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Tanean Lanceng as an Indigenous Parenting System for Supporting Early Childhood Social Skill Development: A Qualitative Study

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Abstract

Indigenous parenting systems remain underexplored in early childhood social development research, particularly within non-Western cultural contexts. Addressing this gap, this study examines how *Tanean Lanceng*, a traditional Madurese communal living system, functions as an indigenous parenting framework that supports social skill development in early childhood. Using a qualitative descriptive design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with four early childhood teachers selected via purposive sampling from two early childhood education institutions in Bangkalan Regency, Indonesia. The data were analyzed thematically following Braun and Clarke's six-phase approach. The findings are organized into four interrelated themes: communal interaction, which provides children with continuous opportunities to practice communication, cooperation, and emotional regulation; solidarity and mutual assistance, fostering prosocial behaviors such as helping, sharing, and group participation; politeness as moral socialization, strengthening children's understanding of social norms and respectful behavior; and social adaptability, enabling children to adjust effectively to diverse social environments. Together, these themes demonstrate that *Tanean Lanceng* embeds social learning naturally within daily family life. This study contributes academically by extending culturally grounded perspectives in early childhood education and highlighting indigenous knowledge as a valuable resource for social development frameworks. Globally, the findings offer insights for multicultural and context-responsive early childhood practices beyond Western-centric models. However, the study is limited by its small sample size and localized context, suggesting the need for further research involving diverse communities and mixed-method approaches.

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Introduction

Early childhood represents a critical period for the development of social competencies that enable children to interact effectively within their social environments ('Aziz & Aditya Hidayah, 2024; Cananau et al., 2025; Gao et al., 2024; Hoelzel & Scheiner, 2026; Lindahl et al., 2025; Shrestha et al., 2026). The social skills are understood as children's abilities to engage in cooperation, empathy, self-regulation, politeness, and social adaptability. These competencies do not develop independently but are shaped through continuous interaction with caregivers, peers, and culturally embedded social practices (Agustriana et al., 2022; Espinosa et al., 2025; Fillion et al., 2023; Trecca et al., 2022; Van Beurden & De Haan, 2019). Although the importance of early social skills has been widely acknowledged, existing research tends to treat social development as an individual outcome rather than as a process embedded within specific cultural and caregiving systems.

Scholarly discussions increasingly recognize that parenting patterns and cultural contexts play a decisive role in early socialization (Castro & Sánchez-Vincitore, 2025; Quinn et al., 2025). Indigenous parenting systems, in particular, offer natural social learning environments through

collective caregiving, shared responsibilities, and value-based interactions (Aghnaita & Murniati, 2023; Indah et al., 2024, 2024; Kauser & Piquart, 2019; Munawaroh et al., 2025; Rahimah & Sukiman, 2020; Sapendi et al., 2023). However, much of the global literature on early childhood social development remains dominated by Western-derived parenting models that emphasize independence, nuclear family structures, and formalized learning settings (Riggs, 2021; Schmidt et al., 2023). While these models provide valuable insights, they often inadequately explain social development processes within communal and culturally grounded caregiving contexts (Corapci et al., 2025; Quinn et al., 2025). The socialization mechanisms operating within indigenous living systems remain insufficiently theorized in early childhood education research.

This limitation is evident in the Indonesian context, where cultural diversity produces a wide range of community-based parenting systems. Although scholars have called for greater attention to non-Western perspectives on child development, empirical studies in Indonesia continue to prioritize generalized explanations of social skills without closely examining how specific cultural arrangements function as parenting systems. Consequently, there is a lack of empirically grounded knowledge on how indigenous caregiving practices shape children's everyday social interactions, particularly in early childhood settings.

One such indigenous system is *Tanean Lanceng*, a traditional residential and caregiving arrangement practiced by the Madurese community. *Tanean Lanceng*, which literally means "long yard," refers to a communal living structure in which houses of matrilineally related families are built in close proximity. This arrangement creates an environment where children are continuously exposed to extended family members and collective social activities. Unlike nuclear-family living patterns common in urban settings, *Tanean Lanceng* facilitates shared caregiving, frequent social interaction, and collective responsibility. Cultural values such as solidarity, mutual assistance, respect for elders, and politeness are transmitted to children through daily participation rather than formal instruction (Dwi Aprilia et al., 2025; Rohmah et al., 2022; Trisetiawati et al., 2025).

