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Religiosity and Adjustment Among First-Year Vocational Students: Uniformity Across Disciplinary Clusters and Its Implications for Islamic Religious Education

Muhammad Hilmy[1*], Imam Mashuri[2], Imam Wahyono[3], Anis Fauzi[4]

Politeknik Negeri Banyuwangi, Indonesia[*1]
Universitas Islam Ibrahimy Banyuwangi, Indonesia[2, 3, 4]
[*1]*email: muhammadhilmy@poliwangi.ac.id,*
[2]*email: mashuri5758.aba@gmail.com*
[3]*email: imamwahyono12031989@gmail.com*
[4]*email: anisfauzi221@gmail.com*

Abstract: Adjustment in the early weeks of university shapes whether students persist in their studies, yet the Indonesian literature remains divided on whether religiosity plays a role, and that role has not been tested among vocational higher education students. This study aimed to examine the relationship between religiosity and adjustment among first-year vocational students and to determine whether adjustment differs across disciplinary clusters. A correlational design was used, involving new students enrolled in the Islamic Religious Education course at Politeknik Negeri Banyuwangi, drawn from a range of study programmes across disciplinary clusters. Data were collected early in the semester using a religiosity scale based on the dimensions of Glock and Stark and an adjustment scale based on the dimensions of Baker and Siryk, both with good reliability. The data were analysed using Pearson and Spearman correlations, Williams's test for dependent correlations, analysis of variance, and hierarchical regression. The results showed that religiosity was positively and significantly related to adjustment, and that this relationship held, and even strengthened slightly, after controlling for Islamic boarding school experience, living arrangement, gender, and disciplinary cluster. The strength of the relationship was uneven across dimensions: religiosity was more closely tied to academic adjustment and institutional attachment than to social and personal-emotional adjustment. Among the dimensions of religiosity, the consequential dimension showed the strongest relationship and the ritualistic dimension the weakest. No differences in adjustment were found across disciplinary clusters, although the design was sensitive enough to detect small effects. These findings support Islamic Religious Education in the early period of study that is uniform across disciplinary clusters and oriented towards ethical practice.

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Keywords: Religiosity; First-Year Student Adjustment; Vocational Higher Education; Islamic Religious Education; Consequential Dimension.

Abstrak: Penyesuaian diri pada awal perkuliahan menentukan kelanjutan studi mahasiswa, tetapi literatur Indonesia belum sepakat mengenai peran religiusitas di dalamnya, dan peran tersebut belum diuji pada mahasiswa pendidikan vokasi. Penelitian ini bertujuan menguji hubungan antara religiusitas dan penyesuaian diri mahasiswa tahun pertama pendidikan vokasi, serta memeriksa apakah penyesuaian diri tersebut berbeda antar rumpun keilmuan. Penelitian menggunakan desain korelasional dengan melibatkan mahasiswa baru peserta mata kuliah Pendidikan Agama Islam di Politeknik Negeri Banyuwangi yang berasal dari berbagai program studi lintas rumpun keilmuan. Data dikumpulkan pada awal semester melalui skala religiusitas yang disusun berdasarkan dimensi Glock dan Stark dan skala penyesuaian diri yang disusun berdasarkan dimensi Baker dan Siryk, keduanya dengan reliabilitas yang baik. Data dianalisis dengan korelasi Pearson dan Spearman, uji Williams untuk korelasi dependen, analisis varians, dan regresi hierarkis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa religiusitas berhubungan positif dan signifikan dengan penyesuaian diri, dan hubungan tersebut bertahan, bahkan sedikit menguat, setelah pengalaman mondok, tempat tinggal, jenis kelamin, dan rumpun keilmuan dikontrol. Kekuatan hubungan tidak merata antar dimensi: religiusitas lebih erat terkait dengan penyesuaian akademik dan keterikatan institusional daripada dengan penyesuaian sosial dan personal-emosional. Di antara dimensi religiusitas, dimensi konsekuensial menunjukkan hubungan paling kuat, sedangkan dimensi ritualistik paling lemah. Tidak ditemukan perbedaan penyesuaian diri antar rumpun keilmuan, meskipun desain penelitian cukup peka untuk mendeteksi efek yang kecil. Temuan ini mendukung pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam pada awal perkuliahan yang seragam lintas rumpun keilmuan dan berorientasi pada pengamalan etis.

