Humanistic Principal Leadership in Inclusive Early Childhood Education: A Qualitative Exploration

Selamat Maulana[1], Aslamiah[2], Noorhapizah[3], Novitawati[4], Uswatun Nisa[5*], Aom Thai[6]
[1,2,3,4]*University of Lambung Mangkurat, Indonesia*
[5]*University of Muhammadiyah Banjarmasin, Indonesia*
[6]*Chulalongkorn University, Thailand*

*Corresponding Author: Selamat Maulana, **E-mail**: selamatmaulana15@gmail.com

ABSTRACT
Humanistic principal leadership is essential for fostering inclusive Early Childhood Education (ECE), yet remains underexplored in Indonesia's inclusive schools. This study examined how principals practice humanistic leadership in two inclusive kindergartens in Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan, to support diverse learning environments. Using a descriptive qualitative design, data were gathered through observation, in-depth interviews with two principals, eight teachers, four parents, and document analysis at Pelita Hati and Bina Sejahtera Kindergartens. Thematic analysis followed Miles and Huberman's framework. Results show humanistic leadership is reflected in embracing diversity, building supportive environments, and facilitating collaboration. Principals lead through participatory decision-making, empathy, care, and promoting each child's potential, shaping an inclusive, humanistic school culture. The study offers insights into how humanistic leadership operates in inclusive ECE, providing a practical reference for principals and policymakers to strengthen inclusive, child-centered education.

Keywords: Inclusive Kindergarten, Principal Leadership, Early Childhood Inclusion

INTRODUCTION

Effective leadership is widely recognized as a critical factor in the success of educational institutions (Rahmawaty & Karwanto, 2021). In the context of early childhood education (ECE), the role of the school principal is particularly vital. Their leadership characteristics reflect their typical personality. However, the ability to adjust to various team characteristics is a skill that must be learned in order to achieve the vision and mission of the organization. The diversity of leadership approaches and styles will be very influential and have a significant impact (Suriansyah et al., 2023). Therefore, it is not surprising that the role of leadership is crucial in driving the organization. The principal plays a role in determining the goals that are the target through discussion, cooperation and contributions from various parties involved (Putri & Mardison, 2021; Yuningsih et al., 2024). Determining the direction of educational goals is the same as laying the basic foundation for the perpendicularity of the implementation of education in schools. Next, the principal's brilliant strategies and ways to

arrive at the desired goal through collaborative delegation of tasks and functions with its members (Muhimmah et al., 2021).

Globally, goals such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 4 emphasize the provision of inclusive and equitable quality education. However, realizing this goal at the local level often faces significant challenges (Rabbani, 2019). In Banjarmasin for instance, statistics indicate a relatively low percentage of ECE units currently implementing inclusive education practices. This situation underscores the complexities involved in fostering inclusive environments in this context and highlights the need to understand the factors that enable successful inclusion. The written statement describes equality, justice, tolerance, openness and an inclusive society, especially for groups that are vulnerable to being marginalized - one of which is people with disabilities - or children with special needs in their participation in school. In order for the SDGs goal point 4 to be achieved, every country must guarantee the provision of quality education that is inclusive and equitable so as to encourage life-long education (Mujib & Ali, 2022). The education sector is one of the transformative fields that supports the development of sustainable and inclusive societies if it starts with a commitment to identify the diversity of learners as a challenge that must be faced. So far, learners with status vulnerabilities such as special needs have often been sidelined/excluded from the existing education system. Thus, their presence is rarely found in the general school environment.

The early childhood education (ECE) level is a potential platform for expanding opportunities for children with special needs to attend school if accompanied by the approach and principles of inclusion as a foundation (Saleha et al., 2022; Sari et al., 2023). Universal accessibility is the basis of inclusion to overcome various barriers related to marginalization and discrimination issues (Muhibbin & Hendriani, 2021). Cooperation is needed between various parties to identify and provide integrated services for children's special needs, as well as a curriculum that supports the formation of children's character and identity, training for educators and involvement between support systems. Inclusive education is an idea and conceptual idea that is deeply rooted in humanism. At the school and early childhood education level, inclusion aims to organize a humane educational process in order to realize the maximum potential of each learner (Aslamiah et al., 2020; Qodri, 2017; Suriansyah et al., 2023)

The main paradigm in inclusive education is how schools, classroom communities and the community environment make changes to be able to adapt mutually with individuals with special needs. Not only learners with special needs are required to adjust to schools, peer communities and the community environment (A. Lestari et al., 2023). The concept of *humanizing* human *being* is a characteristic of humanism leadership that focuses on the principle of equality between human *relations*. The role of the principal is not only to exercise his authority and see clear boundaries between hierarchical positions, but how he can improve the welfare of the group of members under him. So that through this leadership style will appear empathetic, caring, exemplary, cooperative, responsive, participatory and transformational behavior (Monica et al., 2017).

