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The Relationship Between Peer Social Support and Psychological Well-Being Based on Islamic Values among Islamic University Students

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Abstract

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The psychological well-being of students in Islamic higher education institutions is influenced by various social environmental factors, one of which is peer support. This study aims to analyze the relationship between peer social support and psychological well-being grounded in Islamic values among students at UIN Sunan Kudus. A quantitative correlational approach was employed, involving 100 active students selected via convenience sampling. The research instrument was developed based on a theoretical synthesis, with its quality verified through item-total correlation analysis and Cronbach's Alpha. Data were analyzed using Pearson Product-Moment correlation. The results reveal a positive and significant relationship between peer social support and psychological well-being based on Islamic values ($r = 0.528$; $p < 0.001$), with a coefficient of determination of 27.84%. Descriptively, the majority of students exhibited moderate levels of both peer support and psychological well-being. These findings underscore the importance of social bonds among peers in fostering inner peace (*tuma'ninah*), self-integration, and student solidarity (*ukhuwah*), while also serving as a reference for developing guidance and counseling programs that strengthen peer networks within higher education institutions.

[Kesejahteraan psikologis mahasiswa di lingkungan perguruan tinggi keagamaan Islam dipengaruhi oleh berbagai faktor lingkungan sosial, salah satunya dukungan rekan sebaya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis hubungan antara dukungan sosial teman sebaya (*peer support*) dengan kesejahteraan psikologis (*psychological well-being*) berdasarkan nilai-nilai Islam pada mahasiswa UIN Sunan Kudus. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif korelasional dengan melibatkan 100 mahasiswa aktif yang dipilih melalui teknik *convenience sampling*. Instrumen penelitian dikembangkan oleh peneliti berdasarkan sintesis teoritis dan diuji kualitasnya menggunakan analisis korelasi butir-total (*item-total correlation*) serta *Cronbach's Alpha*. Data dianalisis menggunakan korelasi *Pearson Product-Moment*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya hubungan positif dan signifikan antara dukungan sosial teman sebaya dengan kesejahteraan psikologis berdasarkan nilai-nilai Islam ($r = 0,528$; $p < 0,001$) dengan kontribusi koefisien determinasi sebesar 27,84%. Secara deskriptif, mayoritas mahasiswa memiliki tingkat dukungan sebaya dan kesejahteraan psikologis pada kategori sedang. Temuan ini menegaskan pentingnya keterikatan sosial antar-teman sebaya dalam menunjang ketenangan batin (*tuma'ninah*), integrasi diri, dan *ukhuwah* mahasiswa, sekaligus menjadi rujukan bagi pengembangan program bimbingan dan konseling berbasis penguatan jejaring sebaya di perguruan tinggi.]

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Introduction

Student psychological well-being has now become a crucial issue in the global higher education landscape. The transitional phase of emerging adulthood that students experience requires adaptation to a high academic load (Izzati et al., 2026), new social dynamics (Naz et al., 2024), as well as career uncertainty (Virtanen et al., 2019), thus placing this group at high vulnerability to stress, anxiety, depression, and the phenomenon of academic burnout (Zhang, 2026). In the context of global education, a conducive campus environment and a strong social support system have been shown to play a vital role in shaping mental health and a sense of belonging (Podiya et al., 2025), as well as more optimal student learning involvement (Podiya et al., 2025; Virtanen et al., 2019). In fact, a meta-analysis study confirmed that the availability of social support was significantly positively associated with students' psychological adjustment with a correlation coefficient of $r = 0.20$ (Bender et al., 2019), where the dynamics of peer support are the most dominant predictor in determining changes in an individual's psychological well-being profile (Song, 2024; Virtanen et al., 2019).

Recent literature outlines that peer social support operates comprehensively through four main dimensions: emotional, esteem, instrumental, and informational support (Azizah et al., 2025; Saad & Ali, 2025; Zhang, 2026). This mechanism is in line with the foundations of the direct-effect model, stress-buffering model, social cognitive theory (Man & Jing, 2025), and self-determination theory (Zhou et al., 2019), which places social network relations as the foundation for forming self-efficacy, motivation, and psychological adaptation capabilities (Emadpoor et al., 2016). Empirical evidence shows that peer support is positively and significantly associated with students' psychological well-being ($r = 0.585$) (Izzati et al., 2026), and predicts long-term mental health of students ($\beta = 0.33$) with 63.6% of the effect mediated by self-efficacy and social adaptation (Zhang, 2026). In fact, character strength-based peer mentoring interventions have been shown to significantly increase psychological well-being scores by up to 13.53 points (Muslikah et al., 2026).

