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Santri Lived Experiences in Experiential Collaborative Islamic Religious Education: A Phenomenological Inquiry

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Abstract

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) often emphasizes doctrinal memorization, giving limited attention to students' (*santri*) adjustment-related anxiety and interpersonal tensions. Research on experiential and collaborative learning has focused primarily on cognitive outcomes, leaving students' lived experiences underexplored. This study examined how students experienced experiential collaborative IRE and how they understood its role in their psychosocial development. Guided by an interpretive paradigm, the study used a descriptive phenomenological design and Colaizzi's method of analysis. Fieldwork took place from May to September 2026 in the Al-Masruriyah region of Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid, Paiton. Participants were purposively selected from current students, IRE teachers, and residential guardians (*wali asuh*) responsible for 240 students. Data came from phenomenological interviews, participant observation, and pastoral records. Triangulation and member checking strengthened the credibility of the findings. Three themes emerged. Guided post-activity reflection helped students manage adjustment-related distress. Collaborative activities encouraged a shift from self-centeredness (*cengkal*) toward empathy and mutual assistance (*ta'awun*). Students also developed resilience and self-regulation as they came to view institutional pressures as opportunities to practice patience (*sabr*) and consultation (*musyawarah*). The findings suggest that experiential collaborative IRE can help students draw on religious teachings to manage everyday challenges. The study

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connects Kolb's experiential learning theory with classical Islamic moral cultivation (*ta'dib*) and offers a framework for linking classroom instruction with residential pastoral care to support student well-being in keeping with the *Ulul Albab* ideal.

Keywords: Collaborative Learning; Experiential Learning; Islamic Religious Education; *Pesantren*; Psychosocial Resilience

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) plays a strategic role in cultivating students' religious character, spiritual maturity, and social competence. Within the Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) ecosystem, religious education extends beyond cognitive indoctrination and the mastery of Islamic knowledge to encompass the formation of moral conduct, social identity, and adaptive capacity to navigate contemporary realities. Wanto (2025) underscores the central role of *pesantren* in transmitting religious values, while Azka et al. (2025) emphasize the necessity of revitalizing character education to counteract moral crises in the digital era. In the broader context of social transformation, Mubarak et al. (2026) examine *pesantren* strategies in preserving Islamic educational traditions while actively shaping students' (*santri*) social identities. This dynamic is reinforced by Nurdi and Cahyadi (2026), who frame the integration of science, technology, and the principles of *Maqasid al-Shariah* as an essential imperative of contemporary Islamic curriculum transformation. Consequently, Islamic education faces an urgent demand to synthesize religious knowledge mastery, character development, and social competence into a coherent pedagogical whole.

This imperative is further amplified because educational success is fundamentally determined not only by formal academic achievement, but also by emotional intelligence, interpersonal aptitude, and social resilience. Imran and Amaluddin (2025) establish a clear link between Islamic education and soft skills development, a view supported by Lutfiah and Nurmawati (2026) regarding the utility of talent-based student projects in strengthening nonacademic competencies in madrasahs. Even in the face of infrastructural and media constraints within *pesantren*, Santika (2025) demonstrates that social skill development can still be effectively fostered through thoughtfully designed instructional activities. Nevertheless, empirical evidence indicates significant psychosocial vulnerabilities among students. Farhan and Shobahiya (2024) analyze students' mental health dynamics through an

Islamic educational psychology lens, while Tohir et al. (2025) document heightened transitional anxiety among new students that necessitates interventions such as Islamic Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). These challenges are compounded by academic burnout and psychological distress fueled by digital-era demands (Hakim, 2026), requiring mindfulness-based resilience initiatives (Lubis & Salabi, 2025) and a supportive residential climate to ensure students' psychological well-being (Mufidah & Suud, 2026).

