

**SOCIAL SUPPORT, SELF ESTEEM, AND ADJUSTMENT AMONG THE FIRST  
GRADE STUDENTS IN ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS**

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**ABSTRACT**

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This study is aimed to examine the relationship between social support dimensions, self esteem and adjustment among the first grade students in Islamic boarding school in Aceh. The study also examined the contribution of social support dimensions and self esteem on adjustment. The study investigated whether there are differences in adjustment among the first grade students by gender and location of origin. The research methodology is based on survey which involved 204 respondents from three Islamic boarding schools that were selected through stratified and simple random sampling. The instruments used in this study are the Child and Adolescent Social Support Scale (CASSS), Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (RSES), and Student Adjustment Scale (SAS). Data was analyzed using mean, standard deviation, frequency, percentage, simple regression, stepwise regression, and independent *t*-test. The findings of the study show that the relationship between social support dimensions, self esteem, and adjustment were moderate. The study also found that classmate support were found to be the strongest predictors to adjustment. In addition, there were no significant difference in adjustment among the first grade students by gender and location of origin. Implication for family, teacher, school and on future research are discussed. Schools, teachers and family need to be aware of relationship among some of variables examined in the present study. Therefore, the first grade students can make good adjustment in the school environment.



**SOKONGAN SOSIAL, ESTIM KENDIRI, DAN PENYESUAIAN DALAM  
KALANGAN PELAJAR GRED PERTAMA DI SEKOLAH BERASRAMA  
PENUH AGAMA**

**ABSTRAK**

Kajian ini meneliti hubungan antara dimensi sokongan sosial, estim sendiri, dan penyesuaian dalam kalangan pelajar gred pertama di sekolah berasrama penuh agama di Aceh. Kajian ini juga meneliti sumbangan dimensi sokongan sosial dan estim sendiri dalam penyesuaian. Kajian ini melihat perbezaan dalam penyesuaian di kalangan pelajar gred pertama mengikut jantina dan lokasi asal. Metodologi kajian adalah berdasarkan tinjauan yang melibatkan 204 responden dari tiga buah sekolah berasrama penuh agama yang dipilih melalui persampelan rawak berstrata dan mudah. Instrumen yang digunakan dalam kajian ini adalah *the Child and Adolescent Social Support Scale* (CASSS), *Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale* (RSES), and *Student Adjustment Scale* (SAS). Data dianalisis menggunakan min, sisihan piawai, kekerapan, peratusan, regresi, regresi *stepwise*, dan ujian-*t*. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa hubungan antara dimensi sokongan sosial, harga diri, dan penyesuaian adalah sederhana. Kajian ini juga mendapati bahawa sokongan rakan sekelas didapati menjadi peramal yang paling kuat untuk penyesuaian. Di samping itu, tidak ada perbezaan yang signifikan dalam penyesuaian di kalangan pelajar gred pertama mengikut jantina dan lokasi asal. Implikasi untuk keluarga, guru, sekolah dan penyelidikan masa depan dibincangkan. Sekolah, guru, dan keluarga perlu menyedari tentang hubungan antara beberapa pembolehubah yang dikaji dalam kajian ini. Oleh itu, pelajar gred pertama boleh membuat penyesuaian dalam persekitaran sekolah.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CASSS	Child and Adolescent Social Support Scale
<i>df</i>	Degree of freedom
M	Sample mean
MSPSS	Multi Dimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support
N	Population size
n	Sample size
<i>p</i>	Probability
<i>r</i>	Correlation
RSES	Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale
SAS	Student Adjustment Scale
SD	Standard deviation
Sig.	Significant
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
<i>t</i>	<i>T-test</i>

LIST OF SYMBOLS

<b>%</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>&lt;</b>	<b>Less than</b>
<b>&gt;</b>	<b>More than</b>
<b>≤</b>	<b>Equal less than</b>
<b>F</b>	<b>F distribution, Fisher’s F ration</b>
<b>r</b>	<b>Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient</b>
<b>α</b>	<b>Cronbach’s index of internal consistency</b>
<b>β</b>	<b>Population values of regression coefficients</b>
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Multiple correlation squared</b>



## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter deals with the background of study, statement of problem, research objective, research question, significance of research, conceptual and operational definition of each variable, description about the theoretical approach, conceptual framework, and hypotheses. The summary of this chapter is presented at the end of the chapter.

