

Intergenerational Parenting and Children's Discipline in Working-Mother Families: A Qualitative Case Study Using Lickona's Framework

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Abstract

The increasing participation of women in the workforce in rural Indonesia has shifted childcare responsibilities to grandmothers, a reality that, if not handled carefully, can lead to intergenerational inconsistencies suppressing children's disciplinary character. This study aims to analyze the parenting strategies for developing disciplinary character in families with working mothers in Pogalan District, Trenggalek Regency, Indonesia. A qualitative collective case study design was implemented, and the data were obtained from six working mothers through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. These data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model and triangulation of sources and methods. Five main parenting strategies were identified: (1) communication of values through daily verbal repetition; (2) efforts to habituate a strict routine schedule; (3) role modeling as social modeling; (4) strengthening emotional closeness during limited time; and (5) coordination of intergenerational values through daily evaluative communication with grandmothers. The most critical inconsistencies were in the domain of gadget use and religious obligations. In Lickona's framework, Moral Knowing had developed relatively well, but Moral Feeling was a gap in suppressing intrinsic and consistent Moral Action. The results showed an intergenerational synchronization mechanism that had never been explicitly formulated in previous literature. The effectiveness of parenting was determined by three mutually supportive factors: the quality of emotional interactions, consistency of values between caregivers, and proactive cross-generational coordination.

1. Introduction

Over the past two decades, Indonesia has experienced numerous dynamic and rapid socio-economic transformations, resulting in significant consequences for institutions, such as the family, particularly regarding the distribution of parenting roles. These economic pressures have pushed women, particularly those living in rural areas, into the formal labor market. Families with two breadwinners are now considered very common, not only in developed countries but also in developing countries like Indonesia (Huda & Halimatus, 2024). The data from the Central Statistics Agency (2023) indicated that the national labor force participation rate for women has reached 54.04 percent, with an even higher proportion in rural areas, driven by the dominant agriculture, local trade, and home industries. In Pogalan District, Trenggalek Regency, Indonesia, thousands of women actively work in many sectors, from agriculture and trade to the private sector and government (Diskominfo, 2021).

This situation has created significant changes in how families operate, such as who provides daily childcare, and if both parents are working, the time available for childcare will be significantly limited. Studies on the correlation between parental employment and child development have been quite advanced in Western countries, such as how work hours, type of employment, and non-standard work patterns impact children's psychological well-being and behavior (Craig & Churchill, 2021; Kim, 2021). According to Fajrin and Purwastuti (2022) the daily childcare process in working mother families often shifts to grandmothers. This is not only logistical but also involves restructuring the normative environment in which children develop their values, habits, and moral orientations. However, similar evidence in rural contexts and collectivist societies in the Global South is considered limited, even though in these places, extended families, such as grandparents, directly participate in childcare, playtime, and daily needs (Lilia Bliznashka, Jeong, & Jaacks, 2023). This situation raises the important question of how the combination of working mothers, extended family support, and economic constraints shapes children's developmental experiences in the Global South, such as Indonesia. This remains largely unanswered by research (Eckrich, Emily, Hirokazu, & Joan, 2024).

In fact, grandmotherly care is not inherently detrimental. Numerous cross-cultural findings demonstrate that grandmothers' participation and role significantly influence prosocial development (Haryani, R. I., Dimiyati, & Fauziah, 2022). The problem lies in the systematic differences in parenting styles that emerge across generations. Baumrind's (1967) typology of authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive styles, supported by the dimensions of demandingness and responsiveness, provides a relevant analytical framework. Parents in dual-earner families likely adopt an adaptive authoritarian position that accommodates limited time with their children, while grandmothers often employ a permissive style that emphasizes cultural norms of warm parenting (Rachel Dunifon, 2020). Shaped by diverse generational experiences, many grandmothers' parenting styles differ significantly from their parents' parenting practices. This disparity creates a gap between the expectation of value consistency and the reality of fragmented parenting across generations. The consequences of this development have been widely reported: inconsistent disciplinary climates associated with weak self-regulation, minimal internalization of moral values, and increased vulnerability to problem behavior in children (Crandall, Ghazarian, Day, & Riley, 2020; Wang & Lu, 2025)

