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Humanistic–Religious Education in Indonesian Primary Schools: A Systematic Review Protocol and Preliminary Evidence Synthesis for Joint Cooperation Schools (SPK)

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ABSTRACT

Humanistic–religious education integrates spiritual values, social relationships, and character development in primary education. However, its conceptual dimensions, implementation mechanisms, and outcome evidence remain inconsistently documented, particularly in Satuan Pendidikan Kerjasama (SPK) schools. This study presents a systematic review protocol with preliminary synthesis to examine conceptualisation, implementation practices, potential best practices, and contextual conditions. The planned review covers publications from 2014 to 2026 across Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, DOAJ, Google Scholar, and Indonesian academic sources. The preliminary corpus comprises ten studies identified through targeted searches, including qualitative case studies, quantitative and mixed-methods research, and conceptual analysis. Formal database searching, PRISMA screening, and critical appraisal remain incomplete. Preliminary patterns indicate that vertical–spiritual and horizontal–social dimensions predominate, while habituation and school culture feature prominently in implementation. Explicit curriculum mapping and family–community engagement are less consistently documented, and comparable pupil-outcome evidence remains limited. Evidence concerning SPK schools is particularly sparse, precluding definitive best-practice claims. A proposed four-layer framework may guide further synthesis of conceptual dimensions, implementation mechanisms, outcomes, and contextual conditions. These preliminary observations require verification through completion of the systematic review before supporting evidence-based recommendations.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Primary schools operate in an educational landscape increasingly shaped by digital transformation, international curriculum mobility, and changes in children's social interactions. Although these developments expand access to learning and improve

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educational efficiency, they also raise concerns about the development of pupils' social relationships, ethical awareness, and personal values. Digital transformation therefore requires educational approaches that integrate cognitive achievement with spiritual, moral, and social development [1], [2], [3], [4], [5].

In Indonesia, concerns about school safety, bullying, intolerance, and declining empathy illustrate the continuing challenge of translating educational values into everyday conduct. National monitoring indicates a substantial increase in reported school bullying, with primary-school pupils representing the largest group of victims [6]. Related studies have documented intolerance and weakening empathy among pupils [7], [8], as well as violence and neglect by teachers [9], [10]. These concerns highlight a gap between the formal inclusion of character-related values in education and their consistent enactment in school life.

This gap is particularly relevant to Satuan Pendidikan Kerjasama (SPK), or Joint Cooperation Schools, which replaced the former National Plus and International school categories and operate under a dual-curriculum arrangement [11], [12]. Regulation No. 31 of 2014 requires SPK schools to provide international educational programmes while maintaining compulsory national subjects, including Religious Education and Character, Pancasila and Civic Education, and Indonesian Language for Indonesian citizens [13]. The learning outcomes of these subjects provide a basis for examining how spiritual, social, and environmental values are incorporated into internationalised primary education [14]. Although international programmes may emphasise character development, critical thinking, and social responsibility [38], the coexistence of national and international curricula does not necessarily ensure that pupils internalise and consistently practise the values they encounter.

Humanistic–religious education offers a conceptual approach to this challenge by integrating respect for human dignity with religious and moral commitments. Rather than separating religious knowledge from general knowledge or spiritual development from social responsibility, this approach views personal development as an integrated process involving relationships with God, other people, and the natural environment [15], [16], [17], [18]. At the primary-school level, these relationships can be organised into three dimensions. The vertical–spiritual dimension (*hablum minallah*) concerns pupils' relationships with God, expressed through worship, honesty, and prayer [19]. The horizontal–social dimension (*hablum minannas*) concerns relationships with others, reflected in courteous communication, empathy, and non-participation in bullying [20], [21]. The natural–contextual dimension (*hablum minal ʻalam*) concerns responsibility for the created world, including care for the school environment [22]. Together, these dimensions provide an operational basis for examining humanistic–religious values in pupils' everyday educational experiences.

The theoretical foundation of this approach can be understood through the complementary contributions of humanistic, cultural, and Islamic educational thought. Ki Hadjar Dewantara conceptualised education as the development of children's character, intellect, and physical capacities in harmony with religion, nature, and society [23], while John Dewey emphasised the reconstruction of experience through participation in a school

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environment that reflects social life [24]. Dewantara's emphasis on *budi pekerti*, understood through the integration of thought, feeling, will, and action, complements Dewey's emphasis on experience by connecting personal autonomy with ethical and social responsibility. Islamic educational thought further situates this development within an integrated understanding of bodily, spiritual, and moral formation [25], [26]. Accordingly, humanistic–religious education is understood here as guided personal development that respects children's potential (*fitrah*) while cultivating responsibility toward others and addressing social alienation associated with digital disruption [27].

Humanistic learning theory provides a psychological foundation for understanding this developmental process. Maslow emphasised the relationship between the satisfaction of human needs and higher-order development [28], while Rogers highlighted learners' capacity for exploration, self-evaluation, and problem-solving [29]. Both perspectives position teachers as facilitators of learning and emphasise pupils' holistic understanding of themselves and their environment [30], [31]. For the present review, however, humanistic learning theory is not treated as equivalent to humanistic–religious education: it explains aspects of personal growth, whereas the religious dimension establishes an explicit normative orientation for that growth [32].

Several related concepts must therefore be distinguished to establish the conceptual boundaries of this review. Humanistic education emphasises human dignity, learner autonomy, and holistic development. Religious humanism connects these humanistic commitments with religious values, treating intellectual, personal, and spiritual development as complementary rather than competing processes [35], [18]. Humanistic–religious education refers in this study to the educational approach through which these commitments are integrated into curriculum, pedagogy, school culture, and everyday relationships. Religious education, by contrast, refers to an educational domain that encompasses religious knowledge, moral formation, and behavioural regulation [33]. Its implementation extends beyond classroom instruction to teacher modelling, habituation, responses to everyday situations, school environments, and school-wide routines [34]. Character education is a broader construct concerned with cultivating values and dispositions that guide conduct, whereas religious character education specifically emphasises the development and enactment of religiously grounded values. These concepts overlap, but they are not interchangeable: character education may inform the analysis of humanistic–religious education when it provides relevant evidence about shared values, educational mechanisms, or behavioural outcomes.