#### **1.1 Background of Research**

In the last decade there have been developments in the part of education, especially in relation to the establishment of boarding schools by bringing additional curriculum based on religious as well as nationalism (Maslihah, 2011). This is shown by many

parents who want their children to go to school to acquire the aspect of curriculum.

One of alternative education offered to produce quality human resources is boarding school (Kompasiana, 2011).

Islamic boarding school is a form of educational institution applies the lodge system. The education process continues over time which religion is more dominant than the school curriculum (Ismail, 2009). Islamic boarding school is not new concept in Indonesian system. Educational institutions in Indonesia present the concept of educational boarding called *Pondok Pesantren*. *Pondok Pesantren* is the beginning of a boarding school in Indonesia (Maknun, 2006). The goal of the Islamic boarding schools is trying to complete the existing system of Islamic education in Indonesia (Yuli, Haningsih, & Adikrishna, 2011).

In general, parents send their children to boarding schools because children will have a longer learning time, more focus on education, more independent and better equipped to prepare a variety of challenges (Zakiyah, Ratna, & Setyawan, 2010). Moreover, children in Islamic boarding school not only learn general concept but also religious concept of education, therefore children educate based on moral and ethical aspect of religion (Fitriah, 2013), and have a readiness to face the challenges of life in the future (Maslihah, 2011). In China, parents assume that sending their children to boarding school help them to be fully educated as well as help them to shape the quality of personality become responsible and good in the community (Ganeson, 2006).

Octyavera (2010) said that teenagers who just entering the boarding school should be able to adjust with the dorm life, however it is not easy for those teenagers. The transition from the family to the dorm environment causes a significant change for them. The changes require them to adjust, therefore they can live in the boarding school comfortably.

Furthermore, Maslihah (2011) added that students who follow the boarding school are facing the situation of separation from parents. Living apart from parents and meet new people in dormitory certainly not as easy as and demands the ability to make better adjustment in the boarding school. Then, students are not only required to adjust their social environment, but also to adjust themselves to the task of learning and school.

Change and transition are common features of life, but the process of change may have powerful negative effect on well being and health (Fisher, 1994). Because there are many unknowns to the new comer, adjusting to a new culture becomes a difficult process that can be challenging and stressful (Yusoff & Chelliah, 2010). Especially in the boarding school, the adolescents should live separately, and ready to be independent (Fitriah, 2013).

According to Handono (2013), different condition of life leads the students change and adjust to new environment, therefore it will experience a variety of problems that eventually make them stress. Usually it begins with the problems arising from the physical environment and social environment of new place such as maladjustment, trouble in getting along, hard to communicate with friends and affect



their duties and responsibilities as students. Furthermore, there were also students who have problems with the rules in the boarding school such as obeying the rules in the boarding school.

A study conducted by Sutris (2008) in Indonesia, found that almost 75% students who enter the boarding school because of the willingness of parents instead of students themselves. As a result, it takes a long time (4 months) for students to adjust and get into the concept of educational boarding integratively. Parker (2008) reported the experience of adolescent in the modernist Islamic boarding school in West Java, Indonesia. The students feel sadness, homesickness or longing, and loneliness. Students of both genders described how homesick they were at the beginning of their time at boarding school, some being still children when they left home for life in the boarding school.

A study conducted by Ak and Sayil (2006) also reported that boarding school students were the most disadvantageous group compare to students in regular school terms of behavior problems, social support, and school adjustment. Students in boarding school feel lack of emotional expression such as homesick, lonely, shy, afraid of school (Vaseth, 2010) and disruption of self concept when they entered the boarding. Based on these condition, in British parents who send children to boarding school considered as child abuse (Perveen & Kazmi, 2011).

Furthermore, Moswela (2006) also mentioned the students' discipline problems in boarding school such as lesson interruption, poor performance, stress to teachers and school authorities and physical abuse to other students. Schools, once

regarded as places of comfort, safe learning, and socialization, are increasingly becoming places in society of youth anti-social behaviour. Students have lost respect to authority, to their peers and to themselves. They also pay less value to the resources that support their learning.

Those of literatures reveal that students in boarding school who separated from their families have insufficient social support sources and negative attitudes towards schools. All of those negative factors have an impact on students' school achievements and adjustments (Kuperminc, Leadbeater, & Blatt, 2001; Levitt, Guacci-Franco & Levitt, 1994).

