive self-concepts, foster independence, develop trust in others, accept differences, express emotions appropriately and positively, and exhibit politeness and courtesy. Social intelligence is crucial because many aspects of human life involve social interactions. Children who fail to develop social intelligence often face significant social challenges and may become socially isolated (Shofiyah et al., 2020).

In line with their growth and development, the intellectual, emotional, and social needs of children require appropriate facilities, infrastructure, and individualized conditions. Early childhood is a golden period for educational processes, as children during this time recognize various environmental facts that stimulate personality, psychomotor, cognitive, and social development. Therefore, early childhood education in the form of stimulation from parents, teachers, and the immediate environment is essential to optimize children's abilities and growth in accordance with their developmental stages (Tanu, 2019).

In this context, the family, as the smallest social unit, plays a vital role in laying the foundation for education and instilling values in children from an early age. The family is the first environment where children learn, develop social skills, and shape their character. Family-taught values such as integrity, responsibility, and hard work form an essential foundation for character development. Through daily interactions with family members, children learn ethics, norms, and moral values critical to their lives (Rahayu et al., 2023).

The family is the primary environment where children learn various things. Parents play a key role in educating and guiding children through their parenting styles. Parenting style refers to how parents educate, nurture, guide, and provide direction, which varies among families (Nadhifah et al., 2021). Indonesia's cultural diversity influences parenting practices, which vary widely across regions. Thus, child-rearing in Indonesia is not limited to general parenting styles like Baumrind's but includes cultural values specific to each region (Alfaeni & Rachmawati, 2023).

Currently, the theory of ethnoparenting is emerging in Indonesia, emphasizing parenting oriented toward traditional community values. Introduced in 2019, ethnoparenting is defined as parenting practices based on local wisdom, culture, and specific ethnic identities. Ethnoparenting involves parenting activities grounded in the local culture or particular ethnicity, reflecting unique regional child-rearing traditions (Rachmawati, 2020). This concept encompasses values, philosophies, customs, and social systems believed to meet the needs of the community. Based on the above, this study aims to explore how social intelligence development in early childhood is enhanced through local cultural parenting practices in Madura.

# METHODS

#### Research Design

This study utilized a qualitative research design with an ethnographic approach. Ethnography was selected to describe and analyze the cultural characteristics of individuals and community groups, with a specific focus on parenting practices within the Madurese community.

#### Participants

The participants consisted of members of the Madurese community in the Bangkalan region who have children in early childhood. The study particularly involved parents and families who actively engage in fostering their young children's social intelligence. The research was conducted in several early childhood education centers, including TK Muslimat NU Darunnajah Kamal, TK YKK 01 Bangkalan, TK ABA 09 Socah, TK Tarbiyatus Shibyan Gili Timur, as well as within the broader Bangkalan community.

#### Data Collection

Data were collected using multiple qualitative methods, including direct observation, semistructured interviews, and document analysis. These techniques enabled the researcher to gain comprehensive insights into parental efforts to enhance social intelligence in their children.

#### Data Analysis

The data were analyzed through a systematic process involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involved filtering and focusing on the most relevant information. Subsequently, the data were organized and presented in a clear manner to facilitate interpretation, which led to drawing meaningful conclusions about Madurese parenting practices.

# RESULT

The results of this study demonstrate that parenting practices in Madura effectively enhance social intelligence in early childhood. Through interviews conducted with the community of Bangkalan Regency, particularly parents of young children, as well as observations in several kindergartens—namely TK Muslimat NU Darunnajah Kamal, TK YKK 01 Bangkalan, TK ABA 09 Socah, and TK Tarbiyatus Shibyan Gili Timur—it was evident that children exhibited a strong ability to understand and empathize with their peers, and showed ease in interacting with new people.

Based on the interviews and observations conducted between October 9 and November 5, 2024, it was found that parents in Madura apply a firm yet culturally rich parenting style. Bangkalan, a small island off the northern coast of East Java, is known for its diverse and unique culture. One particularly intriguing aspect is the distinctive parenting approach practiced by the Madurese people. Although this parenting style can sometimes appear strict or harsh, it is deeply rooted in local wisdom and reflects values worthy of appreciation and further study.

The Madurese parenting style tends to emphasize discipline and independence from an early age. Children are taught to be self-reliant and persistent in facing various life challenges. This is reflected in the role of parents who demonstrate firmness while instilling values such as simplicity and the preservation of cultural traditions. A distinctive feature of Madurese parental communication is its straightforwardness, which may sound firm but actually conveys honesty and sincerity in child-rearing. This sometimes strict demeanor teaches children to express themselves openly, become assertive, and take responsibility for their actions. Additionally, the Madurese parenting approach strongly upholds family values and community cooperation. Children are taught to love one another and assist each other in daily life. From these observations, it can be concluded that Madurese parenting significantly contributes to enhancing social intelligence in children.

