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Gotong Royong in Parenting Practices in Cireundeu Traditional Village

Aliva Fatiha Aqeela^{1*}, Gina Nurhaliza Firdaus², Maria Natalia Kewa Wanga³, Mauizhaturrahmi⁴, Nadhifa Dhira Khairunnisa⁵

Pusat Unggulan Etnoparenting Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Indonesia

*Correspondence: E-mail: aliva.aqeela@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the concept of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) in parenting practices in Cireundeu Traditional Village, Indonesia, which is an integral part of local culture. Through a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected via observations and interviews with local community members. The findings reveal that *gotong royong* in parenting involves not only parents but also extended family members and the community, all of whom play crucial roles in supporting children's development. Ethical and moral values are instilled from an early age, and cooperative parenting is expected to broaden children's horizons and improve their self-confidence in social interactions. This research underscores the importance of preserving traditional parenting practices amidst globalization's challenges and encourages communities to pass down local wisdom in parenting. These findings contribute to the understanding and developing parenting knowledge rooted in Indonesia's cultural values.

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1. INTRODUCTION

As social beings, humans inherently depend on one another. This interdependence has given rise to the concept of *gotong royong* in Indonesian society. Derived from the Javanese language, “gotong” means lifting or carrying, while “royong” means together. According to Suprihatin (2014), *gotong royong* refers to a system of mutual assistance within rural communities, characterized by voluntary participation in various social activities. Parenting, as an academic discipline, has evolved to enhance parental understanding of positive child-rearing practices (Astuti et al., 2018). However, parenting principles vary across countries due to differences in moral values, beliefs, and traditions, including the concept of *gotong royong* in Indonesia. Effective parenting involves the participation of multiple stakeholders, thus giving rise to the idea of cooperative parenting.

In the current era of globalization, the development of academic disciplines is often dominated by theories originating from Western nations. As Mayo (2014) states, global standards established by the West are often deemed “most appropriate.” This perspective fosters a mindset that privileges ideas from America and Europe, while undermining the importance of values from Africa and Asia, leading to the erosion of local traditions (Febiyanti and Rachmawati, 2021). In parenting, the dominant global theory is Baumrind’s framework (Asysyura and Rizal, 2020; Mainnah et al., 2021; Rahmaningrum and Fauziah, 2020).

Inspired by this phenomenon, there is a growing interest in studying parenting practices rooted in Indonesia’s diverse cultural traditions, referred to as *etnoparenting*. *Etnoparenting* incorporates many principles of *gotong royong* found in the parenting practices of various ethnic groups. This makes *gotong royong* a central value within *etnoparenting*, which is founded on divinity, human identity, environmental preservation, and community involvement (Alfaeni and Rachmawati, 2023). This article seeks to delve deeper into how *gotong royong* in parenting supports children’s holistic development, reflecting the practices of diverse ethnic groups across Indonesia. It is hoped that Indonesian communities will preserve and pass down the local wisdom embedded in their parenting practices while introducing it to the global stage for further study.

2. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to explore social phenomena in the research location. Qualitative descriptive research is commonly used to examine social phenomenology (Polit and Beck, 2009). Data were collected using two primary methods: observation and interviews. Observations involved direct examination of the subjects or phenomena under study (Moleong, 2006). Interviews were conducted using techniques described by Noor (2011), involving direct questioning of participants related to *gotong royong* parenting in the Cireundeu Traditional Village.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. The Concept of *Gotong Royong*

The term *gotong royong* originates from Javanese, where *gotong* refers to the act of carrying or lifting, and *royong* implies collaboration or connection. Literally, it means to do something together. According to its linguistic roots, *gotong royong* is derived from the words *gotong* (work) and *royong* (together) (Unayah, 2017).

Gotong royong exemplifies active individual participation in contributing to the needs, issues, or objectives of the surrounding community (Dewanti *et al.*, 2023). One unique aspect of Indonesian rural life is the strong sense of *gotong royong*, as demonstrated in activities like home construction, road repairs, building irrigation channels, setting up community offices, and participating in various social events. This cooperative spirit is often referred to as community service and is associated with addressing collective concerns (Bintari and Darmawan, 2023). Additionally, individual collaborations extend to personal matters, such as home building, weddings, childbirth, and establishing new plantations. According to Pohan and Gunawan (2019), rural communities maintain strong internal bonds among residents, fostering mutual trust and a sense of shared community. Residents are willing to make sacrifices for the collective good, respect one another, and uphold shared rights and responsibilities, all contributing to communal security and happiness (Derung, 2019).

