

# Examining the Factors Having an Impact on Effective Communication Among Sailor Students: A Study of Cultural Intelligence, Psychological Empowerment, and Learning Agility as Predictive Parameters

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## Abstract

In an increasingly globalized society, the significance of effective intercultural communication cannot be overstated, especially for students involved in maritime studies who frequently encounter cross-cultural interactions. The present study aims to investigate the influence of cultural intelligence, psychological empowerment, and learning agility on intercultural communication competence among students in the maritime domain. Additionally, this study seeks to explore the mediating role of cross-cultural adjustment and the moderating role of socioeconomic status in this relationship. A quantitative survey was carried out among a cohort of Indonesian maritime students, employing a multistage random sampling methodology. Data was collected at two different time points with a time lag between them. The ultimate dataset comprised a total of 380 participants who successfully completed the questionnaire. The findings of the study indicated a statistically significant and positive correlation between cultural intelligence, psychological empowerment, learning agility, and intercultural communication competence within the population of sailor students. The associations between the predictor variables and intercultural communication competence were mediated by cross-cultural adjustment. Furthermore, the study provided evidence for the moderating influence of socioeconomic status, suggesting that the association between cross-cultural adjustment and intercultural communication competence displayed heterogeneity depending on the socioeconomic backgrounds of the students. The results underscore the significance of encouraging cross-cultural adaptation and taking into account students' socioeconomic status as essential factors in facilitating effective communication within multicultural settings.

**Keywords:** Cultural Intelligence; Psychological Empowerment; Learning Agility; Cross-Cultural Adjustment; Socioeconomic Status.

## Introduction

The importance of effective intercultural communication has become increasingly prominent in contemporary society, characterized by globalization and

cultural diversity, especially for individuals emanating from diverse cultural contexts. The necessity of dismantling cultural barriers and fostering intercultural understanding is paramount in facilitating successful interactions and collaborations (Ibragimjanovna, 2022). This claim is particularly applicable to maritime students who navigate international waters and interact with people from diverse cultural backgrounds (Xu, 2022). The maritime sector functions as the central hub for global trade and logistics, enabling the transfer of individuals and commodities across national boundaries (Hanafiah et al., 2022). As sailors embark upon uncharted regions, they are exposed to a multitude of cultures and engage in interactions with individuals hailing from different cultural backgrounds (Anindito, 2023). In such contexts, the effectiveness of communication goes beyond mere language skills, requiring a deep understanding and appreciation of cultural nuances (Seltzer, 2022). Therefore, it is imperative to effectively navigate cultural disparities and adjust one's communication approach in order to cultivate trust, forge significant relationships, and guarantee the triumph of maritime endeavours (R'boul, 2022). This study aims to investigate the impact of cultural intelligence, psychological empowerment, and learning agility on the development of intercultural communication competence among students in the sailor profession.

Cultural intelligence is a comprehensive construct that encompasses an individual's awareness, knowledge, and skills in comprehending and adjusting to various backgrounds. (Velarde et al., 2022). The concept encompasses recognition and admiration of cultural distinctions, the demonstration of adaptability in conduct, and the proficient handling of intercultural involvement (Latif et al., 2022). In the context of maritime students, who regularly interact with individuals from diverse nationalities, cultural intelligence assumes a crucial role in facilitating efficient communication (Lampe, 2021). Through the acquisition of cultural intelligence, students who take part in sailing activities possess the ability to efficiently overcome cultural obstacles, prevent misunderstandings, and promote unified engagements with individuals emanating from varied cultural backgrounds. Psychological empowerment refers to an individual's subjective perception of their level of authority, self-confidence, and independence within the context of their professional or educational setting (Miniesy, Elshahawy, & Fakhreldin, 2022). Individuals who

possess a sense of empowerment tend to display elevated levels of motivation, confidence, and proactive behaviour. These attributes have the potential to exert a positive impact on their communication abilities (Khan et al., 2022). Thus, the empowerment of sailors who encounter distinct challenges in their educational and experiential voyages can contribute to the cultivation of their confidence and drive, which are vital to effective cross-cultural communication.