Initial observations in Ngulanwetan Village, Pogalan District, Trenggalek Regency, Indonesia (October 2025) confirmed this. Observations of three families with different occupational backgrounds (farmers, factory workers, and civil servant teachers) revealed differences in children's behavior. Some children appeared less disciplined, spoke in a high-pitched tone to their parents, and were exposed to digital content unsupervised due to their parents' lack of technological literacy. These findings refer to Dzikra and Masyithoh (2025), who stated that unsupervised gadget use in rural environments exacerbates the decline in character values, such as politeness and adherence to social norms. Inconsistent parenting conditions will lead to moral degradation, Janah (2023), namely the failure of children to accept the ethical values of society. In Pogalan District, local wisdom values such as cooperation, respect for others, and traditional tolerance instilled through the parenting process based on the extended family are beginning to show erosion (Alfaeni & Rachmawati, 2023). Research by Ayub (2022) found that parenting patterns contribute significantly, at 51.98 percent, to the disciplinary character of early childhood.

Many previous studies have revealed three significant conceptual gaps. First, many existing studies explain character values without focusing in-depth on the single value of discipline (Dhuriyani, Mansur, & Lutfiana, 2022; Suri, 2021). Second, many studies focus on identifying parenting patterns using a quantitative approach, without re-examining the dynamic processes of parenting strategies in the daily lives of rural families (Mahmudin & Nisfawati Laili Jalilah, 2024; Nurkholida & Luqman Hakim, 2020). *Third*, there is a lack of studies analyzing the synchronization of parenting values between working mothers and grandmothers as alternative caregivers, and their impact on the internalization of children's disciplinary character (Oktarima, F. W., & Almaghfiro, 2025). This study focuses on two related theories: Baumrind's Parenting Theory (1967) in analyzing the typology of parenting styles of parents and grandmothers, and Lickona's Moral Development Theory (1991) to assess the extent to which parenting strategies successfully create three components of character: Moral Knowing, Moral Feeling, and Moral Action. The purpose of this study is to explain and analyze parenting strategies to instill discipline in families with working mothers in the Pogalan District, Trenggalek Regency, Indonesia.

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative approach, using a collective/multiple case study design (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). This design alternative was not without consideration. Multiple case studies allow for an in-depth exploration of adaptive parenting strategies, the dynamics of intergenerational interactions, and the reality of instilling discipline within family units with clearly defined contextual boundaries. Multiple case studies were conducted because they allow for the dynamic and processual nature of intergenerational parenting coordination (Saat, S., & Mania, 2020). The intended generalization was analytical a theoretical proposition that can be applied to similar contexts, rather than a statistical generalization.

This study was conducted in Pogalan District, Trenggalek Regency, Indonesia, from October 2025 to February 2026. The subjects were selected based on the criteria of families with both working mothers, elementary school-aged children aged 7-10, and daily care provided by a grandmother. The six key informants were selected from diverse occupational backgrounds: one mother was a factory worker, two were farmers, two were civil servants/village employees, and one was a trader. These findings provided a diverse perspective for the comparative analysis. Data collection was conducted from January to February 2026. Due to the sufficient number of informants, the six cases exceeded the threshold for thematic saturation in qualitative case study research with focused research questions and a homogeneous social context. No new themes emerged after the fourth case, with the fifth and sixth cases serving as confirmation and contrast (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022).

The six main informants in this study were working mothers from various backgrounds, as shown in Table 1; all of them live and work in Pogalan district, Trenggalek Regency, Indonesia. The first informant, Harti, works as a farmer who leaves very early in the morning and returns in the afternoon; her 10-year-old child is cared for by her paternal grandmother throughout the day. The second informant, Yayuk, also works as a farmer with a similar daily schedule; her 10-year-old child is cared for by her maternal grandmother. Among all the

informants, these two have the longest periods of physical absence from child care and the least experience in parenting practices.

