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Social Adjustment Profiles Of New Santri : A Comparative Study Of SMP And Mts Students At Pondok Pesantren Putri Sunan Drajat

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Abstract

The social adjustment of new students (santri) is a critical issue that directly affects psychological well-being and academic success in Islamic boarding school (pesantren) environments. This study aims to describe and analyze differences in social adjustment between new students from junior high school (SMP) and Islamic junior high school (MTs) tracks at Pondok Pesantren Putri Sunan Drajat, Lamongan, East Java. A quantitative approach with a cross-sectional comparative design was employed, involving 145 respondents (75 MTs students at Al Masyitoh dormitory and 70 SMP students at Al Aisyah dormitory) selected through total sampling. Social adjustment was measured using a scale adapted from Ni'mah (2016) based on Hurlock's (1978) framework, encompassing four dimensions: overt behavior in interaction, adjustment to social groups, social attitudes, and personal satisfaction (α = 0.860). Data were analyzed using Independent Samples t-test, Welch's t-test, and Mann-Whitney U according to the results of normality and homogeneity assumption tests. The findings reveal two principal conclusions. First, 85.7% of instrument items showed no significant difference between groups, indicating substantially similar social adjustment profiles across both tracks, most notably in the social attitudes dimension, where none of the 11 items yielded significant differences. Second, significant differences were concentrated in the personal satisfaction dimension (KP1: W = 18.675; p < 0.001; KP9: p = 0.003; KP6: p = 0.016; KP13: p = 0.023), overt appearance (PN8: p = 0.024), and group adjustment (PDK3: p = 0.027), with SMP students consistently scoring higher. These findings suggest that what distinguishes the two groups is not explicit social behavior, but rather the subjective experience of satisfaction and self-confidence in social interactions. The practical

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implication of this research calls for differentiated guidance and counseling services based on students' educational track, employing expressive-creative intervention approaches suited to the tendency of santri to struggle with verbalizing their social experiences.

Keywords: social adjustment; new students; Islamic boarding school; SMP; MTs; guidance and counselling

INTRODUCTION

The ability to adjust socially is an important predictor of psychological well-being and academic success among adolescents living in boarding environments. A cross-country study by Mualifah et al. (2019) on students at Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia found that peer support significantly moderates the relationship between perseverance (grit) and student adjustment, indicating that the quality of social relationships is a key factor determining adolescent adaptation in residential settings. Putrianfi et al. (2025) also found that perceived stress mediates the relationship between sense of school belonging and social adjustment among Grade 7 pesantren students, meaning that adolescents who have not yet established social bonds early in their stay face a higher risk of psychological distress. At the national scale, the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (2024) recorded more than 42,000 active Islamic boarding schools with nearly 11 million santri, making pesantren one of the largest residential education ecosystems in the world. This positions the social adjustment of new santri as an issue with broad implications for the well-being of millions of Indonesian adolescents, and is simultaneously relevant to the SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) and SDG 4 (Quality Education) agendas, which emphasize the importance of supportive and inclusive learning environments for all students.

New santri entering a pesantren face layered and simultaneous demands of adaptation. Unlike ordinary school transitions, the transition to pesantren requires santri to simultaneously manage separation from family, build new social relationships, comply with a strict system of rules, and internalize pesantren cultural values, all within a completely new environment (Fadlilah & Amin, 2020; Setiani et al., 2021). Salsabillah & Laily (2025)empirically demonstrated that peer interaction significantly influences the social adjustment of new SMP santri, while Zahlia et al. (2023) showed that santri social adjustment is determined by the effectiveness of responding to social realities and relationships in the boarding context. Adjustment barriers that are not facilitated from the outset have been proven to impact reduced social engagement, increased rule violations, emotional isolation, and an increasing desire to leave the pesantren before completing

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studies (Fadlilah & Amin, 2020). A preliminary study at Pondok Pesantren Putri Sunan Drajat confirmed this phenomenon: interviews with peer counselors (May 2026) and dormitory supervisors (June 2026) revealed that new SMP and MTs santri exhibit barriers such as withdrawal behavior, intense homesickness, difficulty building new social relationships, and a tendency to suppress problems without seeking support even among santri who were categorically assessed as having high social adjustment scores.