Amidst various leadership theories, humanist leadership emerges as a potentially relevant approach for inclusive settings. Humanist leadership emphasizes human dignity, equality, empathy, mutual respect, and the empowerment of individuals within an organization (Yusuf, 2021). These principles align well with the core philosophy of inclusive education, which seeks to value every child and create environments where all feel they belong and can thrive. A leader who embodies humanist values is theoretically better positioned to navigate the complexities of diversity, advocate for vulnerable groups, and build strong, caring relationships essential for a truly inclusive school community (Munawar, 2022).

Based on information collected through the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology in 2024 on data on kindergarten education units in Banjarmasin city, there are 372 levels of kindergarten equivalent, 109 playgroups equivalent, 42 daycare, and 1 similar education unit with a total of 524. As for the organizers of inclusive education in kindergarten units in Banjarmasin city, it is known that there are 6 kindergartens of the same level, 3 playgroups of the same level and 1 daycare. The interpretation is that there are only around 2.42 per cent of schools in early childhood education units in Banjarmasin city that organize inclusive education. Among them are Pelita Hati Inclusive kindergarten, Cemara Inclusive kindergarten, Insan Mulia kindergarten, Bina Sejahtera Inclusive kindergarten, Abdurrahman kindergarten, East Pembina State kindergarten with a total concentration of 118 students. Leadership in the Pelita Hati inclusive kindergarten environment is a special attraction for the author to conduct research.

Pelita Hati Inclusive kindergarten is one of the institutions that was initially devoted to handling children with special needs such as autism, attention deficit disorder and hyperactivity to specific learning difficulties. The role of the principal at that time in reading the situation through his observations considered that children with special needs were difficult to obtain formal and informal education services. Thus, a kindergarten institution that accepts children with special needs and normative children was established since 2008. The typical personality and leadership style of the humanist principal is reflected through the purpose of establishing the Pelita Hati inclusive kindergarten institution to dismiss the stigma in the community about the accessibility of education reserved for certain groups and individuals, but every learner with any background has the right to be given access to the same quality education.

Slightly different from the initial establishment of kindergarten Bina Sejahtera, which is a laboratory for vocational high school students majoring in social work as a professional prospect to assist, improve, enhance and develop mutually beneficial interactions between various relationships in society. Its role focuses on the intervention of individuals - especially students with special needs - from social dysfunction to social functioning. kindergarten Bina Sejahtera has been established since 1997 and is the oldest inclusive kindergarten in Banjarmasin city. Before the concept of inclusive education was widely recognized at that time, Bina Sejahtera held principles and a vision that emphasized acceptance and equal opportunity. This shows a strong understanding of the concept of inclusion and is coupled with the humanist leadership direction played by the principal. Through the two kindergarten school objects above led the author to conduct further research on exploring the humanism approach to the leadership of inclusive kindergarten principals in Banjarmasin city. Among various other forms of leadership, humanism still plays an important role as a counterweight and still exists to empower vulnerable groups in society.

Responding to the lack of leadership roles with a humanist approach at the kindergarten school level, which is considered too individualized (excessive attention to learners with special needs), it becomes very important to outline strategic efforts and steps in changes and combinations of leadership that internalize humanist practices in order to achieve sustainable development goals in 2030 in the aspect of quality education (SDGs 4) (Permana & Eliza, 2022). Humanist leadership lies at the core of morality that supports strengthening the character of students. Previous research by Yusuf (2021) has shown that principals employing responsive and humanist approaches can contribute to the success of inclusive programs in kindergartens. Similarly, theoretical frameworks from scholars like Carl Rogers and Paulo Freire emphasize humanistic principles such as empathy, mutual respect, and empowerment as foundational for effective education, particularly for marginalized groups (Sabaruddin, 2020).