This study argues that the communal environment of the *pesantren*—characterized by intensive interactions, congregational life, and shared collective responsibility—remains underutilized as a formal pedagogical vehicle in classroom IRE. When students' daily social experiences are relegated to unexamined dormitory routines rather than methodically woven into instructional design, IRE risks devolving into the mere dissemination of normative doctrines detached from students' emotional struggles and relational realities. Therefore, IRE must be repositioned as an emancipatory pedagogical space through the integration of collaborative learning and experiential learning frameworks. Through participatory and reflective instructional mechanisms, the development of psychosocial competencies—specifically interpersonal empathy, assertive communication, conflict management, social sensitivity, cooperative aptitude, and mental resilience—ceases to be a serendipitous byproduct and instead becomes the deliberate outcome of conscious, reflective meaning-making.

Scholarly interest in innovative IRE pedagogy and students' psychosocial profiles has expanded substantially. In active and cooperative instructional methods, Puspitaningrum et al. (2023) examined active learning implementations in *pesantren*, while Ritonga et al. (2024) formulated collaborative strategies to foster innovative learning environments in IRE. Rohman and Rohman (2025) documented the contribution of the Think–Pair–Share cooperative model to both conceptual mastery and social skills, alongside Umaidah and Sofa (2025), who investigated project-based learning combined with collaborative engagements to instill moral integrity. In relation to specific psychosocial dimensions, Luthfiyah et al. (2022) substantiated the efficacy of collaborative learning in elevating social sensitivity, complementing Puteri and Wangid's (2017) foundational findings regarding the critical role of interpersonal attachment in peer interactions. In the *pesantren* setting, student adaptation and psychosocial support have been evaluated through expressive arts such as collage therapy (Imami et al., 2025), the quality of female mentors' (*ustazah*) interpersonal communication

(Ummah et al., 2024), and psychoeducational counseling rooted in institutional values (Saputri et al., 2026).

Concurrently, experiential learning paradigms have gained widespread scholarly traction across contemporary general and Islamic education (Akbar, 2025). Empirical inquiries span primary and secondary schooling (Azizah et al., 2025), instructional adaptations for Generation Z within vocational higher education (Bey et al., 2025), integrations of Kolb's learning cycle into creative problem-solving dynamics (Sitepu et al., 2024), and the strategic deployment of interactive ice-breakers and peer-teaching models (Khairi, 2024; Sari et al., 2024). Within the specialized domain of Islamic pedagogical theory, Brifkani (2023) developed an Islamic experiential learning model for spiritual guidance, which parallels recent inquiries into Sufism-oriented experiential models (Samad et al., 2025), student spiritual intelligence assessment (Hakim & Manap, 2025), the cultivation of religious character and tolerance (Oktaviana et al., 2026), social-spiritual competence development (Minhatullaili, 2026), and behavioral modification approaches such as operant conditioning to instill school discipline ("Enhancing Discipline through Operant Conditioning," 2025). Furthermore, character development rooted in communal learning has received phenomenological attention (Pribadi et al., 2026).

Notwithstanding these substantial contributions, a critical research gap persists. The existing literature predominantly investigates collaborative instructional models and student psychosocial outcomes through quantitative, positivist paradigms focused on learning metric efficacy or via administrative program evaluations. Empirical investigations that couple collaborative experiential learning directly within IRE while examining how students subjectively interpret and live through this process remain noticeably absent. The triadic relationship among collaborative involvement, cyclical reflective experience, and students' existential interpretation of their psychological and relational growth within a *pesantren* remains empirically underexplored from a phenomenological vantage point.

The novelty of this study lies in its integrated examination of students' lived experiences within experiential collaborative IRE, specifically situating psychosocial development as a phenomenon analyzed through individual and shared meaning-making. Unlike previous scholarship that evaluates structural instructional interventions or standardized cognitive gains, this research centers on the subjective experiences of students to uncover how they navigate collaborative tasks, negotiate interpersonal tensions, and reflect

on Islamic values within their daily communal life. Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid serves as a distinct empirical locus, uniquely embodying an interface between deeply rooted classical Islamic boarding traditions and contemporary pedagogical practices.

Theoretically, this inquiry is grounded in Kolb's (2015) experiential learning theory, which conceptualizes knowledge construction and personal transformation as a four-stage cyclical continuum: Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization, and Active Experimentation. When integrated into IRE, this cycle ensures that theological and ethical concepts transcend memorization, enabling them to be actively enacted, contextualized, and communally reflected upon. To capture how students interpret this cycle, the study employs a phenomenological methodology. This phenomenological lens allows the research to penetrate the structure of students' consciousness, capturing the essential essence (*eidos*) of their lived experiences without positivist reductionism, while revealing how structured collaborative learning fortifies their psychosocial resources.