Table 1. Research Informant Profiles

No.	Initials	Age	Occupation	Education	Children Age	Alternative Caregivers
1	Harti	40 years old	Farmer/Farm Laborer	Junior high school	10 years old	Paternal Grandmother
2	Erna	37 years old	Teacher	Bachelor degree	9 years old	Maternal Grandmother
3	Anik	30 years old	Factory Worker	Senior high school	7 years old	Paternal Grandmother
4	Yayuk	42 years old	Farmer	Elementary school	10 years old	Maternal Grandmother
5	Sudarti	30 years old	Small Trader	Senior high school	8 years old	Paternal Grandmother
6	Sundari	42 years old	Village Civil Servant	Bachelor degree	8 years old	Maternal Grandmother

The third informant is Anik, who has a 7-year-old child cared for by the paternal grandmother. She works as a factory worker on rotating shifts, meaning her presence at home is irregular and unpredictable. The fourth informant is Sudarti, who works as a street vendor from the crack of dawn until midday. She has an 8-year-old child who is cared for daily by the paternal grandmother. These two informants primarily rely on extrinsic control as their disciplinary approach, largely due to the limited time available for consistent parenting.

The fifth informant, Erna, works as a teacher with a fixed work schedule and has a 9-year-old child who is cared for daily by the maternal grandmother. The final informant is Sundari, who works as a civil servant at a village office with structured working hours; she has an 8-year-old child cared for by her maternal grandmother while she is at work. These two informants have higher levels of education than the other informants and more predictable work schedules, allowing for more structured and proactive collaboration in parenting. The diversity of occupational backgrounds, work schedules, and educational levels was purposely selected to reflect the real-world conditions of child-rearing in working mothers' families in rural areas, ranging from cases with significant structural constraints to those more conducive to coordinated parenting. Educational level serves as a relevant analytical variable in examining the quality of intergenerational synchronization.

Three integrated data collection techniques were used. First, in-depth interviews were conducted using a semi-structured, face-to-face guide, lasting approximately 30 to 50 minutes per session, and repeated two to three times per informant to generate in-depth data. The interview guide was validated before implementation. Second, participatory observation of daily parenting interaction patterns was conducted flexibly for each family; researchers observed the grandmother's habits and active role in parenting. Third, documentation took the form of field notes, photographs of parenting conditions, and recordings of family routines.

Moreover, the data analysis employed Miles and Huberman's interactive model, with three workflows: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion formulation or verification. The analysis employed open coding, focused coding, axial coding, and selective coding techniques. The data were coded through interview and observation data, categorized based on shared meanings, and then the relationships between categories were mapped out using Thomas Lickona's framework (Moral Knowing, Moral Feeling, Moral Action). The analysis then focused on intergenerational synchronization patterns, followed by comparisons between cases to determine the relevance of parenting strategies, inconsistencies, occupations, and education levels. Furthermore, the data validity was maintained through triangulation of sources and techniques, member checking, descriptions of the research context, audit trails, and researcher reflexivity to ensure the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the data (Rama Dani & Hertati, 2024).

However, this research integrated two theoretical frameworks: Baumrind's (1967) Parenting Theory, which aims to provide an analysis of parenting typologies. Baumrind explains three typologies: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive, based on the dimensions of demandingness and responsiveness, to provide an understanding of intergenerational parenting inconsistencies. Then, Lickona's (1991) theory of moral development shows the effectiveness of instilling disciplinary character through three components: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. Therefore, the combination of these two theories provides an analysis that is not limited to parenting typologies but has a real impact on the internalization of children's disciplinary character.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results

3.1.1. Moral Knowing Cultivation Strategies

One thing that immediately emerged across all the cases was consistency: all of the informants communicated values through daily verbal repetition. Moments of change were the primary vehicle for conveying messages, such as before children left for school, at the dinner table during mealtimes, and at bedtime.

These messages were delivered repeatedly in clear, direct language. Sundari and Erna tended to employ a dialogical approach with the aid of rational descriptions, while Yayuk and Harti focused more on value statements based on local wisdom passed down through generations.