However, while these studies and theories highlight the potential relevance of humanism, there is a lack of depth research exploring how these principles are specifically translated into the day-to-day leadership practices of principals in inclusive ECE settings, and how they navigate the unique challenges of this level of education in specific contexts (Nisa, 2021). This gap in understanding limits our ability to identify effective leadership strategies for promoting widespread inclusive ECE in the Principal Leadership of Inclusive Superior Kindergarten in 2021 showing that Pertiwi Kindergarten succeeded in becoming a superior pioneer of inclusive education by accommodating the diversity of all students. In addition, Pertiwi Kindergarten is also a school that is able to excel at the national level and has good practices in implementing the kindergarten independent curriculum (Aslamiah et al., 2020; Purwanti et al., 2024)

Similarly, Carl Ranson Rogers' theory emphasizes mutual respect and without prejudice. A principal leader who has such a perspective will easily welcome ideas in the inclusive education model. Similar to other humanist schools, namely Paulo Freire in the writing of Ayu Lestari., (N. Lestari, 2023) on the Concept of Paulo Freire Education in an Islamic Perspective outlines that education should be directed to help the community, especially oppressed groups, education that empowers and stems from individual interests not the will of the ruler. So that it can be underlined that there are similarities in the leadership style of principals at inclusive kindergarten in Banjarmasin city who use a humanistic approach and its combination with Elton Mayo's human relations concept that interpersonal interactions can change the behavior of others, build intimacy and provide better motivation (Bruce & Nyland, 2011).

This research addresses this gap by providing an in-depth exploration of humanist leadership as practiced by principals in inclusive kindergarten institutions. Understanding the practical dimensions of humanist leadership in this specific context is crucial because it can illuminate effective leadership strategies that directly support the complex work of inclusion at the foundational level of education, and it offers valuable insights for training and development programs aimed at cultivating leaders capable of fostering truly inclusive ECE environments, thereby contributing to the achievement of SDG 4.

In Banjarmasin, the development of inclusive education in ECE units presents a pertinent context for this study. Data indicates that only a small percentage of ECE institutions in Banjarmasin currently organize inclusive education, highlighting the challenges and the need to understand enabling factors from successful cases. To explore the research problem, this study focuses on two inclusive kindergarten institutions in Banjarmasin Pelita Hati Inclusive Kindergarten and Bina Sejahtera Inclusive Kindergarten. These institutions were selected as case studies because they are recognized examples of early childhood inclusive education providers in the city and offer rich potential for exploring the application of humanist leadership principles in practice.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research employed a qualitative approach using a descriptive narrative design. This approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the complex phenomena related to principal leadership in inclusive Early Childhood Education (ECE) settings within their natural context. Qualitative research relies on rich, descriptive data collected through verbatim accounts, detailed observations, in-depth interviews, and relevant documents, allowing the researcher, as the primary instrument, to explore the nuances of the research subject. The study was conducted at two selected inclusive kindergarten institutions in Banjarmasin City Pelita Hati Inclusive Kindergarten and Bina Sejahtera Kindergarten. These schools were chosen using a purposive sampling strategy based on the criterion that they are

recognized pioneer institutions in implementing inclusive education in Banjarmasin, thus providing a rich context to explore the phenomenon of humanist leadership in practice.

Participants were selected based on their direct involvement and perspectives relevant to leadership and inclusive practices within these schools. The participants included Two principal of Pelita Hati Inclusive Kindergarten and principal of Bina Sejahtera Kindergarten. Eight teachers directly involved in inclusive classrooms from both schools with an average of 5 years of teaching experience. Four parents of students both with special needs and typically developing who were actively involved with the school and willing to participate. Data were collected through several methods to ensure comprehensive understanding and allow for triangulation In-depth Interviews based on indicators derived from the theoretical framework of humanist leadership and key aspects of inclusive education implementation. The guide explored participants' understanding of the principal's leadership style, specific practices related to fostering an inclusive environment, approaches to supporting diverse students and staff, challenges faced, and successes achieved. Interviews were audio-recorded with participant consent and transcribed verbatim.

Direct observations were conducted at both school sites. Observations focused on the principal's interactions with teachers, students including those with special needs, and parents, their involvement in school activities related to inclusion, the general school climate, and how inclusive practices were enacted in the school environment. Field notes were taken during and immediately after observations. Relevant school documents were collected, including school profiles, mission/vision statements, policies related to inclusive education, reports on student support programs, and meeting minutes related to educational planning. These documents provided contextual information and corroborated data gathered through interviews and observations. The collected qualitative data were analyzed using the framework proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994) data reduction, data display, open coding, conclusion drawing and verification.

