

## The Influence of Personality on Students' Interpersonal Communication Skills and Intercultural Adaptation: Integration of the Big Five and Berry Acculturation Models: PLS-SEM Analysis

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**Abstract :** *This study examines the influence of personality on interpersonal communication skills and cross-cultural adaptation of students from Sumatra studying in East Java. This phenomenon is important because of differences in communication norms between the two regions that could potentially create adaptation barriers. The study used an ex-post facto cross-sectional design with 85 respondents, analyzed through Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results showed that interpersonal communication skills significantly influenced Big Five personality ( $\beta = 0.626$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) and cross-cultural adaptation ( $\beta = 0.287$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Big Five personality also contributed strongly to cross-cultural adaptation ( $\beta = 0.489$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), with an  $R^2$  value of 0.818 for adaptation. Conversely, acculturation strategies were not proven to have a direct effect on personality or adaptation. These findings confirm that interpersonal communication plays a key role in bridging the influence of personality on successful cultural adaptation. Theoretically, this study expands the integration of the Big Five Personality Traits with the Berry Acculturation Model in the context of domestic migrant students in Indonesia, a relatively understudied area. Practically, the results encourage universities to strengthen communication soft skills development programs and provide multicultural interaction spaces to support student adaptation.*

**Keywords:** *Personality; Big Five; Interpersonal Communication; Cross-Cultural Adaptation; PLS-SEM*

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini mengkaji pengaruh kepribadian terhadap keterampilan komunikasi interpersonal dan adaptasi lintas budaya mahasiswa asal Sumatra yang menempuh studi di Jawa Timur. Fenomena ini penting karena adanya perbedaan norma komunikasi antara kedua wilayah yang berpotensi menimbulkan hambatan adaptasi. Penelitian menggunakan desain ex-post facto cross-sectional dengan 85 responden, dianalisis melalui Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa keterampilan komunikasi interpersonal berpengaruh signifikan terhadap kepribadian Big Five ( $\beta = 0,626$ ;  $p < 0,01$ ) dan adaptasi lintas budaya ( $\beta = 0,287$ ;  $p < 0,05$ ). Kepribadian Big Five juga berkontribusi kuat terhadap kemampuan adaptasi lintas budaya ( $\beta = 0,489$ ;  $p < 0,001$ ), dengan nilai  $R^2$  adaptasi sebesar 0,818. Sebaliknya, strategi akulturasi tidak terbukti berpengaruh langsung terhadap kepribadian maupun adaptasi. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa komunikasi interpersonal berperan sebagai variabel kunci dalam menjembatani pengaruh kepribadian terhadap keberhasilan adaptasi budaya. Secara teoretis, penelitian ini memperluas integrasi Big Five Personality Traits dengan Berry Acculturation Model dalam konteks mahasiswa perantau domestik di Indonesia yang masih jarang dikaji. Secara praktis, hasilnya mendorong perguruan tinggi untuk memperkuat program pengembangan soft skills komunikasi serta menyediakan ruang interaksi multikultural guna mendukung proses adaptasi mahasiswa.

**Kata Kunci:** Kepribadian; Big Five; Komunikasi Interpersonal; Adaptasi Lintas Budaya; PLS-SEM

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization and educational mobility have not only driven cross-border interactions but also inter-regional mobility within Indonesia. One prominent phenomenon is the growing number of students from Sumatra pursuing higher education in East Java. This migration introduces students to a different socio-cultural environment, where they must adapt to the norms, values, and traditions of Javanese society, which has distinctive characteristics, such as more refined communication patterns and high standards of politeness (Hassan et al., 2019a; Klinkosz et al., 2021). This situation requires students to possess interpersonal communication skills and cross-cultural adaptability to optimally navigate academic and social life. Personality is a crucial factor influencing communication effectiveness and successful adaptation (Chang et al., 2013). The Big Five Personality Traits of extroversion, openness, agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability serve as a conceptual framework for understanding how individual character influences social interactions. (Allehyani, 2021; Chen et al., 2025a). Meanwhile, the Berry Acculturation Model explains the cultural adaptation strategies students choose when facing a new environment, whether through integration, assimilation, separation, or marginalization. The integration of these two models is believed to provide a comprehensive picture of the psychological and social dynamics of students facing cultural differences (Berry, 2005; Ward, 2008).

