HUMANISTIC APPROACH IN BUILDING ETHICAL RESILIENCE AND EMPATHY: A CASE STUDY AT SDN MADYOPURO 2

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ABSTRACT

This case study examines the impact of a humanistic approach on the ethical resilience and empathy of students at SDN Madyopuro 2. The humanistic approach helps students achieve academically and grow socially and emotionally. A qualitative case study design was employed to capture practices observed in grades 4 and 6, utilizing classroom observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The implementation of key strategies, including value-oriented activities, reflective dialogues, and collaborative learning, proved instrumental in fostering moral resilience and empathy among students. These methods enabled students to navigate ethical dilemmas and cultivate a more profound interpersonal understanding. Success depended on educators adopting a student-centered approach and the school principal's support. However, the implementation of these strategies could have been improved by addressing challenges such as limited time and resistance to change. These findings highlight the necessity for systemic and cultural transformations to realize the full potential of humanistic education. This research supports the use of humanistic approaches in primary character education. It provides actionable insights for educational institutions seeking to implement strategies that promote holistic student development, thereby making a meaningful contribution to the discourse on character education.

| KEYWORDS | *humanistic approach, ethical resilience, empathy, character education, elementary school.* |

INTRODUCTION

The capacity for moral flexibility and compassionate conduct among young individuals is fundamental to navigating the complex ethical and moral challenges that characterize the contemporary world. The humanistic instructional method is predicated on developing qualities that prioritize students' comprehensive growth and well-being. In this approach, the emphasis is placed on holistic student development rather than solely on academic achievement, thereby fostering a learning environment centered on the student's needs. This approach affords equal value to moral, social, and emotional skills. In primary school, cultivating these attributes enables students to navigate ethical challenges and establish a robust moral foundation.

The humanistic approach prioritizes personal experience and critical thinking and is well-suited to fostering moral flexibility. This approach comprehends ethical perspectives and encourages individuals to address moral issues with discernment and empathy (Volpe et al., 2024). Historically, educational contexts have frequently adopted pedagogical approaches that position the instructor as the primary figure of authority and knowledge (Aung, 2020). Such a model ensures success in academic achievement and standardized testing, yet it frequently fails to cultivate moral and emotional development in children (Murphy et al., 2021). Conversely, learner-centered approaches, such as humanistic education, prioritize the personal growth and experience of the learners. The strategies delineated herein are designed to foster an

environment that cultivates empathy, ethical reasoning, and a robust moral foundation (Aung, 2020). Ethical resilience, a framework of principles rooted in a deliberate engagement with ethical dilemmas and a demonstration of compassion, provides humanistic avenues where personal experiences and reflective learning play an essential role (Volpe et al., 2024).

Educational institutions should adopt methods emphasizing ethical-culturalist principles like care, compassion, and respect to promote humanistic ethics. The core of moral responsibility in this perspective is cultivating a compassionate learning environment that fosters a culture of inclusion, where empathy and ethical conduct flourish organically (Spohrer, 2024). The implementation of humanistic methodologies in the character development process at *SDN Madyopuro 2* is firmly established to address challenges in a collaborative social learning environment while fostering students' ethical resilience and empathy.

Previous research by Aung (2020) highlighted the limitations of traditional teacher-centered instruction in promoting students' moral development, noting that such pedagogical models often prioritize rote learning and academic performance at the expense of personal and ethical growth. Additionally, Murphy et al. (2021) found that emotionally and morally rich educational environments significantly influence the development of compassion and moral reasoning among children. However, both studies primarily addressed the theoretical underpinnings of learner-centered and humanistic education without a detailed, context-specific exploration of its application in primary school character education programs. This study fills that gap by providing an empirical investigation into the implementation of humanistic approaches at *SDN Madyopuro 2*, focusing on their practical impact on students' ethical resilience and empathy. It further evaluates the institutional and pedagogical conditions that either support or hinder the effectiveness of these methods, offering a grounded contribution to the discourse on moral education in early schooling.