Although the relationship between social support and psychological well-being has been extensively studied globally, a critical review of recent literature identifies three fundamental gaps requiring further investigation specifically, conceptual, contextual, and empirical gaps.

First, regarding the conceptual gap, the majority of psychological well-being (PWB) instruments in mainstream literature still rely on Western constructs that are individualistic and secular in orientation. These conventional constructs fail to accommodate spiritual-cognitive dimensions distinctive to the Islamic psychological tradition, such as inner tranquility (*tuma'ninah*), adaptive resignation (*ridha*), and moral-religious integration (Daradjat, 1988). Furthermore, previous measurements of social support have often been conceptualized in an aggregate manner conflating support from family (Arslan, 2018), lecturers/teachers (Izzati et al., 2026), and peers (Zhou et al., 2019) into a single composite score (Arslan, 2018; Zhou et al., 2019) thereby failing to isolate the independent contribution of peer support.

Second, concerning the contextual gap, studies on peer relationship dynamics and university student mental health have largely focused on secular higher education institutions (Virtanen et al., 2019) or populations within non-religious educational settings (Virtanen et al., 2019) as well as international student populations in secular countries (Berdida et al., 2023). The ecosystem of State Islamic Religious Higher Education Institutions (PTKIN), such as UIN Sunan Kudus, presents a distinctive sociocultural landscape; here, Islamic values transform friendships from mere interpersonal transactions into forms of faith-based mutual assistance (*ta'awun*) and spiritual

bonds of brotherhood (*ukhuwah*). Third, regarding the empirical gap, research set within Islamic educational institutions has thus far remained fragmented, focusing on evaluations of specific clinical interventions or analyses of inclusivity (Azizah et al., 2025; Muslikah et al., 2026); meanwhile, quantitative empirical evidence directly examining the correlation between peer support and psychological well-being grounded in Islamic values at the higher education level remains very limited. It is this tripartite gap that underscores the novelty of the present study. This research explicitly examines the relationship between peer social support and the construct of psychological well-being, which is contextually formulated through the integration of Islamic values among students at State Islamic Religious Higher Education Institutions (PTKIN).

Based on this background, the main objective of this study is to empirically analyze the relationship between peer social support and Islamic Value-Based Psychological Well-Being among students at UIN Sunan Kudus. Theoretically, this study enriches the body of Islamic psychology and Islamic counseling by emphasizing the validity of the stress-buffering model in the realm of religious spirituality.

The practical urgency of this research addresses the pressing need for religious higher education institutions to design low-cost, inclusive, and culturally appropriate psychological support systems that align with Islamic campus norms. The results are expected to provide an empirical basis for policymakers at PTKIN (Private Islamic Higher Education Institutions) in formulating peer counseling and peer mentoring programs, as well as developing a supportive academic climate to sustainably maintain students' psychological well-being and spiritual well-being.

Method

This study uses a quantitative approach with a descriptive correlational design. This design was chosen to measure, describe, and analyze the closeness and direction of the relationship between the independent variable, namely Peer Social Support (X), and the dependent variable, namely Student Psychological Well-Being Based on Islamic Values (Y). This study does not provide treatment or manipulation of the variables studied, but rather measures the empirical conditions that occur among respondents in the field.

The population for this study consisted of active undergraduate students at UIN Sunan Kudus. A non-probability sampling technique was employed specifically convenience sampling combined with specific inclusion criteria (purposive convenience sampling). The inclusion criteria were: (1) active undergraduate students (S1) at UIN Sunan Kudus currently enrolled in an even semester (4th, 6th, or 8th semester); (2) Muslim; and (3) willing to participate voluntarily by providing informed consent. Exclusion criteria applied to students on academic leave or those who did not fully complete the questionnaire.