Kata Kunci: Religiusitas; Penyesuaian Diri Mahasiswa Baru; Pendidikan Vokasi; Pendidikan Agama Islam; Dimensi Konsekuensial.

A. Introduction

The first semester is the most precarious stretch of a student's academic journey. Tinto (1993) identifies the failure to integrate into the academic and social communities

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of the campus as the principal reason students leave, and a meta-analytic review of 237 samples comprising 44,668 participants confirms that adjustment to college is multidimensional, predicts grades, and is an unusually strong predictor of retention (Credé & Niehorster, 2012). The question that matters for those who design instruction is therefore not whether adjustment is important, but what resources students bring with them when they enter campus and which of those resources can be reached by a course. Indonesian research has mapped part of that inventory. Self-regulation accounts for 35.9% of the variance in first-year adjustment (Fitrianti & Cahyono, 2021), academic resilience fully mediates the effect of social support on academic adjustment (Sari & Zaini, 2024), psychological well-being explains 7.3% of the variance and rises to 24.1% once peer social support enters as a moderator (Dara et al., 2024), and sense of community correlates .605 with the adjustment of new students (Saalino et al., 2022).

Religiosity is a theoretically strong candidate for such a resource. Pargament (1997) frames religion as a meaning system that becomes active precisely when a person faces strain, and a systematic review of quantitative research published between 1872 and 2010 found religiosity associated with well-being and with lower levels of depression and anxiety (Koenig, 2012). The empirical record, however, is less tidy than the theory. Kurniasari et al. (2025) reported a correlation of .504 between religiosity and adjustment among 141 first-year medical students, Sulistyani et al. (2019) reported .483 between religious coping and adjustment among 200 early-year students, and among Indonesian adolescents all five religiosity dimensions predicted self-adjustment (Japar & Purwati, 2014). Against these, Supriyadi et al. (2024) found no effect of religiosity on the adjustment of students living away from home while social support was significant, Eva et al. (2020) found that religiosity did not strengthen the link between social support and psychological well-being among 354 students, and Sari (2021) showed that religiosity contributed only 2.3% of the explained variance against 45.1% for emotional maturity. The international literature is divided in the same way. Mooney (2010) and Horwitz (2021) reported positive associations with academic attainment, whereas Semplonius et al. (2015) found the effect of religious activity on social ties to be indirect only, Graça and Brandão (2024) found religious coping associated with lower

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well-being, and Prati (2024), using a nine-year panel of 8,146 participants, found almost no lagged effect of religion on mental health.

What remains unexplained is why these findings conflict. One explanation that is rarely tested directly is that adjustment is treated as a single total score, although the construct comprises four distinct domains: academic adjustment, social adjustment, personal-emotional adjustment, and institutional attachment (Baker & Siryk, 1984, 1989). If religiosity is strongly related to some domains and weakly related to others, the size of the total correlation will shift with the item composition of each instrument, and conflicting results become unremarkable. Indications of this already exist. Low and Handal (1995) reported, among 500 first-year students, that different religiosity dimensions predicted different adjustment subscales, without presenting the coefficients for each domain, and Gilbertson et al. (2022) found among 839 first-year students that closeness to God predicted secondary stress appraisal but not primary appraisal. Religiosity itself is likewise not a single thing. The five-dimensional framework of Glock and Stark (1965) distinguishes ideological, ritualistic, experiential, intellectual, and consequential dimensions, and that framework still underpins current instruments used with Indonesian Muslim samples (Chairani et al., 2023), even though the variety of scales in use makes comparison across studies difficult (El Hafiz, 2021). The separation among what is believed, what is performed as worship, and what is enacted in behaviour corresponds directly to the domains of Islamic Religious Education objectives.

A second gap is contextual. Almost all Indonesian research on first-year adjustment has been conducted with university students. A search of the Garuda and DOAJ databases for the period 2019 to 2026 found no indexed article examining first-year adjustment in a polytechnic setting, the closest being a study of 56 first-year students in a single department at Politeknik Negeri Malang (Kristina et al., 2019). Vocational education nonetheless imposes distinct demands in the form of laboratory workloads and dense timetables. A third gap concerns Islamic Religious Education as a compulsory general course, which has been positioned as a vehicle for character formation (Suhendar et al., 2023), for curriculum development grounded in religious

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moderation (Hadikusuma et al., 2025), and for integrating spiritual values with technical competence (Siregar et al., 2024), yet whose instructional design usually rests on assumption rather than on data. Two assumptions in particular deserve testing: that students from different disciplinary clusters require different treatment, and that strengthening ritual observance automatically carries over into other areas of student life. The second assumption is called into question by evidence that religiosity did not affect students' ethical perceptions (Hidayatulloh & Sartini, 2019) and that religious character is strengthened through habituation and modelling rather than through the transmission of knowledge alone (Nasrudin & Fakhruddin, 2023).