The primary aim of this study is to examine how humanistic educational methods are operationalized in the character education program at *SDN Madyopuro 2* and assess their effectiveness in enhancing students' empathy and moral strength. The findings are expected to inform best practices for integrating humanistic values in elementary education and serve as a model for other schools striving to develop well-rounded, ethically conscious students. The findings of this study underscore the considerable influence of humanistic methodologies on the ethical resilience and empathy of students at SDN Madyopuro 2. Implementing reflective and value-based activities, such as group discussions and collaborative projects, facilitated the integration of students' personal experiences with moral reasoning. This integration facilitated a more profound comprehension and engagement with ethical quandaries. For example, during classroom observations, teachers employed student-centered learning strategies, such as inquiry-based and cooperative learning, encouraging active student participation and reflection. A teacher observed that students showed increasing concern for their peers, indicating a tangible improvement in their empathy and ethical decision-making abilities.

METHOD

The focus group discussions with students further corroborated this growth, as participants articulated how collaborative tasks and reflective dialogues assisted them in developing a deeper comprehension of and consideration for the perspectives of others. These findings align with those of previous studies, such as Aung (2020), which emphasize the role

of reflective practices in nurturing empathy and moral development. Furthermore, the interviews with the headmaster and curriculum vice-principal revealed that the school's commitment to a humanistic framework was instrumental in fostering these outcomes. ScienceDirect's metadata from sources between 2020 and 2024 found that ethical resilience and empathy concepts received considerable attention in education, due to their perceived importance in the creation of inclusive learning environments, the fostering of moral character, and the development of essential social skills.

A review of keyword trends and thematic distributions reveals a notable correlation between project-based learning and collaborative approaches (Pan et al., 2023; Trepper et al., 2022; Wingard et al., 2022). Students engaged in real-world projects tend to develop empathy through direct experiences and social interactions. Furthermore, critical thinking, cognitive learning, and active learning approaches facilitate the development of empathy by encouraging the consideration of diverse perspectives. Themes such as child-friendly social environments and community-focused activities also contribute to the strengthening of ethical resilience, with a focus on conflict resolution and collaborative problem-solving. In recent years, particularly between 2023 and 2024, there has been a notable increase in the momentum surrounding these themes.

The findings are likely driven by global challenges such as the pandemic, which have underscored the need for emotional and moral well-being in education. As illustrated in Figure 1, the prominence of keywords such as "collaboration," "critical thinking," and "adaptive capacity" demonstrates the emphasis on skills that promote ethical and empathetic behaviors (Choi et al., 2022; Didham & Ofei-Manu, 2020; Yi-Ming Kao et al., 2025). The advent of concepts such as distributed leadership and adaptive capacity reinforces the notion that inclusive and flexible school management can reinforce character-based education. Regarding practical implications, there is a clear requirement for teacher training, curriculum development, and technological support in the form of digital learning platforms.
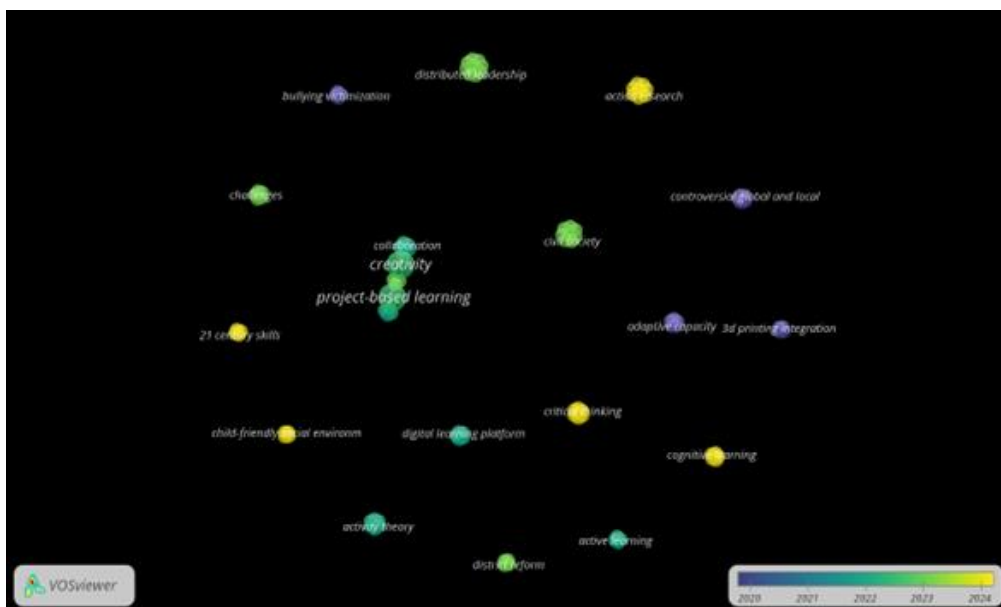