Data collection took place between June and July 2022, resulting in a sample of N = 100 participants who met all criteria. The respondents ranged in age from 19 to 23 years and came from various study programs at UIN Sunan Kudus. Demographically, the participant group was predominantly female (76%, n = 76), with males comprising 24% (n = 24). Regarding academic standing, the respondents were distributed across the 4th semester (52%, n = 52), 8th semester (28%, n = 28), and 6th semester (20%, n = 20). In terms of living arrangements during their studies, the majority of students lived with their parents (54%, n = 54), followed by those in rented rooms or houses (34%, n = 34), dormitories or Islamic boarding schools (9%, n = 9), and other arrangements (3%, n = 3).

Primary data collection was conducted online using a non-probability sampling technique specifically, convenience sampling. A structured questionnaire served as the research instrument; it was created using Google Forms and openly distributed to the target participants via student communication channels (WhatsApp and Telegram groups) and various social media platforms, contingent upon accessibility and respondent willingness. This online approach was selected to optimize time efficiency, broaden student reach, and ensure adherence to principles of voluntary

participation and identity confidentiality (informed consent). To minimize the risk of missing data, all instrument items were configured as mandatory fields.

Data collection in this study employed two researcher-developed instruments based on an operational synthesis of relevant theoretical dimensions, using a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree. The first instrument, the Peer Social Support Scale (Variable X), measures students' perceptions of social support received from peers within the university environment. It consists of 12 statement items, including 8 favorable and 4 unfavorable items, covering four dimensions of social support based on House's (1981) theory: emotional support, which includes empathy, a sense of security, caring, and willingness to listen; esteem support, which involves appreciation, positive affirmation, and fostering self-confidence; instrumental support, which includes tangible assistance, lending facilities or study materials, and support with academic tasks; and informational support, which involves providing advice, guidance, and academic information. The second instrument, the Islamic Value-Based Psychological Well-Being Scale (Variable Y), measures students' psychological well-being from the perspectives of Islamic psychology and Islamic mental health as conceptualized by Daradjat (1988). It defines psychological well-being as a state of positive psychological functioning characterized by inner serenity, personality integrity, and a sense of meaning in life rooted in *Tawhid* (monotheistic) values. This construct is distinguished from ritual religiosity and general spiritual well-being because it emphasizes psychological well-being resulting from the internalization of Islamic values. The scale consists of 9 statement items, including 6 favorable and 3 unfavorable items, covering three main dimensions: *tuma'ninah* (inner serenity), referring to the ability to manage stress, maintain optimism, practice acceptance (*ridha*), and sustain inner calm when facing academic challenges; self-integration (*taqwa*), referring to the alignment of moral and religious beliefs with self-control and daily academic conduct; and meaning in life and harmonious relationships (*ukhuwah*), referring to perceiving the pursuit of knowledge as an act of worship and maintaining healthy and harmonious social relationships within the university environment.

Quality testing of the research instrument was conducted with 100 respondents using item validity testing via the Pearson Product-Moment item-total correlation technique and internal consistency reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha at a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ ($df = 98$, $r_{table} = 0.1966$). All negatively worded (unfavorable) items specifically items 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, and 21, underwent a reverse-scoring procedure prior to analysis. The validity test results for the Peer Support variable indicated that all 12 items were valid, with calculated correlation coefficients ($r_{calculated}$) ranging from 0.354 to 0.502 (all $r_{calculated} > 0.1966$; $p < 0.05$).

Table 1. Results of Validity Test for Variable 1: Peer Support (12 Items)

Item Number	Sifat Butir	r_count	r_table	Description
Item 1	Favorable	0.502	0.1966	Valid
Item 2	Favorable	0.391	0.1966	Valid
Item 3	Unfavorable (Reversed)	0.472	0.1966	Valid
Item 4	Favorable	0.473	0.1966	Valid
Item 5	Favorable	0.397	0.1966	Valid
Item 6	Unfavorable (Reversed)	0.394	0.1966	Valid
Item 7	Favorable	0.457	0.1966	Valid
Item 8	Favorable	0.406	0.1966	Valid
Item 9	Unfavorable (Reversed)	0.472	0.1966	Valid
Item 10	Favorable	0.354	0.1966	Valid
Item 11	Favorable	0.409	0.1966	Valid
Item 12	Unfavorable (Reversed)	0.394	0.1966	Valid

Similarly, regarding the variable of Islamic-Value-Based Psychological Well-Being among Students (items 13–21), all items (9 items) were proven valid, with calculated r-values ranging from 0.201 to 0.645 ($p < 0.05$). Consequently, all statement items (21 items) were declared valid, and no items were discarded.

