

Cultural Wisdom Across Generations: Local Values and Parenting in Javanese Society

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Abstract. This study aims to examine how Javanese local wisdom—gotong royong, tepa selira, and unggah-ungguh—shapes transgenerational parenting practices and how these values persist under modernization. Using a pragmatic, convergent mixed-methods design, the research surveyed 100 Javanese adults (84 women, 16 men) and conducted thematic analysis of interview data to capture value transmission across generations. Descriptive statistics summarize the application of local values in daily parenting, while qualitative themes illuminate mechanisms of inheritance and contemporary challenges. Findings indicate that local wisdom remains integral to parenting, with unggah-ungguh (respectful conduct and politeness) most consistently emphasized in family interactions. At the same time, exposure to modern norms prompts selective adaptation rather than abandonment, suggesting continuity with calibrated change. These results highlight culturally grounded pathways for strengthening parenting programs and character education that honor tradition while accommodating current social dynamics.

Keywords: cultural transmission, gotong royong, Javanese local wisdom, modernization and culture, parenting practices

1 Introduction

Child-rearing patterns are a core pathway through which families transmit norms, roles, and moral reasoning across generations, shaping children's socioemotional development and civic conduct over the life course, including in contemporary Indonesian and Javanese contexts where intergenerational role modeling and dialogic communication remain central. In Javanese society, these practices are embedded in locally salient values—gotong royong (mutual aid), unggah-ungguh (respectful conduct and deference), and tepa selira (empathic self-restraint)—that regulate everyday interaction and role expectations within households and communities, thereby sustaining harmony and social order through exemplification, habituation, and family communication routines. At the same time, accelerating modernization and digital exposure introduce alternative scripts for autonomy, communication, and discipline, creating tensions between traditional expectations and contemporary parental goals as families adopt responsive digital parenting while attempting to preserve core Javanese virtues. Empirically, there remains limited evidence that quantifies how these Javanese values are enacted in day-to-day parenting and how they are transmitted between generations under current social change, with recent studies calling for mixed methods to capture both measurable patterns and lived mechanisms of value transmission. Addressing this gap provides a culturally grounded basis for parenting guidance and character education by linking statistical indicators of value internalization with

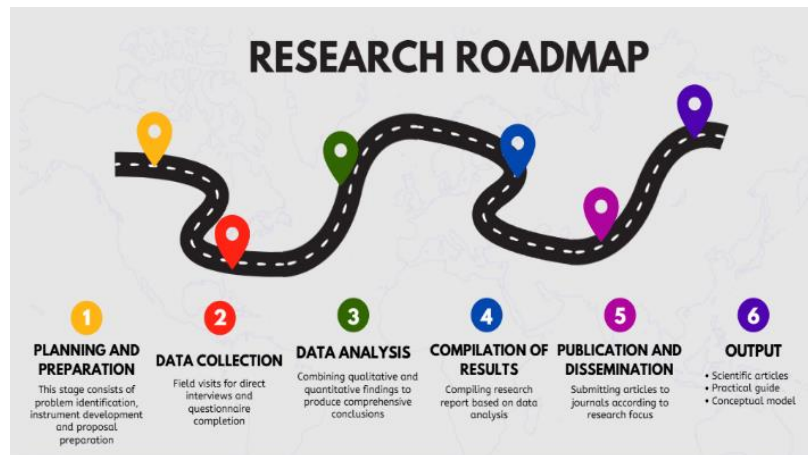


Figure 1. Research roadmap

qualitative accounts of intergenerational negotiation in Javanese families. Accordingly, this study examines the salience and transmission of *gotong royong*, *unggah-ungguh*, and *tepa selira* in Javanese families, and explores how these values adapt—or persist—in the face of modernization through strategies such as role modeling, positive habituation, and democratic-contextual parenting in the digital era [1].