Figure 1. Trends and Emerging Themes in Education: Ethical Resilience, Empathy, and 21st Century Skills (2020-2024)

Despite the favorable outcomes, the study revealed significant obstacles to consistently implementing humanistic approaches. Time constraints were identified as a recurring issue, with teachers indicating difficulty balancing value-based activities with the demands of the existing curriculum. Moreover, some educators and students needed help transitioning from conventional teaching methodologies to a more student-centered approach. These challenges are consistent with the observations of Spohrer (2024), who noted analogous impediments in implementing character education programs. The role of leadership and institutional support was pivotal in surmounting these challenges. The headmaster's proactive measures, including regular classroom observations and establishing a collaborative school culture, proved instrumental in facilitating the successful integration of humanistic strategies. Such support ensured teachers had the resources and guidance to navigate the transition effectively.

These findings contribute to a broader understanding of the implementation of humanistic approaches in primary education settings to enhance students' moral and emotional development. In conclusion, this study illustrates that the implementation of humanistic educational strategies at *SDN Madyopuro 2* markedly enhanced students' ethical resilience and empathy. While challenges related to time management and traditional mindsets persist, the support from school leadership and the commitment of educators have been pivotal in addressing these issues. These findings highlight the transformative potential of humanistic education and provide a framework for its broader application in similar educational contexts.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this research provide compelling evidence that humanistic approaches are an effective means of fostering ethical resilience and empathy among elementary school students. By integrating humanistic techniques into Discovery and Project-based Learning activities, educators at SDN Madyopuro 2 established a learning environment promoting cognitive and affective development. Figure 2 elucidates the interconnection between reflective and collaborative activities and the manifestation of ethical resilience outcomes. This diagrammatic representation demonstrates that each activity, whether involving students or teachers, exerts a reciprocal influence on the others.
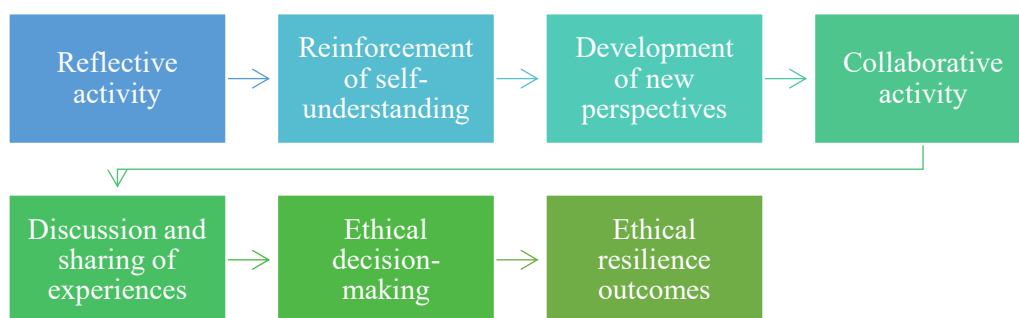
Figure 2. Flow of Ethical Resilience Development through Humanistic Education

The flowchart depicts the methodology through which humanistic approaches foster ethical resilience in students. The process elucidates the interrelated stages of reflective activities, collaborative practices, and decision-making processes, which collectively facilitate

students' moral and ethical development. The process commences with reflective activities, wherein students are urged to engage in critical analysis and comprehension of their personal experiences. Such activities facilitate self-awareness, allowing students to identify their values, beliefs, and emotional responses. Consequently, they develop a more robust sense of self-understanding, which serves as the basis for ethical reasoning. This self-awareness facilitates the development of novel perspectives, enabling students to contemplate issues from a multiplicity of viewpoints and to enhance their empathy for others. Subsequently, students engage in collaborative activities, wherein they apply their insights in group settings. These activities facilitate active communication, teamwork, and collective problem-solving, thereby providing students with opportunities to apply their ethical understanding in real-world scenarios. A crucial element of this phase is discussion and experience sharing, which enables students to enhance their comprehension of moral principles through dialogue and interaction with their peers.

