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The Interaction of College Readiness and Social Support in Shaping the Self-Adjustment of First-Year Students at State Islamic Religious Universities

Hasan Bastomi¹, Dwi Yuwono Puji Sugiharto², Sugiyo³, Anwar Sutoyo⁴
Universitas Negeri Semarang, Jawa Tengah, Indonesia

¹*bastommy@students.unnes.ac.id*, ²*dypsugiharto@mail.unnes.ac.id*,

³*sgy11@mail.unnes.ac.id*, ⁴*anwarsutoyo@mail.unnes.ac.id*

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the relationship between college readiness and social support on the adjustment of new students at six PTKIN in the Central Java region. The main focus is to identify the contribution of each variable to the academic, social, and emotional adaptation of first-year students, and to formulate strategic recommendations for institutions in mentoring new students. The method used is a correlational quantitative approach with an ex post facto design, involving 200 respondents proportionally selected from six PTKIN (Islamic Religious Higher Education Institutions). Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on AMOS 26. The research results indicate that college readiness has a significant influence on student adjustment with a loading factor value of 0.62, while social support shows an influence of 0.58. Both variables simultaneously explain 47% of the variance in students' self-adjustment ($R^2 = 0.47$). The measurement model shows a good fit with GFI = 0.94, CFI = 0.96, and RMSEA = 0.045. The implication of this finding is the need for a holistic and data-driven strengthening of the new student mentoring program. It is recommended that PTKIN develop college readiness assessments and social support as a basis for intervention, and establish a campus adaptation guidance unit that integrates academic, spiritual, and social approaches contextually.

Keywords: College Readiness, Social Support, Self-Adjustment, First-Year Students

Introduction

The transition from secondary school to university is a critical phase in the development of new students, especially in the environment of State Islamic Religious Universities (PTKIN), which have unique academic and religious characteristics. New

students at PTKIN face complex academic, social, and spiritual adaptation challenges. Data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs (2023) shows that over 30,000 new students entered Islamic university students (PTKIN) in Central Java for the 2024/2025 academic year. However, research by Wenz-Gross & Siperstein (1998) indicates that students with learning difficulties tend to experience more stress, lower peer support, and poorer adjustment compared to students without learning difficulties. Academic stress, issues with peers, and relationships with lecturers are the main factors influencing their adjustment.

New students at PTKIN (Islamic University Students) should have adequate preparation for college and receive strong social support to be able to adjust optimally. College readiness encompasses cognitive strategies, content knowledge, contextual awareness, and academic behaviors (Conley, 2007, 2010). College readiness is closely related to the academic and social adjustment of new students. Students who are confident in their chosen major, have realistic expectations, and are committed to campus life demonstrate better adjustment, both academically and socially (Hudley et al., 2009; Lee, 2016). Meanwhile, social support includes support from family, peers, and institutions (Zimet et al., 1988). Social support from friends, family, and lecturers is very important in the adjustment process. Students with good social connections and a sense of belonging on campus find it easier to adapt and have higher well-being (Bowman et al., 2019; Enlow, 2012; Hudley et al., 2009; Salami, 2011). In the context of higher Islamic education, adaptation also includes the integration of spiritual values and local culture. Therefore, it is important to empirically examine how these two factors contribute to the adjustment of new students at PTKIN.

Dennis, Phinney, & Chuateco's (2005) research showed that social support from family and peers plays an important role in increasing the motivation and academic engagement of first-year college students. Pittman & Richmond (2008) added that the quality of social relationships on campus is positively correlated with students' psychosocial adjustment. Credé & Niehorster (2012) confirmed that college readiness significantly contributes to students' psychological well-being and academic achievement. Meanwhile, Sari & Zaini (2024) found that academic resilience fully mediated the relationship between social support and academic adjustment of freshmen. In contrast, Harani's (2019) research showed that social support contributed 19.9% to the self-adjustment of freshmen. The research by Widihapsari & Susilawati (2018) also confirms that emotional intelligence and social support jointly play a role in the adjustment of new students who are away from home.

Although various studies have highlighted the importance of college readiness and social support in student adjustment, most were conducted at public universities and did not consider the unique religious and cultural contexts of PTKIN. These studies also tend to separate the analysis of academic and social aspects, without integrating them into a comprehensive framework for adaptation. This creates a significant research gap in understanding the holistic adjustment of new students in higher Islamic educational institutions.

