

Date Received : April 2026
Date Revised : May 2026
Date Accepted : May 2026
Date Published : May 2026

ETHNOPARENTING OF THE PENESAK COMMUNITY IN THE TRANSMISSION OF LOCAL CULTURAL VALUES TO EARLY CHILDHOOD IN OGAN ILIR

Muharrahman¹

UIN Raden Fatah Palembang, Indonesia 1 (muharrahman@radenfatah.ac.id)

Hamidah

UIN Raden Fatah Palembang, Indonesia 2 (hamidah@radenfatah.ac.id)

Yulia Tri Samiha

UIN Raden Fatah Palembang, Indonesia 3 (yuliatrisamiha@radenfatah.ac.id)

Keywords:

Ethnoparenting,
Penesak Tribe,
Cultural Value
Transmission, Early
Childhood,
Modernization.

ABSTRACTS

This study examines the ethnoparenting practices of the Penesak ethnic community in Ogan Ilir Regency, South Sumatra, in transmitting local cultural values to early childhood (0-6 years) amidst the currents of modernization and digitalization. The main research question stems from the challenge of preserving cultural values such as mutual cooperation, respect for ancestors, and the divine principle in child-rearing when the influences of technology and globalization are increasingly pervasive. The novelty of this research lies in the simultaneous integration of three analytical lenses Cultural Transmission Theory (Margaret Mead), Continuity and Change Theory, and Symbolic Interactionism (Herbert Blumer) to holistically analyze the dynamics of culturally based parenting. Employing a qualitative ethnographic approach, the study utilizes in-depth interviews, participant observation, and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) with parents, traditional leaders, and community members across three sub-districts: Indralaya Selatan, Tanjung Batu, and Payaraman. Thematic analysis was applied to identify patterns of continuity and change in ethnoparenting practices across generations. The findings reveal that although transformations occur in cultural transmission mechanisms and adaptations to digitalization take place, the core values of Penesak ethnoparenting are persistently maintained through social interactions within the family and community, as well as through the negotiation of symbolic meanings in daily parenting routines. This research contributes to the theoretical development of ethnoparenting and offers practical recommendations for integrating local cultural values into culturally sensitive early childhood education policies.

¹ Correspondence author

A. INTRODUCTION

Ethnoparenting as a theoretical construct is designed to serve as a channel of cultural reproduction that enables local values such as divinity, mutual assistance, and environmental preservation to be consistently internalized by younger generations through social interaction within the family and community.² However, on the other hand, the social reality of contemporary indigenous communities, including the Penesak ethnic group in Ogan Ilir, reveals a tension between the ideal of coherent cultural transmission and caregiving practices increasingly influenced by modernization, digitalization, and changes in social structure.³ Globalization and the penetration of digital technology have transformed the ways in which family members communicate and interact, whereby children who previously interacted more directly with family and community are now more extensively exposed to digital media that often erode traditional values.⁴ This friction between design and desolation becomes an important starting point for research to understand how indigenous communities, particularly the Penesak ethnic group, navigate their caregiving practices amid the demands of preserving tradition and the pressures of changing times.

The literature indicates that studies on ethnoparenting in Indonesia have developed significantly over the past decade, yet a number of important gaps remain. Research by Suratman (2020) on childrearing in the Sambas Malay community reveals how local cultural values transmitted across generations shape caregiving patterns that emphasize politeness, respect, and etiquette.⁵ Meanwhile, research by Aprilia et al. (2025) on the ethnoparenting of the Madurese community shows that caregiving patterns combining discipline with affection and honest and direct communication play an important role in shaping children's social intelligence.⁶ Asri et al. (2024), in their study on early childhood caregiving in the Sasak community, found that caregiving patterns are based not only on religion but also on local cultural values such as mutual assistance and the preservation of cultural arts.⁷ Rachmawati (2021) developed a model of Indonesian ethnoparenting that emphasizes seven cultural elements as the foundation of the value system in childrearing.⁸ Research by Zubaedah et al. (2022) on ethnoparenting in the Akit ethnic community reveals how this community has succeeded in maintaining its traditional values despite the influence of digital technology.⁹ Although rich in findings, these studies are generally still descriptive or

² Leli Fertiana Dea et al., "Etnoparenting Influences the Moral and Religious Development of Early Childhood among Transmigrant Community," *COUNS-EDU: The International Journal of Counseling and Education* 10, no. 1 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.23916/00202501049210>.

³ M. Muharrahman et al., "Ethno Parenting: Transformasi Budaya Bayi Di Ogan Ilir Sumatera Selatan," *Kiddo: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini* 4, no. 1 (2023): 101–15, <https://doi.org/10.19105/kiddo.v4i1.8154>.

⁴ Dina Kusumanita Nur Alfaeni and Yeni Rachmawati, "Etnoparenting: Pola Pengasuhan Alternatif Masyarakat Indonesia," *Aulad: Journal on Early Childhood* 6, no. 1 (2023): 51–60.

⁵ Bayu Suratman and Mahmud Arif, "Realm of Malay Civilization: Ethnoparenting, Habitus, and Cultural Contestation in Early Childhood Education of Sambas Malay Society," *JSW (Jurnal Sosiologi Walisongo)* 4, no. 2 (2020): 215–30.

⁶ W. D. Aprilia et al., "Exploring the Influence of Madura Ethnoparenting on Social Intelligence Development in Early Childhood," *Nak Kanak: Journal of Child Research* 2, no. 2 (2025): 61–69.