Every person requires social adjustment in the school environment, especially in adolescence. Ability in social adjustment in the new environment creates harmonious relationships (Maslihah, 2011). Physical, mental and emotional students are influenced by how the students are able to adjust in the environment. Students who have a good adjustment are capable of dealing with a difficult situation with positive solution (Fatimah, 2006). Otherwise, students who are not capable of adjusting in new environment, experience a lot of conflict, no longer focus, facing academic problems, and other problems beyond the academic. Furthermore, they also feel depressed and a lot of dealing with conflict of environmental demands which led to decrease students' motivation in learning and affect student learning outcomes (Zakiyah, Ratna, & Setyawan, 2010).

Aggrawal (2004) revealed the adjustment of adolescent very much depends on the fulfillment of their significant specific needs that consist of physical needs,

emotional needs, social needs, intellectual needs, moral needs and vocational needs. It may be helpful. Therefore, to devote a little more space to important qualities of adjustment. However Yusoff (2011) explains that social support is a factor that appears to improve adjustment. Social support is considered within the stress and coping framework and has been found to be an important predictor of psychological adaptation during transitions of students. Students who are capable of associating with new environment and perceive good social support make better adjustment than those who are not capable of building a new social support in environment (Enochs & Roland, 2006).

Social support has been shown to facilitate positive outcomes in a number of areas including physical and psychological well-being of individual (Beeman, 2001; Cohen, Cottlieb, & Underwood, 2001; Tardy, 1985). Chaplan (1974) showed the same result that perceived social support has been associated positively with subjective well being, mental health, and adjustment when dealing with stress, while lack of social support has been associated with mental distress and maladjustment.

Social support also related to positive adjustment to stressful life events (Brissette, Scheler, & Carver, 2002) throughout an individual's life. It is because social support contributes to individuals' ability to cope with the adverse effects of stress (Benhorin & McMahon, 2008; Bozo, Toksabai, & Kürüm, 2009). Social support may give positive outcomes and acts as a buffering or moderating factor in adolescent' adjustment. Students who have high levels of social support will be spared from negative outcomes in their lives (Cohen, Underwood, & Gottlieb, 2000). Social support influences an individual's capability in creating healthy behaviours and help

with behaviour adjustment, self control, stability feeling, improve self esteem and relief of anxiety (Langford, Bowsher, Maloney, & Lilis, 1997). Therefore, in uncertainty and psychological adjustment, social support plays an significant role (Lien, Lin, Kuo, & Chen, 2009).

For students, social support may be derived from parents, close friends, classmates, and teachers (Bokhorst, Sumter, & Westenberg, 2010). Each source of support may contribute uniquely to students' academic and socioemotional adjustment (Demaray & Malecki, 2003). Peer, parental and community supports appear to be integral aspects and predictors of personal adjustment among adolescent (Kovacev & Shute, 2004; Stoll & Johnson, 2007). While higher levels of teacher support is correlated postively with healty behaviour at school (Furlong, Chung, Bates, & Morrison, 1995).

Moreover, the levels of parent, classmate support, and close friend contibute significantly to factors such as depression, stress, adjustment, self esteem and self concept (Demaray, Malecki, Davidson, Hodgson, & Rebus, 2005). According to Druley and Townsend (1998), people who have higher level of self esteem tend to receive or perceive more social support. In other words, social support may increase person's self-esteem and may be particularly important in reducing depressive symptomatology or when dealing with a stressful situation.

Mental distress was linked negatively to self esteem, individu with higher level of self esteem, have lower level of mental distress and better in perceiving level of functioning (Lieberman, Solomon, & Ginzburg, 2005). Self esteem has been shown

associated with mental health, adjustment and contribute to resiliency (Spencer, Josephs, & Steele, 1993). Self esteem is also associated with environmental mastery, positive relationships with others, autonomy, and helpful in individual's adjustment (Wetzel, 2007)

Bektas, Demir, and Bowden (2009) explained that higher self esteem predicts greater overall psychological adaptation. Student with high level feeling of self esteem give positive affect on their adjustment experience (Rundles, 2012). Students with healthy self esteem may cope with the threats and challenges of transition and are more likely to benefit more in their academic and personal growth (Jindal-Snape & Miller, 2008). Similarly, Li Shi (2001) reported that high self esteem help the students to create positive attitudes about themselves and their new lives. Moreover, Coopersmith (1967) characterizes people with high levels of self esteem by efficient functioning, creativity, a realistic and stable awareness of their capabilities, social involvement, and advancement toward personal goals.