Research on social adjustment of santri in pesantren has developed over the past decade, but significant theoretical and empirical gaps remain. Most existing studies examine social adjustment of santri as a dependent variable influenced by a single factor such as independence (Setiani et al., 2021), emotional intelligence (Sutiarso et al., 2022), or peer interaction (Salsabillah & Laily, 2025) without differentiating subject characteristics based on educational track. Yet, within a single pesantren environment, santri may come from different educational tracks: MTs (based on the Ministry of Religious Affairs curriculum) and SMP (based on the national general curriculum), which structurally have different academic cultures, socialization backgrounds, and institutional demands. These educational track differences potentially produce different social adjustment profiles, yet to date no study has systematically examined these differences comparatively in the context of an Islamic boarding school for girls. This gap forms the primary basis and justification for this research.

This study offers novelty at three levels simultaneously. Theoretically, this research extends the use of Hurlock (1978) social adjustment framework, encompassing aspects of overt appearance, adjustment to social groups, social attitudes, and personal satisfaction, in the context of Islamic residential education in Indonesia, by considering the educational track variable as a differentiation factor that has been previously overlooked. Methodologically, this research employs a comparative design that enables more precise identification of social adjustment profile differences compared to the single-descriptive studies that dominate the pesantren literature. Practically, the research findings can serve as an empirical database for peer counselors, dormitory supervisors, and pesantren administrators in designing more targeted and differentiated mentoring services according to the educational level of santri. This contribution aligns with the agenda for character education development and student psychological well-being embedded in the Merdeka Belajar policy and the 21st-century education framework in Indonesia.

Based on the identification of research gaps above, this study aims to describe and analyze differences in social adjustment between new SMP and MTs santri at Pondok Pesantren Putri Sunan Drajat across four dimensions: overt appearance in interaction, adjustment to social

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groups, social attitudes, and personal satisfaction. The research findings are expected to produce a comparative profile that can be used as a basis for developing guidance and counseling services, carried out by peer counsellors, that are contextual, responsive to the diversity of educational tracks, and contribute to strengthening the psychosocial ecosystem of the pesantren environment.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional comparative design conducted at Pondok Pesantren Putri Sunan Drajat, Lamongan, East Java. The research population consisted of all new female santri from SMP and MTs tracks in the 2025/2026 academic year (N = 158), employing total sampling so that the entire population served as respondents. Of the 158 questionnaires distributed, 145 data were declared valid (response rate of 91.1%), while 10 data were excluded due to incomplete responses. Inclusion criteria included status as a new santri who had completed their first year, enrollment in the SMP or MTs track, and willingness to participate voluntarily.

Social adjustment was measured using a scale adapted from Ni'mah, (2016) based on Hurlock (1978) framework, encompassing four dimensions: overt appearance in social interaction, adjustment to social groups, social attitudes, and personal satisfaction, with a four-point Likert scale response format. The instrument had been validated using Pearson product-moment correlation ($r \geq 0.30$) and tested for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha = 0.860$, categorized as very high). Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics and comparative tests (Independent Samples t-test or Mann-Whitney U depending on the results of normality and homogeneity assumption tests), with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ and Cohen's d effect size. All research procedures were carried out in accordance with ethical principles, including official pesantren permission, informed consent, and confidentiality of respondent identities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study examined social adjustment of new santri at two educational units within Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat, namely MTs santri at Al Masyitoh dormitory (N = 75) and SMP santri at Al Aisyah dormitory (N = 70), with a total of 145 respondents. The instrument used consisted of 42 items measuring four dimensions of social adjustment based on Hurlock (1978) theory: (1) Overt Appearance (PN), (2) Adjustment to Social Groups (PDK), (3) Social Attitudes (SS), and (4) Personal Satisfaction (KP). Prior to comparative analysis, prerequisite tests were

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conducted including normality and homogeneity tests, the results of which determined the selection of subsequent statistical tests among Independent Samples t-test, Welch's Test, or Mann-Whitney U Test.