⁷ Erda Sunifa Asri et al., "Ethno Parenting: Early Childhood Character Development Based on Local Wisdom of the Sasak Tribe," *International Journal of Education and Digital Learning* 3, no. 2 (2024): 73–82, <https://doi.org/10.54443/ijedl.v3i2.221>.

⁸ Yeni Rachmawati, "Pengembangan Model Etnoparenting Indonesia Pada Pengasuhan Anak," *Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini* 5, no. 2 (2021): 1151–63, <https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v5i2.706>.

⁹ S. Zubaedah et al., "The Concept of Ethno Parenting Early Childhood in the Samawa Tribe," 2022, 77–86.

use only one theoretical approach partially, and they have not specifically examined the dynamics of ethnoparenting in the context of the Penesak ethnic group, which has distinctive cultural characteristics, including a very refined and polite manner of speech and deep respect for norms of courtesy.

Existing literature reviews identify a number of research gaps that serve as the basis for the positioning of this study. First, most ethnoparenting studies still focus on describing caregiving patterns without comprehensively analyzing how these cultural values persist or change amid modernization and digitalization. Muharrahman et al.'s (2023) study on the transformation of baby cradles in Ogan Ilir, for example, focuses more on changes in the physical form of caregiving aids than on the social dynamics that shape ethnoparenting practices in depth.¹⁰ Second, studies on the Penesak community themselves have not integrated an analysis of cultural value transformation in the context of early childhood caregiving with a comprehensive theoretical approach. Based on data from the Ogan Ilir Regency Government, the Penesak ethnic group, also called the Meranjat ethnic group, inhabits Tanjung Batu District, Payaraman, parts of Lubuk Keliat District, and parts of South Indralaya District, and uses Palembang Malay or the Meranjat language. The population of Ogan Ilir Regency originates from the Malay ethnic group, which has three sub-ethnic groups: Ogan, Penesak, and Pegagan. Third, previous studies generally have not used an analytical lens that integrates three theoretical perspectives simultaneously to read the dynamics of cultural value transmission in the context of contemporary social change. This study positions itself to fill this gap by specifically and deeply examining the ethnoparenting practices of the Penesak community with a focus on early childhood (0–6 years) from an intergenerational perspective.

Based on the theoretical framework presented, this study proposes the hypothesis that the ethnoparenting practices of the Penesak community are not static but undergo complex dynamics between continuity and change. It is hypothesized that although transformation occurs in the mechanisms of cultural transmission, especially due to the penetration of digital technology and changes in social structure, core ethnoparenting values such as divinity, mutual assistance, and respect for ancestors are maintained through creative adaptation in social interactions within the family and community. The possible direction of this study indicates that the transmission of local cultural values to early childhood in the Penesak community takes place through what can be called “symbolic negotiation,” in which traditional values are neither simply abandoned nor rigidly maintained but are reinterpreted and re-signified in the contemporary context through everyday interactions between parents and children. Thus, ethnoparenting in this study is understood as an arena of value negotiation, not merely the reproduction of tradition. This study also makes possible the discovery of internal variations in caregiving practices across three different districts (South Indralaya, Tanjung Batu, and Payaraman) within the same ethnic group, which can provide a picture of how socioeconomic factors and access to technology influence patterns of cultural value transmission. The direction of this study is expected not only to enrich the theoretical repertoire of ethnoparenting but also to provide practical recommendations for integrating local cultural values into early childhood education policies based on local wisdom.

¹⁰ Muharrahman et al., “Etno Parenting: Transformasi Buaian Bayi Di Ogan Ilir Sumatera Selatan,” 2023.

B. METHOD

This study is articulated through three central research questions: first, how the mechanisms of cultural transmission within Penesak families undergo transformation in the context of modernization and digitalization; second, how the continuity and change of ethnoparenting practices among the Penesak community in transmitting local cultural values to early childhood unfold amid contemporary social dynamics; and third, how the construction and negotiation of the meaning of local cultural values occur in interactions between parents and early childhood within the Penesak community. To address these three questions, this study employs three analytical lenses that are integrated simultaneously. First, Margaret Mead's Theory of Cultural Transmission emphasizes that culture is not transmitted solely through formal education but is more extensively conveyed through processes of informal socialization in everyday life, in which children learn cultural values by observing and imitating the behavior of parents and other family members.¹¹ Second, Continuity and Change Theory provides a framework for understanding how a society can sustain the continuity of its cultural values despite being confronted with rapid social change, whereby the continuity of a society relies not only on the conservation of existing values but also on the society's capacity to adapt to change. Third, Herbert Blumer's Theory of Symbolic Interactionism emphasizes that individuals' meanings and understandings are formed through social interaction, such that social and cultural values are transmitted from one generation to the next through interactions occurring in everyday life within the family and community.¹² The integration of these three theories enables an analysis that examines not only whether cultural values persist or change but also how such values are negotiated in everyday interaction and how their mechanisms of transmission undergo intergenerational transformation.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

DYNAMICS OF CULTURAL TRANSMISSION IN THE ETHNOPARENTING OF THE PENESAK ETHNIC GROUP: BETWEEN CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

Ethnoparenting as a culture-based caregiving practice faces fundamental challenges in preserving traditional values amid the inevitable tide of modernization. For the Penesak ethnic group in Ogan Ilir Regency, South Sumatra, childrearing is not merely a biological or instructional process but a social mechanism laden with the transmission of local cultural values such as mutual assistance, respect for ancestors, and divinity.¹³ However, the contemporary social reality indicates that these caregiving practices are situated within a tension between the ideal design of coherent cultural transmission and the reality in the field, which is increasingly influenced by the penetration of digital technology and changes in social structure.¹⁴ As revealed by preliminary observations within the Penesak community, children who previously interacted more directly with family and community are now more extensively exposed to digital media and social media, which often erode the traditional values that have long been applied in their

¹¹ Margaret Mead, *Growing Up in New Guinea: A Comparative Study of Primitive Education* (Blue Ribbon Books, Inc., 1930).

