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CORRELATION ANALYSIS OF ORIGINAL SCHOOL MAJOR, ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT, MAJOR CHOICE IN *SPAN*, UNIVERSITY STUDY PROGRAM, AND CUMULATIVE ACHIEVEMENT INDEX OF HIGH-ACHIEVING STUDENTS IN THE *SPAN* PROGRAM AT UIN MATARAM

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the relationship between the students' original school major, academic and non-academic achievements, choice of major through the National Academic Achievement Selection (SPAN) State Islamic Higher Education (PTKIN) pathway, the major pursued in higher education, and the Grade Point Average (GPA) of high-achieving students in the SPAN pathway at State Islamic University of Mataram (UIN Mataram). This study employs a quantitative correlational research design. The research was conducted at UIN Mataram, with a sample of 1,768 students accepted through the SPAN pathway. Data were collected through surveys and documentation of student academic records, including high school majors, academic/non-academic achievements, SPAN major choices, higher-education majors, and GPA. The research instruments were questionnaires and academic data documentation sheets sourced from official institutional archives. Data analysis techniques included Pearson Product-Moment correlation tests to determine the relationships among research variables. The results showed a positive and significant correlation between the major chosen in SPAN and the major taken at UIN Mataram, and a negative and significant correlation between the major at the university and the student's GPA. In addition, a significant negative correlation was found between the choice of major in SPAN and academic/non-academic achievement at the school of origin. Meanwhile, no significant relationships were found between the major in the school of origin and the major in university, the achievement in the school of origin, or GPA; likewise, no significant relationships were found between academic/non-academic achievement and GPA. The implications of this study indicate that students' academic success in higher education is not determined solely by their major and secondary education achievements, but is also influenced by the suitability of their major choice, program characteristics, and the learning context in higher education. These findings can inform the development of more comprehensive student selection policies and career guidance services that are aligned with students' interests and potential.

Keywords: High school major, Academic achievements, Major selection in SPAN, University study program, and Cumulative grade point average.

INTRODUCTION

Higher education plays a strategic role in developing excellent, competitive, and characterful human resources. Higher education institutions are required not only to produce academically intelligent graduates, but also graduates with strong competencies, adaptability, and moral integrity (Nawawi, M., & Aliyyah, R. R. 2024). The quality of higher education graduates is largely determined by the quality of student input, effective learning processes, and the suitability of students' educational backgrounds to their fields of study. Inconsistencies in any of these aspects have the potential to cause academic problems, such as low academic achievement, delays in studies, and even dropping out (Hamda, S. 2019). In Indonesia's national education system, the mechanism for accepting new students is an important instrument in ensuring the quality of university inputs. Through various policies, the government has developed a selection process that focuses on academic achievement as the main indicator of potential for success in higher education. One of these selection pathways is the National Academic Achievement Selection (SPAN) for State Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKIN) (Yusrie, C. S., Ernawati, E., Suherman, D., & Barlian, U. C. 2021).

The SPAN pathway is designed to recruit high-achieving students from senior high schools, madrasah aliyah, and vocational schools based on their report card grades and other academic achievements during their studies at their original schools. Conceptually, academic achievement-based selection is based on educational psychology theory, which states that previous academic achievements are a strong predictor of academic success at the next level of education. The theory of achievement continuity explains that individuals who demonstrate consistent academic achievement tend to have more stable learning skills, motivation, and cognitive abilities (Hendrilia, 2025). Therefore, high-achieving students who pass through the SPAN pathway are assumed to have the potential to achieve good academic performance in university, as reflected in their Grade Point Average (GPA).

However, academic achievement in higher education is not only determined by report card grades or student rankings in their original

schools. Other factors that are equally important are secondary education background, particularly the original school's major, and the suitability of that major with the study program chosen in higher education (Astuti, M. Y., Sari, I. P., & Fahmi, R. A. 2020). In secondary education in Indonesia, students are divided into several majors, such as Natural Sciences (IPA), Social Sciences (IPS), Languages, and various skills competencies in Vocational High Schools (SMK). Each major has different curriculum characteristics, cognitive loads, and competency emphases.