This research proposes an integration of the academic transition approach (Tinto & Goodsell, 1993) and the psychosocial adaptation model (Schlossberg, 1981) within the context of PTKIN. The novelty of this research lies in the simultaneous mapping of the relationship between college readiness and social support on the adjustment of new students, considering unique spiritual and cultural dimensions. With this approach, the research not only enriches academic literature but also provides practical contributions to the development of value-based and empirically-driven student services.

The main objective of this research is to analyze the relationship between college readiness and social support in building the foundation for new student adjustment at PTKIN institutions throughout Central Java. This study aims to identify the extent to which these two factors influence the academic, social, and emotional adaptation processes of new students, and to provide strategic recommendations for PTKIN institutions in designing contextual, inclusive, and evidence-based student development programs.

Method

Research on the Relationship between College Readiness and Social Support in Building the Foundation for New Student Adjustment at PTKIN in Central Java adopts a quantitative approach with a correlational research design. The research design for this study is *ex post facto*, which means examining the relationship between variables without direct manipulation of the independent variable because the variables being studied have already occurred in the respondents' real lives (Creswell, 2014: 98). This approach is used to determine the extent to which college readiness and social support influence new students' adjustment, both simultaneously and partially. The paradigm underlying this research is positivist, with a hypothesis-testing orientation based on numerical data, allowing the researcher to identify valid correlations between the variables under study.

The primary data source for this research is the new students from the 2024/2025 academic year at five PTKIN in Central Java, namely UIN Walisongo Semarang, UIN Raden Mas Said Surakarta, UIN Salatiga, UIN KH. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan, UIN Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto, and UIN Sunan Kudus. Data collection was conducted using a closed questionnaire (Likert scale questionnaire) that was developed based on the theoretical constructs of each variable. The college readiness measurement tool was adapted from Conley's theory (2007, 2010) and measured through four dimensions, namely: (1) Cognitive Strategies, (2) Content Knowledge, (3) Contextual Skills and Awareness, and (4) Academic Behavior. Each dimension is measured through indicators developed in a closed-ended questionnaire. The social support measurement tool is based on the theory of Zimet et al. (1988), the Multidimensional Scale Of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), and the scale adaptation by Wiwik Sulistiani et al. (2022). This support consists of three dimensions: (1) Support from Significant Others, (2) Support from Family, and (3) Support from Peers. Meanwhile, self-adjustment is measured through four dimensions according to the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) framework by Baker & Siryk (1984), and the scale adaptation by Rifameutia & Malay (2023), namely: (1) Academic Adjustment, (2) Social Adjustment, (3) Personal-Emotional Adjustment, and (4) Institutional Attachment. The instrument was tested for content validity by experts and for empirical validity using the Pearson Product Moment correlation test, while its reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha technique. In addition to the questionnaire, the researcher also used documentation and passive observation to support a contextual understanding of the new students' adaptation process.

The respondents were determined using the proportional random sampling method, which falls under probabilistic techniques, ensuring that every new student from each PTKIN had an equal chance of being selected as a sample. Inclusion criteria are students who are administratively registered as regular new students in the 2024/2025 academic year. In research using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach, the recommended minimum sample size is 100 respondents (Westland, 2010). Meanwhile, according to Solimun (2002: 78), there are two main guidelines for determining the sample size in SEM. First, if parameter estimation is performed using the Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE) method, the ideal sample size ranges from 100 to 200 respondents, with a minimum of 50. Second, the sample size should be equivalent to five to ten times the number of indicators for all analyzed variables.

The sample size in this study was determined based on the needs of data analysis using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach, which requires an adequate

sample size to ensure accurate and stable parameter estimation. According to Hair et al. (2010), the ideal sample size for SEM is at least 5 to 10 times the number of indicators used in the research model. In this study, there are 20 indicators from five latent variables, so the minimum sample size required is between 100 and 200 respondents.

Considering the complexity of the model and to improve the accuracy of the analysis, the researcher set the sample size at 200 students from six State Islamic Religious Universities (PTKIN) in Central Java. This number is considered sufficient for testing the structural model using SEM. The selection of this size also considers the level of heterogeneity in respondent characteristics, institutional representation, and data collection efficiency.

The determination of 200 respondents also refers to the common practice in social and educational research involving numerous constructs and indicators, where this number allows for the development of a stable model and valid and reliable conclusions. Sample distribution was carried out proportionally, considering the distribution of the number of students at each PTKIN where the research was conducted. The breakdown of the sample size is as follows: UIN Walisongo Semarang 35 respondents, UIN Salatiga 30 respondents, UIN Raden Mas Said Surakarta 35 respondents, UIN Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto 35 respondents, UIN KH Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan 30 respondents, and UIN Sunan Kudus 35 respondents.