Table 2. Results of Validity Test of Variable 2: Students' Psychological Well-Being Based on Islamic Values

Item Number	Sifat Butir	r_count	r_table	Description
Item 13	Favorable	0.338	0.1966	Valid
Item 14	Favorable	0.201	0.1966	Valid
Item 15	Unfavorable (Reversed)	0.416	0.1966	Valid
Item 16	Favorable	0.645	0.1966	Valid
Item 17	Favorable	0.568	0.1966	Valid
Item 18	Unfavorable (Reversed)	0.63	0.1966	Valid
Item 19	Favorable	0.223	0.1966	Valid
Item 20	Favorable	0.433	0.1966	Valid
Item 21	Unfavorable (Reversed)	0.567	0.1966	Valid

Instrument reliability was assessed using *Cronbach's Alpha* a measure of internal consistency based on the valid items. The reliability estimates yielded coefficients of 0.606 for the Peer Support variable and 0.636 for the Islamic Value-Based Psychological Well-Being variable. These values indicate a level of reliability that is marginal yet acceptable within the context of this exploratory study.

Table 3. Reliability Test (Cronbach's Alpha)

Variable Name	Number of Valid Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Standard Cut-off
Peer Support (X)	12 (All Items)	0,606	0.6
Psychological Well-Being (Y)	9 (All Items)	0,636	0.6

Data analysis in this study was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. The raw data obtained from Google Forms were first systematically cleaned, coded, and scored before being statistically processed. The analysis included descriptive statistical analysis, prerequisite testing, and hypothesis testing. Descriptive analysis was used to calculate the mean, standard deviation (SD), minimum, and maximum scores, as well as to categorize the levels of Islamic Peer Support and Psychological Well-Being into high, medium, and low categories based on the empirical mean and SD-based categorization formula. Prerequisite testing consisted of a normality test using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov or Shapiro–Wilk test, with data considered normally distributed when the p-value > 0.05 , and a linearity test using the Test for Linearity, with a linear relationship indicated when the p-value for Deviation from Linearity > 0.05 . Hypothesis testing was conducted to examine the relationship between Variables X and Y. The Pearson Product Moment correlation test was used for normally distributed data, while the Spearman Rank correlation test was used for non-normally distributed data, with a significance level of $p < 0.05$. The contribution of Variable X to Variable Y was determined using the coefficient of determination formula, $R^2 = r^2 \times 100\%$.

Result

Descriptive Analysis and Categorization of Research Data

Descriptive analysis was conducted to provide a general overview of the distribution and characteristics of empirical scores for the Peer Support (Variable X) and Islamic Value-Based Psychological Well-Being (Variable Y) variables. All instrument items used in this analysis were

proven valid based on previous construct validity testing (12 valid items for Variable X and 9 valid items for Variable Y).

Based on data collection on N = 100 respondents of UIN Sunan Kudus students, the accumulated empirical scores for the Peer Support variable have a theoretical range of 12 to 48. From the empirical data obtained, the Peer Support variable has a minimum value of 29, a maximum value of 48, an empirical average (mean) $M = 39.87$, and a standard deviation (standard deviation) $SD = 3.90$. The empirical average that is close to the maximum value indicates that in general students' perceptions of peer support are on a positive trend.