Theoretically, differences in the characteristics of the students' high school majors have implications for their academic readiness when entering higher education. The theory of learning readiness states that learning success is greatly influenced by the initial readiness of students, in terms of prerequisite knowledge, thinking skills, and learning habits (Silangen, P. V. A., Mamentu, M. D., & Dolonseda, H. P. 2025). Students from science majors, for example, tend to be better prepared for study programs that require logical skills, quantitative analysis, and scientific concept understanding. Conversely, students from social studies or religious studies majors may have advantages in social analysis, humanities, and normative understanding, but face challenges in science- or statistics-based courses.

On the other hand, the choice of study program at university is also a crucial factor that affects students' academic achievement. A study program that suits students' interests, talents, and academic backgrounds will facilitate the learning adaptation process and increase intrinsic motivation. Conversely, a mismatch between the student's high school background and the academic demands of the study program has the potential to cause learning shock, decreased motivation, and low academic achievement. Therefore, the relationship between the student's high school major, initial academic achievement, choice of study program, and GPA is an important issue that needs to be studied scientifically (Ananda, A., Masyithah, Q., & Syam, H. 2025).

In State Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKIN), particularly the State Islamic University (UIN) Mataram, this issue has become increasingly relevant. UIN Mataram, as an Islamic higher education institution, offers a wide range of study programs, from Islamic studies, social sciences and humanities, education, to science and technology. This diversity of study programs opens up opportunities for students from various educational backgrounds to continue their education, but at the same time presents challenges in ensuring academic compatibility between student input and study program requirements.

High-achieving students accepted through the SPAN pathway at UIN Mataram have formally met academic criteria based on their report card grades and school recommendations. However, in practice, there has been no comprehensive empirical study on the extent to which the student's high school major and academic performance correlate with their choice of study program and GPA achievement during their studies at UIN Mataram. This information is crucial as a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the SPAN pathway in attracting students who not only excel during the selection process but are also able to maintain their academic performance in higher education.

Initial observations of the academic data of high-achieving students enrolled through the SPAN pathway at UIN Mataram show a tendency for students from certain majors to be more dominant in certain study programs and to have a relatively higher GPA. For example, students with a background in natural sciences tend to show more stable academic performance in science-based and science education study programs, while students from social sciences or religious studies majors show greater variation in GPA when entering study programs that require quantitative competencies. Although these observations are preliminary and descriptive in nature, the findings indicate a relationship that needs to be examined more deeply in a statistical and systematic manner.

In addition, preliminary observations also show that not all high-achieving SPAN students choose study programs that are in line with their original school majors. External factors such as job opportunities, environmental influences, and limited academic information often influence students' choice of study programs. This condition has the potential to cause academic mismatches that affect students' GPA and study continuity. Therefore, a comprehensive correlational analysis is needed to understand the pattern of relationships between these variables.

Based on these issues, this study offers a scientific solution in the form of a correlation analysis between the student's high school major, academic achievement, university study program, and Grade Point Average of high-achieving students in the SPAN UIN Mataram pathway. The correlational approach was chosen because it is able to reveal the degree of relationship and direction of correlation between variables objectively and measurably so that this study is not only descriptive but also analytical in explaining the patterns of academic relationships that occur.

The urgency of this research lies in several strategic aspects. First, theoretically, this research contributes to the development of higher

education studies, particularly related to predictors of student academic success based on secondary education background. The results of this study can enrich the academic literature on the continuity of academic achievement from secondary to higher education in the context of PTKIN. Second, this research provides an empirical basis for universities to evaluate their SPAN new-student admission policies, particularly regarding the suitability between students' high school majors and their chosen study programs. Third, from an education policy perspective, the results of this study can be used as a reference in strengthening the academic guidance and counseling system for prospective students. Information about the correlation between the student's high school major, academic achievement, and GPA can be used to provide more appropriate study program recommendations, thereby minimizing the risk of academic failure. Fourth, for students, this study provides an objective picture of the factors that influence academic success, thereby increasing academic awareness in planning for higher education. To provide limitations to this study, the researcher focused on the research objectives, namely to explain the correlation between the original school major, academic achievement, study program in higher education, and cumulative grade point average in high-achieving students in the SPAN UIN Mataram pathway.

