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Skill Project Module as a Means of Building Morals and Leadership Spirit of Students at Daarul Mutqin Islamic Boarding School, Bogor, West Java

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Skill Project Module as a medium for fostering moral character and leadership spirit among students (santri) at Daarul Mutqin Islamic Boarding School, Bogor, West Java. This research is motivated by the need for integrative character education that combines religious values with practical skills and leadership development. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving pesantren leaders, teachers, and students. The findings show that the Skill Project Module effectively supports the formation of moral values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, cooperation, and independence through structured project-based activities that encourage active participation, teamwork, and problem-solving. In addition, the module strengthens students' leadership qualities by providing opportunities to manage tasks, make decisions, and reflect on their actions under mentor guidance. This study highlights the importance of project-based skill programs as a strategic instrument for sustainable character and leadership development in Islamic boarding schools.

Keywords: Skill Project Module, Moral Character, Leadership, Santri, Islamic Boarding Schools

1. Introduction

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) as Islamic educational institutions hold a strategic role in shaping a generation that is not only intellectually competent but also morally upright and capable of leading within society (Sadiah & Java, 2022). In the midst of rapid globalization, technological advancement, and shifting socio-cultural values, pesantren are required to continuously innovate in order to maintain their relevance and effectiveness in character formation (Arif, 2020). At Daarul Mutqin Islamic Boarding School, Bogor, West Java, education is not



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limited to the transfer of religious knowledge, but is directed toward the cultivation of morals (akhlaq), responsibility, independence, and leadership spirit. One of the strategic efforts undertaken to achieve these goals is the implementation of the Skill Project Module as an integral part of student development (Handayani, Widya, Mahakam, & Mulawarman, 2025).

Within the pesantren tradition, character building is understood as a holistic and continuous process that integrates cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Moral education is embedded in daily routines, worship practices, discipline systems, and social interactions within the boarding environment (Sciences, 2022). However, in facing contemporary challenges, moral formation cannot rely solely on habituation and normative instruction. Students need experiential learning spaces that allow them to practice values directly through real activities. In this context, the Skill Project Module becomes an educational instrument that bridges theoretical understanding and practical application of Islamic values in daily life (Tujuan, Pemecahan, Ptsdl, & Ptsdl, 2023).

The Skill Project Module at Daarul Mutqin Islamic Boarding School is designed as a structured, project-based learning program that equips students with practical skills while simultaneously nurturing moral integrity and leadership character. Through collaborative projects, problem-solving tasks, and community-oriented activities, students are trained to develop responsibility, teamwork, discipline, creativity, and initiative (Geok & Yee, 2024). This module positions students not merely as passive recipients of instruction, but as active subjects who learn through experience, reflection, and action. Thus, skill development is not separated from moral and spiritual formation, but becomes a medium for internalizing Islamic values.

The urgency of integrating skill-based projects in pesantren education is closely related to the evolving characteristics of today's youth (Lateh, 2022). The younger generation tends to respond more effectively to participatory, contextual, and experiential learning approaches rather than purely lecture-based or normative models. A development pattern that emphasizes only rule enforcement may produce compliance, but not necessarily intrinsic awareness and moral responsibility (Roza, Berutu, & Sari, 2025). Therefore, the Skill Project Module is conceptualized as a transformative approach that encourages students to internalize values through meaningful engagement, collaborative leadership, and reflective practice (Torres-cruz, Gonzales-pacheco, Byham-gray, & Rothpletz-puglia, 2023).

Furthermore, leadership spirit (*ruh kepemimpinan*) is not formed instantly, but through continuous training, responsibility delegation, and real organizational experience (Guo, 2023). At Daarul Mutqin, the Skill Project Module provides opportunities for students to lead teams, manage activities, organize programs, and evaluate outcomes collectively. Through these processes, students learn decision-making, communication, conflict resolution, and accountability. Leadership is thus nurtured not merely as authority, but as service (*khidmah*), trustworthiness (*amanah*), and moral example (*uswah*), which are rooted in Islamic teachings (At-taqwa, 2025).

The implementation of the Skill Project Module also reflects the transformation of educational roles within the pesantren environment. Teachers and mentors function not only as instructors, but as facilitators and mentors who guide students throughout the project process (Aloisio et al., 2022).