Despite frequent descriptions of Madurese sociocultural values, existing literature largely presents these values in a descriptive manner and does not sufficiently analyze their function within early childhood social development. Studies on Madurese culture often focus on identity, kinship, or social cohesion, but rarely position *Tanean Lanceng* as a structured parenting system that actively shapes children's social competencies. Moreover, previous research tends to overlook the perspectives of early childhood educators who directly observe how children raised within *Tanean Lanceng* environments interact, cooperate, and adapt in educational settings. This indicates a clear research gap concerning the developmental implications of indigenous parenting systems for early childhood social skills.

The absence of such analysis has practical implications. Teachers working with children from communal caregiving backgrounds frequently encounter social behaviors that differ from expectations derived from Western-oriented educational frameworks. Without an adequate understanding of the cultural foundations of these behaviors, educators may misinterpret children's social responses or undervalue culturally rooted strengths. At the same time, modernization and urban migration increasingly threaten the continuity of traditional living systems such as *Tanean Lanceng*, intensifying the urgency to document and analyze their developmental significance.

Against this backdrop, this study addresses an academic gap by examining *Tanean Lanceng* as an indigenous parenting system that supports the development of social skills in early childhood. Rather than reiterating the general importance of culture, the study focuses on how culturally embedded caregiving practices function as mechanisms of social learning in everyday life. By drawing on the experiences of early childhood teachers who work with children raised in *Tanean Lanceng* environments, this research seeks to provide an empirically grounded understanding of how indigenous cultural systems contribute to early social development.

This study seeks to explore in depth the caregiving practices and cultural values embedded within the *Tanean Lanceng* parenting system. It examines how these practices shape

children's social interactions, foster prosocial behavior, and support their adaptive capacities in everyday contexts. Attention is given to the ways culturally grounded parenting patterns interact with the processes of early childhood social development. Through this focus, the study contributes to broader scholarly conversations on culturally based approaches to early childhood social development by foregrounding indigenous parenting systems within the Madurese community.

Methods

Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative descriptive design to examine how the *Tanean Lanceng* tradition operates as an indigenous parenting system supporting early childhood social skill development. This design was selected not merely to describe cultural practices, but to allow an in-depth interpretation of how everyday caregiving interactions embedded within a communal living system shape children's social competencies. A qualitative approach was considered most appropriate because the research questions focus on meanings, processes, and social practices that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative measurement. By prioritizing participants' experiential knowledge, this design enabled the researchers to contextualize social skill development within culturally situated parenting practices as they occur in natural settings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Research Setting

The study was conducted in two early childhood education institutions TK ABA Socah and TK YKK located in Socah District, Bangkalan Regency, Madura. These sites were purposefully selected because they are situated in communities where elements of the *Tanean Lanceng* tradition remain actively practiced in daily family life. Both institutions serve children who predominantly come from extended-family households characterized by communal interaction and shared caregiving. As such, these settings provided a relevant cultural context for observing how indigenous parenting values encountered at home are reflected in children's social behaviors within formal educational environments. The selection of these sites therefore represents the phenomenon under study rather than serving as a purely logistical choice.

Participants and Sampling Strategy

Participants consisted of four early childhood teachers drawn from the two institutions. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that informants possessed experiential depth rather than numerical representation. Teachers were selected based on three critical criteria: (1) sustained teaching experience within Madurese communities practicing *Tanean Lanceng*; (2) daily interaction with children raised in communal caregiving environments; and (3) familiarity with local parenting norms and family structures. These criteria were applied to maximize the relevance and richness of the data.

The sample size was determined through data adequacy rather than predetermined numerical thresholds. During data collection, recurring patterns and consistent explanations across interviews indicated that conceptual saturation had been reached, as no substantially new themes emerged in the later interviews. The participants' long-term engagement with both children and families positioned them as key informants capable of providing reflective and analytically rich perspectives on culturally embedded socialization processes.