METHOD

This research approach uses a quantitative correlational approach. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to obtain data from a relatively large population efficiently, as well as providing opportunities to perform correlational analyses that can describe the empirical relationship between research variables (Pandiangan, D. F., & Albina, M. (2025). The survey method is considered relevant to this study because it aims to identify and analyze the relationship between majors in the school of origin, academic achievement, choices in the SPAN pathway, study programs in higher education, and cumulative achievement indices in an objective and measurable manner.

Through this approach, data was collected using a research instrument in the form of a questionnaire evaluating SPAN UIN Mataram, which covered various components, including the major at the school of origin, academic achievement, choices in the SPAN pathway, major at the university, and GPA, or documents containing data on new students at UIN Mataram. The students

who were the subjects of this study were those enrolled in the 2022, 2023, and 2024 academic years.

This research was conducted at the State Islamic University of Mataram. The research population included students enrolled in 2022, 2023, and 2024. The sampling technique used was random sampling based on the Isaac and Michael table as described by Sugiyono, with a significance level of 5%. Based on these calculations, the sample size was set at 1768.

The collected data was then analyzed using Pearson Product Moment correlation test. This analysis was chosen to further examine the direction of the relationship between variables, whether it was positive or negative (Jabnabillah, F., & Margina, N. 2022). This correlation test can be performed if the data is normally distributed. If the data is not normally distributed, the researcher will perform a Spearman correlation test. The basis for deciding on this correlation test is as follows:

1. If the Sig (2-tailed) value is < 0.05, then we conclude that there is a significant relationship.
2. If the Sig (2-tailed) value is > 0.05, then we conclude that there is no significant relationship.

Next, to see the degree of the relationship, researchers refer to the table.

Table 1

Degree of Relationship/Correlation (Wulandari, I. (2024)

Correlation Value	Degree of Correlation
0.00-0.199	Very Weak
0.20-0.399	Weak
0.40-0.599	Fair/Enough
0.60-0.799	Strong
0.80-1.00	Very Strong

In addition to seeing the level and strength of the relationship between variables, researchers can also see the direction of the relationship by looking at the positive and negative values of the correlation. If the value is positive, then the relationship is consistent, while if the value is negative, then the relationship is inverse.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to explain the correlation between the student's original school major, academic achievement, major choice in SPAN, study program in university, and cumulative grade point average among high-achieving students in the SPAN pathway at UIN Mataram. The correlation test refers to the product-moment correlation test table, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 Correlation Test

Correlations

		MAJOR	SPAN CHOICES	MAJOR IN PREVIOUS SCHOOL	ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT	GPA
MAJOR	Pearson Correlation	1	.127**	.032	.017	-.182**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.180	.476	.000
	N	1768	1768	1768	1768	1768
SPAN CHOICES	Pearson Correlation	.127**	1	-.002	-.060*	-.019
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.943	.012	.423
	N	1768	1768	1768	1768	1768
MAJOR IN PREVIOUS SCHOOL	Pearson Correlation	.032	-.002	1	-.008	.009
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.180	.943		.751	.709
	N	1768	1768	1768	1768	1768
ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT	Pearson Correlation	.017	-.060*	-.008	1	-.017
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.476	.012	.751		.472
	N	1768	1768	1768	1768	1768
GPA	Pearson Correlation	-.182**	-.019	.009	-.017	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.423	.709	.472	
	N	1768	1768	1768	1768	1768

Table 2 shows the relationship/correlation between the student's original school major, academic achievement, major choice in SPAN, study program in higher education, and cumulative grade point average of high-achieving students in the SPAN pathway at UIN Mataram. The interpretation of Table 2 can be explained further as follows:

1. There is a correlation/relationship between majors at UIN Mataram and major choices at SPAN PTKIN, referring to a significant value of

0.000 less than 5% significance level. The Pearson Correlation value is 0.127 (positive value). This means that the direction of the relationship is consistent.