Anchored in the conceptual tensions and pedagogical imperatives outlined above, this study focuses on examining students' lived experiences (*Erlebnis*) as they engage with experiential collaborative Islamic Religious Education (IRE) within the distinctive socio-cultural matrix of Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid. Rather than treating psychosocial metrics as detached pedagogical variables, this investigation interrogates the dialectical nexus between instructional encounters and the existential meaning-making mechanisms of *santri*.

Accordingly, this research aims to delineate the temporal and experiential phases navigated by students throughout the cyclical iterations of experiential collaborative learning, tracing how doctrinal concepts transition into situated communal action. It further seeks to examine the subjective meanings constructed by students regarding their psychosocial transformation, specifically elucidating how collaborative friction, reciprocal vulnerability, and guided reflection shape their empathic capacities, collective agency, and cognitive resilience. Ultimately, the study aims to uncover the invariant structural essence (*eidos*) of this collaborative-experiential paradigm, demonstrating how intentional instructional spaces within traditional Islamic boarding environments simultaneously cultivate religious consciousness and psychosocial well-being. By advancing this phenomenological inquiry, the research bridges a critical epistemological gap in Islamic educational studies, providing an

empirical model of student-centered transformative pedagogy for scholarly discourse and offering actionable pedagogical frameworks for faith-based communal settings.

METHODS

This inquiry operates within an interpretive paradigm utilizing a qualitative phenomenological design to explore the lived experiences (*Erlebnis*) of *santri* undergoing experiential collaborative Islamic Religious Education (IRE). Grounded in the phenomenological tradition, the research accesses the subjective realities of participants without imposing preconceived hypotheses, prioritizing how learners consciously articulate, interpret, and internalize the psychological and relational shifts emerging from experience-based instructional engagements.

A descriptive phenomenological architecture was deployed to capture how interactive pedagogical practices translate into psychosocial growth. Fieldwork took place between May and September 2026 within the Al-Masruriyah region of Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid in Paiton, Probolinggo, East Java. This site offers an immersive setting where the customary norms of Islamic boarding education intersect with structured collaborative learning activities. Throughout the investigative cycle, reflexivity and bracketing (*epoche*) were maintained through reflexive journaling to consciously suspend personal assumptions concerning boarding school culture and student behavioral adaptation.

Informants were selected through purposive sampling to recruit key institutional actors directly immersed in both the instructional interventions and the residential mentoring ecosystem. The participant cohort was drawn from the Al-Masruriyah residential sector of Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid, comprising three complementary stakeholder groups: active *santri* enrolled in the experimental experiential collaborative IRE classroom modules, IRE subject teachers and instructional tutors who designed and facilitated the experiential learning cycles, and residential dormitory guardians (*wali asuh*) tasked with the daily pastoral oversight and behavioral monitoring of 240 *santri* across the Al-Masruriyah quarters. Key focal informants providing in-depth qualitative accounts included students representing varying degrees of communicative confidence, initial peer reticence, and adjustment challenges, paired with primary residential mentors directly handling interpersonal conflict resolution and student adaptation. Sampling proceeded iteratively until both experiential and thematic saturation were attained, marked by the point at which successive interview dialogues,

participatory observations, and documentary checks yielded no novel horizons, emotional expressions, or interpretive nuances regarding the participants' psychosocial transformation.

Data generation synthesized primary and secondary empirical sources via a three-pronged fieldwork protocol. Semi-structured, open-ended in-depth phenomenological interviews served as the primary instrument, eliciting *santri* reflections regarding instructional interactions, interpersonal frictions, and emotional development, while parallel sessions with educators and guardians provided pedagogical and behavioral context. In tandem with interviews, participant observations were conducted in real time across collaborative classroom sessions and residential routines in the Al-Masruriyah quarters, tracking peer communication, nonverbal expressions, collective problem-solving, and emotional self-regulation. Secondary documentary materials—including IRE lesson plans, instructional materials, student reflection sheets, and pastoral mentoring records (*catatan pengasuhan*)—were examined to anchor the empirical findings in their institutional context. Methodological rigor was maintained through source triangulation across informant tiers, technique triangulation combining interviews with observations and documents, and participant member checking. Research ethics were upheld through explicit informed consent, institutional authorization, secure anonymization of informant identities, and strict protocols of confidentiality.