Several strategies were employed to ensure the trustworthiness and rigor of the qualitative data and findings triangulation data from multiple sources were compared and cross-referenced to validate findings and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. Informed consent was obtained in writing from all participants after fully informing them about the purpose of the study, their role, the voluntary nature of participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured by using pseudonyms for participants and schools in all transcripts, analysis records, and the final report. Data were stored securely and only accessed by the primary researcher.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Cultivating a Culture of Unconditional Acceptance and Respect

Unraveling the course of education cannot be separated from the philosophical paradigm behind it. Every effort in education aims to shape personality character and organize experiences in order to foster new skills for future life. An educational institution or school institution has its own goals and vision to bring the direction of education as desired (Nisa et al., 2024). In the process, it certainly involves the role of leadership as an initiator and driving force to maximize the potential of its members in an effective cooperation frame. Educational leadership is an influential factor in the quality of education in an institution. The better the form of leadership will be reflected in the achievements and gains of the organization, both in terms of learner development, teacher and school achievements, governance and environmental conduciveness to parent/user satisfaction as partners.

Conversely, leadership patterns that have no impact will hinder the effectiveness of education (Safitri et al., 2023).

Several theories have suggested many types, patterns and forms of leadership. The typical character of a leader in a school institution is very dependent on the goals that the institution wants to achieve. Nowadays, education is considered a market place so that it can be capitalized. The goal of trading educational services is one form of educational entrepreneurship. Thus, it is not surprising that some schools are competing to offer *high end* education quality in the community with guarantees and guarantees of quality *output*. Such institutional orientation will lead to leadership characters that can meet predetermined targets/objectives. Generally, the form of leadership that is carried out cannot be separated from the perspective framework of rewards and sanctions in building a work culture and motivating its members. Schools with transactional leadership generally produce a quality image and quality among other schools (Yetti et al., 2021).

Another form of leadership can also be seen through the charismatic authority of the leader. This type of character usually suggests a figure that can be idolized by all levels of society. A warm and humble personality is a special allure to be loved by the community (Ruairc et al., 2013). Not all individuals can be a coveted figure. Typically, charismatic is a label that people attach to their leaders because of their likes and dislikes. So the opportunity to utilize this authority can support the growth and development of educational institutions. Usually, charismatic leadership can be found in traditional schools and non-formal institutions such as boarding schools and the like. The personality that emanates from the leader sparks motivation and influence to follow the direction and goals of the institution (Jardinez & Natividad, 2024).

In the next type, the leadership that we commonly see is the principal's tendency to inspire and develop the potential of his/her members. A figure who is able to model change is better able to motivate and set an example. Transformational leadership may overlap with other previous forms. So in principle, making changes, providing examples and being a source of inspiration is a process to achieve the goals of quality education (Nisa et al., 2024). The leadership patterns that have been described in transformational, transactional and charismatic will intersect with the educational direction of an institution. How the process of education and learning with all its components and mechanisms can be traced to two philosophical schools, namely behaviorism and social learning.

The direction of our education is still very much in line with these two schools. How humans learn is believed to be strongly influenced by environmental modalities that exist outside of themselves. However, the concept also does not deny individual modality as a factor that combines with each other. In behaviorism (1910) with known figures such as Thordike, Ivan Pavlov and B.F. Skinner suggested that each individual will be considered to have learned if they show a change in behavior (Nabiullina, 2015). The environment needs to provide various stimuli so that individuals can learn and learn something and show the desired response, namely change (learning progress). Behaviorism also uses the practice of *reward* and *punishment* to lock control over individuals as selectable reinforcement. In contrast, the *social learning* school, which later followed the theory of behaviorism and was popularized by Albert Bandura (1963), explains that individual learning can be obtained through observation and imitation. Interactive experiences can influence a person's learning outcomes. A person's tendency to take information and determine his behavior can be adopted from the surrounding environment (Nahdiyah et al., 2023).

In the learning process, the two streams above have their own characteristics, as well as their relevance to the form of principal leadership in an institution. The two kindergarten units that the author obtained data from, Pelita Hati Inclusive Kindergarten and Bina

Sejahtera Kindergarten are organizers of inclusive education, which is to gather, embrace, accept and appreciate the presence of students with special needs clearly (Nisa et al., 2023). Although among other kindergarten units, both private and public, each school year also accepts students with special needs, it is usually not conveyed straightforwardly. The problems can come from various aspects, ranging from unprepared policy implementation, limited teacher competence in handling children with special needs, technical adaptation of curriculum and learning that is still difficult, inadequate infrastructure, to social problems such as stigma, lack of parent-community involvement and low self-confidence in families of children with special needs to attend school (Widodo & Umar, 2020). As a principal from Pelita Hati Inclusive Kindergarten stated:

> *"For me, every child is a blessing. They come with their own uniqueness, including children with special needs. Our task is not to make them 'normal' by our standards, but to help them grow optimally according to their innate potential. Accepting them as they are, unconditionally, is fundamental…"* (Interview with Mr. BR).