¹² Herbert Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method* (University of California Press, 1969).

¹³ Alfaeni and Rachmawati, "Etnoparenting: Pola Pengasuhan Alternatif Masyarakat Indonesia," 2023.

¹⁴ Santi Yuni et al., "Etnoparenting: Early Childhood Parenting in the Muslim-Malay Community in Kapuas Hulu," *ALBANNA: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini* 4, no. 1 (2024): 49–60, <https://doi.org/10.24260/albanna.v4i1.2053>.

upbringing. This friction between ideality and reality becomes an important starting point for understanding how indigenous communities navigate their caregiving practices amid the demands of preserving tradition and the pressures of changing times.

The Theory of Cultural Transmission proposed by Margaret Mead provides a relevant analytical framework for understanding the dynamics of cultural value transmission within the Penesak community. Mead argues that culture is not transmitted solely through formal education but is more extensively conveyed through processes of informal socialization in everyday life, in which children learn cultural values by observing and imitating the behavior of parents and other family members.¹⁵ Mead asserts that children learn through example, not only through direct instruction, and that parents play a crucial role in introducing children to the values and cultural norms prevailing in their society, both directly through teaching and through the examples demonstrated in daily interactions. In the context of the Penesak ethnic group, this theory is highly relevant because childrearing patterns are not only carried out by teaching social norms through formal education but also through direct experiences encountered by children in their family life; cultural values such as mutual assistance, respect for parents and ancestors, and living in harmony with nature are passed on through patterns of interaction occurring in everyday life within their family and community.¹⁶

However, Mead's theory of cultural transmission needs to be read critically in the context of rapid social change. Research indicates that the process of cultural transmission does not always proceed linearly and reproducibly; in facing modernization and digitalization, its mechanisms and forms of transmission may undergo significant adjustment.¹⁷ As found in the study by Zubaedah et al. (2022) on ethnoparenting in the Akit ethnic community, although digitalization has influenced the ways parents raise children, fundamental values such as divinity, mutual assistance, and environmental preservation remain an integral part of childrearing patterns.¹⁸ This finding indicates that although transformation occurs in the media and methods of cultural transmission, the essence of the transmitted values can persist through creative adaptation. In the Penesak community, the process of cultural transmission takes place through what can be called "symbolic negotiation," in which traditional values are neither simply abandoned nor rigidly maintained but are reinterpreted and re-signified in the contemporary context through everyday interactions between parents and children.

A more comprehensive approach to understanding the dynamics of cultural transmission in ethnoparenting is offered by the Theory of Continuity and Change. This theory provides a framework for understanding how a society can sustain the continuity of its cultural values despite being confronted with rapid social change. Cambridge

¹⁵ Margaret Mead, *Growing Up in New Guinea: A Comparative Study of Primitive Education* (Blue Ribbon Books, Inc., 1930).

¹⁶ K. Dzikro and I. Karyamah, "Etnoparenting Pada Pengasuhan Anak Usia Dini Oleh Orang Tua Perkawinan Multi Etnis," *PIAUDKU: Journal of Islamic Early Childhood Education* 2, no. 2 (2023): 113–24.

¹⁷ Mead, *Growing Up in New Guinea: A Comparative Study of Primitive Education* (Blue Ribbon Books, Inc., 1930).

¹⁸ Zubaedah et al., "The Concept of Ethno Parenting Early Childhood in the Samawa Tribe."

University Press (2008) explains that continuity refers to elements that persist in a society's culture despite external change, such as values, traditions, or social systems that remain unchanged, while change refers to adaptations or shifts occurring in social, economic, or cultural value structures in response to external influences, such as technology, globalization, or modernization.¹⁹ In the context of ethnoparenting in the Penesak community, this theory explains how traditional values in childrearing can be maintained and even strengthened, despite being confronted with the tide of modernization that brings major influences on people's ways of life. As stated by Berkey (1992), the continuity of a society relies not only on the conservation of existing values but also on the society's capacity to adapt to change.²⁰

This study positions cultural transmission in the ethnoparenting of the Penesak community as a dialectical process between continuity and change. On the one hand, there are conscious efforts by parents and the community to preserve core cultural values such as divinity, mutual assistance, and respect for ancestors, which are considered essential for shaping children's identity and character.²¹ On the other hand, caregiving practices must also respond to the increasingly complex demands of the times, including the influence of digital technology, changes in economic structure, and increased social mobility. This phenomenon is reflected in the findings of Muharrahman et al. (2023) on the transformation of baby cradles in Ogan Ilir, which show that although there has been a shift from traditional baby cradles to modern swings, ethnoparenting values remain preserved; changes in the physical form of the cradle do not alter the core values applied in caregiving, such as emotional closeness between parents and children and the religious aspects that form an important part of the caregiving patterns of the Ogan Ilir community.²² Families with higher purchasing power tend to choose modern swings, while families with lower social status continue to maintain the use of traditional cradles, which reflects socioeconomic differences in ethnoparenting practices.