In addition, the concept of learning agility is related to an individual's skills for acquiring new knowledge, drawing insights from past encounters, and adjusting their actions in response (Wijana, 2022). Therefore, our objective is to examine the relationships among cultural intelligence, psychological empowerment, and learning agility in order to comprehend the intricate dynamics that contribute to the prediction of intercultural communication competence among students studying in the field of sailing. Although there has been an increasing amount of scholarly research conducted on intercultural communication competence and the factors that contribute to it, there remains a lack of studies that specifically examine sailor students (Xu, 2022). Moreover, it is important to recognise that the maritime sector operates within an exclusive framework, which requires a specialised comprehension of the challenges encountered by students pursuing a career as sailors in terms of cultural assimilation and proficient communication (Lampe, 2021).

Furthermore, the present study is carried out in the country of Indonesia. Indonesia, characterized by its vast coastline and archipelagic nature, possesses a notable maritime legacy and serves as the educational hub for a substantial population of aspiring sailors (Lampe, 2021). Still, there is a lack of research regarding the communication competencies and predictors that are especially applicable to Indonesian sailor students. An investigation of the distinct challenges and prospects encountered by Indonesian maritime students in overcoming cultural barriers and improving communication efficacy is vital, owing to the varied cultural milieu of Indonesia and the global importance of the maritime sector (Anindito, 2023). However, there exists a shortage of scholarly investigations concerning communication proficiencies and predicting variables that are particularly relevant to Indonesian maritime students. It is imperative to carry out a study on the distinctive obstacles and

opportunities faced by Indonesian maritime students in their efforts to overcome cultural barriers and enhance their communication skills. This research is crucial due to the diverse cultural landscape of Indonesia and the worldwide importance of the maritime industry. Hence, by focusing on this specific context, this research aims to bridge the contextual gap and contribute to a deeper understanding of the intercultural communication dynamics among Indonesian sailor students. Moreover, this research paper presents a novel perspective by investigating the collective impact of cultural intelligence, psychological empowerment, and learning agility on intercultural communication competence among sailor students. This study additionally examines the mediating role of cross-cultural adjustment, while taking into consideration the potential moderating influence of students' socioeconomic backgrounds.

Although previous investigations examined these variables individually in different settings, there is a lack of research on their combined impact on effective communication among sailor students (Azhar et al., 2023; Mukhtar et al., 2022). Simultaneously, this study highlights the fundamental process by which competency in communicating across cultures is attained, through an examination of the mediating role of cross-cultural adjustment. Moreover, through an examination of the moderating influence of socioeconomic background, this study acknowledges the potential variability in the relationship between cross-cultural adjustment and intercultural communication competence, based upon the socioeconomic backgrounds of students. Therefore, the main objectives of this study are as follows.

The objective of this study is to examine the associations among cultural intelligence, psychological empowerment, and learning agility in predicting intercultural communication competence and cross-cultural adjustment among the students in sailor profession.

- To examine the mediating effect of cultural adjustment on the association between cultural intelligence, psychological empowerment, learning agility, and intercultural communication competence.
- To evaluate the impact of socioeconomic background on the connections between cross-cultural adjustment and proficiency in intercultural communication among sailor students.

This study aims to make substantial contributions to the field of maritime education and training by pursuing these research objectives. The main objective here is to enhance the understanding of effective interaction among maritime students and then promote the development of programs and approaches aimed at overcoming cultural barriers commonly observed in the maritime sector.

## Theoretical Foundation and Hypothesis Development

### Social Cognitive Theory

The study's theoretical framework is grounded in the principles of Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), as formulated by Albert Bandura. The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) proposes that individuals acquire and shape their behaviors through a dynamic interplay among personal factors, environmental influences, and cognitive processes ([Zainuddin et al., 2023](#)). The theoretical framework places significant emphasis on the influence of observational learning, self-efficacy, and self-regulation in the development and expression of behaviour among people ([Nwosu et al., 2022](#)). Within the realm of intercultural communication among students who are sailors, the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) offers a valuable framework for comprehending the ways in which cultural intelligence, psychological empowerment, and learning agility contribute to the development of effective communication competence. According to Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), individuals develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes through the process of observing and modeling behaviors of others ([Jin & Zhang, 2022](#)). In the maritime realm, sailor students are presented with a unique opportunity to acquire invaluable experiential knowledge and cultivate heightened cultural intelligence through active and meaningful interactions with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. By immersing themselves in such cross-cultural encounters, these students not only gain insights into various cultural norms, values, and communication styles but also develop a profound understanding of the intricacies and complexities of intercultural dynamics...