The selection of respondents was done using purposive sampling technique, with the criteria being active students in the early semesters (semester I or II), as they were in the initial stages of the adjustment process in higher education. This even and proportional determination of the number of respondents is intended to maintain data representation from each institution, as well as ensure that the research results can more comprehensively describe the phenomenon within the context of PTKIN in the Central Java region.

This sample size is not only determined by quantitative criteria, but also considers aspects of affordability, time effectiveness, and the participants' willingness to complete the instrument fully and honestly. Thus, the sample size used in this study has met the requirements for sufficient data to conduct further analysis using SEM.

Theoretical Study

Student adjustment

Student adjustment is a dynamic process that involves an individual's ability to adapt academically, socially, personally-emotionally, and institutionally to the new university environment. Baker and Siryk (1984), thru the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ), explained that adjustment encompasses the dimensions of academic adjustment, social adjustment, personal-emotional adjustment, and institutional attachment.

College Readiness

Some studies have found that college readiness is positively correlated with freshman adjustment. Students who are less prepared, especially first-generation students, more frequently experience difficulties adapting to the curriculum, extracurricular activities, and the campus social environment (Ahmad et al., 2020; Hudley et al., 2009; Koval, 2024). Students who are well-prepared for higher education tend to show better academic adjustment, are able to manage learning demands, and have strong self-efficacy (Credé & Niehorster, 2012). In the context of PTKIN (Islamic University Students) college readiness also includes spiritual readiness, such as a sincere intention to study and an understanding of Islamic values in campus life.

David Conley's College Readiness is a fundamental model in education, widely cited for its comprehensive approach to preparing students for success after high school. Conley (2007, 2010) defines college readiness as more than just academic achievement, emphasizing the blend of cognitive, academic, behavioral, and contextual skills students need to enroll and succeed in credit-bearing college courses without remediation. According to Conley (2007, 2010), college readiness encompasses four main dimensions: cognitive strategies, content knowledge, contextual awareness, and academic behavior. Cognitive strategies refer to high-level thinking abilities such as analysis, critical reasoning, evaluation, problem-solving, and evidence-based argumentation. These skills are essential for understanding complex concepts and navigating academic materials at the college level. Students who possess strong cognitive strategies tend to be more adaptable to academic tasks requiring reflective thinking and the synthesis of information from various sources.

Content knowledge, or mastery of fundamental material, involves a solid understanding of core academic areas such as mathematics, science, literacy, and related subjects. A strong foundation in content knowledge enables students to follow lectures with greater confidence and reduces anxiety when faced with complex academic challenges. Contextual awareness, on the other hand, includes understanding how the higher education system operates—covering aspects such as administrative procedures,

academic expectations, financial management, and the ability to navigate the campus environment independently. Conley (2007) highlights that this awareness fosters a sense of ownership in the learning process and helps students develop adaptive strategies to manage academic and cultural transitions effectively.

Finally, academic behavior encompasses a set of habits and attitudes such as time management, self-discipline, personal responsibility, perseverance, and the ability to complete tasks without direct supervision. This dimension represents the non-cognitive aspect of readiness that significantly influences academic success at the university level. Conley (2007) emphasizes that academic behavior can be cultivated through training and practice during high school, serving as a crucial foundation for developing learning independence and persistence in higher education.

Social Support

Dennis et al.'s (2005) research indicates that social support plays a significant role in enhancing the motivation and academic engagement of first-year students. Pittman & Richmond (2008) added that the quality of social relationships on campus is positively correlated with students' psychosocial adjustment. Research shows that social support, especially from parents and peers, has a positive and significant relationship with the adjustment abilities of first-year students. Parental support plays an important role in helping students cope with changes and challenges in the college environment, as well as improving their adaptability (Awang et al., 2014; Rahman & Agustina, 2024; Shiddiq et al., 2020a). Peer support has also been shown to improve the social and emotional adjustment of new students (Ramsay et al., 2007; Shiddiq et al., 2020b; Wesley & Booker, 2021). In the context of PTKIN, social support also includes the value of Islamic brotherhood and the principle of ta'awun (mutual assistance) as the foundation for building the campus community.