2. There is no correlation/relationship between the majors taken at UIN Mataram and the majors at the school of origin, referring to a significant value of 0.180 greater than the 5% significance level.
3. There is no correlation/relationship between majors and achievements at the school of origin, referring to a significance value of 0.476, which is greater than the 5% significance level.
4. There is a correlation/relationship between majors at UIN Mataram and GPA, referring to a significance value of 0.000, which is less than the 5% significance level. The Pearson Correlation value is -0.187 (negative). This means that the direction of the relationship is inverse.
5. There is no correlation/relationship between the choice on the SPAN and the major at the original school, referring to a significance value of 0.943, which is greater than the 5% significance level.
6. There is a correlation/relationship between SPAN and academic achievement at the school of origin, referring to a significance value of 0.012, which is less than the 5% significance level. The Pearson Correlation value is -0.060 (negative). This means that the direction of the relationship is inverse.
7. There is no correlation/relationship between the choice of SPAN and GPA, referring to a significance value of 0.423 greater than the 5% significance level.
8. There is no correlation/relationship between the major at the original school and academic and non-academic achievement, referring to a significance value of 0.751 greater than the 5% significance level.
9. There is no correlation/relationship between the major at the school of origin and GPA, referring to a significant value of 0.709 greater than the 5% significance level.
10. There is no correlation/relationship between academic and non-academic achievement and GPA, referring to a significant value of 0.472 greater than the 5% significance level.

The discussion of the research results is aimed at providing a comprehensive interpretation of the relationship between the student's original school major, academic and non-academic achievements at school, major choices in the SPAN PTKIN pathway, majors pursued in higher education, and the Grade Point Average (GPA) of high-achieving students in

the SPAN pathway at UIN Mataram. Correlational analysis is not only understood statistically, but also contextualized within the theoretical framework of higher education, higher education admission policies, and the dynamics of academic transition from secondary to higher education.

The results of this study provide a comprehensive empirical description of the relationship between the student's high school major, academic and non-academic achievements, choice of major through the SPAN PTKIN pathway, study program undertaken at UIN Mataram, and the Grade Point Average (GPA) of high-achieving students in the SPAN pathway. In general, these findings indicate that the educational transition process from secondary to higher education is not linear and deterministic, but is influenced by various structural, psychological, and contextual factors that interact in complex ways.

The first finding shows a positive and significant correlation between the choice of major in SPAN and the major ultimately pursued by students at UIN Mataram ($r = 0.127$; $p < 0.05$). Although the strength of this correlation is relatively weak, its significance indicates that the major choices made by students during the national selection stage are related to the academic direction they pursue in university. This indicates that the SPAN PTKIN mechanism is relatively consistent in placing students according to their initial academic preferences. From the perspective of rational choice theory, students' decisions in choosing a major through SPAN are the result of considerations between interests, perceptions of self-ability, chances of acceptance, and available information about study programs (Mardhiah, M. 2024). Therefore, although not entirely decisive, these initial choices remain one of the factors influencing students' academic paths.

This finding is reinforced by descriptive data showing that 82.35% of students were accepted into their first choice, 16.45% into their second choice, and only 1.18% into their third choice. This pattern shows that the SPAN system is relatively effective in placing students according to their initial academic preferences. From the perspective of rationality theory, as stated by Wisadirana from Coleman (2024), individuals tend to make educational decisions based on rational considerations that take into account the chances of success, interests, and personal capacity. The high percentage of acceptance in the first choice indicates that SPAN UIN Mataram students have undergone a fairly mature self-selection process before deciding on a major. Thus, although the statistical correlation is weak, substantively the relationship between SPAN choices and majors has important implications in the context of higher education admission policies.

The distribution of students based on study programs also reinforces these findings. Study programs such as Islamic Religious Education (11.42%), Islamic Family Law (6.3%), Sharia Economics (5.8%), Sharia Economic Law (5.4%), Social Studies Economics (5.2%), as well as Sharia Banking and English Language Teaching (each at 5.1%) show relatively high acceptance rates. This reflects the tendency of SPAN pathway students to choose study programs that are considered relevant to social needs, job prospects, and Islamic scientific identity. Conversely, the low percentages for study programs such as Physics (0.9%), Chemistry (0.96%), Astronomy (1.47%), and PPI (0.97%) indicate that perceptions of academic difficulty and career opportunities also influence student preferences. Thus, the distribution of study programs provides an empirical context that clarifies the correlation pattern between SPAN choices and majors in higher education. The results of this study are also relevant to the reasons why Chemistry, Astronomy, and PPI are considered rare majors.