Empirical data were analyzed following Colaizzi's phenomenological framework, executed as a continuous, reflexive analytical progression. The analytical workflow commenced with repeated, immersive readings of the complete corpus of verbatim interview transcripts, field notes, and instructional artifacts to establish holistic familiarity. The researcher then conducted line-by-line coding to isolate significant statements directly addressing the experience of experiential collaborative learning and psychosocial dynamics. Meaning units were subsequently formulated from these statements, bridging raw informant discourse with pedagogical and psychological concepts while preserving interpretive fidelity. These formulated meanings were synthesized into overarching thematic clusters—principally focusing on cooperation, interpersonal empathy, self-regulation, and psychological endurance—while remaining open to emergent inductive categories. These clustered themes were synthesized into an exhaustive narrative description depicting both the contextual textures and structural dynamics of the phenomenon, which was subsequently condensed into an articulate statement defining the invariant essence (*eidos*) of the *santri* lived experience. The analytical cycle concluded with formal member checking, wherein synthesized

descriptions and thematic structures were reviewed by participants to verify descriptive accuracy, integrate feedback, and affirm that the analytical outcomes faithfully reflected their lived reality.

RESULTS

Fieldwork data generated through participatory observations in experimental Islamic Religious Education (IRE) classrooms and in-depth phenomenological interviews across the Al-Masruriyah region of Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid demonstrated that the psychosocial empowerment of *santri* occurs primarily when guided reflection is conducted post-collaborative activity. By synchronizing the lived experiences (*Erlebnis*) of *santri* with the perspectives of residential mentors (*wali asuh*) responsible for 240 students in the dormitory quarters, the analysis revealed that experiential collaborative IRE directly intervened in initial transitional frictions. Following Colaizzi's (1978) phenomenological reduction and extraction of significant statements, three core themes emerged to articulate the essence of this psychosocial transformation.

Emotional Transition and Meaning-Making of Psycho-Emotional Symptoms

The first core theme indicates that experiential collaborative learning enabled *santri* to successfully navigate the psychological transition characterizing early boarding school life. Baseline assessments highlighted persistent adaptive barriers: novel learners frequently experienced interpersonal awkwardness, emotional withdrawal, social hesitation, and homesickness. Prior to this pedagogical intervention, traditional textbook-centered IRE (didactic knowledge transmission) operated largely detached from these residential vulnerabilities.

As captured in the observations of Mentor 1 (*Wali Asuh 1*):

"The primary reason santri struggle to interact is unfamiliarity with boarding life... They feel awkward and shy to mingle with peers. Some even cry repeatedly or isolate themselves in crowded spaces."

Integrating lived residential dilemmas into experiential classroom encounters catalyzed emotional breakthroughs. In Kolb's paradigm, this began with *Concrete Experience*, where learners confronted simulated and real dormitory scenarios, disrupting self-isolation. During post-activity discussions (*Reflective Observation*), students identified latent emotional triggers, linked interpersonal friction to Islamic ethical values, and engaged in self-

examination. In *Abstract Conceptualization*, normative doctrines were reframed into actionable principles of patience (*sabr*), consultative deliberation (*musyawarah*), and brotherly solidarity (*ukhuwah*). Finally, during *Active Experimentation*, these understandings were implemented directly within dormitory quarters.

This paradigm shift was encapsulated by Student 1 (*Santri 1*):

"Previously, studying fiqh or akhlaq was merely confined to classroom memorization for exams. But when we had to simulate resolving dormitory cleaning disputes using the principle of musyawarah, I realized how difficult it is to suppress one's ego. We were compelled to look into the mirror."