Participant Characteristics

All participants had between three and ten years of teaching experience in early childhood education and extensive exposure to Madurese cultural practices. Their professional roles required continuous observation of children's social interactions, peer relationships, and adaptive behaviors in classroom settings. This positioned them to offer informed interpretations of how children's social competencies are shaped by home-based communal caregiving practices. Their cultural familiarity was not treated as a background characteristic, but as a crucial factor enhancing the depth, contextual sensitivity, and interpretive validity of the data.

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews to balance consistency across participants with flexibility for probing culturally specific experiences. Each interview lasted approximately 45–60 minutes and was conducted in a quiet space within the school environment to ensure participant comfort and confidentiality. Interviews were conducted in one session per participant.

The interview guide included open-ended questions addressing: (1) teachers' observations of children's social interactions and behaviors; (2) perceived influences of *Tanean Lanceng* caregiving practices on children's cooperation, politeness, and adaptability; (3) everyday cultural values encountered by children in family settings; and (4) challenges or contrasts observed when children transition between home and school contexts. Probing questions were used to clarify meanings, elicit concrete examples, and deepen participants' reflections. All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy. Field notes were also taken during and immediately after interviews to document non-verbal cues and contextual details that supported interpretive analysis.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006), operationalized iteratively rather than as a linear checklist. First, the researchers familiarized themselves with the data by repeatedly reading the transcripts while noting preliminary analytical insights. Initial coding was then conducted manually, focusing on segments related to caregiving interactions, social learning processes, and culturally embedded practices.

Codes were compared across transcripts to identify recurring patterns and conceptual similarities. These patterns were subsequently clustered into provisional themes that reflected broader socialization mechanisms, such as communal interaction, solidarity and mutual assistance, politeness as moral socialization, and social adaptability. Themes were continuously reviewed against the data to ensure internal coherence and clear differentiation. Theme definitions were refined to capture not only descriptive content but also their analytical relevance to early childhood social development within indigenous caregiving systems.

Trustworthiness

Several strategies were employed to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings. Credibility was supported through prolonged engagement with the research context and member checking, whereby participants were invited to confirm the accuracy of interpreted meanings. Peer debriefing was conducted with fellow researchers to challenge assumptions and refine thematic interpretations. An audit trail documenting coding decisions, theme development, and analytical reflections was maintained to support dependability and transparency.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained prior to data collection. Participants received clear explanations regarding the study's aims, procedures, and voluntary nature before providing informed consent. Pseudonyms were used to protect participant anonymity, and all data were securely stored for academic purposes only. Cultural sensitivity was prioritized throughout the research process, particularly during interviews, by respecting local norms of communication and minimizing hierarchical dynamics between researchers and participants.

Researcher Positionality

In this culturally grounded qualitative study, the researchers functioned as the primary instruments of data collection and interpretation. Reflexive awareness was maintained regarding potential interpretive biases arising from cultural familiarity with Madurese contexts. Ongoing reflexive notes were used to critically examine assumptions and ensure that

participants' perspectives remained central to the analysis rather than being overshadowed by researcher preconceptions.

Result

This section presents findings derived from early childhood teachers' perceptions of how the *Tanean Lanceng* tradition is understood to influence children's social skills. As the data were generated exclusively through teacher interviews, the findings reflect educators' interpretations and professional observations rather than direct documentation of caregiving practices or children's behaviors within the *Tanean Lanceng* environment. Analysis revealed four interrelated themes that illustrate how teachers conceptualize the relationship between indigenous communal living and early childhood social development.

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Perceived Influence of Communal Living on Children's Social Interaction

All teachers described the communal spatial arrangement of *Tanean Lanceng* as an important contextual background through which children's social experiences are understood. In their accounts, extended-family living is believed to expose children to frequent and routine social encounters, which teachers associate with early familiarity in communication and engagement with others. These interpretations do not present communal living as a direct causal factor, but rather as a social environment that makes interaction an ordinary part of children's daily lives. From teachers' perspectives, such familiarity appears to shape how children approach peer interaction in school, particularly in terms of initiating communication and responding to social cues.