Table 4. Statistical Description of Peer Support Variables

Variables	N	Min Score	Max Score	Mean	Elementary School
<i>Peer Support</i>	100	29	48	39.87	3.90

Grouping of respondents' Peer Support levels was carried out using a standard hypothetical/empirical categorization technique divided into three levels (High, Medium, and Low) based on a normal curve ($M \pm 1 * SD$). The score cut-off limits were determined as follows:

Height: $X > M + 1 * SD \rightarrow X > 43.77$ (score ≥ 44)

Medium: $(M - 1 * SD) \leq X \leq (M + 1 * SD) \rightarrow 35.97 \leq X \leq 43.77$

Low: $X < M - 1 * SD \rightarrow X < 35.97$ (score ≤ 35)

Table 5. Frequency Distribution and Categorization of Peer Support Variables

Category	Empirical Score Norms/Range	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Tall	$X > 43.77$ (Score ≥ 44)	19	19.00%
Currently	$35.97 \leq X \leq 43.77$ (Score 36–43)	71	71.00%
Low	$X < 35.97$ (Score ≤ 35)	10	10.00%
Total	—	100	100.00%

Based on Table 5, the majority of UIN Sunan Kudus students, 71 students (71.0%) are in the Medium category. Nineteen students (19.0%) have a High level of Peer Support, and the remaining 10 students (10.0%) are in the Low category. This indicates that most respondents receive and experience adequate and proportional social support from their peer networks within their academic environment.

Meanwhile, the Islamic Value-Based Psychological Well-Being Variable was measured using 9 valid items with a theoretical score range of 9 to 36. From the results of data analysis on 100 respondents, the minimum value was 17, the maximum value was 35, the empirical mean $M = 26.39$, and the standard deviation $SD = 3.80$.

Table 6. Statistical Description of Psychological Well-Being Variables Based on Islamic Values

Variables	N	Min Score	Max Score	Average (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Psychological Well-Being	100	17	35	26.39	3.8

The categorization of the level of Psychological Well-Being Based on Islamic Values is compiled using the norm limits $M \pm 1 * SD$ as follows:

Height: $Y > M + 1 * SD \rightarrow Y > 30.19$ (score ≥ 31)

Medium: $(M - 1 * SD) \leq Y \leq (M + 1 * SD) \rightarrow 22.59 \leq Y \leq 30.19$ (score 23 - 30)

Low: $Y < M - 1 * SD \rightarrow Y < 22.59$ (score ≤ 22)

Table 7. Frequency Distribution and Categorization of Psychological Well-Being Variables Based on Islamic Values

Category	Empirical Score Norms/Range	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Tall	$Y > 30.19 (\geq 31)$	16	16.00%
Currently	$22.59 \leq Y \leq 30.19 (23-30)$	68	68.00%
Low	$Y < 22.59 (\leq 22)$	16	16.00%
Total	—	100	100.00%

Table 7 shows that the respondents' level of Islamic Value-Based Psychological Well-Being was dominated by the Medium category, with 68 students (68.0%). Meanwhile, the High and Low categories were each occupied by 16 students (16.0%). This finding indicates that most students have moderate levels of Islamic value-based psychological well-being (such as peace of mind/*tuma'ninah*), acceptance/*ridha*, and awareness of the meaning of life and worship) and are symmetrically distributed across campus.

Prerequisite Analysis Test

Before testing a regression hypothesis or parametric statistical correlation, analysis prerequisite tests are first performed. These prerequisite tests aim to ensure that the empirical data obtained meets basic assumptions, namely the assumption of normal distribution of data and the assumption of linearity of relationships between variables.

Normality Test

A normality test was conducted to determine whether the total scores for the Peer Support (Variable X) and Islamic Value-Based Psychological Well-Being (Variable Y) variables were normally distributed. The test was conducted on $N = 100$ respondents using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method and supplemented with the Shapiro-Wilk test for comparison.

The decision criteria for the normality test are if the significance value (p-value / Asymp. Sig.) > 0.05 , then the data is declared normally distributed. The results of the normality test are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Results of the Normality Test of Research Data Based on the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (Asymp. Sig. $p = 0.185 > 0.05$).

Variables	D statistics (Kolmogorov-Smirnov)	Asymp. Sig. (p)	W (Shapiro-Wilk) statistic	Sig. (p)	Information
Peer Support (X)	0.107	0.185	0.968	0.016	Normally Distributed*
Psychological Well-Being (Y)	0.071	0.671	0.988	0.533	Normally Distributed

Based on Table 1, the results of the normality test show that Variable X (Peer Support) obtained a Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistical value of $D = 0.107$ with a significance value of $p = 0.185$. Since $p = 0.185 > 0.05$, the Peer Support data are declared to be normally distributed. Meanwhile, Variable Y (Psychological Well-Being Based on Islamic Values) obtained a Kolmogorov-Smirnov statistical value of $D = 0.071$ with a significance value of $p = 0.671$. Since $p = 0.671 > 0.05$, the Psychological Well-Being Based on Islamic Values data are also declared to be normally distributed.

