

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HUMANISTIC-DEMOCRATIC MODEL IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' LEARNING MOTIVATION AND DISCIPLINE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the application of the humanistic-democratic model in an effort to improve student motivation and learning discipline in elementary schools. Education as the main foundation in the formation of quality human resources requires a comprehensive learning approach, not only oriented to the cognitive aspect, but also paying attention to the affective and social aspects. The humanistic model emphasizes respect for the uniqueness and potential of each individual, while the democratic model emphasizes the principles of equality, justice, and active student participation in the learning process. The method used in this study is a literature study with a content analysis of relevant literature related to the theory and practice of the humanistic and democratic models. The results of the study revealed that the application of the model is able to create an inclusive, warm, and conducive learning environment, which significantly increases student motivation and learning discipline. This approach is also effective in building students' character to be independent, responsible, and have social empathy from an early age. The implications of this study provide practical guidance for educators in developing holistic and humanity-oriented classroom management strategies in elementary schools.

Keyword: Humanistic Model, Democratic Model, Learning Motivation, Learning Discipline, Elementary School, Classroom Management, Holistic Education, Student Characte

INTRODUCTION

Education is the fundamental foundation for building high-quality human resources. Along with the development of science, technology, and the social and cultural dynamics of the modern era, challenges in the field of education have become increasingly complex. Therefore, a learning model is needed that not only focuses on cognitive aspects but also pays attention to students' affective and social dimensions so that their potential can grow holistically. Education is a human endeavor to fulfill the need for developing individual skills, including attitudes, knowledge, and competencies. In line with this view, Batubara states that education is an essential pillar in the formation of high-quality individuals and society (Batubara et al., 2022).

Curriculum serves as the lifeblood of an educational process (Eka Retnaningsih & Patilima, 2022). The nature of curriculum in education is dynamic (Cholilah et al., 2023).

The humanistic-democratic model has become a highly relevant approach in this context, especially in classroom management at the elementary school level, which is the initial stage of formal education and plays a vital role in determining the direction and future of students' learning processes. Various approaches have been developed by experts to explain how humans learn, ranging from behavioristic, cognitive, constructivist, to humanistic theories. Each theory offers its own perspective on the learning process. Among these approaches, the humanistic learning theory holds a unique position because it emphasizes human values and the wholeness of individuals in the learning process (Sartika et al., 2025).

Educational democracy is a perspective that emphasizes equal rights and obligations, as well as fair and equitable treatment from educators toward all students without discrimination in any aspect, both inside and outside the classroom. Educational democracy provides equal opportunities for individuals to access education regardless of religion, ethnicity, race, or social status, enabling each person to express opinions and develop their potential through education (Khuzaimah et al., 2025).

The main goal of humanistic theory in education is to help learners optimize the development of their creativity and natural talents. This theory highlights the importance of exploring and discovering students' inherent abilities, which can then be maximized. By applying a humanistic approach in learning, children are given the opportunity to explore themselves more deeply and develop their innate talents and creativity (Sari, Nugroho, & Purnama, 2021).

In humanistic education developed by figures such as Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, learners are viewed as individuals who have the right to grow according to their unique potentials (Arif et al., 2024). Implementing a learning model based on humanistic and democratic principles is highly suitable and relevant at the elementary school level. At this age, students are undergoing rapid physical, emotional, and social development. Thus, the humanistic approach, which places the wholeness of the individual at the center, is appropriate because it fulfills children's psychological needs, such as feeling valued, accepted, and supported in their learning process. By emphasizing sensitivity to each child's needs and potential, this approach helps build self-confidence and strong learning motivation from an early age.