Social intelligence is defined as the individual's ability to perform actions and thought patterns required to function effectively as a social being. It involves understanding and interacting with others, phenomena, and the surrounding environment (Akbar et al., 2021). Early childhood is a critical period for developing social intelligence, enabling children to adapt to societal rules and norms, build a positive self-concept, cultivate independence, foster trust in others, accept and adjust to differences, express emotions appropriately, and behave politely and respectfully. Social intelligence is important because human life inherently involves interactions

with others. Children who fail to develop social intelligence often face many obstacles in their social lives and risk social exclusion (Shofiyah et al., 2020).

In the formation of social intelligence, parents play a fundamental role. As the first teachers in a child's life, parents are responsible for guiding their children in both academic and life skills. This responsibility underscores the importance of applying effective parenting practices to ensure children grow into socially competent individuals. A well-established parenting style acts as a foundation for children's growth and development (Fatmawati, 2022). Parenting style refers to the manner in which parents raise and educate their children. An effective parenting style shapes children's character positively.

Among the various parenting styles in Indonesia, the Madurese parenting style is recognized for its unique characteristics. This style has been passed down from generation to generation and has proven effective in shaping children's character. The head of TK Tarbiyatus Shibyan noted in an interview that the Madurese parenting style is deeply embedded in the cultural fabric of the community and plays a critical role in child development (Interview, 2024).

The observations and interviews with parents and educators in the Madurese community revealed that the parenting model, while firm, encourages children to develop empathy and social skills such as cooperation, respect for others, and adaptability. Children were observed interacting harmoniously with peers and adults alike, demonstrating behaviors such as sharing, helping, and effective communication. These interactions are crucial indicators of social intelligence development.

Moreover, the emphasis on discipline does not equate to authoritarianism but rather reflects a balance between firm guidance and warmth. This balance helps children understand boundaries while feeling supported and secure, which is essential for social and emotional growth. Parents also foster social responsibility by involving children in family and community activities that reinforce collaboration and mutual aid.

Another significant aspect of Madurese parenting is the transmission of local values and cultural identity. Parents actively teach children about their cultural heritage, traditions, and social norms, which strengthens the child's sense of belonging and identity. This cultural grounding provides children with a framework for understanding social roles and responsibilities, enhancing their ability to navigate social relationships effectively.

This research also highlights that early childhood education institutions in Bangkalan play a vital role in complementing the efforts of families by integrating cultural values into their curricula and daily activities. This synergy between the home and school environments creates a supportive and nurturing network that fosters the holistic development of children's social intelligence. The Madurese parenting style is marked by firm yet loving discipline, which encourages children to develop independence and responsibility. It strongly emphasizes family and community values, such as mutual cooperation and social harmony. Additionally, the style involves direct and honest communication that motivates children to be assertive and sincere in their interactions. There is also a deliberate and active transmission of local cultural values that reinforce children's sense of identity and understanding of social norms. Importantly, collaboration between families and educational institutions further supports the overall development of the child. This comprehensive approach results in children who are socially intelligent—able to empathize with others, engage positively in social interactions, and adapt effectively to diverse social contexts. The study confirms that Madurese ethnoparenting plays a significant and meaningful role in fostering social intelligence during early childhood.

# DISCUSSION

This study investigated how Madurese ethnoparenting influences the development of social intelligence in early childhood. The findings reveal that the unique parenting style in Madura, characterized by firm but loving discipline, strong family and community values, direct communication, and active cultural transmission, significantly fosters children's social intelligence. These results align with broader research emphasizing the crucial role of culturally

embedded parenting practices in shaping early social development (Bornstein, 2017; Garcia & Gracia, 2019).

Firstly, the firm yet loving discipline observed among Madurese parents encourages children to develop independence and responsibility. This balance between strictness and warmth is supported by Baumrind's (2013) authoritative parenting model, which has been linked to positive developmental outcomes including social competence and emotional regulation. Unlike authoritarian styles that may inhibit social skills (Pinquart, 2017), the Madurese approach fosters resilience and assertiveness, as children learn to express themselves honestly yet respectfully, a finding consistent with studies in various cultural contexts (Kuppens & Ceulemans, 2019; Lansford et al., 2018).

Secondly, the emphasis on family and community values such as mutual cooperation, social harmony, and gotong royong (mutual aid) reflects collectivist cultural orientations found in many Asian societies (Chao & Tseng, 2020). These values serve as the foundation for social intelligence by promoting empathy, cooperation, and social responsibility from an early age. Research by Chen et al. (2016) supports the notion that collectivist parenting fosters social skills oriented toward group cohesion and interpersonal sensitivity, essential components of social intelligence (Miller, 2015).

The direct and honest communication style of Madurese parents, although sometimes perceived as stern, appears to cultivate children's assertiveness and sincerity. This is noteworthy, as effective communication patterns within families are critical for children's social development (Hart et al., 2020). When children are encouraged to speak openly and understand social norms, they are better equipped to navigate social situations (Grusec & Goodnow, 2019). This communication dynamic also strengthens parent-child relationships, which are key predictors of social competence (Pinquart & Gerke, 2019).