Experiential collaborative learning reduced academic fatigue while enhancing emotional engagement. IRE transitioned from abstract normative axioms into a reflective vehicle for self-awareness and emotional regulation, providing an institutional bridge that reinforced the pastoral duties of *wali asuh*.

Deconstruction of Egocentricity (Cengkal) Toward Empathic Collectivity

The second theme captures the transformation from individualistic, defensive posturing to cooperative, empathic collectivity. In the dense communal matrix of the *pesantren*, individual obstinacy and poor social sensitivity frequently precipitate peer friction. Mentors documented that interpersonal conflict in dormitories frequently stemmed from minor grievances magnified by stubborn or unyielding attitudes, locally termed *cengkal*, alongside limited peer contributions.

The collaborative learning architecture confronted this egocentricity by establishing a safe space where students solved real-world institutional case studies collectively. As Student 2 (*Santri 2*) described:

"In our group, no one could insist on winning alone. I learned to listen to roommates who are usually quiet. It turned out their ideas were remarkable. We became much more cohesive, not only during class but carried over into our everyday dormitory routines."

Mentors corroborated this developmental shift, with Mentor 2 (*Wali Asuh 2*) observing:

"Learning through group work activates santri because they converse, cooperate, and interact... Santri must be continuously accustomed to establishing sound communication, mutual respect, and mutual assistance."

The structured interplay between *Reflective Observation* and *Abstract Conceptualization* mirrored indigenous conflict-resolution practices in the dormitory—specifically assembling

disputing parties, identifying root causes, voicing perspectives, and establishing mutual empathy. Values of mutual assistance (*ta'awun*), collective responsibility, and tolerance acquired existential depth because they were enacted within group dynamics rather than passively absorbed as verbal instruction.

Enhancement of Value-Based Resilience and Emotional Regulation

The third theme illustrates marked gains in psychological resilience, self-efficacy, and affect regulation anchored in *pesantren* values. Daily institutional realities—including strict routines, long meal and bathroom queues, chore rotations, and restricted digital device access—shifted from perceived punitive burdens into deliberate crucibles for cultivating perseverance, self-containment, and discipline.

Prior to the intervention, mentors noted depressed confidence among many *santri*, which manifested as an inability or reluctance to speak publicly or assert viewpoints. Through progressive experiential group presentations and iterative reflection cycles, students constructed psychological confidence and adaptive coping strategies.

This perceptual realignment was highlighted by Student 3 (*Santri 3*):

"After learning from the experiences discussed in the IRE classroom, I became much calmer when facing long queues for food or bathrooms. I now view that as practical training in sabr, not just theoretical text in a kitab. My psychological stamina has grown much stronger here and across our entire student residential area."

Through recurring experiential cycles, theological virtues such as patience (*sabr*), gratitude (*shukr*), reliance on God (*tawakkul*), and collective consultation (*musyawarah*) were internalized as pragmatic coping mechanisms. This development repositioned classroom IRE as an integrative intervention that simultaneously addresses cognitive mastery, affective stability, and spiritual maturity.

The progressive synthesis linking Kolb's experiential learning stages with the developmental trajectory of *santri* psychosocial transformation in the Al-Masruriyah region is detailed below.

Table 1: Matrix of Psychosocial Transformation Across Experiential Learning Phases

Process Stage	Activity and Instructional Focus	Manifested Psychosocial Transformation
Baseline Adaptive Vulnerability	Initial difficulty adapting to communal boarding life; interpersonal isolation, shyness, and persistent homesickness.	- Enhanced institutional adaptation - Heightened initial affective empathy
Concrete Experience	Active immersion in social simulations and authentic experiential dilemmas confronting dormitory realities.	- Cooperative engagement (ta'awun) - Deescalation of peer conflict and improved emotional regulation
Reflective Observation	Guided collaborative debriefing, self-examination, and identification of emotional triggers and interpersonal barriers.	- Increased communicative self-confidence - Strengthened psychological resilience
Abstract Conceptualization	Deep hermeneutic reconstruction of Islamic values (*sabr*, *musyawarah*, *ukhuwah*, *akhlaqul karimah*) as operational life principles.	- Enhanced religious self-awareness - Epistemic consciousness of Islamic values
Active Experimentation	Practical application of internalized virtues and conflict-resolution strategies in daily *pesantren* residential routines.	- Heightened social meaningfulness and community engagement - Embodiment of holistic Islamic character (Ulul Albab)