Social support is defined as an individual's perception of the availability of emotional, informational, and instrumental assistance from their social environment (Zimet et al., 1988). The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) model identifies three main sources of support: family, peers, and significant others. Family support includes acceptance, attention, and the presence of family members who provide both emotional and practical assistance to students. Zimet et al. (1988) emphasized that family support serves as the primary foundation for building self-confidence and emotional stability. For students transitioning to university life, a supportive family can offer a significant moral boost, reduce feelings of loneliness, and strengthen academic motivation.

In the campus environment, peers act as the closest social agents who foster a sense of belonging, provide emotional support, and serve as companions in dealing with academic and social pressures. According to Zimet et al. (1988), peer support not only enhances a sense of connection but also contributes to students' psychological well-being and encourages stronger social engagement within the college community. Meanwhile, support from a significant other refers to an individual's perception that there is someone or several people who hold an important place in their life and consistently provide care, understanding, and emotional support. In the student context, a significant other may include a partner, mentor, or any emotionally meaningful figure whose presence plays a crucial role in fostering psychological resilience and a sense of security when facing academic and social challenges.

Based on theoretical studies and previous research findings, the adjustment of new students in higher education is the result of a combination of mutually influencing internal and external factors. The most influential internal factor is college readiness, which refers to the extent to which students possess the cognitive abilities, behaviors, and contextual awareness necessary to meet the academic and social demands of higher education. Some studies show that college readiness is positively correlated with students' ability to adapt to the new campus environment. Students who are less prepared, especially those who are the first generation in their families to pursue higher education, tend to experience difficulties in adjusting to the curriculum, extracurricular activities, and the social dynamics of campus (Ahmad et al., 2020; Hudley et al., 2009; Koval, 2024).

Conversely, students with high levels of college readiness demonstrate better academic adjustment, are able to effectively manage learning demands, and have strong self-efficacy and emotional regulation (Credé & Niehorster, 2012). In the context of State Islamic Religious Higher Education (PTKIN), college readiness not only includes academic and learning behavior readiness, but also spiritual readiness, such as sincere intention to study, awareness of Islamic values, and the ability to apply moral principles in campus life. This spiritual aspect is an important differentiator that makes the adaptation process of students at PTKIN holistic, encompassing intellectual, emotional, social, and religious dimensions.

Beside internal factors, social support also has a significant influence on the successful adaptation of new students. Social support encompasses the emotional, informational, and instrumental assistance individuals receive from their social environment, including family, peers, and other significant figures. Dennis et al.'s (2005) research showed that social support plays an important role in increasing the motivation

and academic engagement of first-year students. Pittman & Richmond (2008) add that the quality of social relationships on campus is positively correlated with students' psychosocial adjustment, as adequate support can reduce stress and increase a sense of belonging to the campus environment.

Other empirical findings also support the conclusion that social support, especially from parents and peers, has a positive and significant relationship with the adjustment abilities of freshmen (Awang et al., 2014; Rahman & Agustina, 2024; Shiddiq et al., 2020b). Parental support plays a role in helping students cope with changes and academic challenges, while peer support enhances students' social and emotional adjustment (Ramsay et al., 2007; Shiddiq et al., 2020b; Wesley & Booker, 2021). In the context of PTKIN, social support also has a unique spiritual dimension, reflecting the values of Islamic brotherhood and the principle of ta'awun (mutual assistance) as the foundation for building a campus community with Islamic character and full of empathy.

Thus, based on previous theories and research findings, it can be assumed that college readiness and social support have a positive influence on the adjustment of new students at PTKIN, therefore this study formulates the following hypotheses:

H₁: College readiness has a positive and significant influence on the adjustment of new students at PTKIN throughout Central Java.

H₂: Social support has a positive and significant influence on the adjustment of new students at PTKIN throughout Central Java.

H₃: College readiness and social support simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on the self-adjustment of new students at PTKIN throughout Central Java.

Results

Data analysis in this study was conducted using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach based on Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE) thru AMOS software version 26. SEM analysis was used to test the causal relationship model between the latent variables of college readiness (X_1) and social support (X_2) on the adjustment of new students (Y) at State Islamic Religious Universities (PTKIN) throughout Central Java.

Testing Assumptions and Validity of the Measurement Model

Before structural model analysis was performed, construct validity and reliability were tested thru Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) for each latent variable. The test results show that all indicators have a standardized loading factor (SLF) value > 0.50 , which means the indicators are declared convergently valid. Additionally, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for all constructs is > 0.50 and the Construct Reliability (CR) value is > 0.70 , indicating that the instrument used has good construct reliability (Hair et al., 2010).