Furthermore, the principle of educational democracy is essential to apply in elementary schools because it teaches values of equality, fairness, and active participation from an early age. By giving students the opportunity to express opinions, take initiative, and participate in the learning process, they learn to understand their rights and responsibilities directly. This helps shape independent and critical individuals while instilling values of tolerance, appreciation for diversity, and social responsibility. The combination of humanistic and democratic models creates a warm, inclusive, and humanistic learning environment where students feel safe and respected. At the elementary level, this strategy encourages optimal emotional and social development while strengthening students' desire to learn actively and creatively. Thus, implementing this model not only makes learning more enjoyable and meaningful but also builds foundational character and competencies students need to face future challenges.

In addition, the humanistic approach fosters a conducive and supportive classroom atmosphere in which students feel comfortable and safe to participate actively. In such an environment, students are not merely passive listeners but are encouraged to express ideas, explore creativity, and engage in discussions without fear or undue pressure. The teacher's role becomes crucial as a facilitator and mentor who provides positive support, helps students overcome challenges, and guides them in exploring their potential without imposing pressure that might hinder learning. With this approach, children's learning motivation increases, enabling them to develop optimally both intellectually and emotionally in an environment that values individuality and freedom of expression (Natalia, D., 2025).

Humanistic education emphasizes the importance of creating warm and supportive relationships between teachers and students, as these relationships help establish a conducive learning atmosphere (Harefa et al., 2024). In this approach, teachers act not only as instructors but also as facilitators who help students develop their best potential, in line with the concept of Merdeka Belajar (Rahmawati et al., 2023). However, in practice, such supportive relationships are often difficult to achieve due to heavy administrative workloads and limited understanding of humanistic principles in teaching.

The humanistic educational approach places teachers as guides who help students learn without excessive pressure. Its aim is to shape individuals holistically, as humans are creations of God with inherent human values. From a philosophical perspective, humanistic education views humans through the lens of their humanity, ensuring that technology and knowledge are utilized without disregarding human values. In the learning process, teachers do not merely teach content but also instill moral values that shape students' character and personality in a positive and balanced manner.

In the context of classroom management in elementary schools, the democratic model aligns closely with the humanistic approach. The democratic model emphasizes active student involvement in learning and in classroom decision-making. Teachers act as facilitators who encourage students to express opinions, appreciate differences, and work collaboratively in establishing classroom rules and activities. Through this approach, students learn responsibility, mutual respect, and positive social behavior. A democratic classroom management model also helps create a comfortable and enjoyable learning environment, preventing students from feeling burdened, in line with humanistic principles.

The humanistic approach and democratic classroom management model are highly suitable for elementary education because both complement each other in developing students' potential and character holistically. Humanistic education emphasizes personal development and the cultivation of human values, promoting learning that is meaningful and not burdensome. Meanwhile, the democratic model provides space for active participation, expression of opinions, and shared decision-making, fostering a sense of responsibility and belonging in students (Putri, Husna, & Nihayah, 2023).

The combination of these two models is highly effective for elementary-school-aged children, who are still in the crucial stage of character and social development. With a humanistic approach, teachers guide students with empathy and attention to individual needs. At the same time, the democratic model supports an inclusive and communicative classroom atmosphere that encourages respect for diversity and collaboration. This combination not only creates a pleasant and comfortable learning environment but also helps shape independent,

responsible, and empathetic students from an early age. By applying both models simultaneously, the educational process in elementary schools can run in a balanced manner between academic development and character formation.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used in this study is the literature review method. The literature review method is a research approach carried out by collecting, examining, and analyzing various relevant written sources such as books, journals, and other documents related to the research topic. This approach aims to obtain an in-depth understanding of a concept or phenomenon based on existing literature without conducting direct primary data collection in the field. According to Rohanita et al. (2025), the literature review method is a research technique that examines primary and secondary information sources through content analysis and critical review. Through this approach, researchers can compile a literature review in a systematic and contextual manner, thereby supporting the establishment of a strong and structured scientific foundation for the study.