Teacher A stated:

"Through the *Tanean Lanceng* tradition, children are able to interact easily with other family members."

A similar view was expressed by Teacher G, who explained that:

"The *Tanean Lanceng* tradition facilitates communication among children, thereby fostering their social awareness from an early age."

In addition, Teacher K added:

"The *Tanean Lanceng* tradition has existed for generations with the purpose of providing children with a foundation for greeting and engaging with others when they encounter people in social settings."

Another teacher noted that children entering school from such backgrounds often appear less hesitant when initiating interaction. However, this assessment was explicitly grounded in classroom experiences rather than direct observation of children's home environments. While communal living was generally interpreted in positive terms, teachers also emphasized that social confidence does not emerge uniformly among all children. Variations in individual disposition and family interaction patterns were acknowledged as influencing how children express social engagement at school. This indicates that teachers' perceptions are shaped primarily by patterns they observe in educational settings, rather than by assumptions of consistent cultural effects.

In reflecting on their classroom experiences, teachers positioned *Tanean Lanceng* as a salient social context that provides children with sustained opportunities for interaction from an early age. The communal spatial arrangement associated with extended-family living was understood as enabling repeated exposure to communication practices, greeting routines, and everyday social exchanges. Teachers associated this exposure with children's apparent

readiness to initiate interaction and engage with peers in school contexts. At the same time, they remained cautious in interpreting these tendencies, recognizing that their judgments are based on school-based observations rather than comprehensive knowledge of family life. Social confidence was thus understood as variable and contingent, shaped by the interaction between children's prior social experiences, individual differences, and the demands of the school environment. In this way, communal living was interpreted not as producing a singular or deterministic outcome, but as one contextual influence among others that teachers draw upon to make sense of children's social behavior.

Solidarity and Mutual Assistance as Perceived Sources of Prosocial Orientation

Teachers frequently referred to solidarity and mutual assistance, commonly articulated through the concept of *gotong royong*, when interpreting children's prosocial behavior in school settings. These values were not described as being transmitted through explicit instruction, but rather as learned implicitly through children's everyday exposure to cooperative practices within extended-family environments. In teachers' accounts, observing adults share responsibilities, assist one another, and engage in collective caregiving provides children with practical reference points for understanding cooperation and care in social life.

Teacher B explained:

"A distinct characteristic of Madurese people is their strong solidarity and love for mutual cooperation, and this behavior is also applied in parenting."

Teacher L explained:

"In Madurese families, children grow up observing adults who regularly help one another, and this habit of cooperation becomes part of their everyday behavior."

Teacher N emphasized:

"Mutual assistance is not only a cultural value but also a daily practice in parenting, where children are encouraged to participate in shared responsibilities with family members."

Teacher P noted:

"Through collective caregiving and shared activities within the extended family, children learn to care for others and to work together from an early age."

In classroom contexts, some teachers perceived children from such backgrounds as more willing to help peers, particularly during group activities. However, these observations were accompanied by a degree of caution. Several teachers acknowledged that prosocial behaviors are not consistently displayed across situations and may be shaped by classroom dynamics, peer relationships, and the presence or absence of teacher guidance. In this sense, helping behaviors were understood as situational and responsive, rather than as stable traits that children carry into school unchanged.

Teachers' interpretations therefore positioned solidarity and mutual assistance as resources that inform children's social orientations, rather than as fixed outcomes of *Tanean Lanceng* parenting. While cooperative values observed in extended-family settings were associated with caring attitudes and a willingness to assist others, teachers recognized that these dispositions are continually negotiated within the school environment. Prosocial behavior was thus understood to emerge through the interaction between culturally grounded values and ongoing processes of school socialization, highlighting the role of context in shaping how such values are enacted in everyday classroom life.

Politeness as a Moral Reference in Teachers' Interpretations

Politeness emerged as a prominent theme in teachers' interpretations of Madurese parenting influences on children's social behavior. Teachers did not frame politeness merely as a matter of outward manners or etiquette, but rather as a moral reference that provides children with guidance for regulating conduct, communication, and emotional expression in social situations. In their accounts, politeness functions as an internalized orientation that shapes how children relate to others, particularly in terms of respect, self-control, and social order.