However, the weak correlation coefficient also confirms that the choice of major in SPAN is not the only determinant of the study program taken by students. Other factors such as internal university policies, study program capacity, and student placement strategies also influence the final results. This finding is in line with Tinto's study, which states that the transition to university is an adaptive process, where students' initial decisions often undergo adjustments in line with institutional and academic dynamics (Weliangan, H. 2021).

The second and third findings show that there is no significant correlation between the majors taken by students at UIN Mataram and their majors in their schools of origin or their academic and non-academic achievements in high school. These findings have important theoretical implications, as they challenge the common assumption that the suitability of a student's school of origin major to a university program will determine their academic choices. In the context of the SPAN PTKIN pathway, these results show that the background of the major at the school of origin, whether it be natural sciences, social sciences, religious studies, or others, does not directly influence the major pursued in university.

These results become more understandable when linked to data on students' high school majors, which were dominated by social studies (38%) and natural sciences (35%), followed by religion (17.5%), languages (6.67%), and general studies (2.6%). Although the majority of students came from social studies and religious education majors, they did not linearly choose study programs in line with those majors. Social studies students were

spread across various religious, social, and even exact science study programs, while not all science students continued to study science in university.

This phenomenon is in line with the theory of higher education transition proposed by Riyono (2023), which states that universities are spaces for academic identity reconstruction, where students are no longer completely bound by their previous educational paths. The SPAN pathway provides considerable flexibility for students to engage in interdisciplinary academic mobility. Therefore, the absence of a correlation between the student's original high school major and their major in higher education indicates that the SPAN selection system opens up opportunities for students to develop their academic potential beyond the structural limitations of secondary education.

This phenomenon can also be explained through the concept of academic reorientation, which is the process of rearranging students' academic orientation when they enter higher education. According to Pascarella and Terenzini, universities provide a broader space for students to explore their interests and potential, so that their previous academic background is not always the main determining factor (Loise, M., Arsyad, M., & Gani, M. 2025). This is particularly relevant at UIN Mataram, an Islamic religious university that offers interdisciplinary study programs, so that students from various high school majors have relatively equal opportunities to adapt.

The absence of correlation between the student's original high school major and their academic and non-academic achievements indicates that student achievement at the secondary education level is more contextual and situational than linearly determined by the major they chose. High school majors essentially serve as administrative and pedagogical groupings to facilitate learning management, rather than as the sole determinants of students' academic capacity or potential achievements. Therefore, students from social studies, Islamic education, language, and general majors have relatively equal opportunities to achieve high academic and non-academic achievements, as long as they are in a supportive learning environment and receive adequate educational stimulation.

Theoretically, these findings are in line with the ecological view of education, which places learning achievement as the result of complex interactions between individuals and the learning environment.

Bronfenbrenner emphasizes that student development and achievement are influenced by various interrelated systems, ranging from the classroom environment and school culture to prevailing education policies (Oktaviana, R., Khiftiyah, U., Yuliani, F., & Utari, W. D. 2023). In this context, school quality, teacher competence and commitment, availability of facilities and infrastructure, and a conducive academic climate play a far more significant role than subject labels alone. Schools with a strong learning culture and a structured achievement coaching system are able to produce high-achieving students across subjects, both in academic and non-academic fields.

In addition, academic achievement in secondary school is greatly influenced by the assessment system used by each school. Variations in evaluation standards, question difficulty levels, and internal assessment policies mean that achievements cannot be fully compared objectively between departments or between schools. This reinforces the argument that academic achievement at the secondary level reflects students' success in adapting to a particular learning system rather than their conceptual readiness for specific fields of study in higher education. In other words, high achievement is not always synonymous with mastery of academic competencies relevant to a particular major in higher education.

Similarly, non-academic achievements such as sports championships, arts, organizational leadership, or religious activities have no direct correlation with the student's original school major. Non-academic achievements are more influenced by personal interests, individual talents, family support, and opportunities provided by the school. Students from various majors have relatively equal access to extracurricular activities, so that the potential for non-academic achievements develops across disciplines. This explains why no significant relationship was found between the student's original school major and non-academic achievements in this study.