This statement reflects a deep-seated belief in the inherent worth and potential of every child, a cornerstone of humanism. This philosophy directly informs the inclusive ethos of the school, positioning acceptance as a non-negotiable principle rather than a mere policy requirement.

These problems need to be addressed through political action, a framework of idealistic ideals that begins with an understanding of the new paradigm in education. Humanism is a concept that emerged in the 1970s and was popularized by Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow. The concept of humanism emphasizes that each individual must be humanized in order to achieve the actualization of his or her potential (Indrayanti et al., 2024). The humanist approach in education will view humans as individuals who have the freedom to be able to think and learn from around their universe. The various ways humans obtain information with the aim of achieving self-actualization, understanding and self-concept are the goals of humanism. In the end, humanism will encourage each individual to be valued in their education. In line with the opinion of Paulo Freire, it is said that in the humanistic dimension, there is no oppression. If we pay attention to the complexity of the humanist approach in education, it will show a universal, holistic and idealistic concept of thinking (Santoso, 2023). As one of the teachers from Bina Sejahtera Inclusive Kindergarten stated:

> *"Ms. M always reminds us never to use negative labels for children, especially in front of others. We are taught to see their strengths, not just their shortcomings. It feels comfortable working here because we, as teachers, also feel accepted with all our strengths and weaknesses…"* (Interview with Ms. M)

Every educational process needs to place the highest respect for the individuals in it without exception (non-discrimination). Rogers' statement about respect is an actualization of his attitude in seeing the uniqueness of each individual. Likewise with Freire that every award does not castigate the differences that exist in individuals. As the concept of inclusive education that upholds respect for every learner, embraces them in diversity and involves an equal learning process between children with special needs and non-special needs. Equality is the opposite principle of discrimination, that understanding individual potential differences is an inevitable necessity. In practice, providing space for children to grow and develop based on their talents, interests, potential, intelligence plurality is a form of justice and accessibility

in education. Maslow agrees with the concept of the peak of individual self-actualization which is not obtained except through the basic pyramid ladder.

Fulfillment of various individual needs is the key to arriving at identity, dignity, security and a complete self-concept. Principal leadership that has a humanist perspective, attitude and approach is not oriented towards material aspects, but prioritizes character building as the value of education and life. Principal leadership in the two inclusive kindergartens in the author's observations in addition to being based on his understanding of the concept of inclusion universally, is also driven by spiritual religious motives by seeing learners as a holy fitrah. The framework for thinking to humanize humans starts from a good appreciation of the existence and presence of children, especially children with special needs, often neglected from the world of education. Pelita Hati Inclusive School believes that every child has the potential to develop based on their nature and strengths in addition to their limitations (Safariani et al., 2023).

The sensitivity to pay attention to children with special needs is part of the principal's humanist attitude. Theoretically, this leadership is also known as *servant leadership,* which is the role of leaders who feel interested in serving their members without exception and focus on their needs. A principal feels important when he or she understands the interests of others. Inclusive education emerges with the principle of universal spatial equality and respect for every individual's inherent rights. In line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child ratified by Indonesia since 1990, it has committed and guaranteed every right to life as a civilian through 4 principles, namely non-discrimination, the best interests of the child, survival and development of the child, and respect for the child's opinion. It is clear that the character in the humanist approach tends to describe the authority of learners as learners and will be assisted through facilities to fulfill their special needs (Maromi & Hasibuan, 2024).

Typically, not every leader is ready and willing to adopt this postulate. Because the reality is often difficult to describe conclusively (Widodo & Umar, 2020). Therefore, the leadership of principals in inclusive kindergarten institutions has a humanist-religious approach. This leadership style will combine several ways to achieve essential educational goals through various methods and strategies relevant to the times. As in Pelita Hati inclusive kindergarten, learning also involves the introduction of digitalization to children with special needs in addition to the design of individual programs for each child. Various challenges that become obstacles in inclusive education are resolved through the participatory efforts of various stakeholders. The involvement of the school committee, the mobilization team and the school foundation has been instrumental in the school's progress. This shows the participatory leadership of the principal who does not focus on himself but also has good skills in listening/absorbing the aspirations of his members.