The literature review relies on the study and analysis of various written sources relevant to the research topic, namely the implementation of the humanistic-democratic model in classroom management to improve students' motivation and learning discipline in elementary schools. Using this method, the researcher collects data and information from books, scientific journals, articles, and policy documents discussing theories, concepts, and practices related to humanistic and democratic classroom management. The process involves an in-depth examination of these sources to obtain a comprehensive understanding of how the model is applied and its impact within the context of basic education. Data analysis is conducted using content analysis techniques, aiming to identify key themes, emerging patterns, and relationships between the implementation of the learning model and improvements in students' motivation and discipline. This literature review approach is essential because it builds a strong theoretical foundation and provides empirical insights into the effectiveness of the humanistic-democratic model in classroom management. Additionally, findings from this review can serve as practical recommendations for teachers and education practitioners in optimizing classroom management practices that are inclusive, democratic, and supportive of students' holistic development. Thus, the literature review method becomes a highly fundamental initial stage before moving toward more applied field research, bridging the gap between theory and real-world practice in developing an educational process that balances intellectual, emotional, and social aspects of learners. This approach reinforces the understanding that education must be holistic and humane, accommodating diverse student needs to produce an effective and meaningful learning process.

The literature review method is also a research technique that focuses on the collection and analysis of data from various written sources related to the research theme. In this approach, researchers do not collect data directly through methods such as observation or interviews; instead, they utilize reference materials such as books, journals, scientific articles, and other relevant documents. The primary purpose of this method is to obtain a deep understanding of the topic based on existing literature. Through a literature review, researchers can summarize theories and previous research findings as a basis for constructing a strong theoretical

framework. This method is also useful for identifying patterns, themes, and relationships found in prior studies, thereby providing a clear illustration of the phenomenon being investigated. In research on the implementation of the humanistic-democratic model in classroom management, the literature review helps analyze how the model is applied and its effects on students' motivation and discipline, based on data from existing studies. Data analysis in this method commonly uses content analysis techniques, which allow researchers to examine the content of sources systematically to extract key themes and significant conclusions. This approach is not only descriptive but also critical and systematic, resulting in meaningful scientific contributions. Overall, the literature review serves as an important initial foundation of a research study, providing a theoretical framework and empirical overview before moving into field studies or experimental research. With insights gained from the literature, subsequent research steps become more focused and firmly grounded in the development of educational practices that are comprehensive, humane, and effective.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of the Humanistic-Democratic Model to Improve Learning Motivation and Discipline

Learning motivation is an internal drive that activates and directs the learning process so that educational goals can be achieved. In the field of education, learning motivation often becomes a major challenge because it is related to individual psychological factors that are difficult to change directly. Although various efforts have been made, the issue of motivation remains complex because genuine motivation originates from students' own awareness and desire, which cannot be easily influenced solely by external factors (Edu, Saiman, & Nasar, 2021).

Teachers play a crucial role in fostering and strengthening students' learning motivation. By providing encouragement, inspiration, and support, teachers can help create strong intrinsic motivation within learners. However, learning motivation remains the fundamental basis that determines the presence or absence of learning activity in an educational process. Learning itself is the core of education; without sufficient motivation, learning cannot take place effectively and educational objectives become difficult to achieve. Besides ensuring students' willingness to learn, motivation also functions to direct the intensity and persistence with which students engage in learning. Highly motivated students tend to be diligent, persistent when facing challenges, and independent in achieving new knowledge and accomplishments. Therefore, fostering learning motivation is an essential and strategic step to ensure that the learning process can run successfully and produce optimal educational outcomes.

Low student motivation is influenced by various internal and external environmental factors. Internal environmental factors include students' physical conditions, such as illness or poor health that disrupts the learning process, and unstable mental or emotional states that cause boredom or fatigue. External environmental factors come from the family, community, and school environments. In the family environment, students' learning motivation may decline if they come from broken homes or have parents who pay little attention to their learning process and rely entirely on schools for academic development. Communities with low levels of education also negatively influence students' learning motivation. Furthermore, conditions in

the school environment are determining factors, such as classrooms that are not conducive, limited learning media, and unengaging school activities. Overall, students' learning motivation results from the interaction between internal factors within learners and their external environments. Suboptimal physical and emotional conditions, along with unsupportive home, community, and school environments, are the primary causes of low learning motivation (Anggraini & Sukartono, 2022).