These findings confirm that high school performance cannot be viewed as the sole indicator of a student's readiness to pursue a particular course of study. Academic readiness encompasses broader aspects, such as critical thinking skills, independent learning, adaptability to new academic demands, and intrinsic motivation. These aspects are often not fully reflected in academic and non-academic achievements in high school. Therefore, the absence of correlation found in this study reinforces the view that the selection and training process for students in higher education needs to consider a more holistic dimension of learning readiness, not solely based on majors and formal achievements in secondary education.

The fourth finding, which shows a negative and significant correlation between the majors taken at UIN Mataram and the students' Grade Point Average (GPA), indicates that differences in study programs are related to variations in students' academic achievements, even though the relationship is not positively linear. The negative correlation value ($r = -0.182$; $p < 0.05$) indicates that in certain majors, GPA tends to be lower than in other majors, and vice versa. Substantively, this condition cannot be interpreted as a difference in the intellectual quality of students between majors, but rather reflects differences in the academic characteristics inherent in each study program. Each major has different cognitive demands, study loads, and material complexity, which affect the pattern of student GPA achievement in various ways.

GPA is the result of a grading system that is heavily influenced by curriculum design, learning approaches, and evaluation standards applied at the program level. Ridho from Biggs (2025), through the concept of constructive alignment, emphasizes that student learning outcomes are the result of the interaction between student characteristics, the learning context, and the assessment system used. Study programs with curricula that emphasize high analytical skills, deep conceptual understanding, and complex academic tasks such as research, text analysis, or abstract problem solving tend to produce a different GPA distribution compared to more applied or practice-based study programs. Therefore, differences in GPA between majors are a logical consequence of differences in academic structure and the assessment philosophy applied.

These findings reinforce the view that GPA is relative and contextual, and therefore cannot be used as a single measure to directly compare the academic performance of students across majors. The negative correlation that emerged actually emphasizes the importance of caution in interpreting GPA as an indicator of student academic quality. In the context of academic policy and further selection, these findings imply that the assessment of student achievement should take into account the background of the study program, curriculum characteristics, and applicable assessment standards. Thus, the negative correlation between majors and GPA does not indicate student weakness, but rather reflects the complexity and diversity of the academic system in higher education, particularly at UIN Mataram.

The fifth finding shows that there is no correlation between the choice of major in SPAN and the major in the school of origin. This indicates that students' choice of major through SPAN is not entirely based on the background of their school of origin. This phenomenon can be interpreted as

an indication of increasing flexibility and courage among students in determining their academic choices based on their interests and future aspirations, rather than simply following a linear path from their previous education. When viewed from the previous data, the highest percentages of majors at the students' original schools were social studies (38%) and natural sciences (35%). However, the highest percentage of majors chosen through SPAN was Islamic education (11.42%), while majors relevant to those at the original schools, such as chemistry, physics, and biology, had the lowest percentages as majors of interest to students. This further reinforces the findings.

In the perspective of career development theory proposed by Marzuqi from Super (2024), the end of secondary education is understood as the exploration stage, which is a crucial period when individuals begin to recognize their interests, values, talents, and career preferences more consciously, even though the process is not yet fully stable or final. At this stage, students are still in the process of trying out various educational and career options as part of the formation of their vocational self-concept (Wutsqo, B. U., Rizky, D. M., & Hidayat, D. R. 2020). This self-concept develops dynamically through interactions between learning experiences, social environment, family expectations, and exposure to information about education and the world of work. Therefore, the choice of major in university is not always a linear continuation of the high school major or previous academic achievements, but is often the result of a new reflection on personal interests and future aspirations. Super emphasizes that the mismatch between academic background in high school and further study choices is a natural phenomenon, because during the exploration phase, individuals are still adjusting their self-perception to the reality of available opportunities. In this context, SPAN students who choose a study program different from their high school major can be understood as individuals who are establishing their vocational identity, rather than as a form of academic inconsistency. Thus, study choices in university reflect a career maturation process rather than simply being a deterministic result of previous academic experiences.