The concept of *gotong royong* aligns with the ideology of *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* (Unity in Diversity), Indonesia's national motto. It underscores mutual assistance, respect, and cooperation within diversity (Furqon, 2022). The philosophical foundation of *gotong royong* is deeply rooted in the teachings of Ki Hajar Dewantara, the father of Indonesian education. His philosophy, expressed in Javanese terms, applies universally to Indonesian society: *Ing Ngarsa Sung Tuladha* (setting an example from the front), *Ing Madya Mangun Karsa* (providing support in the middle), and *Tut Wuri Handayani* (offering encouragement from behind) (Arief and Yuwanto, 2023).

3.2. Parenting Practices

Parenting is an ongoing exchange of information between parents and children, fostering the physical and mental growth of children. This process is intrinsically linked to the socio-cultural environment in which children are raised (Rakhmawati, 2015). Parenting involves educating and nurturing children from conception to adulthood, guiding them with exemplary behaviors, education, and the fulfillment of biological, spiritual, and moral needs.

Parenting styles vary across families, influenced by culture, socio-economic status, knowledge, and experience. Common parenting styles include authoritarian, where parents exercise strict authority limiting children's freedom; democratic, where warmth and cooperation foster positive relationships; and permissive, where children are given unregulated freedom without consistent parental guidance (Febiyanti and Rachmawati, 2021; Astuti *et al.*, 2018; Satrianingrum and Setyawati, 2021).

3.3. *Gotong Royong* in Parenting

Gotong royong in Indonesian parenting reflects deeply rooted cultural practices, particularly among working mothers who entrust their children to extended family members, such as grandparents or trusted relatives, rather than daycare facilities, as is typical in Western individualistic societies (Kurniawan, 2023). The African proverb, "It takes a village to raise a child," resonates strongly with the Indonesian context, where children's behavior is closely monitored by the community. Deviations from expected behavior often prompt corrective actions from community members.

Cultural and traditional roles play a dominant part in *gotong royong* parenting. Helping one another and contributing to a child's upbringing are deeply ingrained values in Indonesian society, making *gotong royong* a cornerstone of child-rearing. Key elements

include collaboration, mutual assistance, and shared effort to achieve the best outcomes (Oktaviana and Munawwarah, 2021). Through these practices, children grow in an environment where they receive attention and guidance not only from their parents but also from the broader community. This collaborative effort shapes children's character and development.

The proverb "it takes a village to raise a child," as previously mentioned, suggests that a collective effort is necessary to establish a safe and healthy environment for children—one that ensures their security, supports their growth and development, and helps them fulfil their hopes and dreams. In this context, "village" refers to the broader community (village residents), including parents, siblings, extended family, neighbors, teachers, professionals, community members, and policymakers (the government). All of these groups can either provide direct care for children or support parents in their caregiving roles. This collective endeavor exemplifies the concept of *gotong royong* in parenting, where *gotong royong* serves both as the backbone of Indonesia and as a guiding principle for daily life (Oktaviana and Munawwarah, 2021).

3.4. Implementation of *Gotong Royong* in Kampung Adat Cireundeui

Kampung Adat Cireundeui takes its name from the Cireundeui plant, which is abundant in the area and is believed to possess medicinal properties (Gustiani and Utami, 2017). Located in the Leuwigajah sub-district of South Cimahi, Kampung Adat Cireundeui differs from most traditional villages in that it is not situated far from an urban center.

This traditional village is distinctive in terms of its religious beliefs, local cuisine, and primary occupations. According to Putra (2024), the majority of inhabitants in Kampung Adat Cireundeui engage in cassava and tuber farming. The community utilizes every part of the cassava plant, from the roots to the leaves. The roots are processed into various products such as *rasi* (cassava-based rice), *ranggening*, *opak*, *cimpring*, *peuyeum* (cassava tape), and other cakes made from cassava. The stems are used for seedlings, and the leaves are consumed as salad (*lalapan*) or cooked, and may also be used as animal feed. Even the cassava peels are further processed, often cooked as *sayur lodeh* (vegetable soup) or turned into *dendeng kulit ketela* (cassava peel jerky). These products are not only consumed by the villagers themselves but are also sold to tourists as souvenirs.

