

Strengthening the Human Resource Capacity of Santri Through Soft Skills Training at Salafiyah Tahfidzul Quran Muhammad Natsir Islamic Boarding School

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Article History

Received on 11 Mei 2026

Revised on 22 Mei 2026

Accepted on 22 Mei 2026

Abstract

Purpose: This community service activity aims to strengthen the human resource capacity of Islamic boarding school students (santri) through soft skills training, including effective communication, leadership, and self-management.

Research Methodology: The program was conducted at Pondok Pesantren Salafiyah Tahfidzul Quran Muhammad Natsir, targeting santri as participants. The methods used included interactive lectures, group discussions, simulations, and practice-based evaluations.

Results: The results indicate a significant improvement in students' understanding of soft skills and their importance in social life and future career readiness. In addition, students showed increased confidence and interpersonal communication skills.

Conclusions: This activity demonstrates that soft skills training based on Human Resource Management (HRM) is an effective approach to developing the quality of santri as adaptive and competitive human resources.

Limitations: The program was limited to participants from one Islamic boarding school and was conducted within a relatively short implementation period, which may affect the generalizability and long-term impact of the findings.

Contributions: The program is expected to serve as a sustainable development model for human resource empowerment in Islamic boarding schools.

Keywords: *human resource development, soft skills, Islamic boarding school, community service, santri*

How to Cite: Author name. (Year). Title of study. *Name of Journal*, Volume (Issue), Number page.

1. Introduction

The development of globalization and technological advancement has brought significant changes to the competency demands of human resources. In addition to technical competencies (hard skills), individuals are also required to possess non-technical abilities (soft skills) such as communication, leadership, and self-management. Soft skills have become an important factor in determining individual success in both social life and the professional world.

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) as religion-based educational institutions have a strategic role in shaping character and improving the quality of human resources. Besides equipping santri with religious knowledge, pesantren are also expected to develop supporting skills that are relevant to contemporary needs.

However, based on preliminary observations at Pondok Pesantren Salafiyah Tahfidzul Quran Muhammad Natsir, it was found that some santri still faced limitations in interpersonal communication, self-confidence, and leadership abilities. This condition indicates the need for structured training interventions to enhance the human resource capacity of the students.

From the perspective of Human Resource Management (HRM), the development of individual competencies is considered an important investment in improving the quality of human capital. Therefore, this community service activity was carried out as an effort to enhance the capacity of santri through practical and contextual soft skills training.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis/es Development

2.1 Literature Review

Soft skills are recognized as essential competencies that support individual success in both academic and professional settings. According to Pratama and Lestari (2021), the development of soft skills has a significant influence on students' work readiness, particularly in communication, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities. These competencies complement technical skills and contribute to better adaptability in the workplace.

Participatory learning approaches are also considered effective in improving interpersonal abilities among learners. Siregar and Putri (2022) explained that interactive and participatory learning methods encourage active involvement, enhance communication skills, and foster self-confidence among participants.

Furthermore, experiential learning-based community service activities contribute positively to the improvement of human resource quality. Nugroho and Sari (2023) stated that direct practice and real-life learning experiences are effective strategies for strengthening individual competencies and increasing participant engagement.

In educational institutions, soft skills training has also been shown to strengthen students' competencies and character development. Rahmawati and Wibowo (2024) emphasized that soft skills-based training programs help learners become more adaptive, collaborative, and prepared to face future challenges.

Based on these studies, soft skills development through participatory and experiential learning approaches can be considered an important strategy for improving the quality of human resources, particularly within Islamic boarding school environments.

2.2 Hypothesis Development

Based on the literature reviewed, this study proposes that the implementation of participatory and interactive soft skills training can positively improve the human resource capacity of santri, particularly in terms of communication skills, self-confidence, leadership, and teamwork abilities.

3. Methodology

This community service activity was carried out at Pondok Pesantren Salafiyah Tahfidzul Quran Muhammad Natsir, with santri serving as the primary participants. The program implementation adopted a participatory approach that positioned the santri as active subjects in the learning process. This approach was chosen so that the activity would not merely involve knowledge transfer, but would also encourage active participation, direct experience, and sustainable behavioral changes among the participants.