They create a supportive, dialogical, and reflective learning atmosphere that encourages initiative and creativity. This shift from a purely supervisory model to a participatory mentoring model strengthens the pedagogical relationship between educators and students, making the development of morals and leadership more organic and sustainable (Green-thompson, Mcinerney, Manning, & Mapukata-sondzaba, 2012).

Although various studies have discussed character education and leadership development in Islamic boarding schools, relatively limited attention has been given to structured skill-based project modules as an integrated medium for moral and leadership formation within a specific institutional context. Each pesantren possesses unique cultural traditions, management systems, and educational visions that influence the effectiveness of its programs (Hakim, 2023). Therefore, examining the Skill Project Module at Daarul Mutqin Islamic Boarding School, Bogor, becomes significant in understanding how contextualized project-based learning can contribute to strengthening students' moral values and leadership spirit in a boarding school setting (J. H. Penelitian, Kepustakaan, & Pendidikan, 2022).

Based on this background, this study aims to explore comprehensively the role of the Skill Project Module as a means of building morals and leadership spirit among students at Daarul Mutqin Islamic Boarding School, Bogor, West Java. The research seeks to analyze the design and implementation of the module, identify the strategies used to integrate skills training with moral education, and examine supporting and inhibiting factors influencing its effectiveness. By situating this study within the broader discourse of transformative Islamic education, this research is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to the development of integrative, contextual, and sustainable character education models in Islamic boarding schools (Pendidikan, Ahyan, & Sya, 2023)

2. Research Method

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive design to comprehensively examine the implementation of the Skill Project Module as a means of building morals and leadership spirit among students. The qualitative approach was selected because it enables the researcher to understand deeply the meanings, values, experiences, and social processes that occur naturally within the Islamic boarding school environment. Through this method, the researcher sought to explore how project-based skill activities are designed, implemented, and internalized by students as part of their moral and leadership development in a holistic and contextual manner (YOGENDRA PANTA , *Dept of Mechanical Engineering* , and KENAN HATOPOGLU , *Dept of Electrical & Computer Engineering* , *West Virginia University Institute of Technology* , Beckley , WV , 25801 , *Implementation of ACUE ' s " Developing Student ' s Career Ready Skills " Module at WVU Tech*, n.d.).

The research was conducted at Daarul Mutqin Islamic Boarding School, located in Bogor, West Java. This pesantren integrates formal education with a boarding school system in which



students reside in dormitories, allowing character education to be carried out intensively throughout daily activities. Daarul Mutqin combines the national curriculum with Islamic studies and pesantren traditions, emphasizing the cultivation of akhlaq (morals), discipline, responsibility, and leadership (Pang, Lu, Huang, Lin, & Ran, n.d.). The Skill Project Module is one of its flagship programs, designed to engage students in structured, project-based activities that integrate practical skill development with character and leadership formation under the supervision of teachers and dormitory mentors.

Data collection was carried out through participatory observation, in-depth semi-structured interviews, and documentation review. Observations were conducted to examine directly the implementation of the Skill Project Module, student participation, and interactions between students and mentors during project activities. Interviews were conducted with school leaders, program coordinators, teachers, dormitory mentors, and selected students who were actively involved in the module. Documentation, including program guidelines, activity reports, student project outputs, and institutional records, was analyzed to support and enrich the primary data. The validity of the data was strengthened through triangulation of sources and techniques.

The selection of informants used purposive sampling to identify individuals who possessed relevant knowledge and direct experience related to the Skill Project Module. To obtain more comprehensive and in-depth data, the sampling process was expanded using snowball techniques, allowing additional informants to be identified based on recommendations from initial participants. The data collection process was conducted in several stages, including preliminary observation, intensive field research, and verification and clarification of findings to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the information obtained (Muhtarom & Qurtubi, 2023).