Among Kampung Adat Cireundeui's distinctive features is its system of beliefs and customs. The community adheres to the traditional Sunda Wiwitan or Sunda Karuhun belief system (Tramontane, 2017). Another unique aspect is the community's staple food, which is *rasi* (cassava rice), consumed as the daily staple by local residents. Moreover, Kampung Adat Cireundeui holds a traditional ceremony known as *Upacara 1 Sura*. According to Sanusi and Sidik (2022), this ritual marks an important feast day for the adherents of the ancestral belief system, celebrated on the first day of the Islamic month of Sura. The event typically spans from morning until night at the local *Bale* (traditional gathering place), serving as an expression of gratitude for the blessings the Creator has bestowed upon the Cireundeui community.

Indonesia's diverse cultural landscape results in varying parenting styles across different regions. One example is the parenting system found in Kampung Adat Cireundeui, which is deeply embedded in the local cultural values and serves as a guiding principle in raising children. This approach highlights the practice of *gotong royong* (communal cooperation) within the community.

As the smallest social unit, the family plays a central role in guiding its members. In essence, family guidance involves an interactive process in which adults influence younger,

less mature generations as they prepare for social life (Sudardja, 1988). At birth, humans possess limited capabilities; only after interacting with the social environment do they learn communication, customs, traditions, and the values and norms necessary for their ongoing physical and psychological development (Asysyura and Rizal, 2020).

In Kampung Adat Cireundeu, *gotong royong* in parenting rarely takes the form of entrusting children to neighbors or the wider community. Instead, parents typically leave their children in the care of blood relatives—such as grandparents or aunts and uncles. Nonetheless, *gotong royong* in child-rearing extends beyond childcare arrangements; community members habitually remind one another about inappropriate behavior, especially concerning children. In this way, community involvement is regarded as essential to childrearing. By contributing to a child's upbringing, the community affords children the opportunity to learn independence and develop social skills.

A key communal activity supporting *gotong royong* in Kampung Adat Cireundeu is "Kurasan," a customary event or ritual held every Sunday evening. During Kurasan, children receive instruction on local customs and etiquette. This event is open to everyone, regardless of age, thereby fostering intergenerational learning.

Interviews with several residents of Kampung Adat Cireundeu reveal that *gotong royong* in childrearing should continue to adapt to children's needs and should not be constrained solely by ethical and moral considerations, as teaching these values from an early age is deemed essential. Even with communal support, parents remain the primary figures in raising their children; no matter how busy they are earning a livelihood, they maintain this paramount responsibility. Preserving *gotong royong* in parenting is considered vital within any community since it enriches children's perspectives and bolsters their confidence in social interactions.

As such, the socialization and upbringing of children in Kampung Adat Cireundeu are not solely the responsibility of their immediate families, for extended relatives also share in upholding the cultural standards. These relatives—on both the maternal and paternal sides—help guide each child's place within the community. In accordance with these cultural values, parenting practices in this village extend beyond the biological mother and father. Empirically, children in Kampung Adat Cireundeu are also nurtured by other relatives, including grandparents, aunts, uncles, and traditional elders, whose influence profoundly shapes the social aspects of local traditions.

4. CONCLUSION

Amid the ongoing globalization that increasingly diminishes local principles, *etnoparenting* serves as a means of preserving these values through the lens of parenting science. One such principle deeply rooted in local culture is *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation). Generally, *gotong royong* is a value passed down through generations. However, in the actual process of raising children, we also practice *gotong royong*, indicating that caring for a child is not solely the responsibility of the mother and father but also involves the broader community in the child's life. Each ethnic group in Indonesia has its own distinct methods of actualizing *gotong royong* in parenting. Nevertheless, several common everyday practices can be observed, such as reminding children when they misbehave and guiding respected elders regarding social interactions. Through these communal efforts, children can receive optimal education, develop greater independence, and learn to socialize effectively within their community.

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