Thus, both research variables have fulfilled the assumption of normality distribution so that parametric statistical testing can be continued.

Linearity Test

The linearity test aims to determine whether the relationship between the independent variable (Peer Support) and the dependent variable (Psychological Well-Being Based on Islamic Values) forms a significant linear line. The test was conducted using the Test for Linearity (ANOVA) with attention to the Deviation from Linearity value.

The decision criterion for the linearity test is if the significance value in the Deviation from Linearity (p) row is > 0.05 , then the relationship between the variables is declared linear. The results of the linearity test are presented in Table 2.

Table 9. Results of Linearity Test of Variable X against Variable Y

Variable Relationship	Anova Indicator	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F hitung	Sig. (p)	Information
Y * X	Combined (Between Groups)	497,875	17	29,287	2,575	0.002	—
	Linearity	397,107	1	397,107	34,921	0	Perfect Linear
	Deviation from Linearity	100,768	16	6,298	0.554	0.909	Linear
	Within Groups (Residual)	932,475	82	11,372	—	—	—
	Total	1430.35	99	—	—	—	—

Based on Table 3.2, the significance value in the Linearity row shows $F = 34.921$ with $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$), which proves that there is a statistically significant linear relationship between Peer Support and Psychological Well-Being. The statistical value in the Deviation from Linearity row shows the calculated F value = 0.554 with a significance value of $p = 0.909$. Because the significance value of $p = 0.909 > 0.05$, it can be concluded that the relationship between the Peer Support (X) and Psychological Well-Being Based on Islamic Values (Y) variables is LINEAR.

All the results of the analysis prerequisite tests indicate that the Peer Support (X) and Islamic Value-Based Psychological Well-Being (Y) variable data are normally distributed ($p > 0.05$). The relationship between the Peer Support (X) and Islamic Value-Based Psychological Well-Being (Y) variables is proven to be linear ($p > 0.05$ in Deviation from Linearity).

By fulfilling these two prerequisite assumptions for analysis, the use of parametric statistical analysis techniques (such as Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and Simple Linear Regression) is declared appropriate and valid for use in testing research hypotheses.

Results of Hypothesis Testing of the Relationship between Peer Support and Psychological Well-Being Based on Islamic Values

Based on the results of the analysis prerequisite tests conducted previously, the total score data for the Peer Support (Variable X) and Islamic Value-Based Psychological Well-Being (Variable Y) variables were shown to be normally distributed ($p > 0.05$) and had a linear relationship ($p > 0.05$ in Deviation from Linearity). Therefore, hypothesis testing was conducted using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analysis technique (parametric statistics).

This test aims to prove whether there is a significant relationship between peer support and the psychological well-being of students based on Islamic values, while also measuring the level of closeness, direction of the relationship, and the magnitude of the contribution of variable X to variable Y. The results of the correlation analysis are presented in Table 10.

Table 10. Results of the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Test

Variables	Analysis Techniques	Correlation Coefficient (r)	p-value (Sig. 2-tailed)	Coefficient of Determination (R ²)	Hypothesis Decision
Peer Support (X) → Psychological Well-Being (Y)	Pearson Product Moment	0.528	0	27.84%	Ha Accepted (H0 Rejected)

Direction and Closeness of Relationship The results of the Pearson correlation analysis produced a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.528 with a positive value. This positive sign indicates a unidirectional relationship, meaning that the higher the Peer Support received by UIN Sunan Kudus students, the higher their Islamic Value-Based Psychological Well-Being. Based on the Guilford

correlation closeness criteria(1931), the r value = 0.528 is in the range of 0.40 - 0.599, which is categorized as a moderate / fairly strong relationship level.

Hypothesis Testing Decision The significance value (p-value / Asymp. Sig. 2-tailed) obtained is 0.000. Because the p-value <0.05, statistically H_a is ACCEPTED and H_0 is REJECTED. This finding significantly proves that there is a positive and significant relationship between Peer Support and Psychological Well-Being Based on Islamic Values in students.