Moreover, the active transmission of local cultural values in Madurese parenting underscores the importance of cultural identity in child development. As Rachmawati (2020) explains, ethnoparenting based on local wisdom helps children internalize social norms and values that are vital for social adaptation within their community. This is echoed in global studies highlighting the role of culturally relevant parenting in fostering not only social intelligence but also a strong sense of identity and belonging (Delgado et al., 2019; Hughes et al., 2017).

The research also demonstrates the collaboration between families and early childhood education institutions in Bangkalan, which further enhances the development of children's social intelligence. The integration of cultural values into school curricula creates a consistent learning environment, reinforcing lessons from home and promoting holistic growth. This synergy supports Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which emphasizes the interaction of multiple environments in child development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Weiss et al., 2018). Studies have shown that positive partnerships between parents and schools enhance children's social and emotional learning (Durlak et al., 2011; Sheridan et al., 2019).

The findings also contribute to the growing body of literature on ethnoparenting in Indonesia and Southeast Asia, an area still underexplored compared to Western-centric parenting research. The Madurese example highlights how indigenous parenting systems transmit cultural knowledge and social competencies effectively, resonating with previous studies by Alfaeni & Rachmawati (2023) and Nadhifah et al. (2021) that emphasize the diversity and richness of parenting across Indonesian ethnic groups.

Social intelligence, defined as the ability to understand and manage social interactions, is essential for children's success in both personal and societal domains (Goleman, 2011; Akbar et al., 2021). The development of social intelligence during early childhood is especially critical, as it lays the groundwork for later interpersonal relationships and emotional well-being (Denham et al., 2012). The study confirms that culturally grounded parenting, such as Madurese ethnoparenting, provides a fertile environment for cultivating these vital skills.

Importantly, the Madurese parenting style appears to prepare children to adapt to a variety of social contexts, an outcome that supports social competence frameworks proposed by Ladd (2017) and Eisenberg et al. (2014). Children learn to express emotions appropriately, respect

social norms, and maintain positive relationships, which are crucial for social integration and reducing risks of social exclusion (Shofiyah et al., 2020).

#### Implications

This research provides important implications for parents, educators, and policymakers in Bangkalan and similar cultural contexts. Understanding that Madurese parenting style promotes social intelligence highlights the necessity of supporting and preserving indigenous parenting practices that align with local cultural values. Early childhood education institutions should integrate these cultural principles into their curricula to foster consistent social development both at home and school. Moreover, parenting programs can be designed to emphasize firm yet affectionate discipline and community cooperation, which have proven effective in nurturing independence and social skills. Policymakers should also recognize the value of local wisdom in child-rearing and promote community-based initiatives that strengthen family-school collaboration for holistic child development.

#### Research Contribution

This study contributes to the growing body of literature on ethnoparenting by providing empirical evidence from the Madurese community, an underrepresented group in parenting research. It expands knowledge on how cultural nuances shape parenting styles and subsequently affect children's social intelligence in early childhood. The research highlights the dynamic synergy between familial and educational environments, reinforcing Bronfenbrenner's ecological model with concrete examples from Indonesia. Additionally, it offers a model for integrating local wisdom in early childhood education, which can inspire similar studies and applications in other culturally rich yet understudied societies.

#### Limitations

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the qualitative approach, while providing rich and in-depth insights, limits the generalizability of the findings to other regions or ethnic groups. The study focused solely on families and institutions in Bangkalan, which may have unique characteristics not shared by the broader Madurese population or other Indonesian communities. Second, data collection relied heavily on interviews and observations within formal educational settings and families who were accessible during the research period; this may introduce selection bias. Finally, the study did not quantitatively measure social intelligence outcomes, which could complement qualitative data and provide more objective assessments of developmental progress.

# Suggestions

Future studies should consider mixed-method approaches combining qualitative insights with quantitative measures to better capture the complexity of social intelligence development. Expanding the research scope to include other Madurese regions or comparison with other ethnic groups in Indonesia would offer a broader understanding of ethnoparenting influences across diverse cultural landscapes. Longitudinal studies could also explore how Madurese parenting affects social intelligence and other developmental domains over time, particularly as children transition to adolescence and adulthood. Moreover, investigating the impact of modernization and urbanization on traditional parenting practices would provide valuable insights into the evolving nature of ethnocultural parenting and its implications for child development.

# CONCLUSION

The study underscores the significance of culturally embedded parenting practices in fostering social intelligence among early childhood children. The Madurese ethnoparenting style—firm but affectionate discipline, strong community values, direct communication, and active cultural socialization—offers an effective model that supports children's social and emotional

development. Additionally, the collaborative efforts between families and educational institutions create an enriched learning environment that sustains and amplifies these benefits. Future research could further explore the mechanisms through which ethnoparenting influences other developmental domains, such as cognitive and emotional outcomes, and how these parenting practices adapt in the face of modernization and urbanization. Moreover, comparative studies with other Indonesian ethnic groups or cross-cultural analyses would provide deeper insights into the role of cultural context in parenting and child development.

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# AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

WDA conceived the idea and conducted data collection. SFF and TY contributed to the literature review. MAL contributed to proofreading and drafting the manuscript. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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