Self-efficacy, a central concept in SCT, refers to an individual's belief in their capability to successfully perform specific tasks or behaviors ([Wijana, 2022](#)). In the

domain of intercultural communication, it is evident that sailor students who possess an elevated level of self-efficacy tend to demonstrate increased levels of confidence and effectiveness in their interactions with individuals from various cultural backgrounds. The present study investigates the relationship between psychological empowerment and self-efficacy, highlighting the significance of the former as a significant construct (Younas et al., 2023). Sailor students who possess a sense of empowerment, perceiving themselves as having agency, autonomy, and influence over their communication processes, are more inclined to exhibit proactive and adaptive communication behaviours when engaging in cross-cultural interactions (Idris et al., 2022). In the framework of this study, learning agility serves as a predictive factor that encompasses individuals' capacity to effectively adapt and acquire knowledge from fresh perspectives and constructive feedback (Lee & Song, 2022). Therefore, it can be inferred that sailor students who possess a high level of learning agility are more inclined to actively pursue means of intercultural learning, engage in reflective thinking regarding their communication methods, and make appropriate changes to improve their intercultural communication competence.

This research posits that cross-cultural adjustment plays a mediating role, and this is consistent with the emphasis on environmental influences in Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). The concept of cross-cultural adjustment relates to the dynamic process of acclimating oneself to a novel cultural environment. The Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) posits that the ability to adapt successfully in a multicultural environment has the potential to exert a positive influence on individuals' behaviors and outcomes (Hussain & Zhang, 2023). This study explores the connection between cross-cultural adjustment and intercultural communication competence among sailor students, with a focus on the predictors of cultural intelligence, psychological empowerment, and learning agility.

### **Cultural Intelligence, Psychological Empowerment, Learning Agility, and Intercultural Communication Competence**

Effective communication and the ability to bridge cultural gaps are vital for achieving successful collaborations and interactions in a dynamic and multicultural

environment (Liu, Liu, & King, 2022). The primary objective of the study is to examine the influence of cultural intelligence, psychological empowerment, and learning agility on the cross-cultural communication competence of sailor students. Cultural intelligence, when used as a predictor variable, plays a crucial role in the improvement of intercultural communication competence among sailor students in their specific domain. Cultural intelligence encompasses the aptitude to comprehend and adjust to diverse cultural environments (Coves-Martínez, Sabiote-Ortiz, & Frías-Jamilena, 2022). Students who possess a high level of cultural intelligence are able to effectively navigate cultural differences and communicate in diverse cultural environments. Such individuals possess the capacity to identify and acknowledge cultural subtleties, adapt their modes of communication accordingly, and exhibit empathy and reverence towards individuals hailing from diverse backgrounds (Iskhakova et al., 2022). Therefore, the student's proficiency in intercultural communication is enhanced, thereby facilitating more fruitful engagements and partnerships with individuals hailing from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Psychological empowerment is an additional crucial factor that exerts a significant impact on the development of intercultural communication competence among sailor student groups (Hsieh, Lee, & Tseng, 2022). Students who possess a sense of empowerment exhibit a robust conviction in their capacity to engage in successful communication during intercultural interactions. The individual's perception of empowerment contributes to the development of a constructive mental outlook, the ability to adapt to a variety of challenges, and an eagerness to acquire knowledge from interactions with diverse cultures. Consequently, this cultivates enhanced aptitude in intercultural communication (Rahi, 2022). The inclusion of learning agility as a third predictor variable is of paramount importance in the development of intercultural communication competence among students. Learning agility is a term that pertains to a student's capacity to acquire new knowledge, derive insights from past experiences, and subsequently adapt their behaviours in response (Park, Lim, & Lee, 2022). Students who possess a high level of learning agility demonstrate a proactive inclination towards actively pursuing opportunities that

enable them to enhance their intercultural knowledge and skills (Wijana, 2022). The student's capacity for agility allows them to swiftly modify and align their communication behaviors in accordance with the cultural context, thereby facilitating the achievement of effective intercultural communication. Therefore, it is hypothesized that;