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which consists of data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification. Throughout the analysis process, the researcher continuously compared findings from different sources to ensure credibility and validity (Rohman, 2023). Triangulation of sources, techniques, and time was applied to strengthen the trustworthiness of the research results. This methodological approach is expected to provide a comprehensive and systematic understanding of how the Skill Project Module contributes to fostering moral integrity and leadership spirit among students at Daarul Mutqin Islamic Boarding School, as well as to offer conceptual insights for the development of character-based educational models in Islamic boarding schools (J. Penelitian, Sosial, Keagamaan, & Afwadzi, 2021).

3. Result

3.1. Implementation Model of the Skill Project Module in the Formation of Students' Morals

The research findings indicate that the implementation of the Skill Project Module at Daarul Mutqin Islamic Boarding School, Bogor, is designed not merely as a technical skills development



program, but also as an instrument for moral formation through experiential learning. The module is carried out through stages of planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation that are integrated with pesantren values such as trustworthiness (amanah), responsibility, discipline, cooperation, and honesty.

These findings are aligned with character education theory, which emphasizes that moral formation must simultaneously involve aspects of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action (Cathrin et al., 2021). In the context of Islamic boarding schools, moral development is strengthened through the boarding system, which enables the intensive and continuous internalization of values. Furthermore, Islamic education views morals (akhlaq) as the result of habituation and exemplary conduct within a religious environment (Sri & Marcel, 2024).

Based on an interview with Ustadzah Najla, Head of Academic Affairs and Curriculum at the boarding school, she stated:

“Every project is not only about the final result, but about how students learn to be responsible, honest, and to fulfill their trust collectively.”

An eleventh-grade student, represented by Abidin Ohoirot, also expressed that group work in projects trains them to respect one another, manage conflicts, and maintain commitment. This indicates that moral formation occurs through direct practice, not merely through normative instruction. Thus, the Skill Project Module becomes a contextual and applicable medium for value internalization.

Abidin Ohoirot further stated:

“We are not afraid to ask questions because the teachers are close to us. We can discuss ideas and improvements for our projects. From there, we learn to think more maturely.”

Ustadzah Najla added:

“Leaders are born through process. The students learn from mistakes, improve themselves, and take responsibility for their work, creating and continuing to try. That is the essence of leadership.”



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Figure 1. *Documentation of Outstanding Students*

3.2. Skill Project Practices as a Pesantren-Based Character Education Model

Research This study found that the Skill Project Module significantly contributes to strengthening students' leadership spirit. Each project is designed with a clear leadership structure, such as team leader, technical coordinator, and members, enabling students to gain authentic experiences in both leading and being led.

Based on interviews and field observations, the implementation of the Skill Project at Daarul Mutqin Islamic Boarding School can be summarized in two key words: "Fun and Enjoy." This model creates a pleasant learning atmosphere and provides space for exploration for both junior high (SMP) and senior high school (SMA) students. The Skill Project is designed as a productive activity that balances the intensive academic routines and Qur'an memorization (tahfidz) programs.

Ustadz Hafis, as the mentor of male students, stated:

“The Skill Project at Daarul Mutqin is intentionally designed with a fun and enjoyable concept. Students are allowed to explore their interests and hobbies, as long as they remain within the framework of Islamic values. We want them to learn happily, not under pressure.”



Figure 2. *Students' Skill Project Outcomes*

In practice, students are given guided freedom to choose project fields such as book writing, content creation, graphic design, and IT programming. In the book writing project, for example, students are free to determine the topic and title as long as they remain within Islamic values. In the field of content creation, students are allowed to experiment with creative and educational video formats or digital media.

Ustadz Hafis also added:

“We only provide direction and guidance. The ideas still come from the students. When they enjoy the process, positive character traits grow more easily.”

Ghaly Arkan, an eleventh-grade student, expressed:

“The Skill Project keeps us from feeling bored. After memorizing the Qur'an, we can create something. It feels more motivating because we are working on something we like.”

These findings indicate that the Skill Project functions as a pesantren-based character education model that is both humanistic and participatory. This model does not eliminate the



distinctive characteristics of the pesantren; rather, it enriches the mentoring system through a creative and productive approach. A joyful learning atmosphere strengthens students' emotional engagement, making character values easier to internalize.