Teacher C noted:

"Through parenting that prioritizes politeness, children's social behavior becomes more orderly and not careless."

Teacher T similarly stated:

"When politeness is consistently emphasized in parenting, children tend to communicate more respectfully and show greater self-control in social situations."

Teacher U explained:

"Parents in Madurese culture often remind children to speak and behave politely, and this habit helps children manage their behavior when interacting with others."

In addition to these reflections, several teachers identified respectful language and deference toward adults as visible markers they associate with children from *Tanean Lanceng* backgrounds. These traits were often interpreted as evidence of moral guidance reinforced within extended-family environments. However, teachers also expressed awareness of the limits of such interpretations. One informant highlighted that children do not always transfer these norms smoothly into peer interactions, particularly when conflicts arise. In such situations, politeness learned at home may be challenged by emotional responses and peer dynamics, revealing gaps between moral expectations and everyday practice.

Through their classroom experiences, teachers thus understood politeness as a key moral reference within Madurese parenting, but not as a uniformly enacted set of behaviors. While consistent parental emphasis on polite speech, respectful conduct, and deference toward elders was associated with more orderly and self-regulated behavior in school, teachers recognized that these values are continuously interpreted and negotiated by children. Politeness was therefore seen as rooted in family socialization yet shaped by situational demands, peer relations, and ongoing social learning processes within the classroom environment.

Perceived Social Adaptability in School Contexts

Teachers frequently interpreted children from *Tanean Lanceng* environments as relatively adaptable in school-based social situations, particularly in their interactions with peers and adults. This perceived adaptability was commonly linked to children's prior exposure to diverse family members and to everyday social engagement within extended-family settings. From teachers' perspectives, regular interaction in communal environments appears to familiarize children with managing social relationships, which may ease their adjustment to the social demands of school life.

Teacher D stated:

"Socialize with peers and the community, and adapt or adjust themselves to their surrounding environment."

Teacher S expressed a similar observation:

"Children from communal family backgrounds tend to adjust more easily when interacting with new peers and unfamiliar social situations."

Teacher F reflected on her classroom experience by explaining:

"In my experience, these children are generally more flexible and comfortable when engaging with different people, both at school and in the wider community."

Teacher Z also noted:

"Because they are used to interacting with many people at home, children show fewer difficulties adapting to classroom routines and group activities."

Teacher I added:

"The habit of daily social interaction in their family environment appears to help children regulate their behavior and adapt smoothly to new social contexts."

Despite these observations, teachers did not describe social adaptability as an immediate or automatic outcome of communal upbringing. Several emphasized that although children may appear socially open, they often still require guidance to understand and comply with structured classroom expectations. Adaptability was therefore interpreted as a relational and context-dependent process, shaped by the interaction between children's prior social experiences and the institutional norms of schooling.

In reflecting on their observations, teachers positioned social adaptability as a tendency that may be supported by communal living, rather than as a fixed attribute carried into school. Familiarity with interacting with many people at home was believed to contribute to children's openness, flexibility, and comfort in new social situations. However, teachers remained cautious in their interpretations, recognizing that successful adaptation also depends on classroom routines, peer dynamics, and pedagogical support. This perspective highlights teachers' understanding of adaptability as emerging through ongoing negotiation between culturally grounded social experiences and the formal demands of the school environment, rather than as a uniform outcome of *Tanean Lanceng* upbringing.

Analytical Summary of Teacher Perceptions

Across the four analytical themes, teachers' narratives consistently portray *Tanean Lanceng* as a culturally supportive context that is believed to facilitate children's social development. However, these accounts also reveal important variations and qualifications in how educators interpret children's social behaviors. Rather than advancing an idealized or deterministic portrayal of cultural parenting, the findings suggest that teachers understand children's social skills as emerging through a dynamic interaction between indigenous caregiving values and school-based socialization processes. In this sense, social competence is perceived not as an automatic outcome of cultural tradition, but as a socially mediated process shaped by children's prior cultural exposure and their ongoing engagement within formal educational settings. Importantly, the findings reflect teachers' professional meaning-making and interpretive judgments, rather than direct empirical evidence of caregiving practices or children's lived experiences within *Tanean Lanceng* households.

