

# The Relationship between Cross-Cultural Competence and Self-Adjustment in Migrant Students

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## ABSTRAK

Sulitnya beradaptasi dengan lingkungan baru membuat beberapa individu dewasa awal sebagai mahasiswa memerlukan relasi yang baik dalam mempelajari penyesuaian diri secara perlahan pada perbedaan yang dirasakan. Karena adanya perbedaan budaya, hal ini menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa baru membutuhkan kompetensi atau kemampuan agar dapat menyesuaikan diri terhadap perbedaan budaya yang terjadi. Oleh karena itu, Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengetahui hubungan antara kompetensi lintas budaya dengan penyesuaian diri pada mahasiswa perantau dari Sulawesi Selatan. Penelitian ini termasuk dalam penelitian kuantitatif dengan desain korelasi. Subjek yang terlibat dalam penelitian ini adalah 102 mahasiswa yang merantau di kota Salatiga dan teknik pengambilan sampel yang digunakan adalah snowball sampling. Pengumpulan data dalam penelitian dilakukan dengan menggunakan skala psikologi sebagai kuesioner, yang akan didistribusikan secara online melalui Google Form. Analisa data menggunakan uji korelasi Pearson dan Spearman. Hasil analisa data menunjukkan bahwa kompetensi lintas budaya menunjukkan hubungan positif yang signifikan dengan komponen penyesuaian akademik (0,402), komponen penyesuaian sosial (0,527). Kemudian, komponen penyesuaian personal-emosional (0,318). Terakhir dengan komponen kelekatan institusional (0,376). Dapat disimpulkan bahwa kompetensi lintas budaya memiliki hubungan dengan penyesuaian diri. Dengan begitu bahwa pentingnya mahasiswa perantau melakukan persiapan dengan mempelajari kota tujuannya seperti budaya, cuaca, birokrasi, dan hal lain sebagainya dengan lebih baik agar dapat lebih mudah dalam penyesuaian diri dan dapat mampu melewati tuntutan yang ada di tempat baru.

## ABSTRACT

The difficulty of adapting to a new environment means that some early adult individuals, such as students, need good relationships in learning to adapt slowly to perceived differences. Due to cultural differences, new students need competencies or abilities to adapt to the cultural differences. Therefore, this research was conducted to determine the relationship between cross-cultural competence and adjustment in migrant students from South Sulawesi. This research is included in quantitative research with a correlation design. The subjects involved in this research were 102 students who had migrated to Salatiga, and the sampling technique used was snowball sampling. The research collected data using a psychological scale as a questionnaire, which will be distributed online via Google Forms. Data analysis used Pearson and Spearman correlation tests. The results of data analysis show that cross-cultural competence shows a significant positive relationship with the academic adjustment component (0.402) and the social adjustment component (0.527). Then, the personal-emotional adjustment component (0.318). Lastly, with the institutional attachment component (0.376). Cross-cultural competence has a relationship with self-adjustment. In this way, migrant students must prepare by studying their destination city, such as culture, weather, bureaucracy, and other things, to adjust more quickly and cope with the demands of a new place.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The difficulty of adapting to a new environment means that some early adult individuals as students need good relationships in learning to adapt slowly to perceived differences (Simamora et al.,

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2023; Wirawan & Setiawan, 2022). Some first year students generally experience difficulties that require help in making adjustments (Aldino & Fitriani, 2020; Rahayu & Arianti, 2020). Adapting to the college environment is a process that must be carried out by all new students in college, this is because new students generally encounter many difficulties during the adjustment process in college (Saputro & Sugiarti, 2021; Suharsono & Anwar, 2020). In general, any student, whether at undergraduate or postgraduate level, domestic or foreign students, will definitely face a number of problems in the transition to entering higher education. Common problems encountered include academic pressure, financial problems, loneliness, interpersonal conflict, difficulty dealing with change and problems developing personal autonomy (Mufidah & Fadilah, 2022; Nadlyfah & Kustanti, 2020). Overseas students and local students generally have different challenges, such as students from outside Java who have a dream of enjoying superior quality education on the island of Java but are forced to migrate and leave their hometowns (Ahmad et al., 2020; Hutabarat et al., 2022). Students from outside Java often experience difficulties in adapting due to language differences and lack of Javanese language skills. Even though Indonesian itself is the language of instruction in the lecture process, it cannot be denied that Javanese is still often used to communicate outside the classroom or inside the classroom. Therefore, cultural differences will be more pronounced for migrant students from outside Java Island compared to migrants from areas on Java Island. In this case, overseas students from outside Java Island will adapt more than overseas students from Java Island in several aspects, including weather, culinary, or time.