The local wisdom embedded in Javanese culture is rooted in a cultural philosophy that prioritizes social harmony and respect for authority, two principles that are very important in Javanese life[2]. Parenting based on local wisdom not only forms the relationship between parents and children but also helps preserve Javanese cultural identity amidst growing modernization. However, globalization and rapid social changes pose significant challenges to the preservation of these values, especially among younger generations who increasingly reinterpret *unggah-ungguh* and *tepa selira* as flexible guidelines while navigating autonomy and digital peer cultures [3]

Previous research in the last decade indicates that local cultural values play an important role in child-rearing and child development in Indonesia, with ethnographic and phenomenological evidence from Javanese families highlighting value internalization through example and routine family practices [4]. Nevertheless, studies that specifically quantify and trace how these local wisdom values are passed on and applied in Javanese parenting across generations remain limited, particularly regarding the interplay between grandparental influence, mother–grandmother co-parenting, and parents’ digital mediation strategies. Therefore, this study aims to explore the role of local wisdom values in shaping transgenerational parenting patterns in Javanese society and to understand how these values survive or change in a society increasingly influenced by global culture, focusing on mechanisms of transmission and adaptation observed in multigenerational households [5].

Theoretically, this research contributes to family sociology and character education by elaborating contemporary models of cultural value transmission that emphasize adaptive reinterpretation rather than static preservation, situated within Javanese communicative norms and family resilience frameworks. Practically, the findings aim to inform families, communities, and educational institutions on preserving and applying local cultural values in modern parenting through concrete strategies—role modeling, structured habituation, and responsive digital parenting—that align with current developmental and technological demands in Javanese households. By grounding guidance in recent peer-reviewed evidence, the study supports the development of culturally based parenting models that remain relevant to today’s family needs while sustaining the ethical and relational core of Javanese local wisdom [6].

2. Literature Review

In this section, the author should provide a comprehensive review of the literature relevant to their research topic. The literature review should summarize and critically evaluate previous studies, highlighting key findings, trends, and gaps in existing knowledge. The authors are encouraged to organize the review thematically or chronologically, and clearly show how existing research contributes to the current study. All references should be properly cited according to the required citation style. Previous research has extensively covered aspects of parenting patterns, local wisdom values, and generational dynamics. Below are some studies relevant to this topic, focusing on local wisdom values and transgenerational parenting patterns in Javanese society:

Ethnoparenting and Cultural Transmission in Indonesian Contexts

Research on Javanese parenting frequently emphasizes cultural values like respect, harmony, and communal harmony as foundational to child development. For instance [7] explored these elements in early childhood rearing, revealing that Javanese practices often initiate during pregnancy through rituals and myths inherited across generations [1]. Their findings illustrate how such traditions foster adaptive behaviors in children, yet the study overlooks the mechanisms of value transmission between grandparents, parents, and offspring, limiting its applicability to transgenerational contexts. This thematic focus on prenatal and early-life influences aligns with broader trends in anthropological studies of Indonesian cultures but reveals a trend toward static cultural descriptions rather than dynamic, multi-generational processes.

Influence of Local Wisdom on Parenting and Child Education

Another relevant study conducted [8], published in the *Journal of Al-Azhar Indonesia Seri Humaniora*, examines how local wisdom values influence early childhood parenting patterns. Local wisdom—encompassing proverbs, rituals, and ethical norms—plays a pivotal role in shaping parenting behaviors, as evidenced by studies on its integration into daily child education. Suwardi and Siti Rahmawati demonstrated that habituating children to wisdom-based routines, such as communal storytelling and ethical decision-making, internalizes values like *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) in early childhood [2]. While this work effectively highlights behavioral outcomes, it prioritizes immediate educational impacts over long-term transmission, neglecting how these practices evolve or erode across generations. Critically, this gap reflects a common trend in *humaniora* research: an emphasis on contemporary applications without tracing historical continuity, which this study seeks to rectify by examining three-generational perspectives.

Ethnoparenting: An Alternative Parenting Pattern of Indonesian Society

A study by [9] published in *Aulad: Journal on Early Childhood* discusses parenting practices based on traditions, culture, and local wisdom in Indonesia, including the Javanese community. This study emphasizes that Indonesian society, especially Javanese, has distinctive characteristics in parenting based on local wisdom values. It is stressed that parenting patterns in Indonesian society are rooted in local traditions and culture passed down through generations. However, this study emphasizes ethnoparenting in general and does not specifically investigate the transgenerational aspects of parenting, which is the main focus of this research.