This distinction is particularly important because the literature relevant to SPK schools does not always use the term humanistic–religious education explicitly. Studies of character education may nevertheless contribute relevant evidence when their findings address one or more of the three relational dimensions identified in this review. Accordingly, conceptual eligibility is determined by the relevance of a study's values, implementation practices, or outcomes to the humanistic–religious framework, rather than by terminology alone. Studies addressing character education in general are therefore not assumed to represent humanistic–religious education in its entirety. Instead, their contributions are interpreted in relation to the specific dimensions and mechanisms they document.

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The distinction also clarifies the relationship between humanistic and religious commitments in educational practice. The humanistic dimension emphasises dignity, personal development, empathy, and inclusion, while the religious dimension provides the normative and transcendent orientation through which these commitments are interpreted. Their integration seeks to maintain a balance between *hablum minallah* and *hablum minannas* [35], [18]. Its practical significance depends on teachers' readiness and on the extent to which these values are embedded in instruction and school culture rather than treated as an additional programme [36]. The central issue is therefore not simply whether schools teach religious or character-related content, but whether their educational arrangements support the consistent enactment of these values.

The SPK context makes this issue particularly important. Its regulatory framework includes Law No. 20 of 2003, Regulation No. 31 of 2014 governing cooperation between foreign and Indonesian educational providers, and Ministerial Decree No. 247/O/2024, which establishes accreditation instruments that include strengthening faith and love of country [37]. These provisions reflect the expectation that international educational provision should coexist with national identity and religious development. In practice, SPK schools may operate Cambridge, Montessori, International Baccalaureate (IB), International Primary Curriculum (IPC), International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE), or comparable programmes [38]. This dual-curriculum arrangement creates both an opportunity to connect international approaches to holistic development with national and religious values and a challenge in ensuring that curricular integration extends beyond formal compliance to pupils' everyday experiences.

Previous research on humanistic–religious education and related practices can be organised into three broad strands. The first is conceptual and text-based, establishing philosophical foundations and examining curricular implications, including those associated with the Merdeka Curriculum and multicultural education [39], [40], [41], [42]. The second comprises empirical studies of particular educational settings. Widiyaningsih and Hairani [43] examined humanistic values in religious instruction through school culture, teacher strategies, and classroom interactions. Prasong [44] identified institutional vision, value-based learning, and a supportive environment as important elements of religious character education in a madrasah, while Arif [45] examined teachers' efforts to cultivate religious awareness in multicultural classrooms. Korostenskiene [46] analysed five constituent paradigms of humanistic education in a secondary-school setting but did not incorporate religious values into the analysis. Taken together, these studies offer complementary insights into educational values, teaching practices, and institutional conditions, although their different conceptual emphases and contexts limit direct comparison.

The third strand concerns dual-curriculum settings and related educational outcomes. Existing studies have examined the management of character strengthening in an SPK school [47], the social and emotional outcomes of SPK character education [48], the challenges of Cambridge–national curriculum integration, including learning load, teacher certification, and incompatible assessment arrangements [49], and the role of Indonesian language instruction in strengthening national identity in international schools [50]. Although these studies illuminate curriculum management, character education, and national identity, they

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do not collectively establish how humanistic–religious values are conceptualised, implemented, and evidenced across the primary-school context.

Four connected gaps emerge from this literature. First, the evidence remains fragmented across philosophical discussions, classroom studies, school-level investigations, and curriculum-management research, while inconsistent terminology makes the relationship between findings difficult to establish. Second, the construct is defined inconsistently, with humanistic–religious education variously associated with teaching practices, school culture, teacher dispositions, or broader character education, and no consolidated framework for the primary phase. Third, claims about *best practice* are not always accompanied by clearly specified criteria or evidence demonstrating their implementation and outcomes. Fourth, research on dual-curriculum schools has focused substantially on curriculum integration and management, leaving the implementation of humanistic–religious values under conditions of curricular convergence insufficiently synthesised. Existing reviews also frequently rely on narrative approaches without clearly reporting search protocols, eligibility criteria, screening procedures, or quality appraisal. These limitations indicate the need for a systematic and transparent synthesis that clarifies the construct, organises implementation evidence, and distinguishes documented findings from unsupported claims.

To address the third gap, this review operationalises *best practice* as an analytical classification rather than an assumed attribute of a programme or school. The classification uses two complementary components. The design component concerns documented curriculum mapping between national learning outcomes and the values of international programmes, together with an inclusive school climate. The outcome component concerns evidence of pupil-level changes in humanistic–religious character, consistency in daily conduct, or sustained parental support for religious and local content. This two-component approach distinguishes the presence of an educational design from evidence of its implementation and outcomes, preventing curricular intentions alone from being treated as proof of effectiveness. Studies claiming exemplary practice without evidence for both components are classified as unsubstantiated rather than excluded, because such claims also reveal how *best practice* is represented in the literature. This classification is an operational framework developed for the present synthesis; it does not assume that all included studies employ equivalent designs or provide comparable levels of evidence.

The review applies a four-layer framework to organise data extraction and synthesis. The value layer identifies the three relational dimensions and their indicators. The mechanism layer examines curriculum mapping, classroom pedagogy, school culture and habituation, and family–community partnerships. The evidence layer records research designs, data sources, and claims concerning implementation and outcomes. The condition layer identifies reported enablers and constraints at policy, institutional, teacher, pupil, and parent levels. By connecting these layers, the framework enables the review to examine not only which values and practices are reported, but also how they are implemented, what evidence supports claims of effectiveness, and under what conditions implementation occurs.