The integration of reflection, collaboration, and discussion provides students with the requisite tools for ethical decision-making. As a result of these processes, students develop the capacity to navigate ethical dilemmas in a balanced and informed manner. In conclusion, the culmination of these stages results in ethical resilience, whereby students demonstrate the capacity to uphold moral values and respond effectively to challenges involving ethical considerations. This cyclical process highlights the significance of integrating reflective and collaborative activities in humanistic education, emphasizing the reciprocal influence between individual introspection and collective engagement. The flowchart provides a visual representation of the systematic approach to fostering holistic ethical development among students through a well-structured humanistic methodology.

Then, the observation found that the sixth-grade classroom is an illustrative example of how Discovery Learning, when infused with humanistic principles, can facilitate the cultivation of ethical resilience. As students engaged in collaborative historical inquiry, they simultaneously confronted the intricacies of group dynamics. This process inherently requires negotiating, compromising, and respecting diverse perspectives, which are crucial to ethical resilience. Furthermore, the teacher's emphasis on interactive participation through questioning enhanced this process, encouraging students to actively listen, consider alternative viewpoints, and engage in constructive dialogue. This finding is consistent with Rogers' concept of empathetic understanding, a fundamental tenet of humanistic education. It entails an effort to comprehend and value the perspectives of others (Fernandez & Zahavi, 2020).

Furthermore, the instructor's proactive approach to managing inattentiveness through behavioral reminders and structured feedback fostered a respectful and reflective learning atmosphere using project-based learning. The concept of Pedagogical Relational Teachership (PeRT) is introduced as a relational approach that supports the development of new knowledge about teachers' relational proficiencies. This approach highlights the importance of creating opportunities for students to participate in their education, suggesting that a nurturing environment is necessary for students to emerge as unique individuals. The study discusses the importance of children's rights in education, advocating for a relational approach that emphasizes the child's right to participate in democratic educational relationships. This focus on rights underscores the need for a secure and supportive environment where children can

express themselves and engage meaningfully in their learning. The study mentioned in the paper involved children from various backgrounds and abilities, highlighting the importance of secure educational environments. The positive experiences shared by students regarding their teachers indicate that a nurturing atmosphere is conducive to development and learning (Hollarek & Lee, 2022).

The emphasis on hands-on experimentation in the fourth-grade classroom provided an optimal environment for cultivating empathy. As students engaged in collaborative experimentation, they gained firsthand experience of the interdependence and shared responsibility inherent in scientific inquiry. The discovery is consistent with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which underscores the significance of social interaction in cognitive development. By working collectively towards a shared objective, students developed an understanding of the perspectives and needs of their peers, thereby fostering empathy and compassion (Sarmiento-Campos et al., 2022). Moreover, the instructor's emphasis on safety and ethical conduct during the experiments fostered a sense of responsibility and accountability, reinforcing the importance of considering the consequences of one's actions on others.

Additionally, the study illuminates the inherent challenges associated with implementing humanistic approaches. Time constraints, a persistent challenge in education, often limit opportunities for more profound reflection and inquiry. This is consistent with Dewey's emphasis on experiential learning, which requires sufficient time for students to engage in meaningful activities and reflect on their experiences. Moreover, the persistence of traditional mindsets among some educators and students underscores the necessity for continuous professional development and a transformation in educational culture. This is consistent with Freire's critical pedagogy, which calls educators to challenge traditional power structures and create a more democratic and inclusive learning environment (Mclaren, 2020).

Notwithstanding these challenges, the supportive leadership at SDN Madyopuro 2 proved instrumental in facilitating the adoption of humanistic methodologies. The headmaster's dedication to fostering a collaborative environment through regular meetings and professional development opportunities equipped educators with the necessary support and resources to effectively navigate these challenges, ultimately contributing to a school culture conducive to innovation and the successful implementation of humanistic methodologies. This highlights the significance of leadership in spearheading educational reform and fostering an environment conducive to innovation.