The initial stage of the activity began with a preparation process, which included coordination with the management of the pesantren to identify the needs and characteristics of the santri. In addition, the community service team prepared training materials tailored to the context of the pesantren environment and the soft skills development needs of the santri, particularly in the areas of communication, leadership, and self-management.

The implementation of the program was conducted through interactive material delivery combined with group discussions and simulations. The interactive lecture method was used to provide a basic understanding of the importance of soft skills in everyday life, while group discussions aimed to enhance the santri's critical thinking and interpersonal communication abilities. Furthermore, simulations or role-playing activities were applied to provide direct experience for the santri in practicing the skills they had learned.

Following the training sessions, the activity continued with a mentoring process aimed at ensuring that the santri were able to understand and apply the material in their daily lives. This mentoring was carried out directly during the program by providing guidance, feedback, and motivation to the participants. The evaluation of the activity was conducted qualitatively through observations of the santri's participation and behavioral changes throughout the program. In addition, feedback from participants was also used as an indicator to assess the effectiveness of the program implementation. Thus, the evaluation focused not only on cognitive aspects but also on the affective and behavioral aspects of the santri.

4. Results and Discussions

The implementation of this community service activity demonstrated positive changes in the human resource capacity of the santri. Prior to the implementation of the program, most santri tended to be passive in communication and lacked confidence in expressing their opinions, both in formal and informal settings. This condition indicated that the santri's soft skills still needed to be improved as preparation for their social lives and future challenges.

After participating in the training, there was a significant improvement in the involvement and participation of the santri throughout the activities. The santri began to show greater confidence in expressing their opinions, became more active in group discussions, and were able to interact more effectively with fellow participants. This finding indicates that the participatory approach and interactive methods used in the program were effective in encouraging positive behavioral changes.

Through simulation and role-playing activities, the santri gained direct experience in applying communication and leadership skills. This experience provided deeper understanding compared to purely theoretical learning. In addition, the discussion sessions helped the santri develop critical thinking skills and increased their awareness of the importance of teamwork within groups.

The mentoring process carried out during the activities also played an important role in strengthening the santri's understanding and self-confidence. Through direct guidance, the santri felt more comfortable expressing themselves and became more motivated to develop their potential. This demonstrates that mentoring is an essential component in the process of human resource development. From the perspective of Human Resource Management (HRM), this activity aligns with the concept of human capital development, in which improving individual competencies will have a long-term impact on the overall quality of human resources. The soft skills training provided not only enhanced the santri's interpersonal abilities but also fostered more adaptive, confident, and resilient character traits in facing future challenges.

Overall, this activity successfully improved the soft skills capacity of the santri and made a meaningful contribution to the development of human resources within the pesantren-based educational environment. The success of this program demonstrates that structured, interactive, and contextual training can serve as an effective strategy for improving individual quality in religious educational institutions.



Figure 1. Implementation of the Activity

5. Conclusions

5.1. Conclusion

The community service activity conducted at Pondok Pesantren Salafiyah Tahfidzul Quran Muhammad Natsir successfully improved the human resource capacity of the santri, particularly in the area of soft skills development. The santri demonstrated improvements in self-confidence, communication abilities, and teamwork skills.

5.2. Research Limitations

This program was limited to participants from a single Islamic boarding school and was conducted within a relatively short period of time. Therefore, the findings may not fully represent the conditions of other pesantren environments, and the long-term impact of the training has not yet been comprehensively evaluated.

5.3 Suggestions and Directions for Future Research

Islamic boarding schools are encouraged to integrate soft skills training into their regular educational activities. In addition, similar programs should be developed continuously using more innovative and collaborative methods. Future research is also recommended to examine the long-term effectiveness of soft skills training and its impact on the personal and professional development of santri in broader educational contexts.

Acknowledgement

The Community Service Program (PKM) implementation team would like to express its sincere gratitude to Pondok Pesantren Salafiyah Tahfidzul Quran Muhammad Natsir for its support and cooperation in the implementation of this activity. Appreciation is also extended to all santri who actively participated in the program.

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