Otherwise, adolescents with low level of self esteem through adjustment problems in transition (DuBois & Hirsch, 2000). Low self esteem leads to maladjustment which influences to low academic achievement (Aunola, Sattin, & Nurmi, 2000). Further, Baumeister (1993) explained students who have low self esteem are tend to be more vulnerable to the threats and challenges of transition. Coopersmith (1967) indicated people with low and negative self esteem by feelings of worthlessness, inferiority, loneliness, depression, anxiety, and guilt, undermining values of achievement and personal abilities and preventing social adjustment and integration.

From the above explanation, it can be concluded that factors which affect adjustment are social support and self-esteem. Some researchs found that social support and self esteem important for adolescent's mental health. This is in accordance with that explained by Geuzaine, Debry, and Liesens (2000) that some literature has shown that the internal resource (self esteem) as well as the external resource (social support) are factors that associated to adjustment significantly.

## **1.2 Statement of Problem**

The Macquarie Dictionary defines transition as the condition where individual changes from one stage to another stage (cited in Mander, 2012). Transition is also a process of moving from known to the unknown (Green, 1997). Students experience many transitions in their life (Ganeson, 2006). Those transitions are experienced by students during the school, home to school, middle school to high school and high school to college or work (Galaway & Hudson, 1996).

The transition from primary to secondary school is a phenomenon which brings many challenges for students. This period in life sees many changes occurring; including changes in school environment and also the physical changes of adolescence. This transition is a particularly challenging time for students who leave their home in order to begin their secondary education at a boarding school (White & Boylan, 2008). Students are not only confronted with the daunting prospect of leaving their primary peer group and the culture of their primary school, they also face the

departure from their community and more importantly, their family. Therefore, the effects of this transition for such students are escalated (Downs, 2003; Vaille, Heaven & Ciarrochi, 2004).

Transitions are stressful and that they can possibly increase the risk of mental or physical disorder (Fisher, 1989). New life as students in the boarding school is a transition between living dependently to independently. Students in boarding school are required to live independent, adjust, and complete the task properly. However, sometimes the task can not be executed properly and raises some pressure and makes the students stress (Handono, 2013). Conditions far from home, parents, friends, and the tight schedule with a variety of activities make the student stress and need to adjust in order to survive and finish the education in the boarding school (Sunahwa & Warsito, 2011). Furthermore, meeting friends who may be unfamiliar and following the different rules from the previous group also bring some pressures for students (Maslihah, 2011).

Srividhya (2007) stated that entering the new group is a serious problem for adolescent, it calls for a lot of adjustment and this in turn may affect the mental health of an individual. The skill and ability of students in adjustment is very dependent on environment' aspect. Low quality in physical conditions will direct the students to maladjustment in academic and social aspects (Terry, 2002).

The transition to secondary boarding school can affect students in numerous diverse ways. The most frequently reported effects of transition on students to boarding school settings were homesickness (Perveen & Kazmi, 2011; Downs, 2003;

Kazantzis & Flett, 1998; Tilburg, Vingerhoets & Van Heck, 1996) and effect to students activities such as difficulty in concentrating in class and feeling excessive sad in the dorm (Thurber, 1999), decreased self-concept. (Downs, 2003; Mason, 1997), declines in academic achievement (Green, Martin & Marsh, 2005; Kazantzis & Flett, 1998), disrupted place identity (Downs, 2003), increase in psychological distress (Green, Martin & Marsh, 2005; Kazantzis & Flett, 1998), negative and inappropriate behaviour (Hargreaves, Earl & Ryan 1996; Howard & Johnson, 2004), and poor in forming ego identity and self esteem, and feel confused which later causes maladjustment (Schaverien, 2004).

Students in boarding school are also more susceptible to bullying than day school because spend more time in the school during the course of the school and far away from the safety of parents (Mangope, Dinama, & Kefhilwe, 2012). Bullying can occur at the boarding school school due to lack of supervision of the teacher in boarding school, the pattern of rigid discipline, and the rules which less consistent (Desiree, 2012).

However, there are also some positive influences on students who live in boarding school. Moffat (2011) described that boarding school provides a significant contribution in the development of student' mind and personality. Each student is given the opportunity to compete fairly with their friends so it provides motivation for students to get better in other areas. In addition, boarding schools creating kinship higher than public school, therefore students have a great team spirit in working together. Living in the boarding school also can expand student' mind and knowledge