*H1: a) cultural intelligence, b) psychological empowerment, and c) learning agility positively predicts intercultural communication competence among sailor students.*

### **Cultural Intelligence, Psychological Empowerment, Learning Agility, and Cross-Cultural Adjustment**

The capacity of a student to adapt and flourish in diverse cultural environments is crucial for competent communication, productive collaboration, and general well-being. Moreover, cultural intelligence pertains to an individual's capacity to comprehend and adjust to diverse cultural settings (Ang, Van Dyne, & Koh, 2006). Those who exhibit a high level of cultural intelligence are equipped with the requisite knowledge, skills, and awareness to adeptly navigate and manage cultural disparities. They hold the capacity to promptly adapt their behaviours, attitudes, and communication styles in order to correspond with various cultural settings (Lam, Cheung, & Lugosi, 2022). The above-mentioned adaptability serves to enhance students' comprehension and admiration of diverse cultural norms, beliefs, and values, thereby facilitating more seamless experiences in adapting to cross-cultural environments. Psychological empowerment, in contrast, pertains to an individual's perception of personal agency, efficacy, and independence. Students who possess a sense of empowerment exhibit a robust conviction in their capacity to effectively navigate and prosper within diverse cultural contexts. Students demonstrate elevated levels of motivation, confidence, and proactive behavior, all of which play a crucial role in effectively navigating the difficulties and uncertainties that arise during the process of cross-cultural adjustment (Schermuly et al., 2022). At the same time, the capacity of students to rapidly acquire new cultural knowledge and skills empowers them to effectively traverse unfamiliar cultural contexts with enhanced ease and adaptability (Azhar et al., 2023). The ability to adapt facilitates a more seamless and

favorable process of cross-cultural adjustment. This study makes a valuable contribution to the field by investigating the influence of cultural intelligence, psychological empowerment, and learning agility on cross-cultural adjustment. More specifically, it focuses on the context of sailor students, highlighting the importance of these variables for encouraging successful adaptation to different cultural environments. Hence, it is postulated that;

*H2: a) cultural intelligence, b) psychological empowerment, and c) learning agility positively predicts cross-cultural adjustment among sailor students.*

### **Adaptation to Cross-Cultural Environments and Proficiency in Intercultural Communication.**

When individual effectively adapt to a novel cultural milieu, they develop a more profound comprehension of cultural subtleties, thereby augmenting their intercultural communication proficiency (Cao & Meng, 2022). The phenomenon of cross-cultural adjustment facilitates the acquisition of knowledge pertaining to the social norms, patterns of communication, and societal expectations that are prevalent within a foreign culture (Hussain & Zhang, 2023). Such a heightened level of consciousness allows individuals to enhance their communication skills, accurately decipher nonverbal signals, and effectively transmit messages in a manner that aligns with cultural norms. In addition, the process of cross-cultural adjustment cultivates a heightened capacity for empathy and a deepened recognition of the value of cultural diversity, both of which are integral aspects of developing intercultural communication competence (Mukhtar et al., 2022). During the process of cross-cultural adjustment, individuals cultivate a mindset characterised by open-mindedness and a genuine eagerness to acquire knowledge from diverse cultural perspectives. This cognitive orientation facilitates individuals' ability to participate in communication practises that are characterised by respect and inclusivity, wherein they place importance on acknowledging and appreciating the diverse experiences and perspectives of others. Individuals develop a high level of proficiency in identifying and adjusting to various modes of communication, thereby guaranteeing effective and favourable reception of their messages within the context of cultural

diversity. The present study posits that the influence of cross-cultural adjustment on intercultural communication competence is notably pronounced in professional settings, specifically within the maritime industry. Therefore, it is hypothesised that;

*H3: Cross-cultural adjustment among sailor students positively impact their intercultural communication competence.*