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This study aims to systematically synthesise published research on the implementation of humanistic–religious education in primary education, with particular attention to its relevance for schools operating national and international curricula. The review addresses four research questions:

1. How is humanistic–religious education conceptualised and measured in primary-education research, and which dimensions and indicators recur?
2. What implementation practices are reported, and through which curricular, pedagogical, school-culture, and family–community mechanisms are they said to work?
3. On what evidentiary grounds are practices designated as *best practice*, and how are pupil outcomes evidenced?
4. What enabling and constraining conditions are reported, and what do they imply for schools adapting both national and international curricula?

The study contributes to the literature in three ways. Conceptually, it consolidates related terminology into an operational framework that distinguishes humanistic–religious education from broader character-education constructs while identifying their points of overlap. Methodologically, it applies a transparent, protocol-driven synthesis and a two-component classification of *best practice* to distinguish design claims from evidence of outcomes. Practically, it organises findings on implementation mechanisms and contextual conditions to inform curriculum integration and future empirical research in primary schools, particularly those operating dual-curriculum arrangements. Rather than assuming that international curricula or formal religious instruction automatically produce desirable character outcomes, the review examines the available evidence for how humanistic–religious values are translated into educational practice.

2. METHOD

2.1. Research Design and Protocol

This study is designed as a systematic literature review protocol to establish a transparent and reproducible procedure for synthesising research on the implementation of humanistic–religious education in primary schools. The review addresses four research questions concerning conceptualisation and measurement, implementation practices, evidentiary grounds for *best practice*, and the conditions that enable or constrain implementation. A systematic review is appropriate because these questions require a structured synthesis of evidence across studies, rather than an investigation of a single educational setting.

The review protocol specifies the information sources, search strategy, eligibility criteria, study-selection procedures, data-extraction framework, quality-appraisal procedures, and synthesis methods before formal screening and synthesis are completed. The review is guided by the PRISMA 2020 statement [51]. The completed review will report the identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion stages transparently, allowing readers to examine how the evidence base was assembled. Procedures for evaluating the trustworthiness of qualitative educational research will be informed by established methodological principles [52], [53].

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The protocol registration details will be reported as follows if registration has been completed: registry name, registration number, registration date, and a publicly accessible registration link. If the protocol has not been registered, the manuscript will state this explicitly rather than claiming prior registration. Any deviations from the planned procedures will be documented and explained in the final review.

2.2. Review Scope and Information Sources

The review scope is defined by four parameters: phenomenon, population, context, and outcomes. The phenomenon is the implementation of humanistic–religious education, understood as pedagogical, curricular, cultural, or partnership practices intended to support pupils' development across the vertical–spiritual, horizontal–social, and natural–contextual dimensions. The population comprises primary-school pupils and the educators and institutions responsible for their education. The context includes formal educational settings such as state schools, private religious schools, and international or dual-curriculum schools. SPK schools are a focal context rather than a mandatory inclusion category because restricting the review exclusively to SPK settings could limit the evidence available for synthesis. The outcomes comprise reported evidence of implementation, value internalisation, or value-related pupil conduct.

20 The review will search six information sources: Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, DOAJ, Google Scholar, and the Indonesian national index Garuda/SINTA. The inclusion of international and Indonesian sources is intended to capture relevant English- and Indonesian-language literature. The search period is 1 January 2014 to the final search date in 2026, with 2014 selected as the starting year because Regulation No. 31 of 2014 established the regulatory conditions relevant to the SPK context.

3 The exact date on which each database is searched will be recorded. Reference lists of eligible studies will be examined to identify additional relevant publications, and forward citation tracking will be conducted for selected studies when the relevant functionality is available. Records identified through database searches and supplementary search procedures will be documented separately to support transparent reporting.

2.3. Search Strategy

The search strategy combines three concept blocks: value construct, educational level, and implementation or context. English- and Indonesian-language terms are included 3 to reflect the terminology used in international and Indonesian educational research. The search strings will be adapted to the indexing fields and syntax of each information source. Table 1 presents the principal search concepts and terms. These terms provide the basis for database-specific search strings rather than representing a single identical query for all databases.

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Table 1. Search concept blocks and terms

Block	English terms	Indonesian terms
Value construct	"humanistic education" OR "religious humanism" OR "humanistic-religious" OR "character education" OR "value internalisation"	"pendidikan humanis" OR "humanisme religius" OR "humanis religius" OR "pendidikan karakter" OR "internalisasi nilai"
Level	"primary school" OR "elementary school" OR "basic education"	"sekolah dasar" OR "pendidikan dasar" OR "madrasah ibtidaiyah"
Implementation / context	implementation OR "best practice" OR "school culture" OR "curriculum integration" OR "international curriculum" OR "dual curriculum"	implementasi OR "praktik baik" OR "budaya sekolah" OR "integrasi kurikulum" OR "kurikulum internasional" OR "satuan pendidikan kerjasama"

The concepts will be combined using Boolean operators, with the value-construct block AND the educational-level block AND the implementation/context block. Within each block, alternative terms will be combined using OR. The full search strings, search fields, filters, dates, and numbers of records retrieved will be recorded in a search log and reported in the completed review or its supplementary materials.

Because the formal database searches and PRISMA screening have not yet been completed, the present manuscript is treated as a protocol rather than a completed systematic review. Any preliminary literature collected during manuscript development will not be presented as the final systematic-review corpus.

2.4. Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility criteria are specified in advance to ensure that the selection of studies is consistent with the research questions and the four-layer analytical framework. Studies will be considered eligible when they address humanistic, religious, or humanistic–religious education, or a related character-education construct that provides relevant evidence about at least one framework layer.

Studies that use broader character-education terminology will be included only when their content is conceptually relevant to at least one of the three relational dimensions, an associated implementation mechanism, or a relevant pupil outcome. The use of a related term alone will not be sufficient to establish eligibility. This approach allows the review to examine relevant evidence without treating all character-education research as equivalent to humanistic–religious education.