The implications of this dynamics of cultural transmission for the transmission of local cultural values to early childhood are highly significant. Early childhood, defined as the period of life from birth to six years of age (0–6 years) based on Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, is the most crucial developmental phase for the internalization of cultural values.²³ During this period, children's brain development occurs rapidly, and they develop the basic skills that underlie their future lives. Therefore, how cultural values are transmitted in this phase will greatly determine the extent to which those values are internalized and become part of the child's identity. This study hypothesizes that although transformation occurs in the mechanisms of cultural transmission, especially due to the penetration of digital technology and

¹⁹ Alfaeni and Rachmawati, "Etnoparenting: Pola Pengasuhan Alternatif Masyarakat Indonesia," 2023.

²⁰ Jonathan Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo* (Princeton University Press, 1992).

²¹ "Early Childhood Development," UNICEF, 2022, <https://data.unicef.org/topic/early-childhood-development/overview/>.

²² M. Muharrahman et al., "Etno Parenting: Transformasi Buaian Bayi Di Ogan Ilir Sumatera Selatan," *Kiddo: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini* 4, no. 1 (2023): 101–15.

²³ D. I. M. Santun, *Iliran Dan Uluan: Dinamika Dan Dialektika Sejarah Lokal* (n.d.).

changes in social structure, the core ethnoparenting values of the Penesak community are maintained through creative adaptation in social interactions within the family and community. The direction of this study indicates that the transmission of local cultural values to early childhood in the Penesak community takes place through dynamic symbolic negotiation, in which traditional values are reinterpreted in the contemporary context without losing their cultural essence.²⁴

MODERNIZATION AND DIGITALIZATION IN THE ETHNOPARENTING PRACTICES OF THE PENESAK ETHNIC GROUP: CHALLENGES AND ADAPTATION

Modernization and digitalization have brought significant impacts on ethnoparenting practices in various indigenous communities in Indonesia, including the Penesak ethnic group in Ogan Ilir, South Sumatra. Globalization, social change, and increasingly rapid technological development have transformed the ways family members communicate and interact, whereby children who previously interacted more directly with family and community are now more extensively exposed to digital media and social media.²⁵ This phenomenon not only changes patterns of social interaction within the family but also influences the ways cultural values are transmitted from one generation to the next. As revealed in preliminary observations within the Penesak community, the increasing influence of technology, especially the use of gadgets, has begun to penetrate childrearing in Generations Y and Z, although many studies indicate the negative sides of excessive gadget use, such as reducing direct social interaction and increasing the risk of child developmental disorders.²⁶ The challenges faced by the Penesak community in maintaining ethnoparenting practices in the digital era are not merely technical but concern fundamental questions about how cultural values can remain relevant and meaningful for younger generations growing up in an environment vastly different from that of their parents' generation.

Research on ethnoparenting in the digital era indicates that the influence of technology on childrearing is complex and multidimensional. Aprilia et al. (2025) in their study on the influence of Madurese ethnoparenting on the social intelligence of early childhood found that although traditional caregiving patterns are maintained, Madurese parents have begun to integrate digital technology as a tool in the caregiving process, especially to access information about child development and to share caregiving practices with a broader community.²⁷ This finding is consistent with Rachmawati's (2021) study, which shows that technology can be used to support children's education in learning about their culture and religion, where the use of digital

²⁴ R. Novianti et al., "Validasi Aplikasi Digital Malay Ethnoparenting: Integrasi Ethnoparenting Melayu Riau Dalam Pengasuhan Anak Usia Dini," *Aulad: Journal on Early Childhood* 7, no. 3 (2024): 948–57.

²⁵ Leli Fertilianita Dea et al., "Etnoparenting Influences the Moral and Religious Development of Early Childhood among Transmigrant Community," *COUNS-EDU: The International Journal of Counseling and Education* 10, no. 1 (2025).

²⁶ Ria Novianti et al., "The Development of Digital Malay Ethnoparenting: 'Preserving Culture for Parenting in Digital Age,'" *Primary: Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar* 14, no. 1 (2025): 29–42, <https://doi.org/10.33578/jpfkip-v14i1.p29-42>.

²⁷ W. D. Aprilia et al., "Exploring the Influence of Madura Ethnoparenting on Social Intelligence Development in Early Childhood: A Case Study," *Nak Kanak: Journal of Child Research* 2, no. 2 (2025): 61–69, <https://doi.org/10.21107/njcr.v2i2.110>.

media to introduce folk tales, customs, and religious teachings can be an effective means of maintaining the continuity of ethnoparenting.²⁸ In the context of the Penesak community, the utilization of technology in caregiving can be an effective solution for introducing cultural values to children, provided it is done in a way that preserves the essence of the cultural values being transmitted. However, the main challenge is how to balance the use of technology with the maintenance of direct social interaction, which is the primary foundation of cultural transmission in indigenous communities.