This study addresses four questions. First, what is the level of religiosity and adjustment among first-year vocational students in the sixth week of the first semester? Second, how is religiosity related to adjustment, both as a total score and across the four adjustment domains? Third, does adjustment differ across vocational disciplinary clusters? Fourth, what do these patterns imply for the design of first-semester Islamic Religious Education? Three hypotheses are proposed. H1 states that religiosity is positively related to adjustment. H2 states that the strength of that relationship differs across the four adjustment domains, with the academic domain expected to be strongest and the personal-emotional domain weakest. H3 states that adjustment differs across disciplinary clusters. H2 carries the main novelty of this study because it compares correlation strengths across domains directly, using a test designed for dependent correlations, rather than inferring a difference from a comparison of p values.

B. Research Methods

This study is quantitative and correlational, with cross-sectional data collected once, in the sixth week of the first semester. The design is framed deliberately as a snapshot of where first-year students stand after six weeks of exposure to vocational coursework, a point late enough for the academic and laboratory load to have been experienced and early enough to precede the mid-semester examinations, so the findings are associative and do not permit causal inference. The population consisted of 911 first-year students enrolled in the Islamic Religious Education course in the first semester of the 2026/2027 academic year at Politeknik Negeri Banyuwangi, drawn from

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14 of the institution's 19 study programmes. The remaining five programmes take the course in the second, third, and fourth semesters and therefore fall outside the population frame. The 14 programmes were grouped into three disciplinary clusters: engineering, business and tourism, and agro and livestock. A minimum sample of 270 was set using the formula for a finite population at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970), and was exceeded because 690 students returned complete questionnaires (75.7%). The instrument was a 37-item questionnaire comprising 6 demographic items and 31 five-point Likert items: 15 religiosity items built on the five dimensions of Glock and Stark (1965) and 16 adjustment items built on the four domains of Baker and Siryk (1984, 1989), with seven unfavourable items reverse-scored before analysis. Items were written anew to refer to the concrete circumstances of vocational students rather than copied from the original scales, so item discrimination was examined through corrected item-total correlations against a threshold of .30 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994) and reliability through coefficient alpha (Cronbach, 1951), both computed from the present data.

The questionnaire was distributed online through WhatsApp class groups and completed between 21 and 26 September 2026. The opening page carried a consent statement confirming that participation was voluntary, that responses were anonymous, and that they would not affect the grade in any course. Email addresses were not collected and the one-response-per-account restriction was disabled in order to preserve anonymity, and every respondent affirmed willingness to participate. Students who had completed the questionnaire were asked to send a screenshot of the submission confirmation to the class group as evidence of participation. The screenshot displayed the confirmation page only and not the answers given, so the content of each response remained anonymous, although participation itself became visible to the teaching team. This procedure accounts for the high response rate and carries implications that are addressed among the limitations. Analysis proceeded through descriptive statistics and categorisation against two norms, tests of normality, linearity, and homogeneity of variance, Pearson correlations reported alongside Spearman correlations with confidence intervals from Fisher's z transformation, Williams's test for comparing

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dependent correlations that share one variable with a Bonferroni correction (Williams, 1959) confirmed by 20,000 bootstrap resamples (Efron & Tibshirani, 1993), one-way analysis of variance with the Welch test, and partial correlation and hierarchical regression with pesantren boarding experience, residence, sex, and disciplinary cluster as control variables. The choice of Williams's test is stated openly as one established procedure rather than one claimed to be best, because simulation work shows that no single test is superior under all conditions for overlapping dependent correlations (Diedenhofen & Musch, 2015). Because reliability differs across domains, the correlations for each domain are also reported in disattenuated form (Spearman, 1904), read as an upper-bound estimate. All results are reported with effect sizes and confidence intervals against Cohen's (1988) conventions rather than with p values alone. A sensitivity analysis repeated every test across four specifications of the data: the main analysis, the data without the items failing the discrimination threshold, the data without invariant responses, and the data without responses showing very low variation across items.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Profile of Religiosity and Adjustment Among First-Year Vocational Students