Table 1: Validity and Reliability Test Results for the Construct

Latent Variables	Number of Indicators	SLF (Range)	AVE	CR	Information
College Readiness (X_1)	4 dimensions	0.67 – 0.81	0.58	0.83	Valid & reliable
Social Support (X_2)	3 dimensions	0.65 – 0.78	0.56	0.81	Valid & reliable
Self-Adjustment (Y)	4 dimensions	0.70 – 0.84	0.61	0.86	Valid & reliable

The CFA results also showed that there was no multicollinearity between the indicators (VIF value < 5 and Tolerance > 0.10), and the data met the assumption of multivariate normality (Critical Ratio for Multivariate Kurtosis value < 5.00).

Model Suitability Test (Goodness of Fit Test)

The structural model built was tested for feasibility using various goodness-of-fit indices. In further analysis, the researchers also conducted a measurement model test (Confirmatory Factor Analysis) to ensure that the indicators for each construct were valid and reliable. The CFA results show a Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) value of 0.94, a Comparative Fit Index (CFI) value of 0.96, and a Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) value of 0.045, all of which are within the ideal range. The results show that the model has met the recommended criteria for a good model, as seen in the following table:

Table 2: Model Suitability Test (Goodness of Fit Test)

Feasibility Index	Value Earned	Reference Value	Model Criteria
χ^2/df (Chi-Square/df)	1,984	≤ 3.00	Good
GFI (Goodness of Fit Index)	0.94	≥ 0.90	Good
AGFI (Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index)	0.91	≥ 0.90	Good
CFI (Comparative Fit Index)	0.96	≥ 0.95	Very good
TLI (Tucker-Lewis Index)	0.95	≥ 0.90	Good
RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation)	0.045	≤ 0.08	Good

This confirms that the conceptual model used in this study is consistent with the empirical data, meaning the structure of the relationships between variables in the

model aligns with the results of field observations. This research also contributes to the validation of theoretical models of new student adjustment, which are rooted in the models of Tinto (1993) and Schlossberg (1981), but adapted to the context of PTKIN.

Testing the Structural Relationships Between Variables (Structural Model)

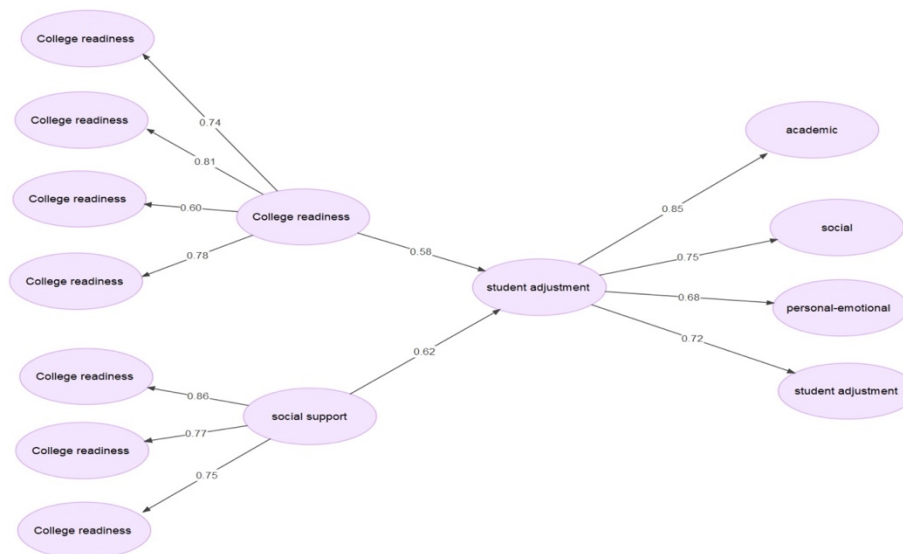
After the measurement model is declared valid and fit, the next step is to test the causal relationships between latent variables. The test results are shown in the following table:

Table 3: Structural Relationship Test Between Variables (Structural Model)

Path of Influence	Estimate (β)	SE	CR	p-value	Information
College Readiness → Adjustment	0.62	0.071	8,732	0.000	Significant
Social Support → Self-Adjustment	0.58	0.067	7,904	0.000	Significant

The coefficient of determination value ($R^2 = 0.47$) indicates that 47% of the variance in students' self-adjustment can be explained by the combination of college readiness and social support variables, while the remaining 53% is influenced by other factors outside the model. The results of the SEM analysis show that both independent variables, namely college readiness and social support, have a positive and significant influence on the self-adjustment of new students at PTKIN throughout Central Java. The standardized loading estimates of 0.62 for college readiness and 0.58 for social support indicate that the contribution of both variables is relatively strong and almost balanced.