Thematic Integration and Conceptual Model

When integrated analytically, the four themes—communal interaction, solidarity, politeness, and social adaptation—form an interconnected interpretive framework through which teachers make sense of children's social development. Conceptually, teachers do not describe *Tanean Lanceng* as a direct or linear causal system; instead, it is understood as a cultural backdrop that shapes children's early social exposure. Communal interaction is perceived as enabling frequent social encounters, solidarity as orienting children toward collective moral expectations, and politeness as a regulatory mechanism guiding socially appropriate behavior. Social adaptation, in turn, is interpreted as an outcome that is continuously shaped and mediated within school contexts, rather than solely produced by the home environment.

This interpretive relationship among themes is illustrated in Figure 1, which presents a thematic map of *Tanean Lanceng* as perceived by teachers:

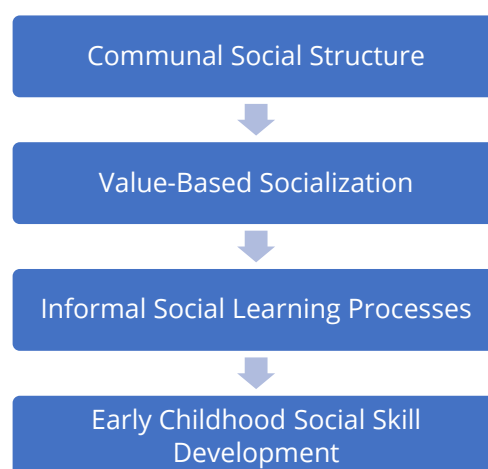


Figure 1. Thematic map illustrating how the *Tanean Lanceng* tradition functions as an indigenous parenting system that supports early childhood social skill development

Taken dialogically, these findings suggest that teachers position *Tanean Lanceng* not as a fixed determinant of children's social competence, but as a cultural reference point that is continuously interpreted, negotiated, and recontextualized within school settings. Across the four themes, teachers' accounts reveal an ongoing dialogue between cultural expectations derived from communal living and the practical realities of classroom socialization. Communal interaction, solidarity, politeness, and adaptability are understood less as inherited traits and more as dispositions that become visible, reshaped, or constrained through everyday school interactions, peer dynamics, and teacher mediation. Teachers simultaneously affirm the value of indigenous caregiving practices while recognizing inconsistencies, individual differences, and situational challenges in how children enact these values at school. This dialogical stance highlights educators' reflexive awareness that cultural meanings are not transmitted intact from home to school, but are co-constructed through children's participation in formal educational contexts and teachers' own professional interpretations. Consequently, children's social skills are framed as emergent and relational, arising from the intersection of cultural background, institutional expectations, and ongoing social engagement, rather than as direct or uniform outcomes of communal parenting traditions.

Discussion

This study examines early childhood teachers' perceptions of the relationship between the *Tanean Lanceng* tradition and children's social skills within Madurese communities. Because the data were generated exclusively through teacher interviews, the discussion does not aim to document actual caregiving practices or children's lived behaviors within *Tanean Lanceng* households. Instead, the analysis focuses on how teachers interpret cultural values, make sense of children's social behaviors in school settings, and attribute these behaviors to indigenous parenting systems. Teachers' accounts are therefore treated as interpretive constructions shaped by professional experience, institutional norms, and cultural assumptions. This analytical positioning ensures that the findings remain methodologically aligned with the nature and limits of the data. As a result, the discussion operates at the level of meaning-making rather than empirical verification of parenting practices.

Teachers' Interpretations of Communal Interaction as a Social Learning Context

Teachers consistently interpreted communal living as a social backdrop that may facilitate children's social interaction in classroom environments. Communal interaction was not described as a deterministic influence but as a familiar social condition that, in teachers' experience, appears to reduce children's hesitation when engaging with peers. Analytically, this reflects how teachers infer a relationship between presumed everyday social exposure and observed classroom behaviors. Such inferences rely on cultural narratives about communal societies rather than on direct observation of interactional processes outside school. As a result, communal living functions in teachers' accounts as an explanatory context rather than an empirically demonstrated mechanism.