The challenges of overseas students at each university were also found in a group of students from South Sulawesi studying at UKSW Salatiga who stated that they were not yet used to cultural differences such as the use of Javanese which was quite a problem when completing assignments in groups because the majority of their group friends came from areas on the island of Java. There are several things that make it difficult for them to adjust, one of which is the Satya Wacana Christian University students who have a cultural background and have typical behavior. This is what makes it difficult for them to accept each other because it is considered unusual in that culture and behavior. Then there is the everyday language used by the people of Salatiga itself and the campus environment, namely Javanese which is very difficult to understand. Therefore, it is difficult for them to interact with people in their living environment or on campus. Likewise, the air conditions in the city of Salatiga are generally different from their area of origin, which makes them unhealthy and find it difficult to eat, because the food here does not suit their tastes. However, they know that they must be able to face this and resolve it themselves to survive in Salatiga City.

If a student's adjustment problem in higher education cannot be handled appropriately, then this will have a negative impact on the student's development at the next stage. Interview results also showed that there were students who complained that while they were in a new environment, they experienced physical health problems such as headaches, stomach and digestive disorders, sleep disorders, and fatigue due to stress which resulted in a lack of motivation to study. Some adjustment problems for students in the early years include difficulty understanding lecturers who sometimes use terms in Javanese and at that time students feel embarrassed to ask questions when they don't understand the lecturer's explanation (Fanani & Jainurakhma, 2020; Mamesah & Kusumiati, 2019). In terms of friendships, several students complained that they had difficulty communicating with their classmates due to language differences which made them reluctant to work together on group assignments (Rahayu & Arianti, 2020; Widodo, 2021). The existence of cultural differences shows that new students need competence or ability to be able to adapt to the cultural differences that occur (Siregar & Kustanti, 2020).

Cross-cultural competence emerges as a highly relevant factor to international students' adjustment in the host country, it reflects the combination of knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors that international students acquire that facilitates their adjustment in the host country and allows them to focus more on their academic career they (Aldawsari et al., 2018; Dianasari et al., 2022). Migrant students from outside Java inevitably have to be able to find ways to adapt well, because every human being is a social creature, who needs each other, therefore a migrant student needs to adjust well and be able to suppress the culture shock they experienced (Ferdiansyah & Noverina, 2019; Sanusi et al., 2020). The challenges faced by individuals from different cultures stem from the tasks assigned, unknown environments, language barriers, and cultural differences. With the challenges that migrant students have to face in new regions and cultures, cross-cultural competence is very necessary (Khoirunnisa & Sunarya, 2023; Susilawati et al., 2020). Because cross-cultural communication competence is needed when living with diverse people in order to live a meaningful and more productive life.

Several previous studies have revealed that an individual's ability to adapt to cross-cultural differences has an impact on the individual's adjustment when living outside a city with a different culture (Liao et al., 2021). The results of other research reveal that cross-cultural competence and social support for international students influence the student's adjustment process when they are outside an area with

a different culture.(Aldawsari et al., 2018). The results of further research reveal that there is a relationship between the dimensions of internalized cultural knowledge and adjustment to different cultural contexts, where cognitive aspects of culture can influence the adjustment process experienced by Indonesian students abroad (Ghaniyy & Akmal, 2018). Based on several research results, it can be said that a process of self-adjustment is very important for every student, where South Sulawesi students also experience difficulties in adapting due to differences in language and cultural habits with their campus friends and the majority of the community who are Javanese. It's just that in previous research, there has been no study that specifically discusses the relationship between cross-cultural competence and adjustment in migrant students, so this research focuses on this study with the aim of finding out the relationship between cross-cultural competence and adjustment in migrant students from Sulawesi. South.

## 2. METHOD

This research is a type of quantitative research with a correlational design. This research aims to determine the relationship between two variables, namely cross-cultural competence as the independent variable and personal adjustment as the dependent variable. This research used as subjects active UKSW students from the Class of 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022, who came from South Sulawesi Province and lived alone in a rented/boarding house/dormitory in Salatiga with a sample of 102 participants. Researchers used snowball sampling techniques. The demographics of research participants can be seen in Table 1.