Phenomenologically, the essence of these findings lies in the epistemological shift of IRE from static doctrinal transmission to lived, experiential meaning-making. Guided reflection and structured group cooperation allowed *santri* to deconstruct individual egos, manage emotional responses, and cultivate interpersonal resilience, establishing experiential collaborative IRE as a vital pedagogical vehicle for psychosocial development in Islamic boarding environments.

DISCUSSION

The empirical findings from the Al-Masruriyah region of Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid demonstrate that the lived experiences (*Erlebnis*) of *santri* undergoing experiential collaborative Islamic Religious Education (IRE) operate as a catalyst for profound psychosocial transformation. The core essence (*eidos*) of this pedagogical intervention lies in its capacity to transform passive doctrinal assimilation into deliberate, situated meaning-making. During the initial encounter, baseline psycho-emotional vulnerabilities—such as

homesickness, communicative reticence, and social alienation—were systematically dismantled. By bringing the authentic tensions of communal dormitory life into the classroom through concrete problem-solving simulations, the curriculum provided a structured, psychologically secure venue where learners could externalize latent emotional friction.

Crucially, the findings indicate that social maturation occurred primarily during the guided post-activity reflection phase. In this reflective space, the traditional tendency toward egocentric obstinacy (*cengkal*) was deconstructed through peer dialogue. By confronting conflicting perspectives during cooperative assignments, students moved beyond individualistic posturing, discovering that collective agency (*ta'awun*) and consultative decision-making (*musyawarah*) yielded superior social and moral outcomes compared to unilateral dominance. Consequently, theological and ethical virtues—principally patience (*sabr*), moral dignity (*akhlaqul karimah*), and brotherly solidarity (*ukhuwah*)—were recontextualized from abstract memorization metrics into active psychological coping mechanisms. This shift enhanced self-regulation, reframed institutional hardships (such as queueing and rigorous schedules) into purposeful spiritual exercises, and fortified the psychological resilience required to navigate the complex social landscape of the boarding school.

These empirical outcomes align with and expand upon Kolb's (2015) experiential learning theory within faith-based educational contexts. While Kolb conceptualizes learning as a four-stage cyclical continuum (Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization, and Active Experimentation), this study demonstrates that within an Islamic residential environment, the cycle operates not merely as an intellectual mechanism, but as an existential and spiritual conduit. The findings corroborate the work of Samad et al. (2025) and Brifkani (2023) regarding the utility of Islamic experiential pedagogies, demonstrating that when learning cycles integrate theological reflection, students internalize spiritual values into everyday praxis.

Furthermore, the observable reduction in egocentrism and enhancement of peer cohesion support the findings of Rohman and Rohman (2025) and Ritonga et al. (2024), who documented the efficacy of cooperative learning strategies in fostering conceptual mastery alongside social competence. The emergence of heightened interpersonal empathy through shared vulnerability reinforces Luthfiyah et al. (2022), who observed substantial gains in

social sensitivity through collaborative religious instruction. In terms of psychosocial well-being, the data resonate with the observations of Mufidah and Suud (2026) and Lubis and Salabi (2025), confirming that a supportive, reflective instructional climate mitigates adolescent anxiety and strengthens resilience against institutional fatigue (Hakim, 2026). However, this study diverges from and contributes beyond existing literature by moving past positivist metric testing; by adopting a descriptive phenomenological lens (Colaizzi, 1978), it reveals the internal affective architecture through which *santri* subjectively reconcile pedagogical tasks with dormitory realities.

The findings carry direct theoretical, pedagogical, and administrative implications for the advancement of Islamic education:

This study enriches contemporary Islamic pedagogical theory by bridging experiential learning paradigms with classical Islamic moral education (*ta'dib*). It provides an empirical framework demonstrating that religious instruction achieves its highest psychosocial potency when doctrines are treated as dynamic, experiential resources rather than inert texts, thus offering an alternative model to traditional didactic methods.