Although there has been research on personality, interpersonal communication, and cultural adaptation, most of it focuses on international students or the context of large cities in Indonesia. (Kristianto & Darmastuti, 2024) Studies specifically examining students from Sumatra studying in East Java are still very limited. This phenomenon is interesting because the two regions have quite contrasting cultural differences: Sumatran people tend to be expressive and direct, while East Javanese people value politeness and social harmony more. These differences have the potential to create communication barriers and adaptation challenges, creating an important research gap worth exploring. (Alderotti et al., 2023; Buecker et al., 2020).

Field observations indicate that some Sumatran students in East Java face difficulties in establishing social relationships, participating in organizational activities, or adjusting to local communication norms. However, some students are able to adapt well through appropriate communication and acculturation strategies. This phenomenon emphasizes the need for a more in-depth study of how

personality influences interpersonal communication skills and the cross-cultural adaptation strategies chosen by students. Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the influence of personality on interpersonal communication skills and cross-cultural adaptation of Sumatran students in East Java by integrating the Big Five Personality Traits and the Berry Acculturation Model. The analysis was conducted using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the relationships between variables. The results of this study are expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of studies on personality psychology and cross-cultural communication, as well as practical implications for universities in East Java in supporting the adaptation process of migrant students.

## **2. RESEARCH METHOD**

This research uses the ex-post facto method with a cross-sectional design, because the focus is on phenomena and conditions that have occurred (Hair et al., 2019). Data were collected at a specific point in time through a structured questionnaire designed based on the research conceptual framework. This design allowed researchers to measure the direct and indirect effects between variables, namely personality, interpersonal communication skills, and cross-cultural adaptation of students, using actual data in the field. The respondents of this study were students from Sumatra who were studying at universities in East Java. A total of 85 students participated, consisting of 65 students from Riau, 10 students from Jambi, and 10 students from Aceh. The sample selection was carried out using a non-probability sampling method through a purposive sampling technique, namely with the criteria that respondents were active students in at least the second semester, from the provinces of Riau, Jambi, or Aceh, and willing to complete the research questionnaire.

The use of purposive sampling technique was intended to ensure that participants were students who had actually experienced the dynamics of cross-cultural communication and the process of social adaptation in East Java. Thus, the collected data can represent the real experiences of migrant students interacting in a multicultural environment. The obtained sample size of 85 respondents was deemed sufficient for analysis using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). According to (Dash & Paul, 2021; Hair et al., 2019) The PLS-SEM method can be used on small to medium sample sizes without reducing the validity of the estimated relationships between constructs. The general rule in PLS-

SEM states that the minimum sample size is ten times the number of the largest structural paths leading to a construct. In this study, there are two main paths leading to the endogenous variable (cross-cultural adaptation), so the minimum number of respondents recommended is 20 people. Thus, the number of 85 respondents has met the requirements and is considered sufficient to produce valid and interpretable findings. To avoid potential conflicts of interest, each respondent was asked to sign an informed consent statement that participation was voluntary and the data would only be used for academic research purposes. The research instrument was developed based on four main constructs, namely: (1) Acculturation Strategy (Berry's Theory), (2) Interpersonal Communication Skills and (3) Personality using the Big Five Personality Traits indicator (4) Intercultural Adaptation, All items are measured on a Likert scale of 1–5. The questionnaire instrument grid is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Questionnaire Instruments Grids

No	Variable	Indicators	Item Example	
1	<b>X1 – Acculturation Strategy (Berry's Theory)</b> (Sam & Berry, 2010; Schmitz & Schmitz, 2022; Tuturea et al., 2023)	Integration	I still maintain my original culture while learning local culture.	
2		Assimilation,	I prefer to follow local culture rather than my native culture.	
3		Separation,	I am more comfortable hanging out with people from the same culture as me.	
4		Marginalization.	I often feel like I don't fully fit in with either my home culture or the local culture.	
5		Attitudes towards culture of origin	I am proud to preserve my local cultural traditions in a new environment.	
6		Attitudes towards local culture	I respect and try to understand the customs of the local people.”	
7		<b>X2 – Interpersonal Communication Skills)</b> (Bubaš, 2024; Devito, 2016; Spitzberg & Cupach, 2011)	openness	I want to share experiences with people from other cultures.
8			empathy	I try to understand the feelings of friends from different cultural backgrounds.
9			support	I try to create a comfortable communication atmosphere for the person I'm talking to.
10			equality	I respect other people's