Conceptual and library-based studies will be considered alongside empirical studies because the first research question concerns how the construct is defined and operationalised. However, conceptual studies will be synthesised separately from empirical studies, and they will not be used as empirical evidence of pupil outcomes. Duplicate publications reporting the same dataset will be examined to identify the most complete report, while complementary publications may be retained when they provide distinct and relevant information. Table 2 summarises the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

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Table 2. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Parameter	Inclusion	Exclusion
Topic	Humanistic, religious, or humanistic–religious education; value or character implementation	Studies of achievement or pedagogy with no value dimension
Level	Primary or basic education; multi-level studies where primary data are separable	Secondary or tertiary only; early childhood only
Study type	Empirical (qualitative, quantitative, mixed) or substantive conceptual analysis	Editorials, book reviews, news reports, abstracts without full text
Publication	Peer-reviewed articles, book chapters, indexed proceedings	Non-peer-reviewed material; duplicate reports of one dataset
Language	English or Indonesian	Other languages
Period	2014–2026	Outside the range

Full-text eligibility will be determined using the criteria above, with the reason for exclusion documented for each report excluded at this stage. Reports that cannot be retrieved in full will be recorded separately from reports that are retrieved but fail the eligibility criteria.

2.5. Study Selection and PRISMA Reporting

Study selection will follow the identification, deduplication, title-and-abstract screening, full-text assessment, and final-inclusion stages recommended by the PRISMA 2020 reporting framework [51]. Records retrieved from all information sources will be compiled in a reference-management system or equivalent database. Duplicate records will be identified and removed before screening.

Two reviewers will independently screen titles and abstracts against the predefined eligibility criteria and independently assess the full texts of potentially eligible reports. Disagreements will first be discussed between reviewers with reference to the eligibility criteria. If consensus cannot be reached, a third reviewer will adjudicate the decision. The reasons for full-text exclusion will be recorded systematically. These procedures will be reported as completed only after they have actually been conducted; if a different screening arrangement is used, the final manuscript will describe the procedure implemented.

Figure 1 will present the completed PRISMA flow diagram after the searches and screening procedures have been conducted. It will report the number of records identified through each information source, additional records obtained through supplementary searches, duplicates removed, records screened, records excluded, full-text reports assessed, full-text reports excluded with reasons, and studies included in the synthesis. All counts will be based on the documented screening records, and no numerical values will be inserted before the selection process is completed. Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 flow diagram of the study-selection process.

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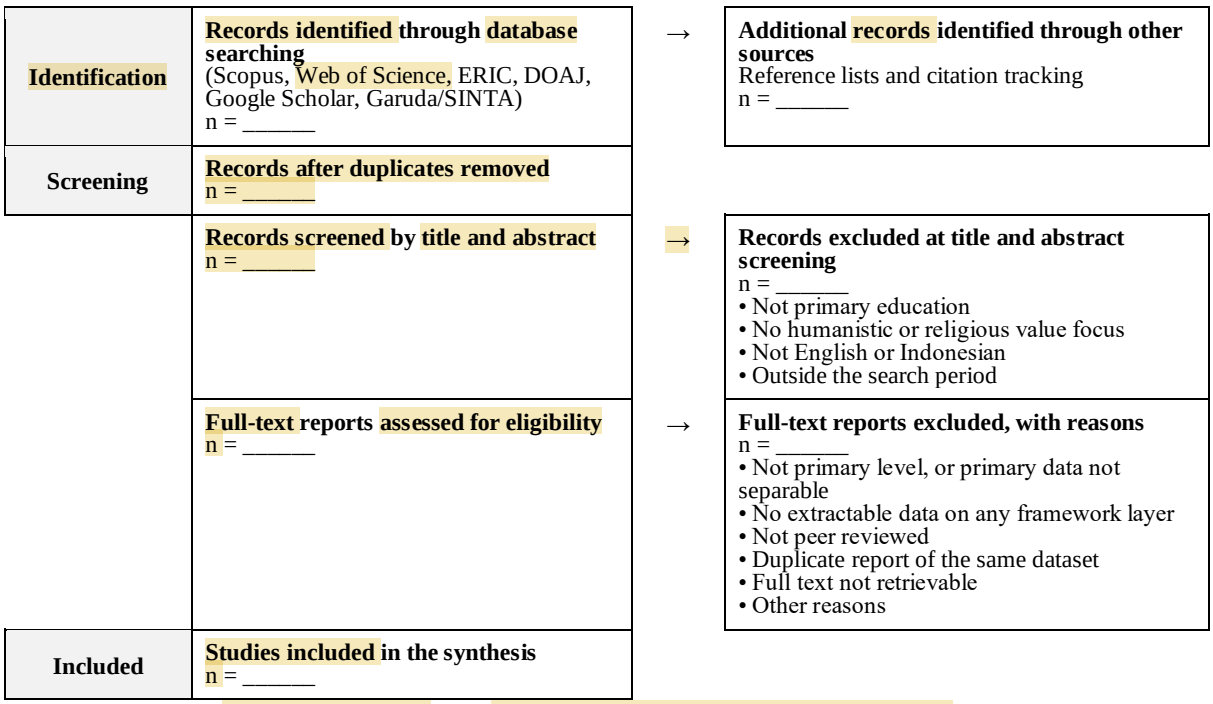


Figure 1. PRISMA 2020 flow diagram of the study selection process

2.6. Data Extraction

Data will be extracted using a standardised form developed from the four-layer analytical framework presented in the Introduction. The form will capture bibliographic information, study characteristics, conceptual definitions, implementation practices, outcome evidence, and reported contextual conditions. The extraction framework consists of four layers:

1. Value layer: the relational dimensions addressed, definitions of humanistic–religious or related values, and the indicators used to describe or assess them.
2. Mechanism layer: curriculum mapping, classroom pedagogy, school culture and habituation, and family–community partnerships.
3. Evidence layer: research design, educational setting, participants, data sources, outcome measures or reported outcomes, and the evidentiary basis for claims of *best practice*.
4. Condition layer: reported enabling and constraining conditions at policy, institutional, teacher, pupil, and parent levels.