Good Practice of Humanistic Leadership Approach

The principals of the two kindergarten units, Pelita Hati and Bina Sejahtera kindergarten, are inspirational and exemplary figures in the management and implementation of inclusive education. Among the good practices demonstrated in her leadership is responsiveness to change, something different, seeing opportunities and prioritizing excellence. This attitude is known by the principal's understanding and knowledge of the issue that is currently marginalized, namely the opportunity for children with disabilities to study in a supportive environment. The principal understands the policy rules that underlie inclusive education in Minister of National Education Regulation No. 70 of 2009 which emerged later as a response to the voice of the lower community (bottom up). The principal's dexterity is an inherent discipline in developing, planning, implementing and evaluating the practice of differentiated curriculum and individualized learning programs, along with the characteristics

of Islamic and local education materials. Until the award for the achievements made by the principal in superior accreditation and the championship for outstanding school principals.

Responsibility for evaluation activities is carried out regularly to ensure and guarantee the quality of education that is meaningful for every learner at school (Putra & Ahmadi, 2021). The attention given by the principal equally and without discriminating between normative and special needs students is an actualization of the humanist approach. Not only to students, but also to all elements of the school, parents, and various guests who come to visit the school for imitation. Humanist leadership realizes that character building cannot be achieved if it is not accompanied by exemplary awareness (Firdausi & Ulfa, 2022). That the example/ figure of the principal will be followed by its members so that being an example for others is not just a personal responsibility but part of self-awareness. Exemplary behavior is much more effective when compared to the principle of rewards and sanctions. Each individual/member in his/her school institution will learn from each other starting from personality aspects to technical aspects in the field such as good learning design.

The humanist approach will foster awareness that in every limitation there are accompanying advantages, where this potential needs to be realized through the help of educated people in a humanizing educational forum (Arkam, 2022). The actualization step cannot be realized alone but needs cooperation with various components as in inclusive education will bring together various teacher backgrounds ranging from therapists, psychologists, special education, Islamic religious education, kindergarten teacher education and other similar educational scientific clumps. Commitment and integrity are the keys to success in teamwork. Building an atmosphere of intimacy, having good self-control (full of patience) and assisting wholeheartedly to each learner. Another unique characteristic of the humanist approach is to always be a leader who is humble, willing to learn and happy. A pleasant, cheerful and happy attitude will radiate positive energy to every other individual. A smiling, friendly and warm demeanor will provide a sense of security and comfort for learners' social-emotional needs. The sense of familiarity built by the principal's leadership is very influential on good relational relationships with all parties.

CONCLUSION

Findings show that humanist leadership manifests through cultivating a culture of unconditional acceptance and respect, with principals serving as cultural change agents, empathetic facilitators, and advocates for inclusive values. They utilize interpersonal skills, uphold human dignity, and engage in participatory decision-making to create supportive environments, empower teachers, and foster parental involvement. The study contributes theoretically by providing empirical insights into how humanist principles are operationalized in inclusive early childhood settings and extends existing theories by highlighting practical applications and challenges. Practically, it offers guidance for inclusive leadership, emphasizing acceptance, individualized support, collaboration, and the importance of relational skills and humanistic philosophy. The study recommends leadership training focusing on empathy and humanist competencies.

REFERENCES

Arkam, R. (2022). Penanganan Anak Berkebutuhan Khusus dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an. *Mentari:Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, *2*(2), 2022. https://jurnal.stkippgriponorogo.ac.id/index.php/Mentari/article/view/218

Aslamiah, A., Amelia, R., Suriansyah, A., & Cinantya, C. (2020). *Comparative Analysis Of Initial Teacher Education In Switzerland And Croatia*. 4343–4354.

https://doi.org/10.21125/iceri.2020.0961

Bruce, K., & Nyland, C. (2011). Elton Mayo and the Deification of Human Relations. *Organization Studies*, *32*(3), 383–405. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840610397478

Firdausi, R., & Ulfa, N. (2022). Pola Asuh Orang Tua Terhadap Perkembangan Emosional Anak Di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Nahdlatul Ulama Bululawang. *MUBTADI: Jurnal Pendidikan Ibtidaiyah*, *3*(2), 133–145. https://doi.org/10.19105/mubtadi.v3i2.5155