The headmaster highlighted that weekly teacher meetings and ongoing professional development sessions provided a platform for educators to address challenges and share effective strategies. Keywords were derived from a thematic analysis of interview transcripts provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency of Key Themes and Their Frequencies

Keywords	Frequency	Description
Humanistic approach	12	The pedagogical approach is centered on the student, with an emphasis on fostering social-emotional growth and potential.

Keywords	Frequency	Description
Ethical Resilience	8	The capacity of students to demonstrate resilience in the context of ethical dilemmas, grounded in an understanding of moral values and principles.
Empathy	10	The capacity of students to comprehend and empathize with the emotional states of others within the context of academic pursuits.
Reflective Learning	7	Reflective discussion to link personal experiences with ethical dilemmas.
Collaborative Learning	9	Group work-based learning that facilitates empathy and social skills.
Teacher Challenge	6	Teachers' constraints in adopting humanistic approaches, including time and traditional mindsets.
Institutional Support	5	Principal support in supporting values-based learning and reflection.
Curriculum adjustment	4	Curriculum adjustments to support humanistic approaches.
Student-centered Strategies	8	Learning methods that focus on students' needs, interests and experiences.
Value-based activities	6	Activities that emphasize value-based learning for student character strengthening.

Thematic analysis revealed that the key themes were "humanistic approach" (12 mentions) and "empathy" (10 mentions), indicating that these concepts were central to the participants' experiences. Furthermore, collaborative and reflective learning were identified as frequently mentioned strategies, with 9 and 7 references, respectively. These approaches are perceived as effective in fostering ethical resilience.

In conclusion, this research offers a significant contribution to humanistic education. The evidence demonstrates the efficacy of humanistic techniques in fostering ethical resilience and empathy, providing a compelling argument for their wider adoption in elementary school settings. The findings underscore the significance of establishing a nurturing and collaborative learning atmosphere where students can engage in genuine inquiry, refine their ethical discernment, and foster empathy. While challenges remain, the study's insights offer valuable guidance for educators and policymakers seeking to promote holistic student development through humanistic education.

Ethical Resilience and Empathy Development through Humanistic Approaches

The findings substantiate the assertion that implementing a humanistic pedagogical framework is an effective strategy that enhances ethical resilience and empathy among students at SDN Madyopuro 2. The framework incorporated a variety of interactive and reflective learning strategies, including value-based activities, collaborative tasks, and reflective dialogues. These approaches enabled students to connect their personal experiences and moral reasoning, facilitating a more profound understanding of ethical principles and empathetic responses.

For example, in sixth-grade social science classes, discovery learning prompted students to collaborate on historical topics by creating pop-up books, such as the arrival of foreign nations in Indonesia. This creative task facilitated individual and group engagement, reinforcing ethical decision-making as students interacted with their peers. The teacher's consistent feedback and guidance proved instrumental in influencing students' moral reasoning and establishing a culture of mutual respect. Similarly, in the fourth grade, hands-on experiments on the transformation of matter allowed students to practice collaboration and attentiveness, enhancing their empathy through shared responsibilities during group work. These findings are consistent with those of Aung (2020) who emphasized the role of student-centered approaches in fostering moral and emotional skills. Furthermore, reflective practices, such as group discussions and role-play scenarios, reinforced the transformative potential of humanistic methods, as observed by Volpe et al. (2024) state that student-centered pedagogical approaches frequently entail collaborative learning, wherein students engage in the exchange of experiences and perspectives. Such collaboration can facilitate a more nuanced comprehension of the moral and emotional intricacies inherent to the field of healthcare. It enables students to gain insights and experiences from one another, thereby enriching their understanding of these complexities.

Challenges in Implementation

The identified challenges are consistent with broader concerns in the field of educational reform. Time constraints represent a persistent challenge, intensified by overloaded curricula and the pressures of standardized testing, which frequently impede the integration of innovative pedagogical approaches (Kumagai & Naidu, 2020). This requires a critical examination of curriculum priorities and a reconsideration of the way time is distributed within the school day.