		opinions even if they differ from mine.
11	Listening skills	I listen attentively when others speak.
12	Communication adjustment	I adapt my speaking style to the cultural background of the person I'm talking to.
13	<b>Y – Big Five Personality Traits</b>	I am interested in learning new cultures and customs.
14	(McCrae, 1993; Psychometrics et al.,;Soto & John, 2017)	I am responsible for completing organizational tasks.
15	Openness	I easily start conversations with new people.
16	Conscientiousness	I easily work with people from different backgrounds.
17	Extraversion	I often feel anxious when interacting with people from other cultures.
18	Agreeableness	I am flexible when facing new social situations.
19	Neuroticism	I remain calm when faced with differences of opinion.
20	<b>Z – Intercultural Adaptation</b>	I am able to interact well with friends from other cultures.
21	(YY Kim, 2000; Ma & Liu, 2023)	I can participate in organizational activities even though my culture is different.
22	Social adjustment	I feel comfortable living in a different cultural environment.
23	Academic/organizational adjustment	I am able to resolve misunderstandings due to cultural differences.
24	Emotional comfort	I adapt my communication style to local cultural norms.
25	Conflict resolution	I appreciate the different values and traditions in my environment.
	Behavioral changes	
	Tolerance	

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### RESULTS

Before testing the SEM model, the factor loading values were analyzed to assess the validity of each item, as well as the alpha ( $\alpha$ ) and average variance extracted (AVE) values to assess the reliability of the research instrument. Validity testing was carried out using the CFA method, while reliability was tested using

Cronbach's Alpha through the SmartPLS 3.0 application. The test results showed that all indicators of each variable had outer loading values of more than 0.700, so no indicators were eliminated. In accordance with the theory of partial least squares, this value has exceeded the minimum required limit, so all items can be declared valid and suitable for use in research.(Hair et al., 2020). Furthermore, the results of the reliability test show that the  $\alpha$  value is in the high category, which means that this research instrument is reliable (Henseler et al., 2015). Details of the validity and reliability test results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Outer Model: Convergent Validity and Reliability

N O	Variable	Indicato r	Convert Validity		Consistency Reliability		
			FL ( $\lambda > 0.70$ )	AVE ( $> 0.50$ )	CA ( $\alpha > 0.70$ )	rho_A ( $\phi > 0.70$ )	CR ( $\delta > 0.70$ )
1	Acculturation Strategy (Berry Theory)	AST1	0.869	0.742	0.930	0.933	0.945
2		AST2	0.859				
3		AST3	0.849				
4		AST4	0.892				
5		AST5	0.899				
6		AST6	0.795				
7	Interpersonal Communicatio n Skills	ICS1	0.844	0.736	0.928	0.930	0.944
8		ICS2	0.835				
9		ICS3	0.882				
10		ICS4	0.883				
11		ICS5	0.849				
12		ICS6	0.853				
13	Big Five Personality Traits	BFP1	0.836	0.705	0.930	0.934	0.944
14		BFP2	0.836				
15		BFP3	0.824				
16		BFP4	0.857				
17		BFP5	0.793				
18		BFP6	0.840				
19		BFP7	0.889				
20	Intercultural Adaptation	AI1	0.875	0.737	0.928	0.928	0.944
21		AI2	0.861				
22		AI3	0.907				
23		AI4	0.893				
24		AI5	0.783				
25		AI6	0.824				