Indrayanti, D., Chairani, I., Rizki, N. F., & Amini, R. K. (2024). Stacking Box Games to Stimulate Problem-Solving Skills in Children Aged 4-6 Years. *Journal of Islamic Education Students*, *4*(2), 232–240. https://doi.org/10.31958/jies.v4i2.12374

Jardinez, M. J., & Natividad, L. R. (2024). The The Advantages and Challenges of Inclusive Education:Striving for Equity in the Classroom. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, *12*(2), 57–65. https://doi.org/10.34293/education.v12i2.7182

Lestari, A., Munajah, N., & Uyuni, B. (2023). Konsep Pendidikan Paulo Freire Dalam Perspektif Islam. *Tahdzib Al-Akhlaq:Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, *6*(2), 288–307. https://doi.org/10.34005/tahdzib.v6i2.3319

Lestari, N. (2023). *Media Pembelajaran Berbasis Multimedia Interaktif* (M. Pertiw (ed.)). PT Penamuda Media.

Maromi, C., & Hasibuan, R. (2024). Increasing the Competency of PAUD Teachers in Sidoarjo Regency Through Leveled Basic Level Training and Integrated Mentoring. *Journal of Islamic Education Students*, *4*(2), 241–250. https://doi.org/10.31958/jies.v4i2.12475

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. SAGE Publication.

Monica, P. dos S., Sandra, C. de M., Mylene, C. S., & Paula, N. (2017). Inclusion in public administration: Developing the concept of inclusion within a school of accounts and administration. *International Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies*, *9*(3), 35–46. https://doi.org/10.5897/IJEAPS2017.0504

Muhibbin, M. A., & Hendriani, W. (2021). Tantangan Dan Strategi Pendidikan Inklusi di Perguruan Tinggi di Indonesia:Literature Review. *JPI (Jurnal Pendidikan Inklusi)*, *4*(2), 92. https://doi.org/10.26740/inklusi.v4n2.p92-102

Muhimmah, H. A., Budiyanto, B., & Mudjito, M. (2021). European Journal of Educational Research. *European Journal of Educational Research*, *10*(3), 1199–1213.

Mujib, A., & Ali, M. (2022). Leadership Management Islamic Education Institut Agama Islam Negeri Metro Lampung. *International Journal of Islamic Religious*, *1*(1), 18–26.

Munawar, M. (2022). Penguatan Komite Pembelajaran dalam Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka pada Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini*, *1*(1), 65–72. https://doi.org/10.35878/tintaemas.v1i1.390

Nabiullina, R. K. (2015). The Principle of Humanism—The Fundamental Principle of Inclusive Education. *Review of European Studies*, *7*(4). https://doi.org/10.5539/res.v7n4p73

Nahdiyah, A. C. F., Prasetyo, S., & Wulandari, N. F. (2023). Merdeka Belajar dan Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) Dalam Pandangan Filsafat Pendidikan Humanisme. *Jurnal Filsafat Indonesia*, *6*(2), 143–151. https://doi.org/10.23887/jfi.v6i2.56092

Nisa, U. (2021). Stigma Disabilitas di Mata Orang Tua Anak Difabel di Yogyakarta. *Inklusi*, *8*(1), 75. https://doi.org/10.14421/ijds.080106

Nisa, U., Rifandi, A., Mardiah, M., & Syahrida, A. F. (2023). Early Detection of Children With Special Needs and Adaptive Learning Design Program on Early Childhood Education. *JMM (Jurnal Masyarakat Mandiri)*, *7*(5), 4638. https://doi.org/10.31764/jmm.v7i5.16615

Nisa, U., Zain, A., & Rahmah, A. (2024). The Role of Shadow Teachers For Supporting Learning Assistance on Children with Special Needs in Inclusive Early Childhood Education. *Journal of Islamic Education Students (JIES)*, *4*(1), 32. https://doi.org/10.31958/jies.v4i1.12298

Permana, A. I., & Eliza, D. (2022). Faktor-Faktor yang Mempengaruhi Kinerja Guru Taman Kanak-Kanak. *Jurnal Basicedu*, *6*(3), 5226–5236. https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v6i3.2824

Purwanti, R., Aslamiah, A., & Suriansyah, A. (2024). The Leadership School Principal in the Implementation of Local Character Education. *International Journal of Social Science and Human Research*, *7*(07). https://doi.org/10.47191/ijsshr/v7-i07-44

Putra, A. D., & Ahmadi, A. (2021). Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia Melalui Media Digital Pada Anak-Anak di Desa Ganti (Lombok). *Jurnal Ilmiah Global Education*, 147–150. https://doi.org/10.55681/jige.v2i2.118

Putri, S. S., & Mardison, S. (2021). Madrasah Principal Leadership Role in Improving Teachers' Performance. *Journal of Islamic Education Students (JIES)*, *1*(1), 10. https://doi.org/10.31958/jies.v1i1.3192

Qodri, A. (2017). Teori Belajar Humanistik Dalam Meningkatkan Prestasi Belajar Siswa Abd. *Jurnal Pedagogik*, *04*(02), 188–202.