"...Every morning before going to work, I tell my children: 'Obey Grandma, don't keep looking at your phone, and when it's time to recite the Quran, you have to recite it.' I repeat this every day. If I don't remind them, they'll forget. When they do something wrong, they'll be told that it will have bad consequences. For example, don't curse your parents, you'll get cursed. Don't go out without permission. If something happens, you fall on the street, you'll hurt yourself or others. For example, if you fight with a friend, you'll get hurt. If your friend gets hurt, your parents won't accept it, and they'll get scolded. So, the children know what's right and wrong in their actions" (Yayuk, January 15, 2026).

As a result, the children in all cases demonstrated adequate ability to differentiate between right and wrong behavior and understand the consequences of not following the rules. This indicates that the element of Moral Knowing has been well developed. Contextualizing values within the child's direct experience and consistent repetition are two key supporting mechanisms identified. Informants using a dialogical approach enable children to articulate the moral reasons for the implementation of rules rather than just memorizing them, reflects the in-depth mastery of Moral Knowing (Suroso, 2024).

3.1.2. Moral Feeling Strengthening Strategies

The Moral Feeling strategy showed the most significant variation across informants. Sundari and Erna created meaningful emotional bonds through warm evening routines, morning hugs, and attention to their feelings. A selective strategy was emotional withdrawal, which involved temporarily suppressing warmth and verbally expressing disappointment without any physical punishment, especially when the child violated core values.

"...If my child neglects to pray despite repeated reminders, I don't get angry. I simply remain silent and express my disappointment. The next day, he apologizes and prays without being asked. At first, when I scold him, he'll be quiet, sometimes pouting, as children do, but he never gets angry back. At least he knows it's wrong. Maybe because I often communicate with him, he's used to telling me, and if he makes a mistake, he doesn't hesitate to tell his mother..." (Sundari, January 20, 2026).

On the other hand, the informants Anik and Sudarti implemented material sanctions as a control mechanism. This pattern resulted in calculated and situational compliance. Children follow rules when the material consequences are perceived as real. When a grandmother took over care in the absence of a parent, the compliance decreased significantly. The results indicated that without a strong emotional connection, discipline tends to be a response to external pressures that stem from instilled values.

3.1.3. Moral Action Habituation Strategies

Habituating a structured daily routine, including prayer times, Quran recitation, study, play, meals, and sleep, became a Moral Action strategy for all informants. This schedule was explicitly communicated to the grandmother, who served as a daily parenting guide. Parents' exemplary behavior during shared time served as social modeling, which children observed and internalized.

"...Yes, like the daily obligations of dividing household chores between the younger and older siblings. I make a daily schedule and post it on the wall. Furthermore, as parents, we must consistently carry out daily tasks so that our children follow suit and get involved in daily tasks. However, sometimes my grandmother still tolerates me when I'm not home. For example, during Quranic study time, she sometimes lets me skip, saying her grandson is tired today. So sometimes she gives me some leeway. So, I sometimes remind her to be firm, unless there's an emergency or the child is sick, she's allowed to relax a bit. But if the child is lazy for various reasons, I emphasize her firmness. I also limit my child's phone time to three hours a day, but when I'm working, he usually uses his grandmother's phone to play games and watch YouTube. That makes it difficult for me to control my child..." (Anik, January 25, 2026)

The dominant critical inconsistencies were claimed to be in two domains: gadget use and religious obligations (Quranic study). All of the informants stated that grandmothers consistently facilitated leeway in both domains. The data stated that this leniency was carried out every day without parents knowing, and occurred in the cases of Harti, Anik, Yayuk, Sudarti.

3.1.4. Dynamics of Intergenerational Inconsistency and Synchronization Mechanisms

The inconsistencies in intergenerational parenting processes were confirmed by all of the informants as structural challenges. The differences between parents' authoritarian-adaptive patterns and grandmothers' permissive patterns were consistently identified in three domains: device use, religious obligations, and consistent study schedules. To address these challenges, the synchronization mechanisms were distinguished into two contrasting patterns: proactive (Erna and Sundari) and reactive (Harti, Anik, Yayuk, and Sudarti).