The results of the outer model testing shown in Table 2 show that all research constructs have met the criteria for convergent validity and reliability. The factor loading value of each indicator is above the minimum limit of 0.70, which means each indicator is able to explain the latent construct well. For example, in the Acculturation Strategy construct (Berry Theory), the factor loading value ranges

from 0.795 to 0.899, indicating that these indicators have adequate strength in representing the acculturation variable. The same thing is also seen in the Interpersonal Communication Skills construct, with a factor loading value between 0.835 and 0.883, indicating that the indicators are able to reflect the dimensions of interpersonal communication consistently. Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of all constructs is above 0.50, with a range between 0.705 and 0.742. These results indicate that more than half of the variance owned by the indicators can be explained by the measured construct, so it can be concluded that all variables have met the requirements for convergent validity. In terms of reliability, the Cronbach's Alpha (CA), rho\_A, and Composite Reliability (CR) values all exceed 0.70. For example, the Big Five Personality Traits construct shows a CA value of 0.930, rho\_A of 0.934, and CR of 0.944, which confirms the high internal consistency of the measurement instrument. Similarly, the Intercultural Adaptation construct obtained a CA value of 0.928, rho\_A of 0.928, and CR of 0.944, which indicates that the instrument in this construct has very good reliability.

Table 3. Structural Model Fit Evaluation

<b>Model fit indices</b>	<b>Desire</b>	<b>Estimated</b>	<b>Decision</b>
Chi-Square	Expected to be small	1016.282	Small
Probability	(>0.05).	2,754	Fit
NFI	≥0.90	0.643	No Fit
SRMR	<0.08	0.092	No Fit

Based on the evaluation results, the model shows a Chi-Square value of 1016.282 with a probability of 2.754, which does not meet the significance criteria (>0.05). The NFI value of 0.643 is also still far below the threshold of ≥0.90, so the model fit can be said to be low. Meanwhile, the SRMR value of 0.092 exceeds the standard of <0.08, which indicates a significant difference between the observational data and the estimated model. Overall, these indicators show that the model does not meet the goodness of fit requirements. Therefore, the model structure needs to be improved or modified to improve its fit with the empirical data.

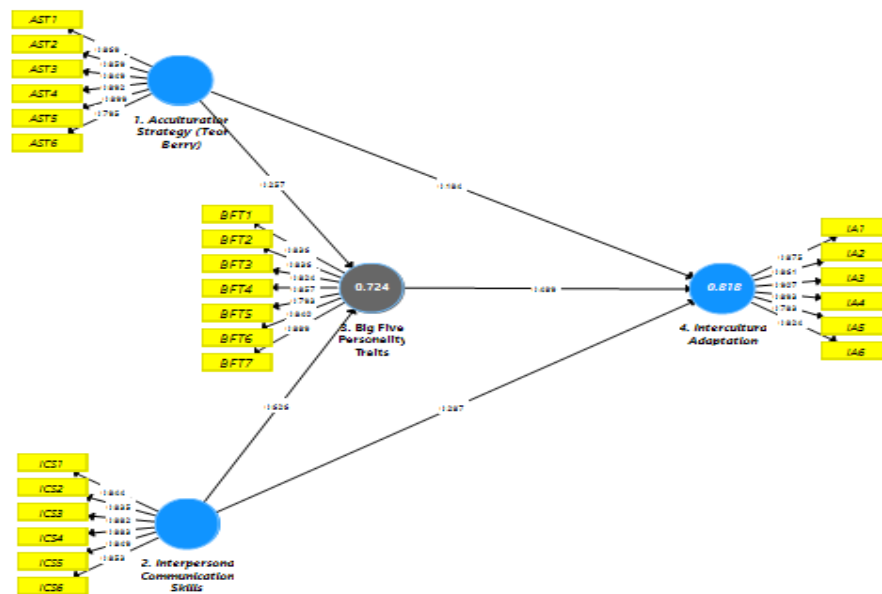


Figure 1. Measurement Model Testing (Outer Model)

The assessment of the measurement model was carried out to ensure that each construct met the criteria of validity and reliability before proceeding to the structural model analysis. Convergent validity was examined through factor loadings, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Composite Reliability (CR). Indicators were considered valid when their loading values exceeded 0.70, while an AVE value greater than 0.50 indicated that the construct explained more than half of the variance of its indicators. Discriminant validity was tested to confirm that each construct was empirically distinct from the others. This was evaluated by comparing the square root of AVE with the correlations among constructs. A construct was deemed to satisfy discriminant validity if the square root of its AVE was higher than the inter-construct correlations.

Reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability. Both values above 0.70 suggested internal consistency and stability of the indicators in representing their respective constructs.

Table 4. Measurement of Structural Model R2

Variables	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Big Five Personality Traits	0.724	0.717
Intercultural Adaptation	0.818	0.811

The results of the outer model test show that all indicators have factor loadings above 0.70, AVE values above 0.50, and Cronbach's Alpha, rho\_A, and Composite Reliability exceeding 0.70. This proves that all research constructs are valid and reliable, so the instrument is suitable for use in the next stage of analysis.

Furthermore, the inner model test through the R-Square value shows that the Big Five Personality Traits construct has an R<sup>2</sup> of 0.724, while Intercultural Adaptation is 0.818. These values indicate that both constructs have strong explanatory power, with most of the variance being explained by the variables in the research model. Overall, the research model is considered good because it meets the criteria of validity, reliability, and has high predictive power.

Table 5. Measurement of Structural Mode (*f*<sup>2</sup>)

Variables	Big Five Personality Traits	Intercultural Adaptation
Acculturation Strategy (Berry Theory)	0.075	0.055
Interpersonal Communication Skills	0.446	0.099
Big Five Personality Traits		0.362

The results of the F-Square calculation show that the Acculturation Strategy variable only has a very weak effect on the Big Five Personality Traits ( $f^2 < 0.02$ ) and Intercultural Adaptation ( $f^2 < 0.02$ ), so its contribution to the model is relatively insignificant. In contrast, the Interpersonal Communication Skills variable shows a fairly large effect on the Big Five Personality Traits ( $f^2$  approaching 0.35), which means that interpersonal communication skills are an important predictor in forming personality traits. However, its effect on Intercultural Adaptation is only in the small category ( $0.02 \leq f^2 < 0.15$ ). Meanwhile, the Big Five Personality Traits construct shows a moderate effect on Intercultural Adaptation ( $0.15 \leq f^2 < 0.35$ ), so it can be concluded that personality plays an important role in supporting an individual's ability to adapt across cultures.

Table 6. The Result of Path Analysis

Hypothesis	Path Analysis	B Coefficient t (+/-)	T-Statistic	Std. Error (>1.96)	Sig. (<0.05)	Decision
H-DIR1	AST → BFP	0.257	0.188	1,368	0.172	N/A
H-DIR2	AST → AI	0.184	0.105	1,762	0.079	N/A
H-DIR3	ICS → BFP	0.626	0.202	3,098	0.002	Accepted
H-DIR4	ICS → AI	0.287	0.140	2,057	0.040	Accepted
H-DIR5	BFT → AI	0.489	0.122	4,010	0.000	Accepted

The results of the hypothesis testing indicate that not all paths in the research model are proven significant. In the AST → BFP path, the value of  $\beta =$

0.257 with a t-statistic of 1.368 and a significance of 0.172 was obtained, while in the AST → AI path the result was  $\beta = 0.184$  with a t-statistic of 1.762 and a significance of 0.079; both of these results are smaller than the specified significance limit and are therefore declared insignificant. This means that acculturation strategies do not have a significant direct influence on Big Five personality or cross-cultural adaptability. In contrast, the Interpersonal Communication Skills (ICS) variable has a significant influence. In the ICS → BFP path, the value of  $\beta = 0.626$  with a t-statistic of 3.098 and a significance of 0.002 is obtained, confirming that interpersonal communication skills have a positive influence on the formation of Big Five personality. Likewise, the ICS → AI path, with a  $\beta$  value of 0.287, a t-statistic of 2.057, and a significance of 0.040, indicates that interpersonal communication has been shown to improve cross-cultural adaptability. Furthermore, the BFP → AI path is also significant with a  $\beta$  value of 0.489, a t-statistic of 4.010, and a significance of 0.000, indicating that the Big Five personality traits have a strong contribution to cross-cultural adaptability.