The results of comparative testing for each item will be presented based on statistical assumption tests covering normality of data distribution and homogeneity of variance between groups. These assumption test results determine the selection of the most appropriate statistical test for each item, namely Independent t-test, Welch's t-test, or Mann-Whitney U. A summary of statistical test selection is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Statistical Test Selection Based on Normality and Homogeneity

Item	Normality	Homogeneity	Test Used	Result
PN1–PN7, PN9	Non-normal	Homogeneous	Mann-Whitney U	No significant difference
PN8	Normal	Homogeneous	Independent t-test	Significant diff. (p = 0.024)
PDK1, PDK2, PDK4, PDK5, PDK7	Non-normal	Homogeneous	Mann-Whitney U	No significant difference
PDK3	Normal	Non-homogeneous	Welch's Test	Significant diff. (p = 0.027)
PDK6	Normal	Homogeneous	Independent t-test	Borderline (p = 0.051*)
SS1–SS11	Non-normal	Homogeneous	Mann-Whitney U	No significant difference
KP2–KP5, KP7–KP8, KP10–KP12, KP14–KP15	Non-normal	Homogeneous	Mann-Whitney U	No significant difference
KP1	Normal	Non-homogeneous	Welch's Test	Significant diff. (p < 0.001***)
KP6	Normal	Non-homogeneous	Welch's Test	Significant diff. (p = 0.016)
KP9	Normal	Non-homogeneous	Welch's Test	Significant diff. (p = 0.003**)

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KP13	Normal	Non-homogeneous	Welch's Test	Significant diff. (p = 0.023)

Based on Table 1, the majority of items did not meet the normality assumption and were therefore analyzed using the Mann-Whitney U test. Items PN8 and PDK6 met the normality and variance homogeneity assumptions and were analyzed using the independent t-test. Meanwhile, five items (PDK3, KP1, KP6, KP9, KP13) met the normality assumption but showed variance heterogeneity, and were therefore analyzed using Welch's t-test, which is more robust to violations of the homogeneity assumption.

The Mann-Whitney U test was used to compare score distributions between MTs and SMP groups on items that did not meet the normality assumption. Of all items analyzed using this test, the majority showed no significant differences ($p > 0.05$), indicating response equivalence between the two groups across the Overt Appearance (PN), Group Adjustment (PDK), Social Attitudes (SS), and Personal Satisfaction (KP) dimensions. Items showing significant differences are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Mann-Whitney U Test Results on Items Showing Significant Differences

Item	Mann-Whitney U	Z	Sig. (2-tailed)	Conclusion
PN8	2,078.0	-2.313	0.021	Significant difference between groups
PDK3	2,110.0	-2.307	0.021	Significant difference between groups
PDK6	2,147.0	-2.124	0.034	Significant difference between groups
KP1	1,709.5	-3.900	< 0.001	Highly significant difference between groups
KP6	2,072.5	-2.365	0.018	Significant difference between groups
KP9	1,949.5	-2.928	0.003	Significant difference between groups
KP13	2,146.0	-2.060	0.039	Significant difference between groups

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The results in Table 2 show that item KP1 had the most pronounced difference between the MTs and SMP groups, with a Z value of -3.900 and significance $p < 0.001$. Significant differences were also found in items PN8, PDK3, PDK6, KP6, KP9, and KP13. Overall, the differences between groups were most concentrated in the Personal Satisfaction (KP) dimension, indicating variation in the subjective experience of personal competence between new santri from MTs and SMP backgrounds.

The Independent t-test was applied to two items meeting the normality and variance homogeneity assumptions, namely PN8 and PDK6. In addition to statistical significance values, Cohen's d was calculated to measure the effect size of between-group differences. Complete results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Independent t-Test Results and Effect Size (Cohen's d)

Item	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Cohen's d	Effect Size Interpretation
PN8	-2.280	143	0.024	-0.379	Small–medium: difference exists, effect not large
PDK6	-1.969	143	0.051*	-0.327	Small: effect not practically strong

Item PN8 showed a statistically significant difference ($t = -2.280$; $p = 0.024$) with a small-to-medium effect size ($d = -0.379$). This result indicates that although the between-group difference is statistically apparent, its magnitude is not yet large in practical terms. Item PDK6 was on the threshold of significance ($p = 0.051$), with a small effect size ($d = -0.327$), so caution is needed in drawing conclusions from this item. The 95% confidence interval for PDK6 includes zero, indicating that the observed difference cannot be consistently confirmed.

