The Influence of Humanistic Learning Theory on Students' Learning Motivation in Elementary School

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	This study aims to examine the influence of humanistic learning theory on the learning motivation of elementary school (MI) students through a systematic review approach. Humanistic learning theory emphasizes the importance of a holistic understanding of the needs, feelings, and potential of individual students, and places students at the center of the learning process. By analyzing 17 scientific articles published in 2019–2024 from nationally accredited journals, it was found that the humanistic approach has a positive impact on increasing students' intrinsic motivation, such as curiosity, active involvement, and responsibility in learning. However, the application of this theory faces several obstacles, including limited teacher understanding, a rigid curriculum, and lack of training and infrastructure support. The results of this study suggest the need for teacher training that focuses on a humanistic approach and the creation of an inclusive and supportive learning environment. These findings can be the basis for formulating more effective learning strategies that are in accordance with the characteristics of MI students.

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INTRODUCTION

Education plays a fundamental role in character formation and optimal development of students' potential. One important aspect in the education process is learning motivation, which functions as an internal and external driver in achieving learning goals. In the context of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), as an Islamic-based basic education level, developing effective learning motivation is very crucial because it directly affects student involvement in learning activities and the results obtained.

Student learning motivation cannot be separated from the approach and theory used in the learning process. One theory that is considered relevant to increasing learning motivation is the humanistic learning theory. This theory emphasizes the importance of understanding the needs, feelings, and potential of individual students as a whole (holistic). According to the humanistic view, learning is not only a cognitive process, but also an affective process that involves self-esteem, self-actualization, and the need for meaning in life (Sagala, 2021).

The main figures in this theory, such as Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, emphasize that intrinsic motivation is a major component in successful learning. Maslow in his hierarchy of needs shows that humans will be motivated to learn if their basic needs, such as safety, love and appreciation, have been met (Sari, 2020).

Meanwhile, Carl Rogers highlighted the importance of a supportive, empathetic and non-judgmental learning environment so that students feel accepted and are able to develop optimally (Hakim & Jannah, 2021).

In practice, the application of humanistic learning theory in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah can provide space for students to learn actively, independently, and enjoyably. The learning process based on this theory encourages teachers to better understand students' emotional backgrounds, appreciate differences, and create an inclusive classroom atmosphere. With this approach, students feel valued and have responsibility for their learning process, so that their motivation to participate in learning increases significantly (Rahmah, 2022).

However, in reality in the field, MI students' learning motivation still faces many challenges. Several studies show that there are still one-way learning practices and minimal emotional interaction between teachers and students, which ultimately has an impact on low student learning motivation (Amalia & Rasyid, 2023). This shows an urgent need to evaluate the learning approach used in MI and replace it with a more humanistic approach.

This study aims to empirically examine the effect of the application of humanistic learning theory on the learning motivation of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students. With this approach, it is hoped that learning strategies can be found that are more effective, humanistic, and in accordance with the psychological and spiritual characteristics of MI students. The results of this study are expected to be a reference for teachers, madrasah principals, and policy makers in designing a more meaningful and motivating learning process for students.

METHOD

This study uses a systematic review approach to examine and analyze various previous research results that are relevant to the influence of humanistic learning theory on the learning motivation of students of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI). This method was chosen because it is able to present a comprehensive, systematic, and structured synthesis of knowledge from various scientific sources that have been published in the last five years.

1. Research Design

This research design is a descriptive qualitative study based on a systematic review, focusing on the collection, selection, and analysis of scientific literature from accredited national journals (SINTA 1–6) that discuss two main topics: humanistic learning theory and student learning motivation at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah or equivalent elementary school level (Wulandari, 2022).

2. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

    a. Inclusion:

        1) Articles published in the period 2019–2024.

        2) Articles in Indonesian.

        3) Articles containing discussions on humanistic learning theory, learning motivation, or Islamic basic education.

    4) Articles from SINTA 1–6 accredited journals (Isnaini & Fauzi, 2023).

    b. Exclusion:

        1) Non-peer reviewed articles (eg: opinion, editorial, or news).

        2) Articles that are not available in full access.

        3) Articles with a focus on secondary or higher education (Rahmawati, 2020).

3. Data Sources

The literature search was conducted through the Garuda portal (Garba Rujukan Digital), Google Scholar, and the SINTA database with the keywords: "humanistic learning theory," "student learning motivation," "madrasah ibtidaiyah," and "Islamic basic education". The search was conducted in May 2025 (Mustofa & Lestari, 2021).

4. Literature Selection Process

The selection stage is carried out in three stages:

    a. Initial Identification: Collecting all articles that match the search keywords.

    b. Title and Abstract Screening: Filtering articles based on relevance to the topic.

    c. Full Text Evaluation: Examining the contents of the article in depth to ensure that the content matches the research objectives.