Data extraction will be conducted independently by two reviewers for the included studies, followed by comparison and reconciliation of discrepancies. If independent duplicate extraction cannot be implemented, the actual extraction arrangement and verification procedure will be reported transparently. The extraction form will be piloted on a small subset of eligible studies and refined where necessary before full extraction. Any changes to the form will be documented to maintain consistency across the corpus.

For each study that claims a practice is exemplary or represents *best practice*, the extraction form will distinguish evidence about the design of the practice from evidence about its implementation and outcomes. This distinction will prevent the presence of a

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programme, curriculum, or institutional policy from being treated automatically as evidence of successful value internalisation.

2.7. Quality Appraisal and Trustworthiness

Methodological quality will be assessed separately from study eligibility because relevance to the review questions does not necessarily indicate the strength of the supporting evidence. Empirical studies will be appraised using design-appropriate checklists from the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) Critical Appraisal Tools. Mixed-methods studies will be assessed using the Mixed Methods Appraisal Tool (MMAT). The instrument appropriate to each study will be selected according to its actual research design, and the appraisal criteria and results will be documented for each included study.

Conceptual and library-based studies will be assessed using a predefined appraisal rubric addressing clarity of the central concepts, coherence of the argument, adequacy and relevance of the sources, and the contribution of the analysis to the review questions. This rubric will be applied separately from the instruments used for empirical studies because conceptual analyses do not provide the same forms of evidence as primary empirical research.

Two reviewers will independently assess methodological quality and discuss discrepancies until agreement is reached; unresolved disagreements will be referred to a third reviewer. Appraisal outcomes will be reported by study and criterion rather than reduced to a single score that obscures important methodological differences. Quality appraisal will inform the interpretation and strength of the synthesis, rather than automatically excluding all studies that have methodological limitations.

The assessment of qualitative studies will also consider the trustworthiness of their findings, including the transparency of the research process, the adequacy of data supporting interpretations, and the relationship between evidence and conclusions, consistent with established principles in qualitative educational research [52], [53]. The review will distinguish the quality of a study's reporting from the substantive relevance of its findings.

2.8. Data Synthesis

Findings will be synthesised narratively, with conceptual and empirical studies analysed separately before their contributions are compared across the four analytical layers. The synthesis will first map how humanistic–religious education and related constructs are conceptualised and measured. It will then examine reported implementation practices and the curricular, pedagogical, institutional, and family–community mechanisms through which those practices are intended to operate.

The evidence layer will be used to distinguish reported implementation from demonstrated outcomes and to examine the evidentiary basis of claims about *best practice*. For this review, *best practice* will be analysed using the two components defined in the Introduction: (1) a design component involving documented curriculum mapping and an inclusive school climate, and (2) an outcome component involving evidence of pupil-level change, consistent daily conduct, or sustained parental support for religious and local content. This is an operational classification for the present review, not an assumption that

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all studies use comparable outcome measures or establish causal effectiveness. Studies that claim exemplary practice without adequate evidence for both components will be classified as unsubstantiated rather than automatically excluded.

Finally, the condition layer will be used to identify patterns in the enabling and constraining conditions reported across studies. The findings will be interpreted in relation to the requirements of dual-curriculum settings, particularly the integration of national educational expectations, international programmes, and humanistic–religious values. Differences in study design, conceptual definitions, settings, and outcome measures will be considered when interpreting convergence and divergence across findings. Where evidence is insufficient, inconsistent, or indirect, the synthesis will report that limitation explicitly rather than infer an effect that the included studies do not establish.

2.9. Ethical Considerations

As a review of published and publicly accessible scholarly literature, this study does not involve direct recruitment of human participants or the collection of new personal data. Ethical practice will therefore focus on accurate representation of source findings, appropriate attribution, transparent reporting of the review procedures, and avoidance of selective reporting. Any applicable institutional requirements concerning ethics review or exemption will be followed and reported accurately.

3. RESULTS

This section presents an illustrative analysis of ten preliminary studies to demonstrate how the four-layer analytical framework can be applied to the research questions. Because the formal database searches, systematic screening, and full quality appraisal have not yet been completed, the findings are provisional and do not represent the results of a completed systematic review. The analysis is organised according to the four research questions and distinguishes observations from the preliminary corpus from interpretations that require confirmation through the planned review.

3.1. Characteristics of the Preliminary Corpus

The preliminary corpus comprises ten studies identified through targeted searches using combinations of the concepts listed in Table 1. It was assembled to examine the applicability of the extraction framework and to illustrate the proposed synthesis procedure, rather than to estimate the distribution of findings across the literature. The corpus is therefore illustrative, not exhaustive, and may change substantially when the formal searches across Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, DOAJ, Google Scholar, and Garuda/SINTA are completed.

Two studies identified through citation tracking were not included in the preliminary corpus because they did not meet the educational-level criterion. Fahrizal [49] examined curriculum integration in a madrasah aliyah, while Mardalena et al. [50] examined International Baccalaureate Diploma candidates. Both studies provide contextual information about dual-curriculum integration but concern upper-secondary education. Their exclusion from the primary-level corpus illustrates the distinction between literature

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used to contextualise the research problem and studies eligible to contribute evidence to the synthesis.

The ten preliminary studies cover the period 2020–2025 and include research conducted in Indonesian primary schools, Islamic primary schools (madrasah ibtidaiyah), and an SPK setting. The corpus includes qualitative, quantitative, mixed-methods, and conceptual or regulatory analyses. Most of the empirical studies use qualitative approaches to describe educational practices and institutional contexts, while Suardi et al. [54] provide quantified indicators and Susanto [47] examine the regulatory and managerial context of SPK education.

The preliminary corpus contains limited direct evidence about the implementation of humanistic–religious education in SPK primary schools, particularly evidence linking implementation practices to pupil-level outcomes. This observation is restricted to the ten selected studies and cannot yet establish the absence of such evidence in the wider literature. Table 3 summarises the characteristics of the preliminary corpus.