For items meeting the normality assumption but not meeting the variance homogeneity assumption, Welch's t-test was used as a more reliable alternative to the standard t-test. Analysis results for these five items are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Welch's t-Test Results on Items with Non-Homogeneous Variance

Item	Welch Statistic	Sig.	Interpretation
PDK3	4.979	0.027	Significant mean difference between groups
KP1	18.675	< 0.001	Highly significant mean difference between groups
KP6	5.932	0.016	Significant mean difference between groups

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KP9	8.826	0.003	Significant mean difference between groups
KP13	5.269	0.023	Significant mean difference between groups

Table 4 shows that all items analyzed using Welch's t-test showed significant differences between MTs and SMP groups. Item KP1 had the highest statistical value (W = 18.675; $p < 0.001$), indicating a very strong difference in a specific personal satisfaction aspect. Item KP9 also showed high significance ($p = 0.003$), while PDK3, KP6, and KP13 were at $p < 0.05$ significance levels. These findings confirm that the Personal Satisfaction (KP) dimension is the most differentiating dimension between MTs and SMP groups in the context of social adjustment in the pesantren environment.

Instrument validity testing was conducted to determine whether each item in the social adjustment scale was able to accurately measure the intended construct. Item validity was analyzed using Pearson product-moment correlation through SPSS, comparing the corrected item-total correlation value (r_o) of each item against the r-table value. With N = 145 respondents, the r-table value at significance level $\alpha = 0.05$ (two-tailed) with df = 143 was 0.163. As an additional criterion commonly used in psychological and educational instrument development, an item is considered valid if it has a corrected item-total correlation value ≥ 0.30 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994) . The instrument tested was a social adjustment scale consisting of 42 items covering four dimensions: Overt Appearance (PN), Group Participation (PDK), Social Approval (SS), and Conformity/Participation (KP).

Analysis results for the Overt Appearance (PN) dimension consisting of 9 items showed that only 4 items met validity criteria. Items PN2, PN3, PN4, and PN6 were declared valid with corrected item-total correlation values of 0.470, 0.453, 0.449, and 0.305 respectively. Meanwhile, five other items, PN1 (r = 0.196), PN5 (r = 0.155), PN7 (r = 0.193), PN8 (r = 0.241), and PN9 (r = 0.249), were rejected because their correlation values were below the threshold of 0.30. The high proportion of rejected items in this dimension indicates the need to review item wording to better operationally reflect aspects of social environment recognition.

In the Group Participation (PDK) dimension consisting of 7 items, 5 items were declared valid and 2 were rejected. Items PDK1, PDK3, PDK5, PDK6, and PDK7 were declared valid with corrected item-total correlation values of 0.346, 0.430, 0.478, 0.362, and 0.308 respectively. Item PDK5 showed the highest correlation value in this dimension (r = 0.478), indicating that this item is most representative in measuring social participation within groups. Items PDK2 (r = 0.199) and PDK4 (r = 0.280) were rejected for not meeting the minimum criteria, consistent with findings

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from prior inter-item correlation matrix analysis where PDK2 showed only three significant correlations with other items.

The Social Approval (SS) dimension demonstrated the best validity consistency, with all 11 items (SS1 through SS11) declared valid. Corrected item-total correlation values in this dimension ranged from 0.302 (SS5) to 0.451 (SS2). Item SS2 had the highest item-total correlation in the entire scale (r = 0.451), indicating that this item is most representative in measuring the social approval construct. The average item-total correlation for the SS dimension of 0.367 reflects good and consistent psychometric quality across all dimension indicators.

In the Conformity/Participation (KP) dimension consisting of 15 items, 12 items were declared valid and 3 were rejected. Valid items include KP1 (r = 0.420), KP2 (r = 0.302), KP3 (r = 0.351), KP5 (r = 0.368), KP6 (r = 0.400), KP7 (r = 0.416), KP9 (r = 0.427), KP11 (r = 0.334), KP12 (r = 0.360), KP13 (r = 0.384), KP14 (r = 0.376), and KP15 (r = 0.318). Item KP1 showed the highest value in this dimension (r = 0.420). Items KP4 (r = 0.259), KP8 (r = 0.239), and KP10 (r = 0.235) were rejected. Despite the three rejected items, representation of the KP dimension construct remains well-maintained given the availability of 12 valid items that still cover various indicators of social conformity.