**Table 1. Research Participant Demographics**

No	Subject Classification	Information	N	Percentage
1.	Faculty	Faculty of Biology	1	0.9%
		Faculty of Economics and Business	12	12%
		Faculty of Social Sciences and Communication Sciences	3	2.9%
		Faculty of Teacher Training and Education	3	2.9%
		faculty of Psychology	28	27.4%
		Faculty of Science and Mathematics	1	0.9%
		Faculty of Information Technology	28	27.4%
		faculty of Language and Art	4	3.9%
		Faculty of Electronics and Computer Engineering	1	0.9%
		faculty of Law	9	8.8%
		Faculty of Medicine and Health	6	6%
		Faculty of Theology	6	6%
<b>Total</b>			<b>102</b>	<b>100%</b>
2.	Force	2019	40	39.20%
		2020	22	21.6%
		2021	30	29.4%
		2022	10	9.8%
		<b>Total</b>		
3.	Origin	Tana Toraja Regency	25	24.6%
		North Toraja Regency	31	30.3%
		Makassar city	19	18.7%
		Palopo City	20	19.7%
		North Luwu Regency	1	0.9%
		Bulukumba Regency	1	0.9%
		Luwu Regency	5	4.9%
<b>Total</b>			<b>102</b>	<b>100%</b>
4.	Ethnic group	Buginese	5	4.9%
		Makassar	4	3.9%
		Toraja	93	91.2%
<b>Total</b>			<b>102</b>	<b>100%</b>

Data collection in the research was carried out using measuring instruments in the form of a scale for each variable. Cross-cultural competence and adjustment scales. The cross-cultural competency scale is based on aspects, while for self-adjustment it is based on components. Participants' responses from this

scale were made into a Likert scale model with alternative answers provided by the researcher, namely 5 for strongly agree (SS), 4 for agree (S), 3 for neutral, 2 for disagree (TS), and 1 for strongly disagree. agree (STS). Data collection in this research used a psychological scale as a questionnaire, which was then distributed online via Google Form. The data analysis technique used in this research is the assumption test that will be carried out including normality and linearity tests. The normality test is carried out using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (KS) statistical test formula, if the significance value is greater than 0.05 ( $p > 0.05$ ) then the data distribution is normal (Ghozali, 2013). Linearity test via ANOVA table, the relationship between two variables is said to be linear if the significance is more than 0.05 ( $p > 0.05$ ). Researchers conducted hypothesis testing using the Pearson product moment correlation statistical technique with the help of IBM SPSS 25 version for Windows software. The results of the cross-cultural competency item analysis test showed that of the 35 items there were 11 items that failed using a standard correlation coefficient of 0.25. The cross-cultural competency item has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.890, this shows that the items on the cross-cultural competency scale are declared reliable. The reliability of the items on the scale used in the research will be tested using Cronbach's alpha with testing criteria, namely if the reliability score is close to 1, it means the scale is more reliable, and conversely if the reliability score is close to 0, it means the scale has a lower level of reliability.

The self-adjustment items translated into Indonesian show that the academic adjustment component has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.888, the social adjustment component has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.881. The personal-emotional adjustment component has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.884, finally the institutional attachment component has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.767. Of the 65 items in self-adjustment, there were 3 items (item no. 22, 24, 25) which were declared invalid in each item discrimination test for each component because they had a standard correlation coefficient below 0.25.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Result

The first analysis in this research was carried out through a categorization analysis of self-adjustment. The results of the analysis of self-adjustment categorization can be seen in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Categorization of Personal Adjustment

	Very low		Low		Tall		Very high	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Academic Adjustment	1	0.9	26	25.49	65	63.72	10	9.80
Social Adjustment	1	0.9	20	19.60	65	63.72	16	15.68
Personal-emotional Adjustment	10	9.80	54	52.94	36	35.29	2	1.96
Institutional Embeddedness	1	0.9	6	5.88	28	27.45	67	65.68

The data in Table 2 shows that the majority of migrant students showed high academic adjustment scores (63.72%), however there were still 25.49% of migrant students who showed low academic adjustment scores. Furthermore, in the social adjustment component, the majority of migrant students got relatively high scores (63.72%) and there were still 19.60% of migrant students who got low scores on social adjustment. The personal-emotional component shows that as many as 52.94% of migrant students have a low score, on the other hand there are still 35.29% who have a high score. Finally, the institutional attachment component shows that migrant students obtained a score that is classified as very high (65.68%), however there are still 5.88% of migrant students who show a low institutional attachment score. The next analysis is an analysis of cross-cultural competency categorization, which can be seen in Table 3.