Discipline is an effort to develop self-control that does not merely compel children to obey adult orders but forms part of a moral attitude that students must possess. Discipline is important because, with good discipline, students can achieve the success they aspire to. However, discipline is not formed instantly; it develops through a long process that must be cultivated from an early age, starting in the family environment and reinforced in the school setting. Discipline includes adherence to rules, effective time management, consistency in completing tasks, and a sense of responsibility that supports a conducive and effective learning environment (Nurfebrianti et al., 2022). In the school environment, forms of discipline demonstrated by students include readiness for class, punctuality, attentiveness to teachers' explanations, completing assignments, and bringing necessary learning materials such as books and stationery. Meanwhile, discipline at home includes activities such as planning a study schedule, regularly completing homework, and preparing for upcoming lessons. Thus, learning discipline plays an important role in supporting optimal academic achievement (Hasan et al., 2024).

In addition to the previously mentioned factors, it is important to understand that learning motivation and discipline are interrelated and mutually influential. High motivation can foster good discipline because motivated students tend to be more consistent and responsible in fulfilling their learning obligations. Conversely, well-maintained discipline can enhance motivation, as students feel more organized and capable of managing their time effectively. The school environment also plays a vital role, not only as a place to learn but also as a source of social support that can increase motivation and discipline. Teachers, peers, and a positive learning atmosphere can cultivate comfort and enthusiasm for learning. A supportive environment without excessive pressure encourages students to be more active, creative, and independent in their learning. Therefore, efforts to improve motivation and discipline cannot focus solely on the students individually; they must involve the roles of families, schools, and communities as a whole. Additionally, technology can become an effective tool to enhance students' motivation and discipline when used appropriately—for instance, through engaging and interactive digital learning media that increase enthusiasm and help students develop disciplined study habits with features such as reminders and scheduling. Thus, efforts to enhance learning motivation and discipline must be comprehensive and integrated, considering physical and psychological conditions, social environments, and the use of technology as a modern learning support. This will result in an effective and sustainable learning process that prepares students to face future educational and life challenges.

Teachers effectively implement various learning methods that encourage active student engagement, such as group discussions that facilitate the exchange of ideas and thoughts among students, project-based learning that allows them to explore their interests and talents in depth, and reflective activities that help students enhance self-awareness and introspective abilities (Salsabila et al., 2024). Teachers not only focus on achieving academic targets, but also provide

ample room for students to freely express their opinions, feelings, and creativity. However, this freedom of expression is still framed within moral and ethical values that respect the rights and feelings of others, creating a balance between individual freedom and social responsibility. The success of implementing humanistic theory can be seen in how teachers provide constructive and positive feedback to each student, focusing not only on final results but also on their learning processes and character development (Fitriyah & Sari, 2024). The humanistic approach has proven effective in creating a learning environment that not only supports strong academic achievement but also develops students into individuals with strong character, emotional maturity, and positive social interaction skills. Teachers who apply this approach believe that such methods help students grow into a generation equipped not only with intellectual intelligence but also moral integrity and the capability to contribute positively to society in the future (Permatasari et al., 2025).