Figure 1. SEM Path Diagram of the Relationship between College Readiness, Social Support, and Self-Adjustment of PTKIN Students



Compared to previous studies, the results of this research are consistent with the findings of Dennis et al. (2005) and Pittman & Richmond (2008), who also showed that the combination of personal readiness and social support strengthens the adaptation of first-year students. However, this research is unique because it places the local religious and cultural context at PTKIN as part of the adaptation construct, which has not been widely highlighted in previous literature. This provides a local and spiritual nuance that enriches the discourse on student adaptation from the perspective of Islamic University students.

Thus, these findings not only address the main research question, namely how college readiness and social support influence new student adjustment, but also provide an empirical basis for developing student service policies, such as orientation programs, academic guidance, and strengthening spiritual communities. This result also underscores the importance of collaboration between academics, families, and institutions to create a more conducive adjustment ecosystem within the PTKIN environment.

Discussion

College Readiness Influences New Student Self-Adjustment

The results of this study indicate that college readiness has a positive and significant influence on the self-adjustment of new students at PTKIN throughout Central Java ($\beta = 0.62$; $p < 0.001$). This finding aligns with the results of other studies showing that students with higher college readiness, such as learning motivation, self-directed learning skills, academic self-confidence, and understanding of college demands, tend to adjust more easily to the university environment (Corti et al., 2023; Rooij et al., 2018). This readiness not only facilitates academic adjustment but also helps students navigate the social and emotional challenges during the initial transition to college (A. K. Sari et al., 2024; Titania & Djamhoer, 2023).

Studies on first-generation college students confirm that college readiness significantly predicts coping ability and self-adjustment, even tho this group generally has lower readiness and faces greater adaptation challenges compared to continuing-generation students (Ivemark & Ambrose, 2021; López et al., 2023). Components of adaptive readiness, such as psychological and social readiness, have been shown to be direct predictors of academic adjustment and well-being for first-year students (Corti et al., 2023). Additionally, research in the Islamic educational environment in Indonesia also highlights the importance of social support, a supportive campus environment, and

involvement in campus activities as factors that strengthen the adaptation process (A. K. Sari et al., 2024; Zuhdi & Syarief, 2023). Other supporting factors that strengthen new students' adaptation include intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, independent learning skills, and satisfaction with the chosen study program (Rooij et al., 2018; Corti et al., 2023). A supportive campus environment, good social relationships, and involvement in extracurricular activities also play an important role in facilitating the adaptation process of new students (Sari et al., 2024; Zuhdi & Syarief, 2023). Thus, interventions targeting improved college readiness and strengthening the social environment on campus are highly recommended to support the successful adjustment of new students at PTKIN throughout Central Java. In the context of PTKIN, this support is reinforced by the values of Islamic brotherhood and the principle of ta'awun (mutual assistance), which creates a conducive academic and social climate for new students. Thus, the results of this study confirm that college readiness is not only a predictive factor for self-adjustment, but also a foundation that interacts synergistically with motivational, social, and spiritual factors in shaping the successful adaptation of new students in the Islamic University students environment.

Social Support Influences New Student Self-Adjustment

The results of the SEM analysis show that social support has a positive and significant influence on the self-adjustment of new students at PTKIN in Central Java ($\beta = 0.58$; $p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that the higher the level of social support received by students from family, peers, and the campus environment, the greater their ability to adjust to academic, social, and emotional demands during the transition to college. These findings are consistent with various previous studies that confirm the crucial role of social support in enhancing psychological well-being, reducing stress levels, and strengthening student resilience (Li et al., 2025; Shiddiq et al., 2020; Alsubaie et al., 2019; Awang et al., 2014). Research by Shiddiq et al. (2020) in Indonesia even showed a significant positive correlation between social support and first-year student adjustment ($r = 0.468$; $p < 0.001$), which strengthens the empirical evidence that the presence of social networks is one of the main protective factors in the adaptation process of first-year students.