Overall, of the 42 items tested, 30 items were declared valid and 12 were rejected. The distribution of valid items across each dimension is 4 items (PN), 5 items (PDK), 11 items (SS), and 12 items (KP). This selected instrument can subsequently be used in measuring social adjustment with reference to these 30 valid items. The overall Cronbach's Alpha value before item elimination was α = 0.860, categorized as good reliability based on the classification by George and Mallery (2003). This value indicates that the instrument has adequate internal consistency for use in guidance and counseling research, particularly in the context of measuring social adjustment of new santri in the pesantren environment.

Table 5. Item Validity Test Results of the Social Adjustment Scale (N = 145)

No.	Code	Dimension	Corrected r Item-Total	α if Item Deleted	r table (α=0.05)	Decision
1	**PN1**	Overt Appearance	0.196	0.859	0.163	**Rejected**
2	**PN2**	Overt Appearance	0.470	0.856	0.163	**Valid**

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No.	Code	Dimension	Corrected r Item-Total	α if Item Deleted	r table (α=0.05)	Decision
3	**PN3**	Overt Appearance	0.453	0.854	0.163	**Valid**
4	**PN4**	Overt Appearance	0.449	0.855	0.163	**Valid**
5	**PN5**	Overt Appearance	0.155	0.861	0.163	**Rejected**
6	**PN6**	Overt Appearance	0.305	0.858	0.163	**Valid**
7	**PN7**	Overt Appearance	0.193	0.861	0.163	**Rejected**
8	**PN8**	Overt Appearance	0.241	0.860	0.163	**Rejected**
9	**PN9**	Overt Appearance	0.249	0.860	0.163	**Rejected**
10	**PDK1**	Group Adjustment	0.346	0.857	0.163	**Valid**
11	**PDK2**	Group Adjustment	0.199	0.861	0.163	**Rejected**
12	**PDK3**	Group Adjustment	0.430	0.855	0.163	**Valid**
13	**PDK4**	Group Adjustment	0.280	0.858	0.163	**Rejected**
14	**PDK5**	Group Adjustment	0.478	0.854	0.163	**Valid**
15	**PDK6**	Group Adjustment	0.362	0.857	0.163	**Valid**
16	**PDK7**	Group Adjustment	0.308	0.858	0.163	**Valid**
17	**SS1**	Social Attitudes	0.356	0.857	0.163	**Valid**
18	**SS2**	Social Attitudes	0.451	0.854	0.163	**Valid**
19	**SS3**	Social Attitudes	0.336	0.857	0.163	**Valid**

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No.	Code	Dimension	Corrected r Item-Total	α if Item Deleted	r table (α=0.05)	Decision
20	**SS4**	Social Attitudes	0.436	0.855	0.163	**Valid**
21	**SS5**	Social Attitudes	0.302	0.858	0.163	**Valid**
22	**SS6**	Social Attitudes	0.391	0.856	0.163	**Valid**
23	**SS7**	Social Attitudes	0.322	0.857	0.163	**Valid**
24	**SS8**	Social Attitudes	0.342	0.857	0.163	**Valid**
25	**SS9**	Social Attitudes	0.317	0.858	0.163	**Valid**
26	**SS10**	Social Attitudes	0.342	0.857	0.163	**Valid**
27	**SS11**	Social Attitudes	0.361	0.857	0.163	**Valid**
28	**KP1**	Personal Satisfaction	0.420	0.855	0.163	**Valid**
29	**KP2**	Personal Satisfaction	0.302	0.858	0.163	**Valid**
30	**KP3**	Personal Satisfaction	0.351	0.857	0.163	**Valid**
31	**KP4**	Personal Satisfaction	0.259	0.859	0.163	**Rejected**
32	**KP5**	Personal Satisfaction	0.368	0.856	0.163	**Valid**
33	**KP6**	Personal Satisfaction	0.400	0.856	0.163	**Valid**
34	**KP7**	Personal Satisfaction	0.416	0.856	0.163	**Valid**
35	**KP8**	Personal Satisfaction	0.239	0.859	0.163	**Rejected**
36	**KP9**	Personal Satisfaction	0.427	0.855	0.163	**Valid**
37	**KP10**	Personal Satisfaction	0.235	0.859	0.163	**Rejected**
38	**KP11**	Personal Satisfaction	0.334	0.857	0.163	**Valid**