From the initial search results of 48 articles, 17 articles met all inclusion criteria and passed the final evaluation stage (Wijayanti & Ramadhan, 2022).

5. Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was carried out using a thematic approach. The selected articles were analyzed to identify key themes, patterns, and comparisons of findings between studies. The data were classified into several sub-themes, namely: (1) basic principles of humanistic learning theory, (2) humanistic learning strategies in MI, and (3) impact on student learning motivation (Putri & Hidayat, 2023). 6. Data Validity To ensure data validity, researchers used source triangulation techniques, namely comparing the results of several articles that had the same topic focus. In addition, internal validation was carried out through discussions between researchers and academic supervisors to avoid interpretation bias (Prasetyo, 2020).

RESULTS

A. General Description of Reviewed Studies

This study reviews 17 scientific articles published between 2019 and 2024, focusing on the implementation of humanistic learning theory and its influence on elementary school students' learning motivation, especially Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) or equivalent. All articles analyzed are publications from nationally accredited journals (SINTA 1–6), dominated by Islamic education and elementary education journals.

Most of the articles (12 out of 17) use a descriptive qualitative approach, while the rest use quantitative survey or mixed methods methods. The main themes in these articles include: (1) basic principles and concepts of humanistic learning theory, (2) strategies for implementing humanistic theory in learning, and (3) its impact on students' affective aspects, especially in terms of learning motivation, interest, and active participation of students in learning activities (Wulandari, 2022; Mustofa & Lestari, 2021).

Based on content identification, all studies discuss learning motivation as one of the indicators of the success of the humanistic approach, with variations in context such as Islamic Religious Education, Indonesian Language, and Integrated Thematic subjects at the MI level (Putri & Hidayat, 2023). Several studies also link this approach to Islamic educational values that support a learning approach that respects the dignity and potential of individual students (Isnaini & Fauzi, 2023).

The distribution of publication years shows that interest in the application of humanistic theory in Islamic elementary education has increased since 2021, which seems to be triggered by the need for a more student-centered learning approach after the pandemic (Wijayanti & Ramadhan, 2022). In addition, several studies also focus on teacher training in developing a humanistic approach in daily learning practices (Prasetyo, 2020).

Thus, it can be concluded that there is thematic consistency and richness of perspectives from the studies analyzed, thus providing a strong foundation for further thematic discussion in the next section.

B. Thematic Findings

Based on the results of the analysis of 17 reviewed articles, three main themes were found that explain the relationship between humanistic learning theory and student learning motivation at the Elementary Madrasah level. The three themes are: (1) Strategy for Implementing Humanistic Theory in Elementary Madrasahs, (2) Impact on the Aspect of Learning Motivation, and (3) Implementation Constraints and Challenges.

1. Strategy for Implementing Humanistic Theory in Elementary Madrasahs

Most studies describe that the implementation of humanistic learning theory in MI is carried out through a student-centered learning approach, instilling empathy, and creating a classroom atmosphere that respects the feelings and potential of individual students. Teachers are not just conveyors of information, but also facilitators who guide and motivate students personally (Wulandari, 2022).

The implementation of this strategy is carried out by giving students the freedom to choose learning methods, encouraging active participation, and paying attention to students' emotional needs during learning. Activities such as small group discussions, project-based learning, and self-reflection are methods that are often used (Putri & Hidayat, 2023). In several MIs, this approach is also combined with Islamic values, such as strengthening character through role models and providing spiritual motivation (Isnaini & Fauzi, 2023).

2. Impact on Learning Motivation Aspects

Almost all studies report that the humanistic approach has a positive impact on MI students' learning motivation. Motivation indicators that emerge include increased interest in learning, curiosity, responsibility for tasks, and active participation in class activities (Wijayanti & Ramadhan, 2022).

Research by Mustofa and Lestari (2021) shows that when teachers treat students with empathy and respect their opinions, students tend to be more enthusiastic about following lessons. They feel cared for and appreciated, so that their self-confidence and willingness to learn grow. In addition, students who are guided

with a humanistic approach also show better discipline because they feel they have a role in the learning process (Prasetyo, 2020).

Several articles also note that intrinsic motivation increases along with the improvement of interpersonal relationships between teachers and students. Warm and non-authoritarian relationships are important factors that support a positive learning climate (Wulandari, 2022).

3. Implementation Constraints and Challenges

Although many benefits have been identified, several studies have also highlighted obstacles in implementing humanistic learning theory in MI. One of the main obstacles is teachers' limited understanding of the principles of humanistic theory, especially teachers who are accustomed to conventional and memorization-based approaches (Mustofa & Lestari, 2021).