The Theory of Continuity and Change offers an analytical framework for understanding how the Penesak community responds to the challenges of modernization and digitalization in their caregiving practices. This theory teaches that although there are changes in caregiving methods influenced by external factors, such as the influence of technology or globalization, the fundamental cultural values transmitted in society can persist and even adapt in ways suited to the development of the times.²⁹ As stated by Cambridge University Press (2008), social change can occur both structurally, such as changes in the education or economic system, and individually, where individual behavior and decisions can also change in the face of external influences. In the context of Penesak ethnoparenting, this theory enables researchers to analyze how the community manages change and maintains the integrity of its cultural values, as well as how cultural values, despite being influenced by changing times, can persist and even develop according to the needs of the times without sacrificing the essence of their tradition.

One important aspect of the adaptation of ethnoparenting to modernization is the shifting roles of family and community in the caregiving process. Research by Putri and Aman (2022) on the shift in marriage customs of the Meranjat community, which is a sub-ethnic group of the Penesak in Ogan Ilir, shows that changes in social structure, especially those influenced by economic and technological factors, affect childrearing patterns while still preserving local cultural values.³⁰ Despite changes in daily life, such as modernization and technological influence, the Meranjat community continues to maintain important values such as mutual assistance, togetherness, and loyalty in childrearing. This finding indicates that although transformation occurs in caregiving practices including changes in how parents interact with children and how values are transmitted the core cultural values remain preserved through creative adaptation mechanisms. In the Penesak community, although the influence of globalization and economic development also affects childrearing practices, values such as divinity, environmental preservation, and mutual assistance remain the principal principles in caregiving.³¹

²⁸ Yeni Rachmawati, "Pengembangan Model Etnoparenting Indonesia Pada Pengasuhan Anak," *Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini* 5, no. 2 (2021): 1151–63.

²⁹ Novianti et al., "The Development of Digital Malay Ethnoparenting: 'Preserving Culture for Parenting in Digital Age.'"

³⁰ Henny Rosa Putri and A. Aman, "Pergeseran Adat Perkawinan Masyarakat Meranjat, Ogan Ilir, Sumatera Selatan," *Jurnal Antropologi: Isu-Isu Sosial Dan Budaya* 11, no. 2 (2022): 112–25.

³¹ I. A. M. Ermayanti and L. F. Faiqah, "Etnoparenting Di Masa Sekarang: Menggali Model Pengasuhan Tradisional Etnis Melayu Sambas," *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai* 6, no. 3 (2022): 17879–87.

Research on the impact of digitalization on ethnoparenting also shows that indigenous communities are not merely passive objects of technological change but active agents who negotiate the meaning and use of technology in the context of their cultural values. Zubaedah et al. (2022) in their study on ethnoparenting in the Akit ethnic community found that although digitalization has influenced the ways parents raise children, fundamental values such as divinity, mutual assistance, and environmental preservation remain an integral part of childrearing patterns.³² The Akit community adapts to technology while maintaining the local cultural values that form the basis of their caregiving patterns. This finding is consistent with what occurs in the Penesak community, where although the influence of technology is also felt, the main focus of their caregiving is more on environmental preservation and the relationship with divinity through customary practices and traditional rituals, rather than on digital technology adaptation alone.³³ The main difference between these two communities lies in how they integrate technology into caregiving practices; the Akit community faces more direct challenges in integrating technology into childrearing, while the Penesak community may focus more on strengthening cultural and natural values through everyday practices.

The implications of these findings for the ethnoparenting practices of the Penesak community in the digital era point to the need for a balanced approach between preserving tradition and adapting to change. This study indicates that success in maintaining ethnoparenting amid modernization and digitalization does not lie in total rejection of technology but in the community's ability to integrate technology into caregiving practices in ways that preserve the essence of cultural values. As suggested by Rachmawati (2021), the development of an Indonesian ethnoparenting model needs to consider how technology can be used as a tool to strengthen, rather than replace, cultural values in childrearing.³⁴ In the context of the Penesak community, this means that parents and the community need to develop strategies to use digital technology for example, social media, educational applications, and culture-based digital content as a means to introduce and strengthen local cultural values in children, while still maintaining the direct social interaction that is the primary foundation of cultural transmission. This study also indicates that differences in socioeconomic status affect people's access to technology and, consequently, the patterns of ethnoparenting adaptation to modernization; families with higher purchasing power tend to have greater access to technology, while families with lower social status may rely more on traditional caregiving methods.

³² Zubaedah et al., "The Concept of Ethno Parenting Early Childhood in the Samawa Tribe."

³³ Novianti et al., "Validasi Aplikasi Digital Malay Ethnoparenting: Integrasi Ethnoparenting Melayu Riau Dalam Pengasuhan Anak Usia Dini."

³⁴ Rachmawati, "Pengembangan Model Ethnoparenting Indonesia Pada Pengasuhan Anak," 2021.

CONSTRUCTION AND NEGOTIATION OF MEANING IN INTERACTIONS BETWEEN PARENTS AND EARLY CHILDHOOD IN THE PENESAK ETHNIC COMMUNITY

The process of childrearing in the Penesak community cannot be understood merely as a series of instructional or technical practices but as a social arena in which cultural meanings are constructed, negotiated, and transmitted through everyday interactions between parents and children. The Theory of Symbolic Interactionism developed by Herbert Blumer (1969) provides a strong analytical framework for understanding these dynamics, emphasizing that individuals' meanings and understandings are formed through social interaction, which enables a person to learn the social values, norms, and culture existing in society.³⁵ Blumer formulates three main premises in symbolic interactionism: first, human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them; second, meaning arises from social interaction between individuals and others; and third, meaning can change through a process of interpretation in ongoing social interaction.³⁶ The first premise asserts that human action is not an automatic response to a stimulus but the result of interpretation of symbolic meanings attached to objects for example, in the context of caregiving, a baby bracelet is not merely an accessory but has specific social and spiritual meanings recognized by the community. The second premise emphasizes that meaning emerges from social interaction, not from individuals separately; parents assign meaning to caregiving symbols, and children learn to interpret them through repeated interaction. The third premise indicates the dynamic nature of meaning, that symbolic meanings can change along with social context and new experiences.