3.3. The Contribution of the Skill Project to the Formation of Students' Morals and Leadership Spirit

Based on interviews with pesantren administrators and policy makers, the Skill Project is a flagship program implemented starting from the first grade of junior and senior high school at Daarul Mutqin Islamic Boarding School. This program is designed as a platform for developing students' interests and talents so that they can be directed toward something beneficial for themselves and for the wider community.

Ustadzah Zahra, as the Head of the Boarding School, explained:

"The name of the program is Skill Project, which begins from the first grade of junior and senior high school. In practice, students are given projects according to their interests and talents to be developed into something beneficial."

The fundamental concept of the Skill Project is to explore each student's unique potential and then develop it into a productive, real-world project. Students with an entrepreneurial spirit are guided to build business projects, such as creating their own products and marketing them to the public. Those who are talented in writing are mentored to become authors whose works provide positive impact. Students with an interest in technology are encouraged to develop IT projects that are innovative and beneficial for community needs.

She further explained:

"For example, students with an entrepreneurial spirit are directed to do business, create their own products, and sell them to the public. Those with writing talent are guided to become authors whose works can give positive benefits. Those with IT talent are encouraged to create technology projects that can help meet many people's needs."

The program is not limited to general skill areas but also includes strengthening religious potential. Students who demonstrate strong memorization abilities are directed to achieve mutqin (strong and precise) memorization of the Qur'an, followed by memorization of hadith and deeper Islamic studies. Meanwhile, students who are talented in drawing are guided to create da'wah comics, and those gifted in sports are encouraged to develop into high-achieving athletes.



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“Those who have drawing talent are directed to create da’wah comic projects. Those with sports talent are encouraged to become world-class athletes. And other talents will certainly be explored while they are in the pesantren.”

These findings indicate that the Skill Project at Daarul Mutqin Islamic Boarding School represents a pesantren-based character education model oriented toward developing individual potential within the framework of Islamic values. Education is not solely focused on cognitive aspects and memorization, but also on the actualization of talents directed toward usefulness and social contribution. This model affirms that each student is viewed as an individual with unique potential that must be discovered, nurtured, and systematically developed.

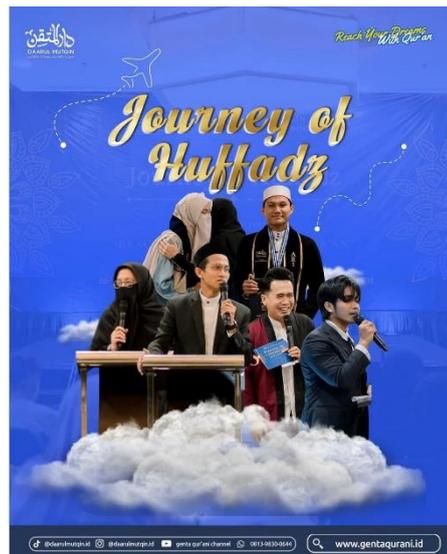


Figure 3. *Reach Your Dreams with Qur’an: The Journey Begins*

4. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the Skill Project learning model significantly contributes to the formation of students’ morals and leadership spirit through a continuous and responsibility-based mentoring process. By assigning projects aligned with students’ interests and talents, the pesantren creates a meaningful learning experience that encourages students to manage trust (amanah), develop structured plans, and consistently complete tasks until they produce tangible outcomes. This process transforms learning from a purely theoretical activity into a value-driven practice rooted in real responsibility.