"...I sit down with Grandma once a week, talk about my child's growth and development, and what needs to be focused on. I also tell Grandma how to handle it when my child is fussy about the Koran or their phone. So, Grandma has guidance, not just instinct. I also tell my parents and the children's grandmother what the child should do at this hour. Grandma also often talks about the child's daily activities, what they've been up to today, but sometimes she doesn't tell me, sometimes only when the time comes to talk. We're like a team..." (Erna, January 15, 2026)

Clearly, the proactive synchronization included weekly assessment meetings, posting written guidelines at home, and active communication via WhatsApp during the day while parents are at work (see Table 2). Meanwhile, the reactive synchronization then became active when parents receive problem reports from the school or notice changes in their child's behavior directly. The proactive synchronization pattern is strongly related to the level of parental education, referring to (Wibowo et al., 2025), parenting literacy being the most consistent predictor of the quality of rural family parenting.

Table 2. Summary of Five Parenting Strategies and Conditions for Their Implementation

No	Parenting Strategy	Lickona Components	Critical Domain Inconsistency	Synchronization Pattern
1.	Daily verbal communication of values	Moral knowing	Gadgets and worship, for example, attending Quranic recitation	Proactive and Reactive
2.	Habit of routine schedules	Moral action	Gadgets and learning	Proactive and Reactive
3.	Social modeling	Moral action	Consistent attendance	Proactive
4.	Strengthening emotional closeness	Moral feeling	Quality time	Proactive
5.	Evaluative coordination between generations	The three components of Lickona	All domains	Proactive

3.2. Discussion

3.2.1. Cultivating Moral Knowing through Consistent Value Communication

Field data indicate that all informants engage in repeated daily value communication during transitional moments such as before leaving for work, before going to sleep, and during family meals. When consistently practiced, this pattern enables children to distinguish between good and bad behavior and understand the consequences of breaking rules, a sign that moral knowing has developed to a satisfactory level despite parents' time constraints. These field data findings align with Lickona's theory that repeated exposure to values can foster moral knowing grounded in children's real-life experiences, rather than through mere verbal commands without daily practice; thus, limited time spent with children will not hinder the development of moral knowing as long as the quality and consistency of values are maintained. These results reinforce the findings by Darwanti, Fauzati, and Fathoni (2025) which indicate that parents' verbal repetition of behavioral standards leads to improved ability to distinguish right from wrong in elementary school-aged children. It should be emphasized that the field data were sourced from 6 informants with diverse occupational backgrounds and varying cases, resulting in patterns that reflect adaptive strategies across work contexts rather than normative ideal conditions.

An international review by Grusec and Davidov (2021) indicates a positive relationship between parents' repeated communication of values and children's internalized moral reasoning. Although the study does not specifically address the rural context of Indonesia, the patterns identified provide relevant preliminary empirical support. Furthermore, this study suggests that when parents consistently explain the rationale behind every rule they enforce, it results in children who can independently articulate their moral considerations similar to the dialogic approach practiced by informants Erna and Sundari. Children do not merely memorize norms but truly understand why those norms exist. This narrative aligns with Suroso (2024) concept of the depth of moral knowing in character education. Within Baumrind's (1967) framework, the high

“responsiveness” dimension, characterized by authoritative parenting involves parents who not only establish rules but also provide explanations that enable children to grasp the meaning behind those rules.

The difference between the dialogic and directive approaches aligns with Pereira (2020) findings regarding the transmission and internalization of values. When the directive approach is used, children tend to comply only in specific situations, particularly when under supervision. Conversely, when values are built through a dialogic pattern, that is, two-way conversation children have the opportunity to make those values a part of themselves, so that moral behavior arises from self-awareness rather than as a response to external pressure. Field data from this study support this distinction, although it must be acknowledged that the observed differences in patterns may also be influenced by parents’ educational levels, not merely by the choice of communication strategy.