The sixth finding shows a negative and significant correlation between the choice of major in SPAN and academic and non-academic achievements in the school of origin ($r = -0.060$; $p < 0.05$). Although relatively weak, this finding has important substantive meaning in understanding the dynamics of study choices among SPAN students. The negative direction of the correlation indicates that students with higher academic and non-academic achievements do not always choose majors that are socially perceived as the

most prestigious, popular, or competitive. This phenomenon confirms that major selection is not linear or mechanical, following achievement alone, but is the result of a more complex process of psychological, social, and contextual considerations. From the perspective of the expectancy-value theory proposed by Wardana from Eccles (2019), individual academic decisions are determined by the interaction between expectations for success and the subjective task value attached to a choice. This subjective value includes intrinsic interest, utility value, attainment value, and cost considerations. High-achieving students may have good expectations for success in many fields, but choose a particular major because it is considered more personally meaningful, more in line with their Islamic identity, or more relevant to their long-term career and social service plans.

This finding is also supported by field data showing that most SPAN students were accepted into their first choice (82.35%), while relatively few were accepted into their second or third choices. This indicates that students generally made careful considerations from the outset in determining their choice of major, rather than simply following the logic of "high achievers choosing their favorite majors." In addition, the distribution of SPAN students across various study programs, including majors that are not always considered academically elite, such as Astronomy, PMI, PPI, or Da'wah Management, shows that the choice of major is more influenced by suitability of interest, religious background, and service orientation than simply academic prestige. Field findings also show that many high-achieving students come from science and social studies majors in high school, but 11.42% of students choose Islamic Education majors, while those who choose exact majors are below 1%. This reinforces the argument that high-achieving students do not always pursue majors with the highest competition, but majors that are considered most in line with their values, competencies they want to develop, and life goals. Thus, these findings challenge deterministic assumptions in higher education selection and emphasize that academic achievement is only one variable among many factors that influence program choice, especially in the context of religious higher education such as UIN Mataram.

The seventh to tenth findings consistently show no significant correlation between SPAN choices, high school majors, and academic/non-academic achievements with student GPAs. These findings have very important theoretical implications, as they show that academic success in university, as represented by GPAs, cannot be simply predicted based on pre-enrollment variables. In higher education studies, these findings are in line

with Astin's theory of student engagement, which asserts that students' academic success is determined more by their active involvement in the learning process during university than by their previous academic background (Mahardika, A. A., & Nurkhin, A. 2024).

Students' GPAs are more influenced by internal university factors such as teaching quality, student learning strategies, intrinsic motivation, time management, and available academic support. Therefore, the absence of a correlation between high school performance and GPA indicates that university is a new arena that requires adaptation and learning strategies different from those used in secondary education.

The results of this study indicate that the SPAN PTKIN pathway at UIN Mataram is relatively inclusive and unbiased toward the background of the applicant's high school major or previous achievements. This reinforces the view that merit-based university admissions should be understood as a gateway, not the ultimate determinant of a student's academic success. These findings also contribute theoretically by emphasizing that success in higher education is the result of a dynamic process influenced by the interaction between individuals and the academic environment, rather than a linear continuation of past achievements. Thus, this discussion emphasizes that the correlations found, whether significant or not, must be interpreted critically and contextually. The results of this study not only explain the relationship between variables statistically, but also provide a deeper understanding of the complexity of educational transitions and the factors that influence the success of SPAN pathway students at UIN Mataram.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion, it can be concluded that there is a positive and significant relationship between the choice of major through the SPAN pathway and the majors taken by students at UIN Mataram, which shows consistency between initial choices and the study programs undertaken at the university. However, the majors at the students' schools of origin do not have a significant relationship with either the majors at the university or the students' academic/non-academic achievements and GPAs. In addition, majors at UIN Mataram have a negative and significant correlation with GPA, indicating differences in GPA achievement between study programs due to variations in curriculum characteristics and assessment systems. The choice of major in SPAN also has a negative and significant correlation with achievements in the school of origin, although it is not related to GPA. Overall,

these findings confirm that the background of the major and achievements in high school are not the main determinants of academic success in university, but rather the choice of major, the context of the study program, and the academic dynamics in the university itself.

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