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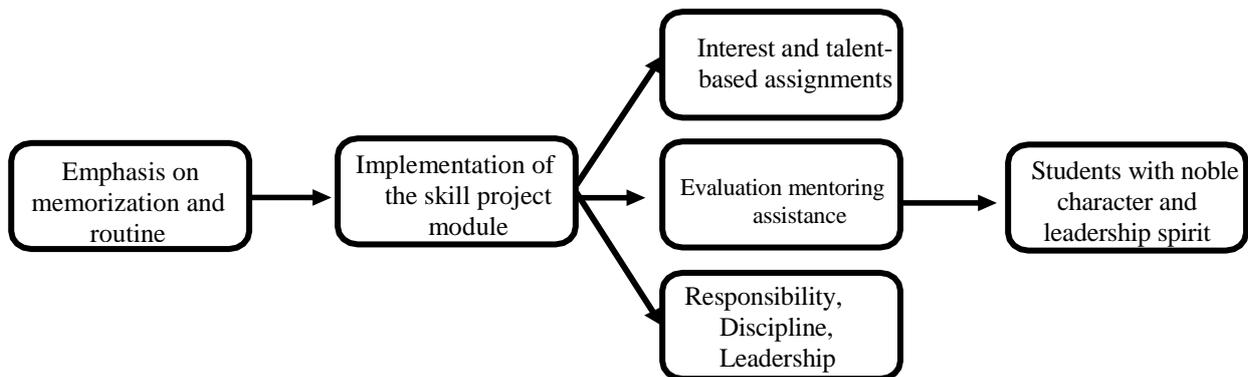
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The cultivation of discipline, responsibility, and commitment becomes evident throughout the implementation of various project types. In entrepreneurship projects, students internalize honesty in transactions, accountability for product quality, and ethical interaction with consumers. Writing projects nurture perseverance, consistency, and patience in completing manuscripts, while IT and technology projects foster problem-solving skills and social responsibility regarding the benefits of the products created. These diverse experiences demonstrate that moral values are embedded within practical activities rather than delivered solely through normative instruction.

Moreover, the integration of Qur'an and hadith memorization within the Skill Project framework strengthens spiritual discipline and long-term commitment. The rigorous process of memorization demands sincerity, persistence (*istiqamah*), patience, and strong self-regulation. This indicates that the Skill Project does not merely emphasize technical competence but also reinforces core Islamic moral values such as trustworthiness, resilience, and dedication. The boarding school environment further supports this internalization process through consistent supervision and habituation.

From a leadership perspective, the Skill Project serves as an authentic training ground for developing managerial and interpersonal skills. Students are given opportunities to lead projects independently or collaboratively, make decisions, address challenges, solve problems, and receive constructive evaluation. Leadership, therefore, emerges as a gradual process shaped by experience, reflection, accountability, and continuous self-improvement rather than instant authority. This experiential approach strengthens students' confidence and adaptive capacity in facing real-world challenges.

In conclusion, the Skill Project at Daarul Mutqin Islamic Boarding School functions as a strategic instrument for producing well-rounded students who excel not only academically and spiritually but also in character and leadership. By integrating spiritual reinforcement with worldly skill development, the program reflects a balanced educational model that harmonizes religious commitment with creative and entrepreneurial potential. Such an approach positions pesantren education as dynamic and transformative, capable of preparing a generation that contributes meaningfully to society and the broader Muslim community.



Picture 2. *Conceptual Model of Skill Project Transformation*

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that the implementation of the Skill Project Module at Daarul Mutqin Islamic Boarding School, Bogor, represents an integrative, creative, and transformative pesantren-based character education model. The Skill Project functions not only as a program for developing students' interests and talents, but also as a strategic medium for fostering morals and leadership spirit through a fun and enjoyable, participatory, and sustainable learning process. Through projects tailored to each student's potential whether in entrepreneurship, writing, technology, Qur'anic memorization (tahfidz), arts, or sports students are trained to be responsible, disciplined, consistent, and capable of gradually developing themselves from small targets to greater achievements. Substantively, the Skill Project learning model contributes to the formation of moral awareness that is not merely normative, but grows through real experiences in managing trust (amanah), completing projects, collaborating with others, and receiving evaluation. Leadership spirit develops through reflective learning processes, close relational engagement between teachers and students, and the habituation of facing challenges independently and collaboratively. Thus, the leadership that emerges is neither instant nor authoritarian, but is shaped through discipline, perseverance, and maturity gained from continuous processes.

Theoretically, this study enriches the discourse on pesantren-based character education by offering a potential- and project-based character development model (project-based character education) integrated with Islamic values and the boarding school system. Practically, these findings provide recommendations for Islamic boarding schools to develop similar programs that integrate spiritual reinforcement with 21st-century competency development in a balanced manner. Moving forward, it is necessary to strengthen mentoring systems, conduct continuous evaluation, and undertake further research using comparative or mixed-method approaches to test the effectiveness and sustainability of the Skill Project model within broader pesantren context.



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