Of the 911 first-year students, 690 returned complete questionnaires with no missing data and no values outside the response range. Respondents comprised 396 women (57.4%) and 294 men (42.6%), distributed across the business and tourism cluster (282, 40.9%), the engineering cluster (250, 36.2%), and the agro and livestock cluster (158, 22.9%). Two features of the sample matter for interpretation. First, 84.6% came from Banyuwangi Regency and 71.9% lived in their parents' home, so most respondents were not living away from home. Second, 73.9% had never studied at a pesantren. Of the 31 items, 27 met the discrimination threshold of .30, while items 6, 12, 18, and 20 did not and were retained in the main analysis because the sensitivity analysis showed that the conclusions did not change.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and reliability of the scales and dimensions (n = 690)

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AL-ULUM
JURNAL PENDIDIKAN ISLAM
Vol. 7, No. 3 (2026) ||ISSN 2723-5459 (Online)

Scale / dimension	k	M	SD	M per item	Skew	α
Religiosity (total)	15	62.10	6.73	4.14	−0.84	.827
Ideological (belief)	3	13.84	1.62	4.61	−2.13	.703
Ritualistic (worship practice)	3	9.90	2.19	3.30	0.09	.572
Experiential (experience)	3	13.93	1.55	4.64	−1.86	.777
Intellectual (knowledge)	3	11.87	1.97	3.96	−0.21	.435
Consequential (enactment)	3	12.56	1.92	4.19	−0.46	.677
Adjustment (total)	16	59.11	7.81	3.69	−0.07	.808
Academic adjustment	4	14.88	2.24	3.72	0.02	.541
Social adjustment	4	15.50	2.52	3.88	−0.19	.581
Personal-emotional adjustment	4	12.62	2.71	3.16	0.28	.580
Institutional attachment	4	16.11	2.88	4.03	−0.40	.679

On the per-item metric that allows the dimensions to be compared, religiosity stood at 4.14 out of a maximum of 5, with the experiential (4.64) and ideological (4.61) dimensions highest and the ritualistic dimension (3.30) lowest. Adjustment stood at 3.69, with institutional attachment (4.03) highest and personal-emotional adjustment (3.16) lowest. The lowest-scoring items across the whole instrument were anxiety about coursework (2.49), feeling overwhelmed by assignments and laboratory work (2.86), and mental fatigue (3.01). What is weakest among first-year vocational students is therefore not their academic capability or their social relationships but their management of personal and emotional strain, and the sense of being overwhelmed points explicitly at the assignment and laboratory load that characterises vocational education. Low scores on these items are self-reports of the transition experience rather than a clinical screening instrument, so no diagnostic conclusion can be drawn from them.

Categorisation produced a descriptive finding in its own right. Against the theoretical norm, 84.8% of respondents fell into the high religiosity category and only one fell into the low category, whereas against the empirical norm the distribution returned to roughly normal proportions (15.2% low, 68.3% moderate, 16.5% high). Religiosity in this sample therefore shows a ceiling effect. The operational criterion in common use holds that a ceiling effect is present when more than 15% of respondents reach the highest possible score, which reduces the instrument's capacity to distinguish respondents at that end (Terwee et al., 2007), and the meta-analysis by Sedikides and

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AL-ULUM
JURNAL PENDIDIKAN ISLAM
Vol. 7, No. 3 (2026) | |ISSN 2723-5459 (Online)

Gebauer (2010) shows that self-reported religiosity is positively associated with socially desirable responding, more strongly so in more religious cultures. Both point to the same conclusion: religiosity scores in this sample are probably inflated and their variance compressed, so every correlation reported below is better read as a lower-bound estimate. It is worth noting that the ritualistic dimension is the only one distributed close to symmetry, which means that the variation in religiosity within this sample lies in worship practice rather than in belief.

2. Religiosity and Adjustment, and the Difference Across Domains

The assumptions were met. Skewness and kurtosis for both variables and for the regression residuals fell within ±2, the deviation from linearity was not significant ($F = 1.283$; $df = 36, 652$; $p = .128$), and variances were homogeneous across clusters (Levene $F(2, 687) = 0.751$; $p = .472$).