For educators and curriculum designers of IRE, the research underscores the necessity of moving beyond textbook-bound transmission. Instructional design must formally institutionalize guided reflective debriefing sessions and simulation modules that directly address the lived interpersonal dilemmas of learners, elevating social and emotional competencies as intentional curricular outcomes.

For *pesantren* leadership and residential guardians (*wali asuh*), the study demonstrates the value of instructional-pastoral synergy. Positioning classroom IRE as a formal extension of dormitory mentoring allows institutions to prevent and de-escalate behavioral maladaptation, fostering a resilient, empathetic community aligned with the holistic ideals of *Ulul Albab*.

While providing rich, contextualized qualitative insights, this inquiry is subject to several methodological boundaries. First, the investigation was geographically and culturally localized within the Al-Masruriyah sector of Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid, focusing specifically on an experimental cohort. Consequently, the experiential nuances and specific mentor dynamics observed may reflect regional subcultures that do not fully represent other *pesantren* typologies (such as traditional *salafiyah* institutions without formal schooling or fully modernized boarding schools). Second, the study's interpretive phenomenological scope

centered primarily on immediate experiential horizons captured over a five-month span, precluding a longitudinal assessment of whether these acquired psychosocial competencies endure across post-boarding life transitions.

To address these limitations, future research should adopt multi-site comparative designs across diverse *pesantren* traditions to determine how varying institutional structures influence collaborative experiential processes. Longitudinal investigations are also recommended to track the long-term durability of empathy, self-regulation, and resilience as students transition into higher education and civic life. Finally, future scholarly inquiries could integrate mixed-method frameworks that combine phenomenological lived-experience narratives with standardized psychosocial psychometrics, providing both descriptive depth and broader statistical generalizability to inform national Islamic educational policy.

CONCLUSION

This inquiry demonstrates that integrating experiential collaborative learning into Islamic Religious Education (IRE) serves as a transformative pedagogical catalyst for the psychosocial development of *santri* at Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid. Phenomenological analysis reveals that psychosocial maturation does not emerge spontaneously from didactic instruction, but is actively constructed through structured, post-activity guided reflection. By translating authentic dormitory dilemmas—such as chores, queueing, and communal discipline—into classroom problem-solving modules, this model mitigates transitional anxiety, homesickness, and communicative reticence. Crucially, collaborative dynamics dismantle entrenched egocentric postures (*cengkal*), replacing them with consultative deliberation (*musyawarah*) and mutual assistance (*ta'awun*). Consequently, Islamic ethical values (*akhlaqul karimah*) and patience (*sabr*) shift from passive memorization into active coping mechanisms that foster interpersonal empathy, emotional self-regulation, and mental resilience.

Theoretically, these findings contextualize experiential learning within a faith-based residential setting, demonstrating that reflective learning cycles can drive moral and spiritual internalization (*ta'dib*) alongside social cohesion. By adopting a qualitative phenomenological lens, this research moves beyond conventional quantitative performance evaluations to uncover the subjective mechanisms through which students translate religious doctrine into lived communal practice.

The study offers notable implications across three dimensions:

First, it bridges experiential learning frameworks with classical Islamic character development, positioning religious tenets as situated social praxis rather than abstract dogma. Second, it underscores the need for IRE curricula to transcend text-bound rote memorization by embedding authentic simulations and affective debriefing to cultivate essential soft skills. Third, it provides *pesantren* leaders and residential mentors (*wali asuh*) with a practical blueprint to align classroom learning with dormitory life, turning daily routine pressures into meaningful opportunities for holistic student development.

Nevertheless, this investigation is bounded by its contextual focus on an experimental cohort within the Al-Masruriyah region of Pondok Pesantren Nurul Jadid and its five-month duration, which precludes assessing the long-term endurance of these psychosocial gains. Future research should pursue multi-site comparative inquiries across diverse *pesantren* typologies, conduct longitudinal studies tracing students' post-boarding life transitions, and deploy mixed-method approaches to balance phenomenological depth with broader generalizability.

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