3.2.2. Moral Feeling as a Critical Bridge between Knowledge and Action

Moral knowing showed relatively consistent development across all cases, but moral feeling emerged as the most notable distinguishing factor in the field findings. Field data consistently demonstrated that the quality of the emotional bond between parents and children is the primary determinant of whether moral knowing can be translated into ingrained and enduring moral action. This finding aligns with research by Utami and Prasetyo (2021) which confirms that emotional closeness is a stronger predictor of disciplined behavior than the frequency of rule enforcement. In the case of Erna and Sundari, who work fixed schedules and consistently implement a warm evening routine, emotional withdrawal strategies such as verbally expressing disappointment rather than using physical punishment, have proven to encourage children to behave in a disciplined manner out of their own awareness. Within the framework of Baumrind (1967), this falls under authoritative parenting, a parenting style that balances firm rules with affection or emotional warmth. This mechanism is described by the research of Rudita, K., and Wijana (2023) as the internalization of values as attachment, while Kochanska and Kim (2020) refer to it as compliance rooted in the child’s acceptance of parental values as their own.

In the case of Anik and Sudarti, who have the longest work hours and the most limited physical presence, parenting relies more on material sanctions such as withholding allowance or cutting back on playtime. Within Baumrind’s framework, this reliance on extrinsic control reflects an adaptive authoritarian pattern, where rules are strictly enforced but affection is limited due to time constraints. The result of this pattern is compliance that is calculated and situational. Previous research indicates that extrinsic motivation cannot foster consistent disciplinary character because it does not activate moral feelings as an internal motivator (Ngulandari & Oktaviani, 2024). Thus, the quality of moral feelings is determined by the extent to which the chosen disciplinary strategy aligns with the parenting style the parents practice.

3.2.3. The Vulnerability of Moral Action to Intergenerational Inconsistency

Field data reveal a recurring pattern: children exhibit relatively well-maintained discipline when under the direct supervision of their parents, but this behavior tends to weaken when care is transferred to their grandmother. Lickona’s (1991) proposition is reinforced by this pattern, suggesting that habits as the foundation of moral action, can be disrupted by inconsistencies in parenting, particularly during elementary school age when self-regulation is not yet fully developed. It is important to emphasize that grandmothers’ permissiveness does not reflect a failure of character, but rather a consequence of their structural position. Within Baumrind’s (1967) framework, grandmothers’ tendency toward high responsiveness stems from biological bonds and cultural norms of caring for grandchildren with affection, yet is accompanied by low demandingness, as full parenting authority does not rest with them. This is what typologically identifies grandmothers’ tendency toward a permissive parenting style as a consequence of their position within triadic parenting. Crandall and Ghazarian (2020) identified a similar tendency in the context of intergenerational parenting in working mothers’ families, with research by Oktarima and Almaghfiro (2025) finding relevant patterns in the context of rural Indonesia. Furthermore, dual parenting where discipline is stricter with parents and more lenient with grandmothers, has the potential to weaken moral development; field data indicate this trend in some cases, such as in the domains of gadget use, routines for attending religious study sessions or worship, and study routines; however, confirming causality requires longitudinal research that systematically tracks the development of children’s moral feelings over time (Darwanti et al., 2025)

3.2.4. Intergenerational Synchronization Mechanisms as an Original Finding

Among all the findings identified, the mechanism of daily evaluative communication between grandmothers serving as alternative caregivers and parents is the least conceptualized aspect in studies of intergenerational parenting in rural Indonesia. Field data reveal a significant difference: more stable parenting consistency is observed among informants who proactively communicate behavioral standards to the grandmother, whether through conversations upon returning from work, weekly evaluations, or text messages, rather than those who react only after problems arise. Intergenerational synchronization mechanisms perform

interrelated functions: First, they serve as a typological bridge that aligns triadic parenting patterns toward more authoritative consistency. Second, they ensure that value messages from the two caregivers remain coherent and do not contradict one another, thereby supporting the development of moral knowing. Third, synchronization maintains parents' emotional authority in the child's eyes despite their physical absence, thereby preserving moral feeling. Fourth, this mechanism protects moral action habits from erosion caused by daily value inconsistencies.