Moreover, the observed reluctance to embrace change among some educators and students highlights the pervasive influence of traditional educational paradigms. This requires a multifaceted approach that encompasses not only professional development but also initiatives to cultivate a shared understanding of the advantages of humanistic education among all stakeholders (Arnold & Foncubierta, 2021). The restricted access to professional development opportunities serves to compound this challenge further, thereby restricting educators' capacity to embrace and implement humanistic strategies fully. This underscores the necessity for sustained investment in teacher training and ongoing support in order to guarantee practical pedagogical innovation.

These findings align with those of previous research, which indicates that teachers' reluctance to adopt a humanistic approach in the classroom can be influenced by a range of factors, including pre-existing beliefs, a lack of support, and perceptions about the efficacy of the new approach (Lomba-Portela et al., 2022). Teachers may have pre-existing beliefs about teaching that are incompatible with the humanist approach, which may result in resistance to changes that challenge those beliefs. Similarly, teachers frequently need more support, such as training or guidance, to effectively implement new approaches. With this support, they may feel prepared and able to make changes. If teachers perceive that a new approach is not more effective or does not have a significant positive impact on student learning, they may be inclined to resist its adoption.

Facilitators of Success

The study highlights the pivotal function of leadership in cultivating a school culture that is conducive to the implementation of humanistic approaches. The headmaster's dedication to collaborative practices, as evidenced by the institution's weekly teacher meetings and professional development sessions, fostered a supportive environment for educators to engage in experimentation, disseminate exemplary practices, and collectively confront challenges. Moreover, the incorporation of reflective discourse and structured feedback into the classroom routine facilitated the development of stronger teacher-student relationships, thereby establishing a foundation for ethical and empathetic growth. This is consistent with the tenets of relational pedagogy, which underscores the significance of genuine connections and mutual respect in the learning process (Ljungblad, 2021). The study highlights that successful teacher-student relationships are built on trust and respect. When teachers create a safe and supportive atmosphere, students feel valued and are more likely to express themselves openly. This trust fosters empathy, as students feel understood and respected by their teachers. The concept of pedagogical tact, which refers to the teachers' ability to respond sensitively to students' needs, plays a significant role in developing empathy. Teachers who demonstrate tact can create spaces where students' unique voices emerge, allowing for deeper emotional connections.

In order to optimize the efficacy of the humanist approach in primary schools, particularly in terms of fortifying students' ethical and moral resilience, principals can facilitate this process through the implementation of a number of strategic techniques. Firstly, servant leadership can be implemented by principals who emphasize spiritual and moral values. This entails active listening, open communication, and acceptance of feedback, as well as the integration of moral, religious, and spiritual values into the leadership philosophy. This approach has the potential to cultivate a humanistic learning environment and to foster personal awareness and ethical wisdom (Effendi & Erb, 2024). Secondly, a humanist approach should be adopted, which emphasizes harmonious relationships, the respectful treatment of subordinates as human beings, and the modelling of positive behavior. This approach has been demonstrated to be effective in strengthening character education and shaping students' characters (Effendi, 2020).

In conclusion, educators may consider developing specialized programs that integrate moral and spiritual elements into the curriculum, with the aim of enhancing character education (Sakarina et al., 2023). At Madyopuro 2 Primary School, parents are also engaged in collaborative efforts with the school to ensure the success of the *Gebyar Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (P5) program from its initial planning stages to its final evaluation. Furthermore, parent committee representatives from each class regularly assist with the school's cleaning, which is referred to as "Friday Clean-Up." This weekly program is done in collaboration with students and teachers. Such an approach can foster ethical resilience, whereby learners engage in reflective learning, implement the learned ethical principles in their actions, and observe the ethical conduct of their parents and teachers.