Local Wisdom Values as Character Shapers

Another important study by [10] in the Journal of Character Education aimed to explore the content of local wisdom values living in the Magelang Raya community and how these values function as a guideline in shaping the character of the local community. This study provides a deeper understanding of the application of local wisdom values in daily life. However, it does not specifically discuss the application of these values in the context of transgenerational parenting in Javanese society, thus opening opportunities for further research on this aspect.

Knowledge Gaps

Although the above studies provide valuable insights regarding the role of local wisdom values in parenting, there remains a gap in research specifically examining how these values are passed down across generations in the Javanese community. Many studies discuss local wisdom values in child-rearing but few specifically study transgenerational parenting patterns in Javanese society, where the process of passing on local wisdom values can be influenced by social, cultural, and temporal changes. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring how these values are inherited and applied in child-rearing by three generations in Javanese families, as well as understanding the challenges faced in preserving these values amid modernization and globalization. This literature review shows that although much research has discussed culture-based parenting and local wisdom values in Indonesia, especially in Java, there are still few studies that explore transgenerational parenting in this context. This research will contribute significantly to filling this gap by studying the role of local wisdom values in transgenerational parenting transmitted within Javanese families.

3 Method

This study uses a pragmatic paradigm, which integrates qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide a holistic understanding of the role of local wisdom values in transgenerational parenting patterns in Javanese society. The pragmatic approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore the deep meaning of local values through in-depth interviews and to examine empirical relationships using surveys. This paradigm assumes that reality is dynamic and complex, requiring a combination of methods to fully understand the phenomenon.

The research design is a survey, which aims to measure the impact of local wisdom values on transgenerational parenting patterns in Javanese society. The independent variables in this study are local wisdom values, such as gotong royong, tepa selira, and unggah-ungguh, while the dependent variable is transgenerational parenting patterns. Data were collected through the distribution of Likert-based questionnaires, which allow measuring how these values are applied in everyday life. The collected data will be analyzed using descriptive analysis to describe the characteristics of respondents and inferential analysis, such as linear regression, to test relationships between variables. This approach is expected to provide results that can be generalized, while also contributing to understanding the dynamics of local cultural value transmission.

The research will be conducted in several systematic stages. The first stage is preparation, which includes a literature review on local wisdom values, parenting patterns, and the transmission of values across generations. Next, researchers will develop data collection instruments in the form of questionnaires and test the validity and reliability of the instruments through a pilot test. In the second stage, data collection will be conducted by distributing questionnaires to Javanese families that meet the criteria, i.e., families with at least two generations (parents and adult

children). The sampling technique used is purposive sampling with a target of 100 respondents. Data will be collected through field visits or online, depending on the situation of the respondents.

Once the data is collected, the third stage is data analysis. The collected data will be processed using statistical software such as SPSS, where descriptive analysis will be used to describe respondent characteristics, while linear regression or path analysis will be used to test the relationship between local wisdom values and transgenerational parenting patterns. The final stage is reporting the research results, including the interpretation of findings, discussion of theoretical and practical implications, and preparation of a scholarly article for publication in an indexed journal. The results of this research will also be disseminated through presentations at international seminars.

The research involves Javanese families with at least two generations (parents and adult children) as the research population. This population is chosen because it has the potential to maintain, apply, or transform local wisdom values in transgenerational parenting patterns. Purposive sampling is used to select respondents based on specific criteria, namely families that still recognize or apply local wisdom values. The sample consists of 100 respondents from families with various geographic, educational, and socioeconomic backgrounds to ensure data variation.

The research instruments consist of questionnaires, interviews, and documentation. The questionnaire uses a Likert scale to measure the level of understanding and application of local wisdom values in cross-generational parenting patterns. The data collection process is conducted either in person or online, depending on the respondents' location. Research ethics are maintained by obtaining voluntary participation consent (informed consent) from each respondent and ensuring the confidentiality of respondent data. With a systematic procedure and comprehensive design, this study is expected to make a significant contribution in understanding the role of local wisdom values in transgenerational parenting patterns in Javanese society, as well as providing practical guidance for preserving local cultural values in the context of child-rearing in the era of modernization..