The magnitude of the contribution (R^2) The coefficient of determination obtained is $R^2 = r^2 \times 100\% = (0.5276)^2 \times 100\% = 27.84\%$. This indicates that the Peer Support variable provides an effective contribution of 27.84% to the dynamics of Islamic Value-Based Psychological Well-Being in students. Meanwhile, the remaining 72.16% is explained by other factors outside the Peer Support variable that were not examined in this study (such as self-efficacy, individual religiosity, religious literacy, and socio-economic conditions).

Discussion

The Dynamics of Peer Support and Islamic Psychological Well-being in PTKIN Students

The empirical findings of this study indicate that the majority of UIN Sunan Kudus students are in the moderate category for the variables Peer Support (71.0%) and Psychological Well-Being (PWB) Based on Islamic Values (68.0%). This symmetrical normal curve distribution indicates that peer social networks and the level of religious psychological well-being in the State Islamic Religious College (PTKIN) environment are woven naturally and adequately. Substantially, the availability of four dimensions of peer support, emotional, esteem, instrumental, and informational has functioned as a basic social ecosystem that supports students' mental stability in facing academic pressures and the transition phase of early adulthood development (emerging adulthood).

The moderate level of Islamic-based PWB reflects moderate achievement in psychological aspects integrated with the domain of Islamic spirituality, including peace of mind (*tuma'ninah*), acceptance of destiny (*ridha*), and the meaning of life within the framework of worship and brotherhood. This finding aligns with the general portrait of student mental health in Islamic-based educational institutions, where religious observance and spiritual values provide a stable ontological foundation, preventing students from falling into the category of low psychological well-being (Muslikah et al., 2026; Izzati et al., 2026). This symmetrical trend emphasizes that communal spaces in PTKIN consistently provide a moderate and protective vehicle for social adaptation.

Comparatively, the profile of Islamic-based PWB at the tertiary level shows a parallel pattern but with different complex dynamics when compared to the context of secondary education or Islamic boarding schools (Azizah et al., 2025; Muslikah et al., 2026). In the total/isolated environment of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), peer interaction and internalization of religious values occur intensively and are strictly regulated 24/7. In contrast, at the tertiary level, students are faced with a more heterogeneous and autonomous social order. Therefore, the fact that the majority of students remain in the moderate to high category of Islamic PWB indicates that the internalization of the values of *ukhuwah* and *ta'awun* (mutual assistance) can still be effectively accommodated amidst the academic freedom of higher education.

Theoretical Confirmation of the Stress-Buffering Model in the Correlational Relationship of Variables

Pearson Product-Moment correlation testing demonstrated a positive and significant relationship between Peer Support and Islamic Value-Based PWB ($r = 0.528$; $p = 0.000$). This correlation coefficient indicates a moderate/fairly strong and unidirectional relationship. This means that an increase in the quality of social support received from peers is consistently accompanied by an increase in students' awareness of *tuma'ninah*, acceptance (*ridha*), and harmony in their social-spiritual interactions. This finding strongly confirms the validity of the direct-effect model and the stress-buffering model (Man & Jing, 2025; Xu & Chai, 2025) in the realm of Islamic psychology, where peers act as a protective factor that mitigates the impact of anxiety and academic stressors.

The correlation coefficient of $r = 0.528$ observed among UIN Sunan Kudus students is highly consistent with the findings of Izzati et al. (2026) regarding students at a private Islamic junior high school in Surabaya ($r = 0.585$) and significantly exceeds the global meta-analytic estimate by Bender et al. (2019) concerning the relationship between social support and psychological adjustment ($r = 0.20$). These findings indicate that the perception of peer support contributes significantly to the psychological well-being of students within the context of Islamic higher education institutions. Drawing upon Émile Durkheim's (2021) theory of mechanical solidarity and Robert D. Putnam's (2013) theory of social capital, environments characterized by shared religious values and norms have the potential to strengthen social bonds and peer empathy; however, hypotheses regarding the comparative effectiveness of religious-based versus secular institutions require further empirical validation through direct comparative studies.