Table 3. Characteristics of the preliminary corpus

No	Author (Year)	Setting	Design	Dimension(s) addressed	Mechanism layer(s)	Outcome evidence
1	Widiyaningsih & Hairani [43]	SDN Nagasari III, Karawang Barat	Qualitative case study	Horizontal–social (humanistic values in PAI)	Classroom pedagogy; school culture	Descriptive; no outcome metric
2	Kholifah et al. [59]	MI, Banyuwangi	Qualitative case study	Vertical–spiritual + horizontal–social	Curriculum mapping; pedagogy; school culture; family–community partnership	Descriptive, triangulated; no quantified outcome
3	Janna et al. [55]	SD, Makassar	Qualitative	Vertical–spiritual (religious school culture)	School culture	Descriptive
4	Lestari et al. [56]	SDN Pandankrajan 1	Qualitative case study	Vertical–spiritual + horizontal–social (anti-bullying, tolerance)	School culture / habituation	Values identified; enablers & constraints reported
5	Suardi et al. [54]	SD (Kampus Mengajar programme), Makassar	Mixed methods	Vertical + horizontal + natural + civic (all measured)	Intra-/co-/extracurricular; family–community partnership	Quantified: 90.3–97.8% “very often” across dimensions
6	Purba et al. [48]	SPK school	Quantitative	Horizontal–social (social-emotional skills)	Character education programme	Reported outcome measure; journal since delisted from Scopus
7	Susanto [47]	SPK schools (regulatory analysis)	Conceptual / policy analysis	—	Management / policy (condition layer)	No empirical outcome data

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No	Author (Year)	Setting	Design	Dimension(s) addressed	Mechanism layer(s)	Outcome evidence
8	Rahmawati [57]	MIN 1 Sleman	Qualitative	Vertical–spiritual (Living Qur'an)	Pedagogy / curriculum	Descriptive
9	Sholeh & Rizki [60]	MI al-Ma'arif 04, Singosari Malang	Qualitative	Civic (nationalism)	School culture (ceremonies, Scouts)	Descriptive; teacher-level constraints reported
10	Umam et al. [58]	MI Miftahul Falaah, Kediri	Qualitative case study	Vertical–spiritual (Living Qur'an)	Pedagogy; school culture / habituation	Descriptive, impact on character/attitude reported qualitatively

Note: The table summarises the preliminary extraction and is not a substitute for the final systematic-review study-characteristics table. Study classifications and outcome descriptions must be checked against the full texts during formal extraction.

3.2. Conceptualisation and Measurement of Humanistic–Religious Education (RQ1)

The preliminary corpus suggests that religious and interpersonal values receive greater explicit attention than environmental responsibility and civic or national values. The vertical–spiritual dimension is represented through habituated worship, including dhuha and dhuhur prayers, Qur'an recitation, tahfidz, and short-surah memorisation, in the studies by Widiyaningsih and Hairani [43], Janna et al. [55], Lestari et al. [56], Rahmawati [57], Umam et al. [58], and Kholifah et al. [59]. The horizontal–social dimension is represented through courtesy, tolerance, empathy, anti-bullying conduct, honesty, and responsibility, although the particular indicators differ between studies [56], [59].

These differences illustrate a conceptual challenge: similar educational intentions are described through overlapping but non-identical terms, including humanistic values, religious character, religious school culture, and character strengthening. Such terminology may reflect differences in theoretical orientation, institutional setting, or the specific educational practices being investigated. Consequently, the presence of a religious or character-related term cannot by itself establish that a study examines the full humanistic–religious construct.

Suardi et al. [54] provide a broader operationalisation by reporting indicators for religious, interpersonal, environmental, and civic character. The study reports that 97.8% of indicators for religious character, 96.4% for interpersonal character, 95.7% for environmental character, and 90.3% for civic character were rated as practised "very often." These figures should be interpreted according to the original study's measurement and scoring procedures; they should not be read automatically as the percentage of pupils demonstrating each character dimension. Verification of the indicator denominators, response categories, and aggregation procedures is necessary before making direct comparisons with other studies.

Within this preliminary corpus, Suardi et al. [54] provide the clearest example of a multidimensional measurement approach, whereas most of the other studies focus on selected values or practices within particular educational settings. This contrast supports the

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analytical usefulness of the three relational dimensions introduced in Section 1. Nevertheless, it does not yet establish that the proposed framework is comprehensive or that the dimensions are measured consistently across the literature. The formal review will need to examine whether the three dimensions are explicitly defined, operationalised, and supported by evidence, rather than assuming that different labels refer to identical constructs.

3.3. Implementation Practices and Their Mechanisms (RQ2)

School culture and habituation emerge as recurring implementation mechanisms in the preliminary corpus. Several studies describe the enactment of religious values through repeated routines, teacher modelling, and activities embedded in everyday school life [43], [55], [56], [57], [58], [59]. These practices suggest that character-related education is not confined to formal classroom instruction but may also be communicated through institutional expectations and interactions. Because the preliminary corpus is small and was not assembled through a completed systematic search, the relative prevalence of these mechanisms remains uncertain.

Classroom pedagogy is particularly relevant when studies examine the delivery of religious or values-related subjects. Widiyaningsih and Hairani [43], for example, describe teaching strategies within Islamic Religious Education. Rahmawati [57] and Umam et al. [58] examine Living Qur'an practices, illustrating how religious content can be connected with classroom activities and school routines. These examples demonstrate the importance of distinguishing the content taught from the mechanisms through which pupils encounter, practise, and interpret the associated values.

Curriculum integration is less explicit in the preliminary corpus than school-based routines. Kholifah et al. [59] describe religious values as integrated across subjects rather than confined to religious instruction. This provides an example of curricular integration, although the extent of alignment between specific national learning outcomes, subject content, and observable pupil outcomes requires further examination. The distinction matters because a general statement that values are integrated across subjects is not equivalent to documented curriculum mapping.

Family and community partnership is also unevenly documented. Kholifah et al. [59] describe parental and community involvement in character strengthening, while Suardi et al. [54] incorporate multiple stakeholder groups into the programme. In other studies, family and community involvement is either not reported or is not sufficiently described to establish its role in implementation.