Table 7. The Mediating Roles of Joint Commitment

Hypothesis	Path Analysis	$\beta$ -Coefficient t (+/-)	T-Statistics	Std. Error (>1.96)	Sig. (<0.05)	Decision
H-DIR1a	ASR → BFT → IA	0.126	0.092	1,370	0.171	N/A
H-DIR2b	ICS → BFT → IA	0.306	0.146	2,092	0.037	Accepted

The results of the mediation hypothesis test showed differences in the influence between the analyzed paths. In H-DIR1a (ASR → BFT → IA), the  $\beta$  value was obtained = 0.126 with a t-statistic of 1.370 and a significance of 0.171, so this path was not significant. This means that acculturation strategies were unable to influence cross-cultural adaptation through the mediation of Big Five personality. This indicates that acculturation is not strong enough to be a predictor of adaptation when mediated by personality factors. Meanwhile, in H-DIR2b (ICS → BFT → IA), the  $\beta$  value was obtained = 0.306 with a t-statistic of 2.092 and a significance of 0.037, so this path was significant. Thus, interpersonal communication skills were proven to influence cross-cultural adaptation indirectly through the mediating role of Big Five personality.

## DISCUSSION

The results of this study confirm that personality has a significant influence on students' interpersonal communication skills and their ability to adapt across cultures.(Aksin, 2023a; Xu & bt. Shapii, 2025). This finding is in line with previous studies showing that certain personality dimensions, particularly extraversion, agreeableness, and openness to experience, contribute positively to communication skills.(Hassan et al., 2019b;Rasid et al., 2025).Students with open and extroverted personalities tend to find it easier to establish social relationships, so they are more skilled at building effective communication.

In the context of cross-cultural adaptation, the results of this study also support the view that personality plays a significant role in determining an individual's chosen acculturation strategy. Recent studies have shown that students with high levels of openness and extroversion are more prepared to accept cultural differences and are able to display greater intercultural sensitivity.Good (Aksin, 2023b;Rasid & Azhari, 2025). This is in line with Berry's acculturation framework which emphasizes the role of integration and assimilation as effective adaptation strategies.(Idris et al., 2019; Utami, 2015). Furthermore, interpersonal communication has been shown to be an important mechanism that bridges the influence of personality on successful cultural adaptation. Cross-context research shows that adaptive personality traits, such as open-mindedness and self-efficacy, enhance communication competence, thereby strengthening students' psychological and social adjustment in multicultural environments.(YS Kim & Lee, 2025)This explains why students with high levels of neuroticism often experience communication barriers and difficulties in dealing with acculturation pressures.(Chen et al., 2025b;John & Srivastava, 1999).

The use of PLS-SEM analysis in this study is also relevant, given that this approach is widely used to examine the complex relationships between personality, communication, and adaptation variables. Contemporary studies confirm that PLS-SEM is capable of identifying both direct and mediating pathways in the acculturation process. (Shahreki et al., 2022; Zheng et al., 2024). Thus, this study provides a methodological contribution while enriching theoretical understanding of the relationship between the Big Five and Berry models in the context of higher education. Practically, these findings indicate that universities need to encourage the development of communication-based soft skills and create a supportive multicultural environment. These efforts can help students optimize their personal

potential while preparing themselves to face global challenges (Sumaryanto & Ibrahim, 2023).

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The results of the study indicate that interpersonal communication skills play a significant role in influencing the Big Five personality traits ( $\beta = 0.626$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) and cross-cultural adaptation of students ( $\beta = 0.287$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Furthermore, Big Five personality traits were shown to contribute strongly to cross-cultural adaptation ( $\beta = 0.489$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), with an  $R^2$  value of 0.818 indicating high explanatory power. Conversely, acculturation strategies did not directly influence personality or adaptation, thus not being a primary predictor in this model. Theoretically, this study makes an important contribution by integrating the Big Five Personality Traits and Berry Acculturation Models in the context of domestic migrant students. This integration expands the study of personality and cross-cultural communication, which previously focused more on international students. Practically, these findings emphasize the need for universities to strengthen soft skills development programs based on interpersonal communication and create an academic environment that supports multicultural interactions so that students are better prepared to face cultural differences.

Future research could expand the scope to include students from other regions and international students to compare the dynamics of cross-cultural adaptation in more diverse contexts. Longitudinal studies are also needed to understand changes in communication skills, personality, and adaptation over time. Furthermore, the addition of moderating variables such as emotional intelligence, social support, and language skills is recommended to make the developed model more comprehensive and relevant.

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