Qualitative Insights and Patterns

The thematic analysis offers compelling evidence that humanistic approaches have a positive impact on students' ethical and empathetic development (see Table 2). The observed enhancement in ethical decision-making through structured discussions and real-world problem-solving activities indicates that these approaches offer students the chance to hone their moral reasoning abilities and cultivate their ethical sensibilities in genuine settings. This is consistent with the theory of moral development, particularly as proposed by Lawrence Kohlberg, suggests that individuals progress through stages of moral reasoning. This progression influences how students perceive ethical dilemmas and make decisions, fostering a deeper understanding of right and wrong. As students advance through these stages, they begin to consider the perspectives of others more critically. This ability to empathize with different viewpoints is crucial for ethical decision-making, as it encourages students to weigh the consequences of their actions on others, promoting a more compassionate approach to conflicts and moral issues. The development of empathy is closely linked to moral reasoning. Students who engage in discussions about moral dilemmas often enhance their perspective-taking abilities, which is a key component of empathy. This is supported by research indicating that perspective-taking can lead to improved relationships and social competence among peers (Hollarek & Lee, 2022).

Similarly, the enhancement of empathy through collaborative tasks and reflective dialogues underscores the efficacy of these approaches in fostering interpersonal understanding and compassion. This is consistent with the theory of empathy development put forth by which emphasizes the role of perspective-taking and emotional responsiveness in fostering empathy. The reinforcement of teacher-student relationships through consistent feedback and empathetic teaching approaches reinforces the importance of the creation of a supportive and nurturing learning environment. This is consistent with the tenets of attachment theory, which posits that secure relationships are a vital component in the promotion of social and emotional development (Firestone, 2024).

Table 2. *Patterns in Humanistic Approach Outcomes*

Theme	Observation	Supporting Quotes
Ethical Decision-Making	Improved through structured value-based discussions and real-word problem scenarios	"Students are increasingly making ethical choices in peer interactions"
Empathy Development	Enhanced by collaborative learning and reflective dialogues.	"Collaborative tasks have helped students better understand others' needs."
Teacher-Student Relations	Strengthened through consistent feedback and empathetic teaching approaches.	"Regular feedback sessions build trust and encourage open communication."

The findings of this study are consistent with existing literature on the integration of humanistic approaches to character education, particularly the philosophy of Ki Hajar Dewantara. Dewantara's educational framework emphasizes the holistic development of students, with a focus on moral growth and ethical resilience. Central to his philosophy is that education should nurture the whole individual - addressing their moral, emotional, and intellectual potential - within a supportive and inclusive environment. Teachers play a pivotal

role in this process by embodying ethical behavior and serving as role models for students through "Patrap Guru," which emphasizes the importance of leading by example. This principle fosters a culture of respect and ethical behavior in schools, as supported by Anggraini & Wiryanto (2022), who emphasize that cultivating ethical behavior among all school members strengthens the moral integrity of the community.

In classrooms where humanistic approaches were employed, students engaged in reflective practices and value-based learning activities that encouraged moral reasoning. For instance, group discussions about real-life ethical dilemmas helped students critically evaluate their choices, fostering ethical resilience. The study also found that collaborative projects, such as creating historical pop-up books in sixth-grade social studies, encouraged students to negotiate, compromise, and respect diverse perspectives. These findings support Rogers' concept of empathetic understanding, where engaging with others' viewpoints deepens interpersonal awareness and ethical decision-making (Fernandez & Zahavi, 2020).

The humanistic approach also emphasizes student-centered learning, which allows students to express themselves freely and develop moral reasoning. This fosters ethical resilience as students learn to overcome challenges and make decisions based on their values. Beyond the classroom, school leaders and administrators are instrumental in creating policies that promote ethical practices and the moral development of all school members. These efforts include teacher training programs and fostering a culture of cooperation and mutual respect. Dewantara's philosophy reinforces the idea that education is a shared responsibility by involving parents and the wider community. Schools can create a supportive network that helps students understand the social implications of their actions, fostering accountability and a sense of responsibility. Integrating moral education into the curriculum, as seen in Dewantara's concept of Merdeka belajar ("freedom to learn"), allows for ethical discussions and critical thinking about moral dilemmas, preparing students to face real-world challenges.

The study also underscores the importance of integrating value-based learning into the curriculum to nurture ethical behavior and responsible citizenship among students. Observations at SDN Madyopuro 2 demonstrated that embedding moral education into daily classroom activities enhanced students' ability to apply ethical principles in real-world contexts. For instance, fourth-grade students participating in hands-on science experiments demonstrated heightened empathy and teamwork, reflecting the principles of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory. However, these efforts require curriculum adjustments that allow sufficient time for experiential learning. Without such changes, the potential of humanistic approaches may remain underutilized.