The preliminary analysis therefore identifies a potential imbalance between school-centred mechanisms and the documentation of family–community partnerships. If confirmed by the full review, this pattern would indicate that published research provides more detail about what schools and teachers do than about how home and community environments support the continuity of humanistic–religious values. At this stage, however, the absence of reported partnership activities must not be interpreted as proof that such partnerships do not occur. It may instead reflect the focus of the research questions, the data-collection methods, or the level of detail provided in the publications.

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3.4. Evidentiary Basis of Best-Practice Claims (RQ3)

The preliminary corpus illustrates the difference between describing an educational design and demonstrating its outcomes. Applying the two-component analytical definition introduced in Section 1, Suardi et al. [54] provide the clearest example of a study reporting both a programme design involving intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities and quantified indicators related to several character dimensions. However, the availability of quantified indicators does not by itself establish that the programme caused improvements in pupils' character. Interpretation depends on the measurement instrument, study design, baseline information, and the extent to which the reported indicators reflect actual pupil conduct.

The other studies primarily provide descriptive accounts of activities, teacher strategies, school routines, and observed values. Lestari et al. [56] and Kholifah et al. [59], for example, describe the presence and implementation of particular values but do not report comparable baseline-to-follow-up changes or independent outcome measures in the information extracted for this preliminary analysis. Such studies remain valuable for understanding educational processes and contextual conditions, but their evidence serves a different purpose from quantitative evaluations of change.

None of the ten studies in the preliminary corpus explicitly identifies its approach as “best practice” in the information examined for this analysis. This observation suggests that the main analytical challenge may concern the limited measurement and reporting of outcomes rather than the prevalence of explicit claims of superiority. The distinction is important: a study can describe a potentially useful practice without claiming that it is superior to alternatives, and a lack of quantified outcomes does not automatically mean that the practice is ineffective.

The two-component framework is therefore useful as a way to classify the evidentiary basis of claims, but it should not be interpreted as a universal definition of educational effectiveness. The design component identifies whether the intended curricular and institutional arrangements are documented, while the outcome component identifies whether the study provides relevant evidence of pupil-level development or other specified outcomes. The strength of such evidence must still be interpreted in light of the research design and methodological quality.

The SPK-related literature in the preliminary corpus illustrates a further distinction between contextual evidence and direct outcome evidence. Susanto [47] discusses regulatory and managerial requirements for SPK schools, including the teaching of Religious Education, Pancasila and Civic Education, and Indonesian Language. This analysis informs understanding of institutional obligations but does not provide primary-level empirical evidence of pupil outcomes. Purba et al. [48] report social–emotional outcomes in an SPK context, but the relevance of those findings to the full humanistic–religious construct depends on the outcomes measured and the extent to which the study addresses the relational dimensions defined in this review.

The indexing history of the journal publishing Purba et al. [48] should be verified against authoritative indexing records and the publication year. A journal's current indexing status is not, by itself, sufficient evidence that an individual study is methodologically weak

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or ineligible. Eligibility should be determined using the predefined publication criteria, while methodological quality should be assessed separately. The formal review should therefore document publication eligibility, indexing information where relevant, and methodological appraisal as distinct considerations.

Overall, the preliminary corpus highlights the need to distinguish four types of evidence: conceptual arguments, descriptions of implementation, observations of values or conduct, and measured outcomes. These categories are not interchangeable. The formal review will examine whether the wider literature provides sufficient evidence to classify practices more confidently and to determine how frequently implementation claims are supported by documented outcomes.

3.5. Enabling and Constraining Conditions (RQ4)

The preliminary studies identify enabling conditions mainly at the teacher and institutional levels. Teacher modelling and consistency in habituation are described as relevant to implementation [43], [57]. The integration of values across subjects rather than their confinement to religious instruction is also reported as an institutional approach [59]. Suardi et al. [54] provide an example of a programme involving multiple stakeholder groups, suggesting that implementation can be organised beyond a single teacher or subject.

Potential constraints concern the consistency of teacher practice and the extent of parental involvement. These conditions should be interpreted cautiously because the depth of reporting varies between studies, and the absence of a reported constraint does not establish that the constraint is absent in practice. The preliminary corpus also provides limited information about how school leadership, teacher preparation, timetable arrangements, and assessment systems interact with the implementation of humanistic–religious values.

The institutional differences between SD, MI, and SPK settings are important for interpreting these findings. Although all three settings may provide relevant evidence about primary-level character development, their institutional missions, religious environments, curricular arrangements, and regulatory obligations are not identical. Studies conducted in Islamic primary schools may describe religious routines that are institutionally embedded, whereas state primary schools may organise related values through different combinations of subjects, school culture, and extracurricular activities. SPK schools introduce an additional consideration because national requirements operate alongside international programmes.

Consequently, mechanisms observed in one school type should not automatically be assumed to operate in the same way in another. The synthesis will need to identify the context in which each practice is reported and distinguish mechanisms shared across school types from those associated with specific institutional arrangements.

Fahrizal [49] describes dual-curriculum integration challenges at the upper-secondary level, including learning load, teacher certification, and assessment compatibility. These issues may provide contextual questions for examining SPK primary education, but the excluded study does not establish that the same constraints occur at the primary level. Mardalena et al. [50] likewise provides contextual evidence concerning an upper-secondary

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international curriculum. The formal review should therefore investigate whether comparable constraints are reported in eligible primary-level studies rather than transferring findings from upper-secondary settings without direct evidence.

4. DISCUSSION

The preliminary analysis demonstrates how the four-layer framework can organise heterogeneous studies while distinguishing conceptual definitions, implementation mechanisms, outcome evidence, and contextual conditions. It also illustrates why findings from studies using related terminology cannot be combined without examining what each study actually measures or describes.