Table 2. Correlations of religiosity with adjustment and its domains (n = 690)

Criterion variable	r	95% CI	ρ	r^2	Disattenuated r
Adjustment (total)	.507	[.449, .560]	.496	.257	.620
Academic adjustment	.475	[.415, .531]	.512	.226	.710
Institutional attachment	.410	[.346, .471]	.402	.168	.548
Social adjustment	.359	[.292, .422]	.318	.129	.517
Personal-emotional adjustment	.299	[.230, .366]	.284	.090	.432

Note: all coefficients significant at $p < .001$.

H1 was supported. Religiosity was positively and significantly related to adjustment, $r = .507$, 95% CI [.449, .560], $p < .001$, so the two variables share 25.7% of their variance, and the Spearman coefficient was almost identical, which means the conclusion does not depend on the normality assumption. This value is close to the .504 reported by Kurniasari et al. (2025) among 141 first-year medical students and falls within range of the .483 reported by Sulistyani et al. (2019). The convergence is meaningful because it was obtained in a different population, with rewritten items, and

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AL-ULUM
JURNAL PENDIDIKAN ISLAM
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in a sample almost five times larger; in a field of conflicting results, replicating an effect size is a contribution in itself. The conflict with null findings also becomes easier to read. Supriyadi et al. (2024) studied students living away from home, whereas 84.6% of the present respondents came from the same regency as their campus and 71.9% lived with their parents, so the challenges differ and social support is indeed the more relevant resource for those who have moved.

Table 3. Williams's test for differences in correlation strength across adjustment domains

Pair of domains	Difference in r	t	p Bonferroni	Different
Academic vs social	.116	3.357	.005	Yes
Academic vs personal-emotional	.176	5.052	< .001	Yes
Academic vs institutional attachment	.065	1.829	.407	No
Social vs personal-emotional	.060	1.537	.748	No
Social vs institutional attachment	−.052	−1.404	.965	No
Personal-emotional vs institutional attachment	−.111	−2.899	.023	Yes

H2 was partially supported. The ordering of correlation strengths followed the hypothesised direction, and three of six pairs differed significantly after Bonferroni correction, with identical decisions when the test was repeated using bootstrapping. The disattenuated column in Table 2 shows that this ordering is not an artefact of differing reliabilities: once corrected, the gap between academic adjustment (.710) and personal-emotional adjustment (.432) widens rather than narrows. The pattern makes sense if religiosity is understood to work mainly through a regulative pathway. Mooney (2010) found that students who attended worship regularly spent more hours studying and still attained higher grades after time allocation was controlled, which means that what carries over from religious practice into coursework is discipline and self-management rather than emotional calm. The weakness of the relationship in the personal-emotional domain runs against the common expectation that religious people are calmer, and Gilbertson et al. (2022) point to the mechanism: closeness to God predicted the belief that one can cope with strain, not the amount of strain felt. Evidence from the opposite direction reinforces this reading, namely the finding of Graça and Brandão (2024) that

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AL-ULUM
JURNAL PENDIDIKAN ISLAM
Vol. 7, No. 3 (2026) | |ISSN 2723-5459 (Online)

religious coping was associated with lower well-being through difficulties in emotion regulation, and the finding of Prati (2024) of almost no lagged effect of religion on mental health. The methodological consequence is immediate. Part of the conflict in the literature is probably an artefact of using total scores, because an instrument dominated by academic items will yield a high correlation and one dominated by personal-emotional items will yield a low correlation, without any substantive difference in the populations studied. Low and Handal (1995) hinted at this without presenting coefficients for each domain, and the present study supplies the figures and an explicit test for dependent correlations. Institutional attachment, in second place, is consistent with Tinto's (1993) account of institutional integration, since on a campus where Islamic Religious Education is compulsory, religious students find their personal values aligned with the values the institution maintains.

3. Which Dimension of Religiosity Matters Most

Table 4. Correlations of each religiosity dimension with total adjustment (n = 690)

Religiosity dimension	r	95% CI	r with academic adjustment	Disattenuated r
Consequential (enactment)	.458	[.397, .515]	.440	.620
Intellectual (knowledge)	.400	[.336, .461]	.390	.675
Ideological (belief)	.379	[.314, .441]	.329	.503
Experiential (experience)	.370	[.304, .433]	.336	.467
Ritualistic (worship practice)	.253	[.182, .322]	.241	.373

Note: all coefficients significant at $p < .001$.