In the context of the Penesak community, symbolic interactionism helps explain how social and cultural values are transmitted from one generation to the next through interactions occurring in everyday life within the family and community. In the Penesak community, interactions among family members, as well as between family and community, are crucial in shaping children's character; values such as respect for parents and kinship are learned through direct interactions carried out in daily activities. As found in Totkova's (2019) study, symbols in culture, such as objects, rituals, and language, become media for families to transmit social and moral values across generations.³⁷ In the Penesak community, these symbols encompass various aspects of life, ranging from the very refined and polite manner of speech that is a distinctive characteristic of the Penesak, distinguishing them from the generally louder-speaking people of Sumatra, to customary rituals laden with symbolic meaning. Respect for norms of politeness, both in relationships among peers and with elders, reflects the importance of respect in their social interactions, highlighting noble values in custom and culture.

In the Penesak community, these symbols encompass various aspects of life, ranging from the very refined and polite manner of speech that is a distinctive

³⁵ Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method* (University of California Press, 1969).

³⁶ Herbert Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method* (University of California Press, 1969).

³⁷ Zornitsa Totkova, "Symbolic Interactionism and the Perceived Style of Parenting," *Qualitative Sociology Review* 15, no. 2 (2019): 172–84.

characteristic of the Penesak, distinguishing them from the generally louder-speaking people of Sumatra, to customary rituals laden with symbolic meaning. Respect for norms of politeness, both in relationships among peers and with elders, reflects the importance of respect in their social interactions, highlighting noble values in custom and culture.³⁸ Children, on the other hand, do not merely receive these values passively but interpret and assign meaning to them through repeated interaction with parents and other community members. This process is consistent with what Blumer expresses in his theory: that meaning can change through a process of interpretation in ongoing social interaction in other words, cultural values are not static but are continuously constructed and negotiated in everyday social interaction. In the Penesak community, this process of meaning negotiation becomes particularly important in the context of social change and modernization, where traditional values encounter new values brought by globalization and digital technology.

Research by Asri et al. (2024) on early childhood caregiving in the Sasak community provides a relevant illustration of how the construction and negotiation of meaning take place in ethnoparenting practices.³⁹ This study shows that childrearing in Sasak is based not only on religion but also on local cultural values such as mutual assistance and the preservation of cultural arts, where children are taught discipline, responsibility, and respect for ancestors and society through traditions, arts, and cultural rituals that form part of their upbringing. The similarity between this study and research on the Penesak community lies in the qualitative ethnographic approach used in both studies, where both utilize direct observation to explore the social and cultural meanings applied in childrearing patterns. In the Penesak community, although there is no particular emphasis on cultural arts, childrearing remains strongly influenced by local cultural and religious values, similar to Asri et al.'s (2024) study, which combines culture and religion in caregiving. However, a striking difference lies in the focus of cultural values taught; Asri et al.'s (2024) study places more emphasis on the preservation of cultural arts, with caregiving involving artistic rituals, music, and dance as media for teaching moral and social values to children, while research on the Penesak community focuses more on the values of divinity and environmental preservation.⁴⁰

The role of the community in the construction and negotiation of meaning in Penesak ethnoparenting cannot be ignored. Unlike individualistic caregiving models commonly found in urban societies, caregiving in the Penesak community is collective, involving the entire extended family and community in the caregiving process. The principles of mutual assistance and respect for parents and ancestors are the main values in the caregiving carried out, reflecting a strongly collectivism-based caregiving pattern. In this community, caregiving is not only the responsibility of biological parents but also part of the shared obligation of the broader community. This means that the process of constructing and negotiating the meaning of cultural values does not only

³⁸ Blumer, *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method* (University of California Press, 1969).

³⁹ Erda Sunifa Asri et al., "Ethno Parenting: Early Childhood Character Development Based on Local Wisdom of the Sasak Tribe," *International Journal of Education and Digital Learning* 3, no. 2 (2024): 73–82.

⁴⁰ Asri et al., "Ethno Parenting: Early Childhood Character Development Based on Local Wisdom of the Sasak Tribe," 2024.

take place in parent–child interactions but also involves interactions with extended family members, neighbors, customary leaders, and other community members. Each of these interactions becomes an arena in which cultural values are introduced, interpreted, and negotiated, thereby creating a complex and interrelated network of meanings that shapes children’s understanding of their social and cultural world.