**Table 3.** Categorization of Cross-Cultural Competence

Intervals	Category	N	Percentage
35 < x ≤ 70	Very low	0	0%
70 < x ≤ 105	Low	5	5%
105 < x ≤ 140	Tall	86	84.3%
140 < x ≤ 175	Very high	11	10.7%
<b>Amount</b>		<b>102</b>	<b>100%</b>

Min =35; Max =175; Mean = 126.32; SD =11.479

The data in [Table 3](#) shows that as many as 86 participants had cross-cultural competency scores classified as high (84.3%) and very high (10.7%), which means that the majority of participants had cross-cultural competency levels in the high and very high categories. On the other hand, there were still 5% of participants who got low scores. The next analysis is the data normality test, as seen in [Table 4](#).

**Table 4.** Results of the Normality Test of Cross-Cultural Competence and Components of Personal Adjustment

Variable	KS-Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	Information
Cross Cultural Competence	0.058	0.200	Normal
Academic Adjustment	0.065	0.200	Normal
Social Adjustment	0.041	0.200	Normal
Personal-emotional Adjustment	0.068	0.200	Normal
Institutional Embeddedness	0.128	0.000	Abnormal

The results of the normality test in [Table 4](#) show that the Cross-Cultural Competence variable and the components of Academic Adjustment, Social Adjustment, Personal-Emotional Adjustment have a significance value of  $p > 0.05$ , different from institutional attachment which has a significance value of  $p < 0.05$ . The cross-cultural competence variable has a Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z value of 0.058 with a p or significance value of 0.200 ( $p > 0.05$ ) and the academic adjustment component has a Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z value of 0.065 with a p or significance value of 0.200, social adjustment has The Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z value is 0.041 with a p or significance value of 0.200, the personal-emotional adjustment Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z value is 0.068 with a p or significance value of 0.200. However, the institutional embeddedness component has a Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z value of 0.128 with a p or significance value of 0.000. Thus, the cross-cultural competence variable and the 3 components of self-adjustment can be said to be normally distributed because they have a significance value of  $p > 0.05$ , the remaining one component of self-adjustment is not normally distributed because it has a significance value of  $p < 0.05$ .

The next analysis is the linearity test of cross-cultural competence and the components of self-adjustment which shows that the Sig. Deviation from Linearity in the Cross-Cultural Competence Variable and the components of Personal Adjustment is more than ( $> 0.05$ ), which means that the relationship between Cross-Cultural Competence and Personal Adjustment is linear. In more detail, the results of the cross-cultural competency linearity test and components of self-adjustment can be seen in [Table 5](#).

**Table 5.** Linearity Test Results of Cross-Cultural Competence and Components of Personal Adaptation

Variable	F	Sig	Information
Cross Cultural Competency – Academic Adjustment	1.039	0.439	Linear Relationships
Cross Cultural Competence – Social Adjustment	0.654	0.919	Linear Relationships
Cross-Cultural Competence – Personal-emotional Adjustment	1.055	0.418	Linear Relationships
Cross-Cultural Competence – Institutional Embeddedness	1.274	0.196	Linear Relationships

The final analysis of this research is the research hypothesis test, which shows that the Cross-Cultural Competence and Academic Adjustment variables show a score of  $t = 0.402$  (Sig.  $0.000 < 0.05$ ). Then, the Cross-Cultural Competence and Social Adjustment variables show a score of  $t = 0.527$  (Sig.  $0.000 < 0.05$ ). Furthermore, the variables Cross-Cultural Competence and Personal-emotional Adjustment show a score of  $t = 0.318$  (Sig.  $0.001 < 0.05$ ). In addition, the cross-cultural competency and institutional attachment variables were tested using non-parametric methods using the Spearman-Rho hypothesis test, showing a score of  $r = 0.376$  (Sig.  $0.000 < 0.05$ ), so it can be concluded that the cross-cultural competency and component variables Self-adjustment has a significant positive relationship due to value ( $p < 0.05$ ). This shows that the higher a person's level of cross-cultural competence, the higher the level of adjustment. In more detail, the results of the hypothesis test can be seen in [Table 6](#).