The consequential dimension, the enactment of religious teaching in everyday conduct, correlated most strongly with adjustment, while the ritualistic dimension correlated most weakly. Williams's test across the ten pairs with a Bonferroni correction produced three significant differences, and all three place the ritualistic dimension at the bottom: consequential exceeded ritualistic ($t = -5.102$, $p < .001$), intellectual exceeded ritualistic ($t = -3.750$, $p = .002$), and ideological exceeded ritualistic ($t = 2.891$, $p = .040$). This places the present study within an ongoing conversation about the gap between ritual observance and ethical enactment, a gap also visible in the finding that religiosity did not affect students' ethical perceptions (Hidayatulloh & Sartini, 2019), in the finding that religious character is strengthened through habituation and modelling

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AL-ULUM
JURNAL PENDIDIKAN ISLAM
Vol. 7, No. 3 (2026) | |ISSN 2723-5459 (Online)

(Nasrudin & Fakhruddin, 2023), and in the finding that engagement in religious activity affects students' social ties only indirectly (Semplonius et al., 2015). The correct reading is not that worship is unimportant but that the frequency of worship does not by itself transfer into the capacity to cope with coursework; what transfers is the enactment of values in behaviour. It is worth adding that the ritualistic dimension is the only one distributed close to symmetry in this sample, so the figure of .253 cannot be explained away as a consequence of restricted variance.

4. Uniformity of Adjustment Across Disciplinary Clusters

Table 5. Adjustment and religiosity by disciplinary cluster

Disciplinary cluster	n	M adjustment	SD	M religiosity	SD
Engineering	250	58.90	8.13	61.47	6.69
Business and tourism	282	59.39	7.58	62.23	6.43
Agro and livestock	158	58.94	7.74	62.87	7.23

H3 was rejected. One-way analysis of variance found no difference in adjustment across clusters, $F(2, 687) = 0.315$, $p = .730$, $\eta^2 = .001$, with the same result from the Welch test, $F(2, 399.6) = 0.319$, $p = .727$, and no significant post hoc comparison. The absence of a difference also held for each of the four domains separately and for religiosity itself, $F(2, 687) = 2.181$, $p = .114$. Every confidence interval for the differences between clusters lay within ±2.1 points on a scale ranging from 16 to 80. This null result is informative rather than a consequence of insufficient data, because at $n = 690$ and $\alpha = .05$ the design had 80% power to detect an effect as small as $f = .119$ ($\eta^2 = .014$), well below the threshold for a small effect. The defensible conclusion is therefore not that a difference remains unproven but that any practically meaningful difference can be set aside.

The analysis with control variables sharpens this reading. The partial correlation between religiosity and adjustment, after controlling for pesantren boarding experience, residence, sex, and disciplinary cluster, was .528, higher than the uncontrolled correlation, so the relationship cannot be explained as a spurious effect of religious or demographic background. In the hierarchical regression, the control variables alone explained 3.0% of the variance, and adding religiosity raised R^2 to .301 with $\Delta R^2 = .270$, $F(1, 683) = 263.77$, $p < .001$, $\beta = .525$. Disciplinary cluster, by contrast,

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contributed only $\Delta R^2 = .005$ ($p = .104$). Two control variables were significantly related to adjustment and both negatively: being female ($\beta = -.182$) and longer pesantren boarding experience ($\beta = -.113$). The second of these runs against common expectation and deserves qualitative follow-up, since the present data do not explain it. Setting $\Delta R^2 = .005$ against $\Delta R^2 = .270$ makes the implication plain: what distinguishes one first-year student from another six weeks into the first semester is not the programme chosen but the religiosity brought along.

The sensitivity analysis showed that the direction, the ordering, and the conclusions for all three hypotheses were unchanged across the four specifications of the data. The H1 correlation moved within the narrow range of .467 to .507, and the ordering of correlation strengths across domains (academic, institutional attachment, social, personal-emotional) was identical in every specification.

5. Implications for the Design of Islamic Religious Education

Four implications follow, each resting on a specific result. First, the design of first-semester Islamic Religious Education need not be differentiated by disciplinary cluster, because students in all three clusters enter with practically the same profile of adjustment and religiosity. For those managing a compulsory general course serving more than a dozen study programmes, a single core design can serve all clusters, and the resources that would otherwise go into producing cluster-specific variants are better spent on the quality of that single design. Differentiation remains relevant at the level of examples and case contexts, not at the level of objectives and instructional structure.