However, this study also highlights significant challenges in implementing a humanistic approach, particularly the need for more respectful communication and its impact on the classroom environment. Intania & Sutama (2020) noted that a lack of respectful dialogue can lead to misunderstandings, conflicts, and a culture of mistrust that hinders the development of empathy and ethical decision-making. Peer influence, when negative, can undermine students' moral reasoning and promote behaviors that conflict with ethical standards, leading to disengagement and entitlement. Such an environment diminishes the collaborative and supportive culture necessary to foster moral development and resilience.

Addressing these challenges requires intentionally focusing on the teacher's role in creating a positive classroom climate. Teachers must model empathy, respect, and ethical behavior to set clear standards for students. This is consistent with findings highlighting teachers' organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs), such as demonstrating empathy and teaching etiquette, as critical to fostering ethical resilience. Creating a classroom culture that prioritizes open communication, and mutual respect can mitigate the effects of negative peer influences. Discussions encouraging students to express their perspectives and feelings help build a sense of belonging and community, which is essential for moral growth. Utari (2023) suggests that teachers should also increase their social awareness - a dimension of OCB that is often underdeveloped - by becoming more attuned to the dynamics within the classroom. This will enable them to proactively address issues and provide targeted support to students who struggle with empathy and respect.

Integrating value-based learning in the primary school curriculum is essential for nurturing ethical behavior and responsible citizenship among young learners. Strengthening the curriculum to emphasize core values such as integrity, respect, and social justice is crucial. Teachers play a significant role in influencing learners' values, and thus, enhancing teacher training to focus on value-based education is recommended (Yauma, 2024). On the other hand, principals can improve teacher performance and satisfaction by using humanistic leadership, which in turn enhances the quality of education. This approach is particularly effective in early childhood education, where meeting the basic needs of teachers is crucial for creating a strong educational foundation (Fauzan et al., 2023).

Beyond classroom practices, the study highlighted the critical role of school leadership in supporting humanistic education. The headmaster's consistent efforts to facilitate teacher collaboration and professional development proved instrumental in fostering a culture of innovation. Weekly teacher meetings provided a platform for sharing best practices, addressing challenges, and promoting reflective teaching strategies. These findings align with Fauzan et al. (2023) , who argue that humanistic leadership enhances teacher satisfaction and performance, which, in turn, improves the quality of education. However, despite these supportive measures, challenges such as time constraints and resistance to change persisted. Teachers often struggled to balance the demands of the curriculum with the need for deeper engagement in value-based activities, echoing the structural challenges (Spohrer, 2024).

While the findings validate the transformative potential of Dewantara's humanistic approach, they also highlight areas for systemic improvement. One promising avenue is enhancing teacher training programs to focus on reflective and value-based pedagogies. Teachers need tools to address both academic and ethical dimensions of learning. Additionally, involving parents and the wider community can strengthen the support network for moral education, as emphasized by Dewantara's belief in shared responsibility. For example, SDN Madyopuro 2's involvement of parents in collaborative projects reinforced moral values at both school and home.

In summary, this study provides empirical evidence that humanistic approaches, when supported by strong leadership and integrated into the curriculum, can significantly enhance students' ethical resilience and empathy. However, to fully realize the potential of these approaches, schools must address challenges such as time constraints and cultural resistance.

Future research should explore longitudinal impacts and the scalability of humanistic methods across diverse educational contexts to ensure their broader applicability.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the transformative impact of humanistic approaches—such as values-based activities, reflective dialogue, and collaborative learning—on enhancing ethical resilience and empathy among elementary school students, fostering deeper moral reasoning, compassionate behavior, and social responsibility. The findings underscore the importance of experiential, student-centered learning and the crucial role of supportive school leadership in overcoming implementation challenges like limited instructional time and resistance to change, while also pointing to the need for systemic and cultural reforms to sustain these practices. As a replicable model for character education, the study contributes significantly to the field; future research should explore the long-term effects and scalability of humanistic methodologies across diverse sociocultural contexts to ensure inclusive and equitable moral development for all learners.

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