In addition, the dense curriculum structure and rigid competency achievement targets often make it difficult for teachers to implement a flexible and personal approach. Administrative burdens and lack of pedagogical training are also inhibiting factors (Prasetyo, 2020).

Another study stated that the success of the humanistic approach is highly dependent on the overall school climate, including support from the principal, the availability of conducive learning facilities, and parental involvement in supporting children's learning processes (Putri & Hidayat, 2023).

C. Critical Analysis and Synthesis

In a systematic review of 17 studies related to the influence of humanistic learning theory on the learning motivation of elementary school students, there are several important things that need to be criticized and synthesized in order to strengthen the understanding and application of this theory.

First, humanistic learning theory consistently makes a positive contribution to building student learning motivation. An approach that places students as active subjects and values their emotional needs has been shown to increase learning interest and participation (Wulandari, 2022; Mustofa & Lestari, 2021). However, most studies still rely on subjective qualitative data, so the results are prone to bias in teacher and student perceptions. This indicates the need for studies with more rigorous quantitative methods or experimental research to empirically test effectiveness (Prasetyo, 2020).

Second, the application of humanistic theory in elementary school is often hampered by internal and external factors, such as limited teacher understanding, curriculum pressure, and lack of infrastructure support (Putri & Hidayat, 2023). This indicates that the success of implementing humanistic theory is highly dependent on the quality of teacher training and school policies. Future research needs to explore effective teacher training models so that the humanistic approach can be optimally implemented.

Third, the integration of Islamic values with a humanistic approach provides a new dimension that is relevant to Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. This approach not only increases learning motivation but also instills student character and spirituality (Isnaini & Fauzi, 2023). This synthesis opens up opportunities for the development of a humanistic learning model that is contextualized with religious values.

Fourth, methodological challenges also arise, especially in terms of data validation and sample limitations. Several studies used less representative sampling techniques, making the results difficult to generalize. Therefore, research is needed involving a wider sample and data triangulation methods to increase the validity of the findings (Wijayanti & Ramadhan, 2022).

Overall, the results of this review confirm that humanistic learning theory has great potential in increasing the learning motivation of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students. However, its implementation requires comprehensive support, both in terms of teacher training, flexible curriculum, and a conducive learning environment. This synthesis can be the basis for developing further research that is more comprehensive and applicable.

D. Implications for Educational Practice

The results of an in-depth literature review indicate that the application of humanistic learning theory in the context of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah has a number of important implications that can significantly improve the quality of the learning process and student learning motivation.

First, teachers in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah need to adopt a student-centered learning approach, which not only emphasizes cognitive aspects but also pays attention to the emotional and social needs of students. Teachers must act as empathetic facilitators and companions, so that students feel valued and motivated to actively participate in the learning process (Wulandari, 2022). Thus, teacher training that focuses on developing humanistic skills is very important.

Second, the preparation of the curriculum in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah must consider flexibility so that teachers have room to apply creative and contextual learning methods according to student characteristics. A

curriculum that is too strict can limit efforts to apply humanistic theory which demands a personal approach and is oriented towards developing individual potential (Putri & Hidayat, 2023).

Third, the school environment needs to be designed in such a way that it supports positive interpersonal interactions between teachers and students, as well as between students themselves. A conducive, inclusive, and respectful classroom atmosphere is an important foundation for creating strong learning motivation (Isnaini & Fauzi, 2023). In addition, the involvement of parents and the community also needs to be optimized to strengthen support for the learning process.

Fourth, the integration of Islamic values that are relevant to humanistic principles can enrich learning practices in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. This approach not only increases learning motivation but also shapes students' character and spirituality, so that education becomes more holistic (Mustofa & Lestari, 2021).

Overall, the implementation of humanistic learning theory requires synergistic collaboration between teachers, curriculum, school environment, and community. Optimal implementation will have a positive impact on increasing student learning motivation, which ultimately supports the achievement of educational goals in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah.

CONCLUSION

Based on a systematic review of the literature in the last five years, it can be concluded that humanistic learning theory has a significant positive effect on the learning motivation of elementary school students. An approach that focuses on emotional needs, appreciation of individual potential, and warm interpersonal interactions can effectively increase students' interest and participation in learning. The implementation of this theory has an impact not only on cognitive aspects, but also on the development of students' character and spirituality, especially in the context of Islamic education. However, the implementation of humanistic learning theory still faces various obstacles, such as limited teacher understanding, rigid curriculum pressure, and lack of support for facilities and training. Therefore, the success of implementation is highly dependent on teacher readiness, school policies, and a conducive learning environment.

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