This positive correlation also emphasizes that the presence of supportive peers not only touches on conventional affective aspects, but also directly strengthens the individual's spiritual dimension. When peers provide emotional support and instrumental assistance when students experience failure or stress, these interactions are not merely understood as mechanical social transactions, but rather are embodied as manifestations of Islamic brotherhood and a form of God's help through intermediaries (*ta'awun*). As a result, students more easily internalize gratitude, maintain optimism, and avoid feelings of alienation in the campus environment.

The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 27.84\%$) indicates that peer support makes an effective contribution of 27.84% to the Islamic-value-based psychological well-being (PWB) of UIN Sunan Kudus students. Meanwhile, the remaining variance of 72.16% is explained by factors outside the simple regression model used in this study (unexplained variance). Given that this study only examined a direct bivariate model, the magnitude of this unexplained variance suggests limitations in the model. Existing literature indicates that the dynamics of student psychological well-being are generally multifactorial. Previous studies show that the influence of social support on psychological well-being often operates indirectly through mediating mechanisms, such as self-efficacy (Ozer, 2022; Zhang, 2026), academic motivation (Emadpoor et al., 2016), resilience (Naz et al., 2024), and social adaptation (Zhang, 2026). Although these factors were not directly measured in the current study, the substantial residual variance underscores the need for further research to examine more comprehensive multivariate or mediation-moderation models.

In addition to mediating factors, the limitations of this direct contribution give rise to a critical discourse that peer support alone is not enough to compensate for other structural and individual factors, such as academic community ties, lecturer/supervisor guidance (Jackman et al., 2022), as well as the individual's level of internal religiosity. In the context of UIN Sunan Kudus students, external factors such as family socioeconomic conditions, understanding of inclusive religious literacy, and the dynamics of parental care also constitute substantial domains contributing to 72.16% of the variance in Islamic PWB.

The novelty of this research lies in its theoretical construction and contextualization within PTKIN students in the Central Javanese cultural region (Kudus). This contrasts with the majority of previous studies that examined Peer Support and PWB in the context of secondary Islamic boarding schools (Azizah et al., 2025; Muslikah et al., 2026) or public universities abroad (Gehreke et al., 2024; Grégoire et al., 2022). This study successfully operationalized the PWB construct, comprehensively integrated with Islamic values (such as *tuma'ninah*, *ridha*, and worship-based self-integration) at a university level. This study demonstrates that religious values rooted in the philosophy of humanizing humans and *ukhuwah* remain highly relevant and valid psychological mechanisms for strengthening the mental health of students in the modern era.

Implications suggest that these findings contribute to a new direction for the development of Islamic guidance and counseling in higher education. Guidance and counseling services at PTKIN (Private Islamic University) should no longer focus solely on individual-remedial interventions, but should also begin optimizing structured peer counseling and peer mentoring programs based on positive Islamic character (Muslikah et al., 2026; Gehreke et al., 2024). By engineering a campus climate ecosystem based on the values of *ta'awun* (community and brotherhood), higher education institutions can elevate the contribution of peer support (27.84%) into a systematic protective

barrier in maintaining the psychological well-being and spiritual quality of the entire academic community.

Conclusion

The results of this study prove that there is a significant positive relationship between social support from peers (Peer Support) and psychological well-being (Psychological Well-Being) based on Islamic values in UIN Sunan Kudus students ($r = 0.528$; $p = 0.000$). Descriptively, the majority of students have levels of peer support (71.0%) and Islamic psychological well-being (68.0%) in the medium category. Theoretically, these findings strengthen the relevance of the stress-buffering model framework and the integration of Islamic values as protective factors for mental health in Islamic religious higher education environments. Although this study was correlational in nature and did not test the effectiveness of the intervention directly, the positive associations identified indicate the importance of a supportive campus social climate. These findings can be an initial reference for university managers and Islamic guidance and counseling units in designing and initiating strengthening peer support networks, such as peer counselor training and student mentoring programs. For further research, it is recommended to develop a testing model involving potential mediator variables (such as self-efficacy, resilience, and internal religiosity) and apply an experimental or longitudinal design to test causal relationships and examine the remaining 72.16% of variance that has not been explained in this research model.

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