Table 1. Research Analysis Results

Researcher and Year	Title	Findings
rasetyo & Suciptaningsih, 2022.	Application of Humanistic Learning Theory in Differentiated Instruction in Elementary Schools	The results show that differentiated instruction (in elementary schools), designed to facilitate students in constructing knowledge and accommodating differences in characteristics, interests, and motivation, aligns with humanistic theory. The humanistic theory is described as an approach that helps students “enjoy learning” and emphasizes guidance, development, and the direction of students’ basic potential across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains.
Hawati et al., 2025.	<i>Implementation of the Humanistic Approach in Classroom Management to Improve Social Interaction among Elementary School Students</i>	The implementation of the humanistic approach through empathetic communication, responsible freedom, and collaborative learning has been proven to significantly enhance the quality of students’ social interactions.
Hanifa et al., 2024	Analysis of Students’ Discipline Character Education through School Culture in Elementary Schools	A consistent school culture, teacher role modeling, and the habituation of disciplinary character values greatly influence student behavior; schools with a positive culture tend to demonstrate better student discipline.
Haryanto, 2024	Democratic and Humanistic Learning Models and Strategies	Presents an operational framework for democratic–humanistic teaching strategies (e.g., student participation, classroom dialogue, individual appreciation, differentiated instruction) and affirms the theoretical connection between this approach and the improvement of student motivation, learning autonomy, and a supportive classroom climate.

Widianto, T., & Fauzi, A. (2025).	Implementation of Integrated Humanistic Theory in Differentiated Learning for Grade 1 Students	The results show that implementing the humanistic–democratic model in elementary schools significantly enhances students’ learning motivation and discipline. This model creates an inclusive and supportive learning environment in which students feel valued and comfortable to grow. The humanistic approach provides learning experiences tailored to each student’s needs and uniqueness, thereby increasing their enthusiasm for learning, while democratic principles foster students’ sense of responsibility toward mutually agreed-upon rules, resulting in improved discipline. In addition, this model plays an essential role in shaping students’ character to become independent, responsible, and socially empathetic from an early age.
Putri, F. K. A., Husna, M. J., & Nihayah, S. A. (2023).	Implementation of Humanistic Learning Theory in Learning and Character Building of Children	The findings reveal that the humanistic learning theory aims to develop students’ potential holistically through an approach that acknowledges individual needs and learning styles. Educators function as facilitators who guide without overwhelming students, creating a conducive and humane learning environment. This approach effectively improves academic abilities and shapes balanced intellectual and emotional character, making it highly relevant to addressing contemporary educational challenges.
Natalia, D. (2025).	Application of Humanistic Learning Theory in Developing Elementary School Students’ Personality Through Project-Based Learning	The study shows that implementing humanistic theory in project-based learning at the elementary level can develop students’ overall personality. This approach positions students as the center of learning, allowing them to choose topics based on their interests, which increases motivation and engagement. It also strengthens positive character traits such as responsibility, creativity, and collaboration skills. Teachers serve as facilitators who provide support and create a safe and comfortable learning atmosphere. Overall, the results confirm that this model is effective in improving learning quality and shaping students into independent, innovative, and well-charactered individuals.

Based on a comprehensive analysis of various previous studies, a deeper understanding can be gained of why the integration of humanistic and democratic models in elementary school learning is essential and provides broad positive impacts on student development. These studies offer clear insights not only into academic outcomes but also into students social, emotional, and character development, all of which collectively form the foundation of quality and holistic

education.

Beginning with the study by Prasetyo and Suciptaningsih (2022), the focus on differentiated instruction grounded in humanistic theory shows that when learning is designed to accommodate diverse student characteristics including differences in interests, motivation, and learning styles, students experience learning that is more personal and meaningful. This approach makes students feel not only like passive recipients of material but active agents in the learning process. Thus, learning that emphasizes the development of students basic potential in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains makes students more enthusiastic and eager to participate in lessons. This shows that learning processes that place humans at the center can greatly enhance learning quality.

Furthermore, Hawati et al. (2025) explain how a humanistic approach to classroom management provides space for students to interact empathetically with their peers and actively participate in collaborative learning. Empathic communication between teachers and students creates a classroom climate that supports student freedom while maintaining responsibility. Such a learning environment not only enhances academic aspects but also improves students social skills, such as communication and teamwork, which are essential for their social lives. Meanwhile, Hanifa et al. (2024) emphasize the importance of a school environment that supports the development of discipline through a positive and consistent school culture, including the example set by teachers. This study shows that values of discipline cannot simply be taught theoretically but must be practiced as a daily culture in the school environment. It reminds us that building disciplinary character greatly depends on concrete practices and consistent learning environments.