The implication of the symbolic interactionism perspective for understanding Penesak ethnoparenting is that childrearing cannot be understood as a mechanical or deterministic process but as a dynamic and creative social process in which cultural meanings are continuously constructed and negotiated. This study indicates that local cultural values are not merely “inherited” from parents to children passively but are actively “constructed” and “signified” in everyday interaction. In the context of social change and modernization, this process of meaning negotiation becomes increasingly important, because parents and children must jointly navigate the tension between traditional values and emerging new values. Thus, ethnoparenting in this study is understood as an arena of value negotiation, not merely the reproduction of tradition—an understanding that expands the meaning of ethnoparenting from what was previously inclined to be normative and static to dynamic and contextual. The direction of this study indicates that the success of transmitting local cultural values to early childhood in the Penesak community depends greatly on the ability of parents and the community to continuously construct and negotiate the meaning of cultural values in everyday interaction, so that these values remain relevant and meaningful for younger generations growing up in a social context vastly different from that of previous generations.

THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY IN THE CONTINUITY OF ETHNOPARENTING AND THE TRANSMISSION OF LOCAL CULTURAL VALUES TO EARLY CHILDHOOD IN THE PENESAK ETHNIC GROUP

The continuity of ethnoparenting practices in the Penesak community cannot be separated from the central role of the community in the caregiving process and the transmission of cultural values. Unlike individualistic caregiving models commonly found in modern urban societies, the Penesak community adheres to a collective caregiving pattern in which the responsibility for childrearing does not rest solely on the shoulders of biological parents but becomes a shared responsibility of the extended family, customary leaders, and the community as a whole.⁴¹ The principle of mutual assistance, which is a core value in Penesak culture, is strongly reflected in caregiving practices, where every community member has a role in educating, guiding, and protecting children. This phenomenon is consistent with research findings on indigenous communities in various regions of Indonesia, where childrearing is viewed as a collective responsibility involving intergenerational and community interaction. As revealed in preliminary observations and interviews with the Penesak community, caregiving is not only the responsibility of biological parents but also part of the shared obligation of the broader community, so that caregiving in the Penesak community is

⁴¹ Dina Kusumanita Nur Alfaeni and Yeni Rachmawati, “Etnoparenting: Pola Pengasuhan Alternatif Masyarakat Indonesia,” *Aulad: Journal on Early Childhood* 6, no. 1 (2023): 51–60, <https://doi.org/10.31004/aulad.v6i1.432>.

closely related to the continuity of social values that prioritize harmonious and virtuous social relationships.

The Theory of Continuity and Change provides an analytical framework for understanding how the community's role in Penesak ethnoparenting contributes to the continuity of cultural values amid social change. This theory emphasizes that the continuity of a society relies not only on the conservation of existing values but also on the society's capacity to adapt to change. In the context of ethnoparenting, this means that the community does not merely function as a static guardian of tradition but as a dynamic agent that actively negotiates and adapts cultural values so that they remain relevant to the development of the times. As found in Suratman's (2020) study on childrearing in the Sambas Malay community, childrearing is influenced by Malay customary traditions that emphasize politeness, respect, and etiquette, where parents, extended family, and society play important roles in shaping children's character.⁴² In the Penesak community, the role of the community in caregiving is not limited to direct supervision and guidance but also includes providing behavioral models, transmitting values through folk tales and customary rituals, and creating a social environment that supports the internalization of cultural values in children.

Research by Nirwana and Irmayanti (2022) on ethnoparenting in the Bugis community in the Karampuang Indigenous Community, Sinjai Regency, South Sulawesi, provides a relevant illustration of how the community's role is manifested in culture-based caregiving practices. This study shows that caregiving traditions in the Karampuang indigenous community have begun since pregnancy, and various traditional rituals are believed to have meaning and influence on child growth.⁴³ The Karampuang indigenous community also believes that there are taboos that must not be violated because they contradict traditional values and will endanger child growth. In addition, this study also found that the division of roles between fathers and mothers in the caregiving process is practiced based on the family's sociocultural values and situational conditions of the child; boys will follow their fathers more in daily functions, while girls will follow their mothers' activities more, while the community's role is implemented in a philosophy of human development that emphasizes cooperation. This finding is consistent with what occurs in the Penesak community, where the community's role in caregiving is not limited to the nuclear family but extends to the entire social structure of the community, including customary leaders, elders, and other community members.

One important aspect of the community's role in the continuity of Penesak ethnoparenting is the community's function as an agent of socialization that complements the role of parents in transmitting cultural values. Research by Syarif (2017) on community social capital in fulfilling children's rights through shared caregiving shows that community involvement in caregiving becomes one of the

⁴² Suratman and Arif, "Realm of Malay Civilization: Ethnoparenting, Habitus, and Cultural Contestation in Early Childhood Education of Sambas Malay Society."

⁴³ Nirwana and Irmayanti, "Etnoparenting in Bugis Tribe (Parental Practices and Beliefs in the Karampuang Indigenous Community, Sinjai Regency, South Sulawesi)," *SEA-CECCEP Journal* 3, no. 1 (2022): 16–29.

important factors in the continuity of cultural values.⁴⁴ In the Penesak community, the community functions as a “second school” for children, where they learn social values, norms, and life skills through participation in communal activities, customary rituals, and everyday interactions with older community members. This process is consistent with Mead’s theory of cultural transmission, which emphasizes that children learn cultural values by observing and imitating the behavior of parents and other family members, and that this process occurs indirectly through routine social interaction within the family and society.⁴⁵ Dalam konteks Suku Penesak, anak-anak belajar nilai kerjasama dengan berpartisipasi dalam kegiatan gotong royong, serta nilai penghormatan terhadap orang tua dan leluhur melalui cara orang tua mereka berbicara dan berperilaku.