4 Result

This study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the role of local wisdom values such as gotong royong, tepa selira, and unggah-ungguh in shaping transgenerational parenting patterns within Javanese society. Guided by a pragmatic paradigm, both quantitative and qualitative data were integrated to support comprehensive insights into how these cultural values are transmitted and adapted across generations.

From the qualitative perspective, thematic analysis of in-depth interviews and observations revealed variations in value retention and adaptation processes. Three primary themes emerged. First, enduring values such as respect for elders and harmonious social relations remain consistently practiced, sustained through daily interactions and family rituals led by the older generation. Second, some values, including tepa selira and unggah-ungguh, show signs of moderation among the younger generation, influenced by digital culture and urban lifestyles that prioritize individual expression over communal conformity. Third, the transmission of

values has increasingly shifted from oral traditions and storytelling to indirect modeling and social media-based interactions, reflecting a changing mode of cultural inheritance. These findings highlight generational reinterpretation rather than total erosion of traditional values. Quantitative analysis was conducted to measure the influence of local cultural values on parenting styles and intergenerational continuity. Statistical results indicated a significant correlation between the strength of cultural value internalization and the consistency of parenting behaviors across generations. Families with higher reported adherence to Javanese wisdom values demonstrated stronger emotional bonds, cooperative decision-making, and stable patterns of child-rearing practices. Quantitative trends thus complement the qualitative interpretations by confirming that preserving these values contributes positively to intergenerational relations and family cohesion.

The integration of both qualitative and quantitative results follows the logic of the pragmatic paradigm, focusing on complementarity between empirical measurement and contextual understanding. Quantitative data provided measurable patterns and significance levels, while qualitative narratives enriched interpretations with contextual depth and meaning. Together, these approaches reveal not only the presence and strength of local wisdom values but also the dynamic processes through which they evolve in the face of modernization and globalization. The results of the research are shown in the graph below:

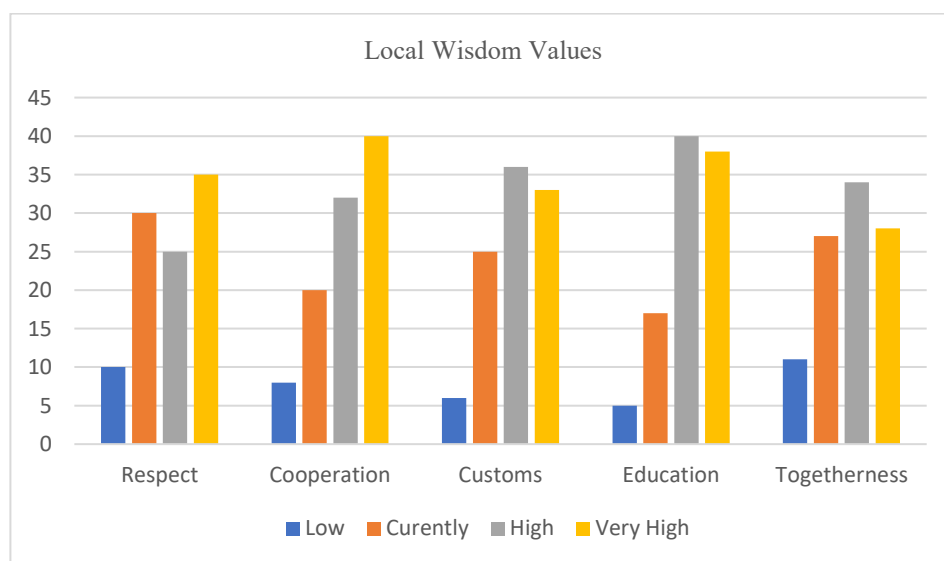


Figure 2. Local wisdom values in Javanese families

The figure above illustrates the local wisdom values that are still upheld and taught across generations in Javanese families. These values include five main aspects: respect for the elderly, gotong royong between siblings and neighbors, preserving Javanese traditions, education through ancestral advice passed from parents to children, and values of togetherness and family. These five values dominate with high to very high scores. From the quantitative analysis results, it was found that there is a relationship between the internalization of local wisdom values and specific parenting styles. For example, older generations, who have direct experience with these