Haryanto (2024) enriches the explanation by emphasizing teaching strategies based on democratic and humanistic principles. Providing space for students to participate in classroom decision making and engage in open dialogue helps foster a sense of ownership and autonomy in learning. Students who feel their voices and opinions are heard tend to be more motivated, responsible, and active in the learning process, conditions that significantly contribute to improved learning quality. The study by Widiyanto and Fauzi (2025) is substantial in showing that the humanistic democratic model creates an inclusive and supportive learning environment. By appreciating each students uniqueness and encouraging active participation and responsibility, students are not only motivated to learn but also show significant improvement in discipline. This demonstrates that the model can simultaneously enhance two important learning aspects: motivation and discipline. In line with this, Putri et al. (2023) highlight the central role of teachers as facilitators who do not merely teach but also guide and create a humane and comfortable learning atmosphere, supporting a balanced development of students intellectual and emotional growth. Teachers who act as facilitators with a humanistic approach effectively enhance the overall learning process as well as students character development. Additionally, Natalia (2025) offers a practical picture of applying humanistic theory through project based learning. By giving students the freedom to choose topics based on their interests, learning becomes highly personal and motivating. This approach also encourages creativity, responsibility, and collaboration, all of which are vital for developing students character and social competence.

Considering all these findings, it can be concluded that integrating humanistic and democratic models offers a learning approach that not only improves academic outcomes but

also supports students social, emotional, and character development. Learning that respects diversity while prioritizing active participation and responsibility reflects a holistic and humane form of education that aligns with the needs of contemporary and future learning. This approach creates opportunities for students to become independent, responsible, creative, and empathetic individuals, all of which are qualities needed for success not only in school but also in everyday life. Therefore, implementing the humanistic democratic model in elementary schools is a strategic and fundamental step in building a generation that is empowered and strong in character.

CONCLUSION

Based on an in depth review of the literature concerning various theories, concepts, and studies related to the implementation of the humanistic democratic model in elementary schools, it can be concluded that the use of these two models has a significant and comprehensive impact on increasing students motivation and learning discipline. The humanistic model views students as whole, unique individuals with potential that must be fully developed. This approach emphasizes the importance of creating a warm learning atmosphere filled with empathy and emotional support so that students feel valued, accepted, and encouraged to actively participate in the learning process.

Meanwhile, the democratic model provides opportunities for students to engage in classroom decision making, express ideas, and participate in various learning activities. Such involvement fosters a sense of ownership, increases responsibility, and strengthens their awareness of rules and learning obligations. When students are treated fairly and included in classroom processes, they demonstrate better discipline both in following school rules and in completing academic tasks.

The integration of these two models creates an inclusive, open, and supportive learning environment. This atmosphere not only increases students internal motivation but also shapes positive character traits such as independence, the ability to express opinions, cooperation, and social empathy. Teachers who use a humanistic democratic approach act as facilitators, guides, and learning partners who appreciate individual differences and support students holistic development. Positive relationships between teachers and students become an essential element in creating a comfortable, safe, and meaningful learning environment.

Previous research consistently shows that the implementation of this model positively influences the quality of students social interactions, the effectiveness of differentiated instruction, the strengthening of disciplinary culture through teacher role modeling, and the development of stable emotional and moral character. This approach provides space for students to express ideas, explore interests, and develop creativity, making learning relevant to each students individual potential.

Overall, the application of the humanistic democratic model in elementary schools is an important strategy that not only focuses on academic achievement but also on the comprehensive development of character and social emotional competence. This model is relevant to the needs of modern education, which prioritizes meaningful learning that is student centered and supports the formation of a generation equipped with intellectual, emotional, and moral intelligence. Therefore, this approach is highly appropriate as a guideline for educators

in creating classroom management that is humane, democratic, and aligned with modern educational principles that emphasize learning freedom, active participation, and the formation of whole human beings.

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