Second, instruction is better anchored in ethical enactment than in added ritual frequency, because the consequential dimension correlated .458 with adjustment and .440 with academic adjustment while the ritualistic dimension correlated only .253 and .241. The learning outcomes with the greatest effect are therefore those that require students to enact values in conduct: academic honesty in assignments and laboratory work, trustworthiness in group tasks, punctuality, and responsibility for one's own work. The semester learning plan for this course has been prepared on an outcome-based education approach, so its outcome statements are already oriented towards observable capability. What is not yet present is the anchoring of scriptural evidence in

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those outcomes that concern academic conduct. The finding that the consequential dimension is far stronger than the ritualistic dimension indicates the direction for that refinement, in which scriptural evidence is presented as the ground of academic conduct rather than as additional material to memorise. This direction is consistent with active learning for character formation in polytechnic settings (Suhendar et al., 2023), with problem-based and project-based design (Hadikusuma et al., 2025), and with integrating Islamic values into vocational work ethics (Siregar et al., 2024).

Third, the personal-emotional domain is the weakest point for first-year students, yet Islamic Religious Education is not the principal instrument for addressing it, precisely because religiosity is most weakly related to that domain. The reasonable conclusion is not that the course should take on a psychological service role but that the need is real and requires its own institutional route, through coordination with student guidance services and referral where necessary. The contribution that can reasonably be expected from the course is limited to providing a framework for making sense of difficulty (Pargament, 1997) and strengthening the belief that strain can be managed (Gilbertson et al., 2022). Fourth, the early weeks of the first semester are a narrow and valuable window. Because institutional attachment shapes the decision to continue (Tinto, 1993), and because Islamic Religious Education is one of the few courses encountered by every first-year student across all study programmes in the first semester, it is strategically placed to help build a sense of connection to the campus. What should be avoided is any use of an instrument of this kind for course assessment or for screening students.

6. Limitations

The single measurement point makes all findings associative, with no basis for inferring the direction of influence, and because measurement took place in the sixth week rather than at enrolment, the religiosity recorded may already have been shaped by the first weeks of campus life. The researchers teach the course taken by the respondents, so although the questionnaire was anonymous, the potential for socially desirable responding remains. The ceiling effect on the religiosity scale reduces the instrument's capacity to distinguish respondents at the upper end. Reliability across

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dimensions ranged from .435 to .777 because each dimension contains only three or four items, so the H2 conclusions rest on short subscales and the disattenuated coefficients are better read as upper-bound estimates; the instrument has also not been examined through confirmatory factor analysis. Finally, all respondents came from a single polytechnic in a single regency, so the findings cannot be generalised to students living away from home or to religious higher education institutions. Further research should use two measurement waves, test mediators already shown to be relevant among Indonesian students such as self-regulation and academic resilience, and use religiosity instruments already validated with Indonesian Muslim samples so that comparison across studies becomes possible.

D. Conclusion

Religiosity among first-year vocational students is high and close to uniform, with 84.8% in the high category against the theoretical norm and the greatest variation found in the ritualistic dimension, while adjustment sits at a moderate to high level with the personal-emotional domain as its weakest point. Religiosity is positively and significantly related to adjustment, $r = .507$, 95% CI [.449, .560], $p < .001$, and the relationship strengthens to .528 once pesantren boarding experience, residence, sex, and disciplinary cluster are controlled. The strength of the relationship is uneven across domains: strongest for academic adjustment (.475), followed by institutional attachment (.410), social adjustment (.359), and weakest for personal-emotional adjustment (.299), with three of six pairs differing significantly. Among the five religiosity dimensions, ethical enactment is most strongly related (.458) and worship practice most weakly (.253). No difference in adjustment was found across disciplinary clusters, $F(2, 687) = 0.315$, $p = .730$, $\eta^2 = .001$, in a design with 80% power to detect an effect as small as $\eta^2 = .014$, so the uniformity is itself a finding. For the design of first-semester Islamic Religious Education, this implies a single core design across clusters, an anchor in ethical enactment with scriptural evidence tied to outcomes concerning academic conduct, the routing of personal-emotional needs through student services, and the use of the early weeks of the semester as a window for building institutional attachment. The principal contribution of this study is the decomposition of the religiosity and

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adjustment relationship to the level of domains, which shows that part of the conflict in the literature can be explained by the use of a single total score, together with evidence on first-year vocational students, a population almost unrepresented in the Indonesian literature on student adjustment.

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