values, tend to apply parenting patterns that emphasize local wisdom values, while the younger generation, who is more exposed to modern culture, may show a stronger influence of more permissive or authoritarian parenting styles. This finding provides a foundation for culturally-based parenting practices and serves as a reference for developing culturally relevant parenting guidelines that meet the needs of modern society. This research is expected to provide recommendations that can be used by the government or communities to design policies or programs that preserve Javanese cultural values in modern family life, such as parent training programs or cultural-based character education policies.

Thus, this research not only contributes to the development of knowledge but also enhances the quality of family parenting in Indonesia. These findings will provide deeper insights into the importance of preserving cultural values in parenting and how these values can adapt to social and cultural developments in contemporary society. Based on the research scale included, the results can be presented in categories or types of local wisdom values still applied in parenting patterns, which are measured through statements in the questionnaires filled out by the respondents. Below is the analysis of the results based on the scale:

Local Wisdom Values That Still Endure

Based on the questionnaire results, Javanese cultural values such as gotong royong, tepa selira, and unggah-ungguh applied in parenting are expected to show high scores on statements like:

- a. "I teach my children to always respect parents and elders."
- b. "Javanese cultural values (such as gotong royong, customs) are very important in educating children."
- c. "I pass on the parenting values I received from my parents to my children."
- d. "The older generation in my family often shares valuable parenting values with the younger generation."

These statements received the majority of "Agree" (S) or "Strongly Agree" (SS) responses from the respondents, showing that these values are still strongly applied in Javanese families today.

Local Wisdom Values That Are Starting to Fade

Meanwhile, some local wisdom values, such as changes in how cultural values are taught and differences in parenting styles between generations, are reflected in statements like:

- a. "Parenting based on Javanese tradition often hinders the development of children in this modern era."
- b. "Traditional Javanese values in family parenting are still applied in my family."

Most respondents selected "Disagree" (TS) or "Strongly Disagree" (STS) on these statements, showing that despite challenges, local wisdom values are still passed down in many families.

Factors Affecting Value Transmission

Factors affecting how these values are transmitted across generations were also identified in the data analysis, considering statements like:

- a. "I feel there is a difference between how my parents raised me and how I raise my children concerning cultural values."
- b. "I find it important to maintain the cultural values I received from my parents in parenting my children."

These statements provide insights into changes in parenting styles and how globalization or modernization influences the acceptance and application of cultural values in family life.

Application of Cultural Values in Parenting Patterns

The results of this analysis show the extent to which local wisdom values are still applied in transgenerational parenting patterns. This research also provides guidance for preserving local cultural values in modern family life. The findings contribute to understanding the dynamics of culturally-based parenting, which can help develop more relevant and culturally appropriate parenting models that fit the current social and cultural context in Indonesia.

5 Discussion

This study provides an in-depth understanding of how local wisdom values such as gotong royong, tepa selira, and unggah-ungguh are maintained, adapted, and sometimes diminished in Javanese transgenerational parenting. Drawing from both qualitative and quantitative analyses within a pragmatic paradigm, the findings demonstrate not only statistical patterns of value persistence but also contextual insights into how these values are negotiated within families facing modern influences.

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Quantitatively, survey results reveal a high level of agreement among respondents regarding the continued relevance of local wisdom values, particularly respect for parents and collective cooperation. High percentages in “Agree” and “Strongly Agree” responses indicate that these values remain foundational to child-rearing practices. The qualitative findings complement these trends by illustrating how such values manifest in daily parenting behaviors—through mutual assistance within extended families, intergenerational caregiving, and moral instruction conveyed through rituals and storytelling. These overlapping results strengthen the validity of both data sources, confirming that traditional values still play a vital role in Javanese family life despite cultural transitions.