The distinguishing factor in the success of value synchronization between caregivers lies in its nature: proactive synchronization, characterized by communicating behavioral standards before problems arise rather than after, results in far more stable consistency. Within Baumrind's framework, this pattern reflects an effort to extend the dimension of demandingness into the triadic parenting system, where standards set by parents are actively communicated to the grandmother, thereby aligning expectations regarding the child. Interestingly, this pattern of proactive synchronization consistently aligns with higher parental education levels, consistent with Wibowo's (2025) findings, which confirm that parenting literacy serves as a predictor of parenting quality in rural areas. This relationship can be explained through two pathways: First, parents with higher parenting literacy tend to be more aware that intergenerational consistency in parenting is a prerequisite for effective value internalization. Second, formal employment, which typically accompanies higher educational levels, provides a structured framework that influences how they manage the parenting system within the household. Overall, these findings suggest that the Baumrind and Lickona frameworks do not operate in parallel but rather in an integrative manner. Baumrind's parenting typology determines the mechanisms through which value instillation occurs, while Lickona's three components (moral Knowing, Feeling, and Action) provide a lens for assessing the extent to which such instillation is successfully internalized. This study offers preliminary empirical evidence that the two complement each other in the context of intergenerational parenting in rural families with working mother, although more systematic confirmation on a broader scale is certainly still very much needed.

3.3. Implications

Theoretically, this study showed that the parental time constraints did not always compromise parenting quality, the key lay in the quality of emotional interactions and consistent coordination between caregivers. Baumrind's typology should be expanded to accommodate the dynamic authoritarian-adaptive pattern for working mothers, and intergenerational inconsistencies need not be eliminated but addressed through synchronization.

Practically, working mothers need to consistently build emotionally meaningful daily interactions, even if brief, and proactively coordinate with grandparents before problems arise. For local governments, these results provided a foundation for designing family empowerment programs that improved parenting literacy from a practical perspective, particularly skills in communicating values in short bursts, planned intergenerational coordination, and digital technology management for parents with limited digital literacy.

3.4. Limitations

This study has several limitations. One is that the sample size of six families in one sub-district limited geographic and socioeconomic generalization although the results provided theoretical propositions that could be applied to other rural contexts. Second, the cross-sectional design did not facilitate longitudinal assessment of disciplinary character development. Third, the limited scope of the location within one village in Pogalan Sub-district limited the transferability of the results to other rural contexts with different socio-cultural characteristics. This, future research agendas should include: (1) longitudinal designs that explore children's disciplinary character from elementary school to early adolescence in the context of intergenerational parenting; (2) comparative studies across rural-urban gradients and across cultural regions; (3) intervention studies of structured intergenerational synchronization programs; and (4) mixed designs that combine qualitative depth with quantitative measurement of moral character outcomes using validated scales.

4. Conclusion

This study yields four conclusions. First, the parenting strategies of working mothers were adaptive and led to habituation, manifested in five mutually reinforcing practices: daily verbal communication of values, the process of establishing structured routines, strengthening emotional bonds, modeling behavior, and conducting evaluative activities with grandmothers. Second, the intergenerational inconsistency of the parents' authoritarian-adaptive patterns and the grandmother's permissive patterns constituted a structural challenge and is addressed through a proactive synchronization process, the quality of which is largely determined by the parents' educational level. Third, the critical gap in instilling discipline lay not in Moral Knowing but also in Moral Feeling, which served as a link to intrinsic and consistent Moral Action. Furthermore, the daily evaluative communication mechanism of parents and grandmothers was a genuine outcome with a dual function as a typological link through the triadic parenting system and as structural support for the three components of Lickona's character.

Author Contributions

Tarissa Aditya Berlin Sunyoto contributed to Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal analysis, Investigation, Methodology, Writing original draft. Sarmini, Sugiantoro, Silvi Nur Afifah: Supervision, Validation, and Writing - review & editing.

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Data Availability

The datasets generated during and/ or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Declaration on AI Use

AI were used only to improve readability and language under strict human oversight; no content, ideas, analyses, or conclusions were generated by AI.

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