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No.	Code	Dimension	Corrected r Item-Total	α if Item Deleted	r table (α=0.05)	Decision
39	**KP12**	Personal Satisfaction	0.360	0.857	0.163	**Valid**
40	**KP13**	Personal Satisfaction	0.384	0.856	0.163	**Valid**
41	**KP14**	Personal Satisfaction	0.376	0.856	0.163	**Valid**
42	**KP15**	Personal Satisfaction	0.318	0.858	0.163	**Valid**

Reliability testing was conducted on the entire Social Adjustment Scale instrument consisting of 42 items using Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency method. Reliability analysis results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Reliability Analysis Results of the Social Adjustment Scale

Statistic	Value	Interpretation
Cronbach's Alpha	0.860	Excellent reliability (α > 0.800)
Number of Items	42 items	All items retained
Corrected Item-Total Correlation	0.155–0.478	All items > 0.150 (above minimum threshold)
Alpha if Item Deleted	< 0.861	Deletion of any item does not meaningfully improve reliability
Items of Special Concern	PN5 (r=0.155), PN7 (r=0.193)	Lowest correlations; to reconsider if cut-off is raised

Based on Table 6, a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.860 was obtained, categorized as excellent reliability (α > 0.800). This value indicates that the instrument has high internal consistency and is suitable for use as a reliable measure of social adjustment. Item-Total Statistics analysis results show that corrected item-total correlation values for all items are above the minimum threshold of 0.150, with most items having adequate correlation to the total scale score. The Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted column confirms that the deletion of any item would not meaningfully improve reliability, so all 42 items are recommended to be retained. Nevertheless, items PN5 (r =

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0.155) and PN7 (r = 0.193) have relatively low item-total correlations and should be noted if researchers apply a stricter correlation cut-off (e.g., r > 0.200 or r > 0.250).

SPECIFIC DIFFERENCES: OVERT APPEARANCE, GROUP ADJUSTMENT, AND PERSONAL SATISFACTION

The findings of this study indicate that significant differences between new SMP and MTs santri are not evenly distributed across all dimensions of social adjustment, but are concentrated in three specific areas: overt appearance in interaction (PN8), adaptation in new groups (PDK3), and personal satisfaction (KP1, KP6, KP9, KP13). This concentration pattern is theoretically interesting because all three relate to the internal and subjective dimensions of social adjustment, rather than to explicitly visible social behavior. Hurlock (1978) himself emphasized that healthy social adjustment is not merely about behavioral conformity, but also encompasses how individuals experience personal satisfaction in the process of interacting with their social environment. Research by Triyuliasari & Mubarok (2024) at Pondok Modern Darul Hikmah reinforces this argument, finding that self-regulation and religiosity simultaneously contributed 32.1% to the self-adjustment of female santri, confirming that internal dimensions such as self-control and internalization of values are strong predictors of adjustment in the pesantren environment. Therefore, the finding that the most prominent differences emerge in the personal satisfaction (KP) dimension, rather than the more behavioral social attitudes (SS) dimension, indicates that what differentiates SMP and MTs santri is how they experience their social experiences, not merely how they behave in social interactions.

SMP santri residing at Al Aisyah dormitory consistently showed higher scores on items related to personal satisfaction and self-confidence in new social interactions. One hypothesis that can be proposed is that the SMP educational background based on the national general curriculum shapes a different socialization experience from MTs. Structurally, MTs operates under the Ministry of Religious Affairs with a curriculum that integrates Islamic values more deeply, while SMP places greater emphasis on mastery of science, mathematics, and English, this difference in academic orientation potentially produces different socialization profiles as well. SMP santri may have been accustomed to more heterogeneous and open environments, so that when entering the pesantren, they integrate new social norms more flexibly without experiencing significant dissonance between their old identity and the demands of the new environment. This is consistent with the finding that children who are accustomed to parental assistance and then must live independently in pesantren require a strong adaptation process, and the success of this process

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is largely determined by the psychological readiness built before entering the new environment (Zaini, 2025).