In contrast, both datasets also reveal strains in value transmission. Quantitative responses show approval of statements recognizing that some traditional values may restrict children’s independence, while qualitative interviews reveal narratives of negotiation—parents striving to balance obedience and autonomy. This reciprocity between datasets exemplifies the pragmatic paradigm’s core principle: integrating numerical tendencies with rich contextual detail to generate a more comprehensive understanding of social phenomena. Together, the results indicate that modernization does not fully displace local wisdom but encourages selective adaptation aligned with changing family and societal structures.

Local Wisdom Values That Still Endure

The combined results suggest that enduring values such as gotong royong and filial respect remain prominent, supported by consistent behavioral reinforcement and intergenerational modeling. Qualitative accounts show that grandparents continue to function as cultural gatekeepers by teaching through everyday practices and oral guidance. These findings parallel earlier work by [8], reaffirming that cultural values remain integral to early education and

socialization. Quantitative data reinforce this pattern, highlighting the strong association between adherence to local wisdom values and familial harmony.

Local Wisdom Values That Are Starting to Fade

While core cultural principles persist, qualitative analysis indicates that the interpretation of certain values—particularly *tepa selira* and *unggah-ungguh*—has evolved. Younger parents describe these concepts as flexible moral guidelines rather than strict behavioral codes. Statistical results align with this trend, showing increased acceptance of attitudes prioritizing children's autonomy and self-expression. This finding resonates with the theoretical perspectives of [11],[12] illustrating how collectivist traditions gradually integrate individualist elements in response to globalization and digital exposure.

Factors Affecting Value Transmission

The integration of both data types reveals that technological advancement, exposure to global media, and generational shifts in parenting ideology significantly affect the continuity of traditional practices. Qualitative narratives describe how millennial parents often seek child-rearing guidance from parent influencers or online forums rather than relying solely on family elders. Quantitative results corroborate this change, showing lower intergenerational transmission scores among respondents who rely heavily on digital sources. Nevertheless, enduring respect for parents and familial unity remains strong, indicating that modernization influences the form rather than the essence of Javanese parenting values. Supporting evidence from [13],[14] further illustrates how cultural adaptation coexists with preservation in different regional contexts.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

The integration of qualitative and quantitative insights provides a holistic understanding of cultural value transmission. Academically, the study extends existing theories by demonstrating that local wisdom endures not through rigid conservation but through adaptive reinterpretation shaped by intergenerational dialogue and modern exposure. Practically, the findings emphasize the need for family and educational interventions that strengthen positive traditional values while allowing flexibility for contemporary challenges. This integrative perspective underscores the potential of the pragmatic paradigm to bridge numerical trends with cultural meaning, creating a balanced understanding of Javanese transgenerational parenting in the twenty-first century.

6 Conclusion

Practically, this research provides a foundation for developing culturally-based parenting guidelines that are relevant to the challenges of the modern era. These guidelines can be used by educational institutions, cultural communities, or governments to design policies or programs that support the preservation of cultural values in parenting children. For example, parent training programs that teach the importance of balancing traditional values with the need to adapt to contemporary developments.

Although the findings of this research provide important insights, there are several limitations to consider. One limitation is the focus on Javanese families, meaning the results may not fully generalize to a broader Indonesian society. Furthermore, while the questionnaire covers various

dimensions of parenting, the influence of more specific external factors, such as economics and education, may not have been fully explored. Future research could expand this approach by involving more cultural communities in Indonesia to understand how culturally-based parenting patterns are applied across different cultural backgrounds. Research could also expand the understanding of external factors influencing cultural value transmission, such as the role of social media and globalization in shaping younger generations' perceptions of traditional values. This research successfully revealed that local wisdom values, although still applied in Javanese family parenting patterns, experience changes as time progresses. Values such as gotong royong, tepa selira, and unggah-ungguh are still highly regarded, even though there is a tension between tradition and modernization. These findings provide significant contributions to understanding the dynamics of cultural value transmission and can serve as a basis for designing future cultural preservation policies and programs

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