Furthermore, these findings are also consistent with the Social Support Buffering Hypothesis framework (Cohen & Wills, 1985), which explains that social support acts as a buffer against the psychological and academic stress faced by individuals. In the context of this research, students who receive emotional support from family, peers, and lecturers tend to have higher self-esteem and resilience, which in turn strengthens their

ability to adapt to the campus environment. Research by Lau et al. (2018) and Anda et al. (2025) also indicates that social support can strengthen self-confidence and reduce academic anxiety by increasing self-control and feelings of competence. Peer support is the most influential factor in social and emotional adjustment, while family support provides emotional stability and sustained academic motivation (Friedlander et al., 2007; Alsubaie et al., 2019). In the context of PTKIN, social support is not only understood in the form of emotional and instrumental assistance, but also includes spiritual aspects—such as religious advice, joint religious activities, and the value of Islamic brotherhood—which play an important role in building a sense of community and psychological balance for new students.

Beside directly aiding the adaptation process, social support also acts as a mediating variable in various psychosocial mechanisms that strengthen students' self-adjustment. Studies by Zhang et al. (2021), Anda et al. (2025), and Feng et al. (2024) show that social support mediates the relationship between interpersonal relationship quality and campus adaptation, and enhances students' sense of meaning in life and psychological well-being. In other words, social support not only provides protection against stress but also fosters a deep sense of belonging to the academic environment. These findings are relevant for PTKIN, where the values of ta'awun (mutual assistance) and ukhuwah Islamiyah (Islamic brotherhood) serve as a cultural foundation that strengthens social cohesion and student well-being. Therefore, the results of this study confirm that strengthening social support thru academic guidance, student communities, and spiritual development programs is an important strategy for holistically improving the adjustment success of new students, encompassing academic, social, emotional, and religious aspects.

Social support, within the framework of Islamic counselling, is viewed as part of ukhuwah and collective responsibility in creating a compassionate and mutually advising environment for good (Abideen & Abbas, 2021; Siahaan & Zunidar, 2020). The finding that social support significantly contributes to the adjustment of new students indicates that the principles of ta'awun (mutual help) and mau'izhoh hasanah (good advice) should be the foundation of counselling services at PTKIN. Islamic counselors play the role of spiritual facilitators who not only help students solve problems but also guide them toward deeper self-understanding and stronger relationships with Allah SWT (Asyikin et al., 2024; Ermalianti & Ramadan, 2021; Rosyid, 2014). With this approach, Islamic counselling at PTKIN can become a strategic instrument in shaping a resilient, integrated, and globally competitive generation of Muslim intellectuals.

College readiness and social support influence the adjustment of new students.

The results of this study convincingly confirm that college readiness and social support have a significant influence on the adjustment of new students in the PTKIN environment throughout Central Java. This finding aligns with Schlossberg's (1981) transition theory, which states that an individual's success in coping with life changes, such as the transition to college, is influenced by their readiness and the available support system. In this context, college readiness encompasses students' ability to manage themselves academically, emotionally, and in terms of learning skills, all of which are essential tools for facing the challenges of the first year of college. The research findings are also consistent with Tinto's (1993) academic integration model, which emphasizes the importance of academic and social integration as determinants of student adaptation success.

This finding also expands on previous results, which showed that college readiness significantly contributes to student adjustment (loading factor 0.62), aligning with the guidance and counselling approach that emphasizes the importance of developing learning skills, self-regulation, and academic efficacy, as stated in the research by Créde and Niehorster (2012), which found that college readiness significantly contributes to students' academic achievement and psychological well-being. Social support, as the second variable in this study (loading factor 0.58), also has direct implications for social and emotional counselling services. In the BK model, support from family, peers, and institutions is an important component in creating a supportive environment for students. Dennis, Phinney, & Chuateco (2005) showed that social support strengthens the resilience and academic engagement of first-year students. Pittman & Richmond's (2008) research also highlighted that the quality of social relationships on campus correlates with students' psychosocial adjustment. Therefore, counselling services at PTKIN need to be designed to strengthen social networks and provide a safe space for students to build their self-identity.

From an Islamic guidance and counselling perspective, research findings on the relationship between college readiness and social support and the adjustment of new students at Islamic University students (PTKIN) highlight the urgency of guidance that is not only academic, but also spiritual and moral (Rahim, 2018). Islamic counselling guidance aims to shape the perfect human being, a complete person with noble character who is able to face life's challenges with trust in God and effort (Agus, 2025; Jamilah, 2020). College readiness in this context not only encompasses cognitive abilities and academic behavior but also spiritual readiness, such as sincere intention, awareness of life's purpose, and the ability to manage emotions according to Islamic values. Therefore, counselling services at PTKIN need to be designed to nurture students

holistically, with an approach that integrates Qur'anic and Hadith values into their adaptation process.