Regarding the first research gap, the preliminary studies use different terms to describe religious, humanistic, interpersonal, and civic values. Several studies concentrate on religious routines, while others address social conduct or broader character dimensions. This pattern is consistent with the possibility of terminological fragmentation, although the preliminary corpus cannot establish how widespread the problem is across the full literature. The framework may help improve comparability by mapping study-specific terms to clearly defined relational dimensions while preserving differences in their original meanings and indicators.

Regarding the second gap, the studies vary in the extent to which they conceptualise humanistic–religious education as an integrated construct. Suardi et al. [54] provide multidimensional indicators, whereas other studies concentrate on specific practices or institutional settings. This variation reinforces the need to distinguish studies that explicitly operationalise a multidimensional construct from studies that contribute evidence about only one component of it. Such a distinction will also prevent the review from overstating the extent to which individual studies validate the proposed framework.

Regarding the third gap, the preliminary findings suggest that descriptions of educational practices and evidence of their outcomes need to be analysed separately. The presence of a programme, school routine, or stated institutional value is not equivalent to evidence of change in pupils' conduct. At the same time, descriptive and qualitative studies can offer important information about how practices are implemented and why they may be relevant in particular contexts. The two-component classification of best practice should therefore be used to clarify the type and strength of available evidence, not to reduce all educational research to quantified outcome measures.

Regarding the fourth gap, the preliminary corpus contains limited direct evidence linking humanistic–religious implementation in SPK primary schools to pupil-level outcomes. Susanto [47] provides contextual and regulatory analysis, while Purba et al. [48] address social–emotional outcomes in an SPK context. These studies differ in purpose and evidentiary contribution, and neither should be treated as establishing the full scope of humanistic–religious implementation in SPK primary education. The apparent gap remains a question for the completed review rather than a confirmed conclusion.

Several limitations must be considered when interpreting these observations. First, the preliminary corpus was assembled through targeted searches rather than the completed protocol-driven search. It may therefore omit relevant studies and overrepresent publications

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that are easier to identify through familiar terminology or citation networks. Second, the corpus is small and contains studies with different designs, settings, conceptual definitions, and outcome measures. Direct comparisons of frequencies or outcome percentages may therefore be misleading. Third, the focus on English- and Indonesian-language publications may introduce language bias, while reliance on indexed and otherwise eligible publications may introduce publication and indexing biases. These risks will be considered during the formal review, although the extent of any resulting bias cannot be established from the preliminary corpus alone.

Fourth, the predominance of Indonesian studies in this corpus may reflect the targeted search strategy, the selected terminology, and the particular emphasis on Indonesian educational settings. It should not be interpreted as evidence that humanistic–religious education is studied primarily in Indonesia worldwide. Fifth, SD, MI, and SPK settings differ in their curricular and institutional conditions. A meaningful synthesis must preserve these differences and examine whether reported mechanisms are transferable across contexts, rather than assuming that practices observed in one setting can be generalised to another.

The principal contribution demonstrated at this stage is methodological: the four-layer framework offers a structured means of connecting value definitions with implementation practices, the evidence supporting outcome claims, and the conditions under which practices occur. Its substantive contribution will depend on whether the framework remains useful when applied to the complete eligible corpus and whether the formal synthesis identifies recurring patterns, contradictions, and gaps across different study designs and school types.

The preliminary findings must therefore be treated as illustrative rather than conclusive. Once the formal searches, screening, extraction, and appraisal have been completed, the analysis will need to be repeated using the final included studies. The final Results and Discussion should then report the actual PRISMA counts, the verified characteristics of the included studies, the completed quality appraisal, and the findings supported by that corpus. Only after this process can the review establish whether the four proposed research gaps are supported by the wider evidence and formulate defensible implications for humanistic–religious education in primary schools, including SPK settings.

5. CONCLUSION

This study aims to examine how humanistic–religious education is conceptualised and implemented in primary education, with particular attention to its dimensions, implementation mechanisms, potential best practices, and contextual conditions in Satuan Pendidikan Kerjasama (SPK) schools. The preliminary analysis of ten studies suggests that humanistic–religious education is most frequently discussed through vertical–spiritual and horizontal–social dimensions, while natural–contextual and civic–national dimensions receive less consistent attention. Habituation and school culture appear prominently in the preliminary corpus, whereas explicit curriculum mapping and systematic engagement with families and communities are less consistently documented. The available outcome evidence is also limited and varies in its measurement and reporting, preventing firm conclusions

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about the effectiveness of particular approaches or the identification of established best practices.

These patterns provide an initial indication of how humanistic–religious education has been represented in the available literature, rather than definitive findings from a completed systematic review. The ten-study corpus is illustrative and cannot support generalisation across primary schools, madrasahs, or SPK institutions. The findings should therefore be interpreted as preliminary observations that require verification through comprehensive database searches, formal PRISMA-based screening, full-text eligibility assessment, critical appraisal of study quality, and systematic synthesis of the final eligible studies.

Conceptually, the preliminary analysis highlights the value of examining spiritual, social, environmental, and civic dimensions together when investigating humanistic–religious education. For SPK schools, the apparent gaps in curriculum mapping and pupil-outcome evidence suggest areas that warrant further investigation. The possible integration of habituation, curriculum planning, and family–community engagement may be considered a tentative direction for professional discussion and future research, not an established evidence-based recommendation. Its suitability and effectiveness in SPK settings remain to be assessed using directly relevant empirical evidence.

The principal limitation of the present analysis is that the formal review process has not yet been completed; consequently, the preliminary corpus may not represent the full range of relevant research and may be affected by database coverage, publication and language bias, and differences between school types and study designs. Future work should complete the planned searches and selection procedures, document the PRISMA flow and full-text exclusion reasons, assess methodological quality, and compare findings across primary schools, madrasahs, and SPK settings. Further empirical studies should also examine how different dimensions of humanistic–religious education are translated into curriculum and classroom practice and whether these practices are associated with clearly defined and reliably measured pupil outcomes. These steps are necessary before stronger conclusions can be drawn about effective approaches or context-specific implications for SPK schools.

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