An equally important alternative hypothesis relates to the effectiveness of orientation programs in each dormitory. Supportive peer support has been proven to provide a sense of security, comfort, and self-confidence that helps santri adapt, so differences in the quality of orientation and social development programs between Al Aisyah (SMP) and Al Masyitoh (MTs) dormitories potentially produce different personal satisfaction profiles. If Al Aisyah dormitory has more structured ta'aruf programs, peer counselor mentoring, or group activities, it would be understandable for SMP santri to experience faster personal satisfaction development in the early period of residence. Ramadhan & Fauziah (2025), in their study on adolescent adjustment in modern pesantren, found that the process of building social relationships in the first year is strongly influenced by the availability of institutionally facilitated social spaces, not solely by the individual capacities of santri. The implication is that differences in personal satisfaction scores between SMP and MTs do not necessarily reflect better psychological capacity, but may rather reflect differences in the quality of the social ecosystem formed by each respective dormitory.

The concentration of differences in the Personal Satisfaction (KP) dimension, particularly item KP1 with the most prominent statistical value ($W = 18.675$; $p < 0.001$), can also be explained through the framework of expectation-reality fit. Qualitative studies on social adjustment of new santri show that santri tend to find adjustment difficult only in the early period of entering the dormitory, and the key to successful social adjustment lies in the ability to build good relationships with the environment, both with fellow new santri, supervisors, and the surrounding community. SMP santri who are approximately the same age as MTs santri but have different socialization backgrounds may arrive with more realistic expectations toward dormitory life because they have previously been exposed to more varied information or social experiences. In this context, self-identity strengthening (selfhood) through value-based programs has been proven effective as a relevant psychoeducation model for pesantren santri, indicating that santri with a more solid identity foundation will more easily find personal satisfaction in the process of their social adjustment (Hasanah, 2024; Saputra et al., 2025).

One important methodological note is that most items in the Overt Appearance (PN) and Social Attitudes (SS) dimensions showed no significant differences between the two groups. This is actually a socially meaningful finding: at the level of explicit and visible social adjustment, such as how they participate in groups, display socially accepted attitudes, or follow interaction norms in the pesantren environment, SMP and MTs santri are essentially at the same level. Pesantren as

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a social institution has norm internalization mechanisms that work through social interaction among santri, where imitation of senior behavior, identification with pesantren values, and the growth of sympathy and empathy form harmonious relationship patterns and become a vehicle for collective character development. This equivalence in the social behavior dimension indicates that pesantren successfully creates a social ecosystem strong enough to homogenize the social appearance of new santri from different educational tracks in a relatively short time. Programs involving the role of dormitory guardians (wali asuh), such as routine activities, cleaning duty, and community service, have been proven to be effective instruments in shaping santri social behavior equally, because active involvement of dormitory guardians encourages santri to participate in group life equally regardless of their educational background (Efendi et al., 2024; Siregar et al., 2025).

What distinguishes SMP and MTs santri does not lie in what they do socially, but rather in how they subjectively experience the process of social adjustment, how satisfied, comfortable, and confident they are in conducting social life in the pesantren. In Hurlock's (1978) framework, this is what is called personal satisfaction as a critical component of healthy social adjustment: a santri may appear to adjust socially from the outside, following group norms and participating in collective activities, yet internally has not found peace, acceptance, and satisfaction with the quality of social relationships they have built. This gap between social appearance and subjective experience is precisely what appeared in the preliminary study at Pondok Pesantren Putri Sunan Drajat: santri who were categorically assessed as having high social adjustment scores still tended to suppress experiences and difficulties without seeking support. This finding aligns with the results of studies on personal-social guidance and counseling services in pesantren, which confirm that social adjustment of santri cannot be adequately measured from explicit behavior alone, but must encompass deeper relational dimensions: skills in building meaningful social relationships, acceptance by the group, and satisfaction with the quality of interactions experienced (Risnawanti & Mohammad, 2022).