Viewed through a sociocultural framework, these interpretations resonate with the notion that social interaction mediates the internalization of norms and communicative patterns (Gauvain, 2020; Matusov, 2015). However, the analysis must remain attentive to the possibility that teachers' perceptions are shaped by expectations of what communal cultures are assumed to produce. In this sense, social interaction is not merely observed but imagined through culturally available discourses. Teachers thus occupy a dual position as classroom observers and cultural interpreters, filtering children's behaviors through professional experience and broader cultural understandings. This dual role introduces analytical tension that warrants careful interpretation rather than affirmation.

Solidarity and Mutual Assistance as Interpreted Moral Orientations

Teachers frequently associated children's willingness to help peers with the Madurese value of *gotong royong*, framing prosocial behavior as an expression of moral orientations rooted in

cultural tradition. Analytically, this association illustrates how educators construct moral narratives that connect classroom behaviors with culturally valued practices. These narratives draw implicitly on assumptions consistent with social learning theory, particularly the idea that children internalize cooperative behaviors through observation and imitation of adults (Biyikoglu Alkan & Cavusoglu, 2024; Koch et al., 2025; Guo et al., 2026). However, because family practices were neither observed nor explored through parental perspectives, such explanations remain interpretive rather than empirically verified.

Importantly, several teachers acknowledged that helping behaviors were situational and often required reinforcement within classroom settings. This acknowledgement complicates any linear assumption of cultural transmission and challenges idealized portrayals of indigenous values as automatically enacted in children's behavior. Instead, teachers appear to understand prosociality as emerging from the interaction between cultural background and institutional socialization. This interpretation aligns with perspectives that view social skills as co-constructed across contexts rather than culturally fixed outcomes (Quinn et al., 2025). Analytically, this nuance strengthens the discussion by foregrounding contingency and pedagogical mediation.

Politeness as a Moral Framework in Teachers' Meaning-Making

Politeness emerged as a central moral reference in teachers' narratives, extending beyond surface-level etiquette to function as an internalized guide for behavior regulation. Teachers described politeness as a mechanism for maintaining social harmony and self-control within classroom interactions. Analytically, politeness operates as a moral framework through which cultural norms are linked to expectations of children's self-regulation in educational contexts (Corapci et al., 2025). This framing reflects teachers' efforts to align cultural values with institutional norms of appropriate behavior.

At the same time, teachers' accounts revealed a notable tension. Politeness was more consistently observed in adult-child interactions than in peer conflict situations, where negotiation and emotional regulation were more uneven. This discrepancy suggests that politeness may function as an aspirational cultural ideal rather than a uniformly enacted social practice. Moral development theories recognize that norm internalization is gradual and context-dependent (Kidwell & Kerig, 2023; Lam et al., 2025), supporting a more cautious interpretation of these findings. Acknowledging this tension prevents normative generalization and highlights the selective enactment of moral values in children's everyday interactions.

Social Adaptation as a Contextual and Relational Capacity

Teachers generally perceived children from *Tanean Lanceng* backgrounds as relatively adaptable within school environments. From an ecological systems perspective, this perception can be understood as teachers' recognition of children's familiarity with socially complex settings (Sato, 1998; Newman & Newman, 2020). Adaptability was described not as an inherent trait but as a capacity that becomes visible in particular classroom situations. Teachers often linked this adaptability to children's comfort in navigating group dynamics and responding to social cues.

However, teachers also emphasized that adaptability is contingent upon classroom structure, teacher guidance, and peer relationships. This emphasis underscores that social competence is understood as context-dependent rather than as a direct outcome of cultural background. Such interpretations problematize claims that communal living inherently produces adaptable children. Instead, teachers conceptualize social adaptation as emerging from the interaction between prior cultural exposure and present educational conditions. Analytically, this framing foregrounds relationality and situational mediation, moving away from cultural determinism.