**Table 6.** Results of Hypothesis Testing of Cross-Cultural Competence and Components of Personal Adjustment

Variable	r	Sig.
Academic Adjustment	0.402	0.000
Social Adjustment	0.527	0.000
Personal-emotional Adjustment	0.318	0.001
Institutional Embeddedness	0.376	0.000

## Discussion

The results of data analysis in this study show that there are several findings in this research, including: first, there is a significant positive relationship between cross-cultural competence and self-adjustment, where the higher the cross-cultural competence of an overseas student, the higher the self-adjustment and vice versa. The lower the cross-cultural competence, the lower the self-adjustment. There is a significant positive relationship between cross-cultural competence and self-adjustment. The level of cross-cultural competence possessed by expatriates is shown by the individual's ability to complete tasks better in the host environment, where cross-cultural competence helps them increase motivation to complete the tasks given with real effort (Purwono & Aster, 2021; Putera, 2019). So it can be said that the higher the level of cross-cultural competence that each individual has, the higher the academic adjustment in the form of performance that they can achieve achieved (Ferdiansyah & Noverina, 2019; Nurdiana et al., 2020; Sanusi et al., 2020). It is further explained that individuals who have high cross-cultural competence can utilize the knowledge and skills they have in encouraging a smooth social adjustment process in a cross-cultural environment, as well as increasing individual acceptance of different cultures and being able to fully adapt to new environments and get along with different personnel. Relevant (Chen, 2019; Khoirunnisa & Sunarya, 2023; Susilawati et al., 2020).

Second, Cross-cultural competence has a significant positive relationship with personal emotional adjustment where the coefficient value is  $r = 0.318$  with sig. 0.001 ( $p < 0.05$ ). It then suggests that individuals with high cross-cultural competence are those who proactively use their cultural knowledge to manage different demands, advance their personal goals, and create a personal niche in multicultural situations. Highly adaptive immigrant students are more likely and quicker to detect cultural differences and uncertainty (Mufidah & Fadilah, 2022; Nadlyfah & Kustanti, 2020). Individuals in the adjustment process can also use effective coping strategies in dealing with stress rather than just complaining about the situation, so that immigrants with high cross-cultural competence can welcome perceived stressors as opportunities to learn and develop in their lives (Ahmad et al., 2020; Hutabarat et al., 2022). Third, there is a relationship between cross-cultural competence and institutional embeddedness where the coefficient value  $r = 0.376$  and sig. 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ), which means that there is a significant positive relationship between cross-cultural competence and institutional embeddedness, meaning that the higher the cross-cultural competency, the higher the institutional embeddedness and vice versa. These individuals with high cross-cultural competence actively seek to join ethnic communities that allow them to gather important information, thereby reducing uncertainty and immigrants possibly experiencing an increased sense of comfort in the new environment (Hua et al., 2019; Saputro & Sugiarti, 2021; Suharsono & Anwar, 2020). The existence of an ethnic community available in a university environment can make immigrant students have a sense of satisfaction in being at the institution (Liao et al., 2021; Siregar & Kustanti, 2020).

The results obtained in this study are in line with the results of previous research, which also revealed that An individual's ability to adapt to cross-cultural differences has an impact on the individual's adjustment when living outside a city with a different culture (Liao et al., 2021). The results of other research reveal that cross-cultural competence and social support for international students influence the student's adjustment process when they are outside an area with a different culture (Aldawsari et al., 2018). The results of further research reveal that there is a relationship between the dimensions of internalized cultural knowledge and adjustment to different cultural contexts, where cognitive aspects of culture can influence the adjustment process experienced by Indonesian students abroad (Ghaniyy & Akmal, 2018). So based on several research results, it can be said that a process of adjustment is very important for every student, every student also experiences difficulties in adjusting because of differences in language and cultural habits with campus friends and society.

## 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this research, it can be concluded that there is a positive relationship between the variable cross-cultural competence and self-adjustment. This means that the higher the level of cross-cultural competence of migrant students, the higher the level of self-adjustment.

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