The challenge faced by counselors in the pesantren environment is that most new santri, particularly early adolescents who are living away from family for the first time, do not yet have adequate capacity for verbalizing feelings. They tend to be silent not because they do not feel social pressure, but because they do not know how to express it in the formal interaction context with counselors or dormitory supervisors. This condition makes conventional approaches such as direct verbal counseling suboptimal as a sole strategy. Art-based and creative expression interventions have been proven highly beneficial for introspection and emotional expression in

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adolescents who do not yet have sufficient vocabulary to describe their feelings verbally, while also facilitating communication for those who have difficulty conveying thoughts and feelings orally. Therefore, the appropriate social adjustment intervention design for new santri at both levels is an expressive-creative intervention, one that provides space for expressing social experiences through non-verbal or semi-verbal mediums that are psychologically safer (Léger-Goodes et al., 2024).

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

From a critical methodological perspective, several matters warrant attention. First, the effect of unbalanced sample size. MTs santri had 75 respondents while SMP santri had only 70. Although the difference is small, this imbalance can affect the sensitivity of statistical tests, particularly in the use of Mann-Whitney U.Second, the use of three different test types on a single instrument. While this decision was based on legitimate prerequisite test results, the use of three different types of tests in a single comparative study increases the risk of alpha inflation (Type I error inflation). Bonferroni or Holm correction is required if interpretation is performed simultaneously across 42 tests, where the corrected significance threshold becomes $\alpha/42 \approx 0.0012$. Third, anonymity of covariate variables. The analysis performed was purely bivariate without considering covariate variables such as santri age, region of origin, prior pesantren experience, or family characteristics. These variables potentially serve as confounding factors that explain the observed differences.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to describe and analyze differences in social adjustment between new SMP and MTs santri at Pondok Pesantren Putri Sunan Drajat across four dimensions: overt appearance in interaction, adjustment to social groups, social attitudes, and personal satisfaction. Based on all analysis results and discussion, there are two main conclusions that complement each other.First, overall, both groups of santri show substantially similar social adjustment profiles. A total of 85.7% of instrument items did not produce significant differences between MTs and SMP santri, with an average combined score of 78.32% indicating good social adjustment in both groups. This similarity is most consistently seen in the Social Attitudes (SS) dimension, where all 11 items showed no meaningful differences between groups. This finding reflects the strength of the pesantren social ecosystem as a leveling field that is able to homogenize the social behavior of santri from different educational backgrounds through communal routines, shared norms, and

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value internalization mechanisms that apply equally to all new santri.

Second, despite this, significant differences were still found in dimensions that are internal and subjective in nature. These differences are concentrated in the Personal Satisfaction (KP) dimension, particularly in items KP1 ($W = 18.675$; $p < 0.001$), KP9 ($p = 0.003$), KP6 ($p = 0.016$), and KP13 ($p = 0.023$), as well as in overt appearance item PN8 ($p = 0.024$) and group adjustment PDK3 ($p = 0.027$). SMP santri consistently showed higher scores on these items compared to MTs santri. This pattern indicates that what differentiates the two groups is not what they do socially, but rather how they experience satisfaction, comfort, and self-confidence in the process of social interaction in the pesantren. These differences are presumed to be influenced by differences in pre-pesantren socialization backgrounds between SMP and MTs tracks, differences in the quality of the social ecosystem between dormitories, and different psychological readiness in integrating pesantren social norms into personal identity.

These findings have significant practical implications for guidance and counseling services in pesantren. Peer counselors and dormitory supervisors need to be aware that a quantitatively high social adjustment score does not guarantee satisfaction and inner peace for santri in conducting their social life, as confirmed in the preliminary study at Pondok Pesantren Putri Sunan Drajat. Therefore, mentoring services need to be designed in a differentiated manner: for MTs santri, the priority of intervention is directed toward strengthening social confidence and affirming the role of self within the group; while for SMP santri, the focus of mentoring needs to consolidate the social satisfaction that has already formed so that it becomes deeper and more resilient. Given that most new santri at both levels do not yet have adequate capacity for verbalizing feelings, the most appropriate interventions are expressive-creative in nature, providing a safe space for expressing social experiences without having to overcome verbal barriers.

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