The greatest challenge to the community’s role in the continuity of Penesak ethnoparenting is the erosion of traditional community structures due to modernization, urbanization, and economic change. As found in Putri and Aman’s (2022) study on the shift in marriage customs of the Meranjat community, which is a sub-ethnic group of the Penesak, changes in social structure, especially those influenced by economic and technological factors, affect childrearing patterns and the overall community structure.⁴⁶ Despite changes in daily life, such as modernization and technological influence, the Meranjat community continues to maintain important values such as mutual assistance, togetherness, and loyalty in childrearing. This finding shows how, despite transformation in culture, core values remain preserved through ethnoparenting practices, which ensure that children receive strong character education. In the context of the Penesak community, a similar challenge is faced: modernization and economic change have altered traditional community structures, reduced the intensity of social interaction among community members, and weakened the social control mechanisms that have been the foundation of collective caregiving. However, the Penesak community demonstrates remarkable cultural resilience by continuing to maintain the core values of ethnoparenting through various adaptation strategies, including the revitalization of customary rituals, strengthening the role of customary leaders, and integrating cultural values into everyday caregiving practices. The implications of these findings for education and social policy point to the need for recognition and strengthening of the community’s role in childrearing as an integral part of efforts to preserve local culture.

This study indicates that the solution to the challenges faced in ethnoparenting is not to replace the community’s role with formal institutions but to strengthen the community’s capacity to carry out its caregiving and cultural transmission functions effectively. As suggested by Sulastri et al. (2021), religious and cultural education conducted within the family and community can strengthen social bonds and help

⁴⁴ S. A. Syarif, “Modal Sosial Komunitas Dalam Pemenuhan Hak Anak Melalui Pengasuhan Bersama,” *Sodality: Jurnal Sosiologi Pedesaan* XII, no. 2 (2017).

⁴⁵ Mead, *Growing Up in New Guinea: A Comparative Study of Primitive Education* (Blue Ribbon Books, Inc., 1930).

⁴⁶ Putri and Aman, “Pergeseran Adat Perkawinan Masyarakat Meranjat, Ogan Ilir, Sumatera Selatan.”

children understand their roles in society.⁴⁷ In the Penesak community, Islamic religious teachings applied in caregiving help introduce children to values such as discipline, honesty, and a sense of responsibility toward family and society. This study also indicates that community empowerment through cultural education and childrearing has great potential to preserve noble values in childrearing despite the influence of modernization. Thus, this study contributes to the development of a childrearing model that integrates Islamic values with local cultural values in the context of the Penesak community, one that attends not only to cognitive aspects but also to spiritual and social aspects in line with Islamic principles. The direction of this study indicates that the continuity of Penesak ethnoparenting depends greatly on the community's ability to maintain social cohesion and its collective caregiving function, as well as on public policies that support the strengthening of the community's role in culture-based childrearing.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the ethnoparenting of the Penesak ethnic community in Ogan Ilir undergoes complex dynamics between continuity and change in responding to modernization and digitalization. With regard to cultural transmission, the study finds transformations in three aspects: transmission media, which originally relied on oral interaction, have now shifted toward the utilization of digital technology; transmission agents, which were originally dominated by parents and the extended family, now involve early childhood education (PAUD) teachers and digital content; and transmission patterns, which were originally informal, now tend to be more structured. Nevertheless, the essence of core values such as divinity, mutual assistance, respect for ancestors, and environmental preservation remains maintained through creative adaptation in everyday caregiving practices. The continuity of core values is sustained through the preservation of customary rituals, the strengthening of the roles of the extended family and community, the internalization of Islamic values integrated with local culture, and the consistency of parental modeling. Meanwhile, change occurs in practical aspects, such as the shift from traditional to modern caregiving tools, changes in teaching methods from oral stories to digital media, and adjustments toward more open patterns of parent-child communication. These findings confirm Mead's theory of cultural transmission, namely that cultural values are inherited through informal socialization that adapts to the context of its time, and they reinforce the theory of continuity and change, namely that society is able to maintain the continuity of cultural values through adaptation without sacrificing the essence of tradition.

Furthermore, the study finds that the construction and negotiation of the meaning of local cultural values in interactions between parents and early childhood take place through three mechanisms. First, the construction of meaning occurs through everyday symbolic interaction, in which parents assign meaning to cultural symbols such as refined and polite language, customary rituals, and prohibitions and recommendations in caregiving, which are then internalized by children through

⁴⁷ S. Sulastris et al., "Desain Etnoparenting Berbasis Adat Alam Minangkabau Untuk Character Building Anak Usia Dini Di Era Digital," *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai* 5, no. 3 (2021): 8447–55.

observation and direct participation. Second, the negotiation of meaning occurs when traditional values encounter new values stemming from modernization, so that parents and children jointly reinterpret cultural values in a contemporary context, as seen in the ways parents introduce religious and cultural values through digital media. Third, the meaning of cultural values is dynamic and is continuously constructed and negotiated through ongoing social interaction among parents, children, the extended family, and the community, in which caregiving constitutes a collective responsibility. These findings reinforce Blumer's theory of symbolic interactionism, namely that social meaning is formed through interaction and changes through an ongoing process of interpretation. Overall, this study affirms that although transformations occur in the mechanisms, media, and agents of cultural transmission, the core values of Penesak ethnoparenting persist through dynamic symbolic negotiation in everyday interaction and through the strengthening of the community's role as the principal pillar of cultural continuity amid changing times.

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