Rabbani, D. R. (2019). Kerja Layak Bagi Mahasiswa Pekerja Kontrak Paruh Waktu (Garda Depan) Di PT.Aseli Dagadu Djokdja. *Jurnal Studi Pemuda*, *6*(2), 605. https://doi.org/10.22146/studipemudaugm.39490

Rahmawaty, M. E., & Karwanto. (2021). Strategi Kepala Sekolah dalam Upaya Memotivasi Minat Membaca Buku Digital Siswa. *Inspirasi Manajemen Pendidikan*, *09*(01), 13–23.

Ruairc, G. Mac, Ottesen, E., & Precey, R. (2013). Leadership for Inclusive Education. In *Leadership for Inclusive Education*. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6209-134-4_1

Sabaruddin, S. (2020). Sekolah dengan konsep pendidikan humanis. *Humanika*, *20*(2), 147–162. https://doi.org/10.21831/hum.v20i2.29306

Safariani, N. A., Suriansyah, A., & Novitawati, N. (2023). Tahfiz Al-Qur`an Learning Management of Integrated Islamic Early Childhood Education. *International Journal of Social Science and Human Research*, *6*(12), 7807–7816. https://doi.org/10.47191/ijsshr/v6-i12-80

Safitri, N. D., Hasanah, U., & Masruroh, F. (2023). The Development of Thematic Board Educational Game Tools to Train The Literacy Skills of Children 5-6 Years Old. *Indonesian Journal of Early Childhood Educational Research*, *1*(2), 75–86. https://doi.org/10.31958/ijecer.v1i2.8156

Saleha, L., Baharun, H., & Utami, W. T. (2022). Implementation of Digital Literacy in Indonesia Early Childhood Education. *Indonesian Journal of Early Childhood Educational Research*, *1*(1), 12–22. https://doi.org/10.31958/ijecer.v1i1.5834

Santoso, S. (2023). Formulasi Pendidikan Inklusif-Humanis bagi Disabilitas. *Peradaban Journal of Interdisciplinary Educational Research*, *1*(1), 21–33. https://doi.org/10.59001/pjier.v1i1.99

Sari, I. P., Warmansyah, J., Yuningsih, R., & Sari, M. (2023). The Effect of Realistic Mathematics Education (RME) Learning Approach on the Ability to Recognize Number Concepts in Children Aged 4-5 Years. *Journal of Islamic Education Students*, *3*, 38–49. https://doi.org/10.31958/jies.v3i1.8654

Suriansyah, A., Purwanti, R., & Agusta, A. R. (2023). *Best Practices Kepemimpinan Era Revolusi Industry 4.0 Dan Masyarakat 5.0*. Damera Press.

Widodo, A., & Umar, U. (2020). Inclusive Primary Schools Without Shadow Teachers: Can Learning Services be Optimal? *Jurnal Educative:Journal of Educational Studies*, *5*(2), 149. https://doi.org/10.30983/educative.v5i2.3196

Yetti, E., Syarah, E. S., & Machfauzia, A. N. (2021). Which Educational Dance Programs Can Be Used To Identify Childre's Talents. *Cakrawala Pendidikan*, *40*(2), 445–456. https://doi.org/10.21831/cp.v40i2.33942

Yuningsih, R., Andriani, L., Warmansyah, J., Sari, M., Wiliani, S., & Solin, S. S. (2024). The Implementation of the Principal's Academic Supervision in Improving the Professionalism of Early Childhood Educators. *Journal of Islamic Education Students (JIES)*, *4*(1), 23. https://doi.org/10.31958/jies.v4i1.12300

Yusuf, M. (2021). Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah TK Unggul Inklusi(Studi di TK Pertiwi Kota Metro). *Attractive:Innovative Education Journal*, *3*(1), 110–116. https://doi.org/10.51278/aj.v3i1.25