Critical Reflection on Data Source and Methodological Boundaries

Because the findings rely solely on teacher perceptions, they are inevitably shaped by professional expectations, institutional norms, and culturally informed assumptions. Teachers may overattribute positive behaviors to cultural background while underrecognizing the

influence of pedagogical strategies or classroom organization. This interpretive tendency does not invalidate the findings but delineates their analytical scope. The study therefore contributes to understanding how indigenous parenting systems are conceptualized within educational discourse rather than how such systems operate empirically.

By foregrounding interpretation, the study extends sociocultural and ecological perspectives to include the role of educators as meaning-makers within institutional contexts. Cultural values are not merely transmitted but actively interpreted and recontextualized through professional judgment. The contribution of the study lies less in refining developmental theory and more in illuminating how cultural explanations are constructed and mobilized in early childhood education. This reflexive stance strengthens the analytical rigor of the discussion.

Implications for Pedagogy and Theoretical Contribution

The findings highlight the importance of culturally reflective pedagogy in early childhood education. Teachers' interpretations shape how children's behaviors are evaluated, how social activities are designed, and how social competence is assessed. Making these interpretive processes explicit can help educators avoid cultural essentialism while still engaging constructively with local knowledge. From a theoretical standpoint, the study contributes to ethnoparenting and indigenous education literature by offering a perception-based analytical model. This model does not seek to validate cultural claims but to examine how such claims are constructed and enacted within educational discourse. As such, it provides a critical foundation for more empirically grounded future research.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This study is limited by its reliance on a single data source and the absence of direct observation, family interviews, or cultural documentation. Future research should incorporate triangulation through ethnographic observation, parental perspectives, and visual or spatial documentation of *Tanean Lanceng* environments. Such approaches would allow researchers to empirically examine caregiving practices and children's lived experiences, while also testing and refining the interpretations articulated by teachers. Integrating multiple data sources would strengthen analytical claims and deepen understanding of the relationship between indigenous parenting systems and early childhood social development.

Conclusion

The *Tanean Lanceng* tradition illustrates the significant potential of indigenous parenting systems to support early social development through communal interaction, cooperative caregiving, moral guidance, and social adaptability. This study demonstrates that *Tanean Lanceng* functions not merely as a residential pattern, but as an integrated socialization ecology in which communal spatial organization, shared responsibilities, and value-based daily interactions converge to regulate children's social behavior. Social competence is cultivated through continuous participation in collective life, where children learn cooperation, emotional regulation, respect, and social responsibility through observation, imitation, and everyday social correction. These findings challenge dominant Western-derived parenting frameworks that emphasize individual autonomy and nuclear family structures, offering an alternative model of early social development rooted in collectivistic cultural practice.

The study contributes to cultural and indigenous parenting theories by empirically highlighting how children's social competence is embedded in the spatial, relational, and moral dimensions of communal living. At the same time, the findings have practical implications for early childhood education, encouraging educators to draw on principles such as collective responsibility, peer-supported interaction, and value-based social learning in culturally responsive pedagogy. However, the study is limited by its reliance on teachers' perspectives without direct child observation or parental triangulation, as well as its small and context-specific sample. Future research should employ multi-method and comparative approaches,

including ethnographic observation and cross-cultural analysis, to deepen understanding of how diverse indigenous parenting systems shape early social development.

Declarations

Author Contribution Statement

Muhammad Abdul Latif conceptualized the study, designed the research framework, conducted data analysis, and led the writing of the original manuscript. Nadlifah contributed to data collection, assisted in coding and thematic analysis, and participated in drafting and revising the manuscript. Sarah A. Alahmari provided critical review and intellectual input, contributed to the interpretation of findings, and supported the refinement of the theoretical framework and discussion. All authors reviewed and approved the final manuscript and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work.

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Data availability statement

Data availability statements provide a statement about where data supporting the results reported in a published article can be found - including, where applicable, hyperlinks to publicly archived datasets analyzed or generated during the study.

Declaration of interests statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper. Alternatively, The authors declare the following financial interests/personal relationships, which may be considered as potential competing interests.

Additional information

Additional information in a narrative form.

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