Furthermore, the results of this study support the integration of Schlossberg's (1981) transition approach and Tinto's (1993) academic integration model into college counselling services. New student adjustment is not just about academic adjustment, but also involves unique emotional and spiritual dynamics in PTKIN (Islamic University students). Studies show that self-efficacy and motivation-based counselling services can improve students' academic achievement (Asrori et al., 2020; Kyauta et al., 2018; Simbolon & Purba, 2022; Sink & Stroh, 2003). Meanwhile, the importance of evaluation strategies (Jarkawi et al., 2018; Livana et al., 2022; Rothney & Farwell, 1960) and follow-up (Mudrikah & Suherman, 2024) in improving the effectiveness of university guidance and counselling services was emphasized. Thus, the results of this study provide a strong foundation for the development of contextual, responsive, and evidence-based guidance and counselling programs to support the adjustment of new students in the Islamic University students environment.

In designing a contextual and inclusive new student development program, PTKIN institutions need to integrate an Islamic values-based approach with adaptive academic transition strategies (Erihadiana et al., 2025; Sa'adi, 2025). One strategic recommendation is to strengthen the functions of the Career Development Center and the Laboratory Madrasah as incubators for character and competency development of new students (Jihan Fira Aziza et al., 2024). The coaching program should not only focus on academic orientation, but also include spiritual, social, and ecological literacy training relevant to the challenges of the times. Cross-institutional collaboration, such as partnerships with MAN Insan Cendekia and the industrial world, can enrich students' experiences and strengthen their readiness for the world of work and multicultural campus life (Pendis Kementerian Agama RI, 2025).

Additionally, PTKIN needs to develop an evidence-based mentoring system by systematically mapping the needs of new students. The use of data from college readiness assessments and social support can serve as a basis for designing targeted interventions. This data-driven mentoring program allows institutions to identify student groups vulnerable to adaptation difficulties and provide both personal and collective support. This strategy aligns with the direction of the Secretary General of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which encourages PTKIN to become a center for innovative and contributing thought, as well as a magnet for the internationalization of Islamic University students. Thus, the guidance of new students at PTKIN is not only

responsive to the local context but also aligns with the direction of national and global educational transformation.

In the context of PTKIN, adaptation is not only related to academic and social aspects, but also to the unique religious values and local culture. Social support from family, peers, and institutions provides a safe space and additional motivation for students to fully develop their self-identity. Thus, the main theoretical contribution of this research is the integration of the transition approach with the religious and cultural context in understanding the dynamics of new student adaptation.

There are several limitations in the implementation of this research that are worthy of constructive criticism. First, a quantitative approach does not allow for an in-depth exploration of students' subjective experiences in the adjustment process. Second, the geographical limitations of Central Java mean that the results of this study cannot be immediately generalized to other PTKIN in regions with different social dynamics. Additionally, collecting data thru closed-ended questionnaires can limit respondents' expression in explaining qualitative factors that might be important. Based on these factors, it is recommended that future research utilize a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews, to delve deeper into the context and personal experiences of students. Further studies can also expand the scope to PTKIN regions outside Java, or compare results between different types of religious and public universities to gain a more comprehensive understanding. In addition, the development of a college readiness instrument that considers the spiritual and socio-cultural aspects unique to Indonesian Islam is also important as an advanced methodological contribution from this research.

Conclusion

The research results indicate that college readiness and social support significantly influence the adjustment of new students at PTKIN throughout Central Java. College readiness, encompassing cognitive strategies, content knowledge, contextual awareness, and academic behavior, serves as a crucial foundation for navigating academic and social challenges in the first year of college. Meanwhile, social support from family, peers, and significant others acts as an emotional buffer, strengthening resilience and student engagement in the adaptation process. This finding confirms the relevance of academic and psychosocial transition models in the context of Islamic University students, while also calling for the development of holistic, contextual, and Islamic value-based new student mentoring programs. PTKIN needs to integrate college readiness assessment and social support into the student admission and

development process, thru Islamic guidance and counselling services that emphasize the values of brotherhood, cooperation, and good advice. The establishment of a campus adaptation training center based on local culture and Islamic spirituality is a strategic step to strengthen the well-being and independence of new students, while further research using a mixed methods approach is recommended to broaden understanding of student adjustment dynamics in various PTKIN in Indonesia.

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