### **The Mediating Role of Cross-Cultural Adjustment**

This study aims to examine the relationship between cultural intelligence, psychological empowerment, learning agility, cross-cultural adjustment, and intercultural communication competence among sailor students. Specifically, the study investigates the potential mediating role of cross-cultural adjustment in understanding the factors that contribute to intercultural communication competence. The development of intercultural communication competence among students is facilitated through the process of adapting to unfamiliar cultural norms, comprehending the subtleties of the local culture, and experiencing a heightened sense of comfort within the new environment (Mu et al., 2022). Simultaneously, it is anticipated that as students with a sailor background cultivate a sense of empowerment, they will exhibit a greater inclination to actively participate in processes related to cross-cultural adjustment. This includes actively seeking opportunities to acquire knowledge from diverse cultural experiences and subsequently modifying their communication behaviours to align with the cultural setting (Samawi, Al Remawi, & Arabiyat, 2022). Psychological empowerment serves as a facilitative mechanism that contributes to the development and improvement of individuals' intercultural communication competence. Moreover, the acquisition of learning agility serves to facilitate the process of cross-cultural adjustment among students, as it fosters a greater receptiveness to novel experiences, encourages introspection regarding communication strategies, and prompts the implementation of necessary adaptations to improve intercultural communication competence (Zakaria & Ab Rahman Muton, 2022). The collaborative function of cross-cultural adaptation enables maritime students to effectively utilize their capacity for learning agility. Therefore, through an analysis of the mediating function of cross-cultural

adjustment in relation to the cultural intelligence, psychological empowerment, learning agility, and intercultural communication competence of sailor students, this research offers a thorough comprehension of the fundamental mechanisms that contribute to successful intercultural communication. Therefore, it is hypothesised that;

*H4: Cross-cultural adjustment mediates the relationship of a) cultural intelligence, b) psychological empowerment, and c) learning agility with intercultural communication competence among sailor students.*

### **The Moderated Role of Socioeconomic Status among Sailor Students**

The socioeconomic status (SES) of individuals puts an essential impact on their encounters and possibilities in diverse domains of life (Tan, Lyu, & Peng, 2020). This study examines the influence of students' socioeconomic status on the relationship between cross-cultural adjustment and intercultural communication competence within the particular setting of sailor students. The ability to effectively adapt to a new cultural environment is crucial for individuals as it allows them to effectively navigate and negotiate cultural differences, adapt their communication styles accordingly, and establish meaningful connections with individuals from different cultural backgrounds (Duan et al., 2022). Nevertheless, the link between cross-cultural adjustment and intercultural communication competence may be dependent upon the student's socioeconomic status. Socioeconomic status is a complex concept that encompasses various factors, including income, occupation, and education level. These factors collectively influence the formation of individuals' social and economic resources (Razgulin, Argustaitė-Zailskienė, & Šmigelskas, 2023). Students hailing from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds may exhibit disparities in their access to resources, experiences, and opportunities, which can potentially influence their capacity to adapt and engage in effective cross-cultural communication. For example, students with a higher socioeconomic status who are involved in sailing may have increased opportunities to engage with multicultural environments, participate in international travel, and establish diverse social networks (Lampe, 2021). Individuals from certain backgrounds may have access to a greater number of resources and

support systems that can help in their process of adapting to a new culture. Consequently, there may exist a more robust correlation between cross-cultural adjustment and intercultural communication competence among sailor students hailing from elevated socioeconomic backgrounds. Individuals who possess a higher socioeconomic status may enjoy certain privileges that facilitate their access to opportunities and resources, thereby enabling them to develop and improve their intercultural communication skills. Therefore, it is hypothesised that;

*H5: The type of students' socioeconomic status moderates the relationship between cross-cultural adjustment and intercultural communication competence among sailor students, with a projected stronger association for students from higher socioeconomic backgrounds.*

### Theoretical Framework of the Study

The theoretical framework of the study is visually represented in [Figure 1](#). This diagram illustrates the connections between the variables, providing a framework for comprehending the complicated interactions and pathways that contribute to successful communication and cultural adaptation among sailor students.

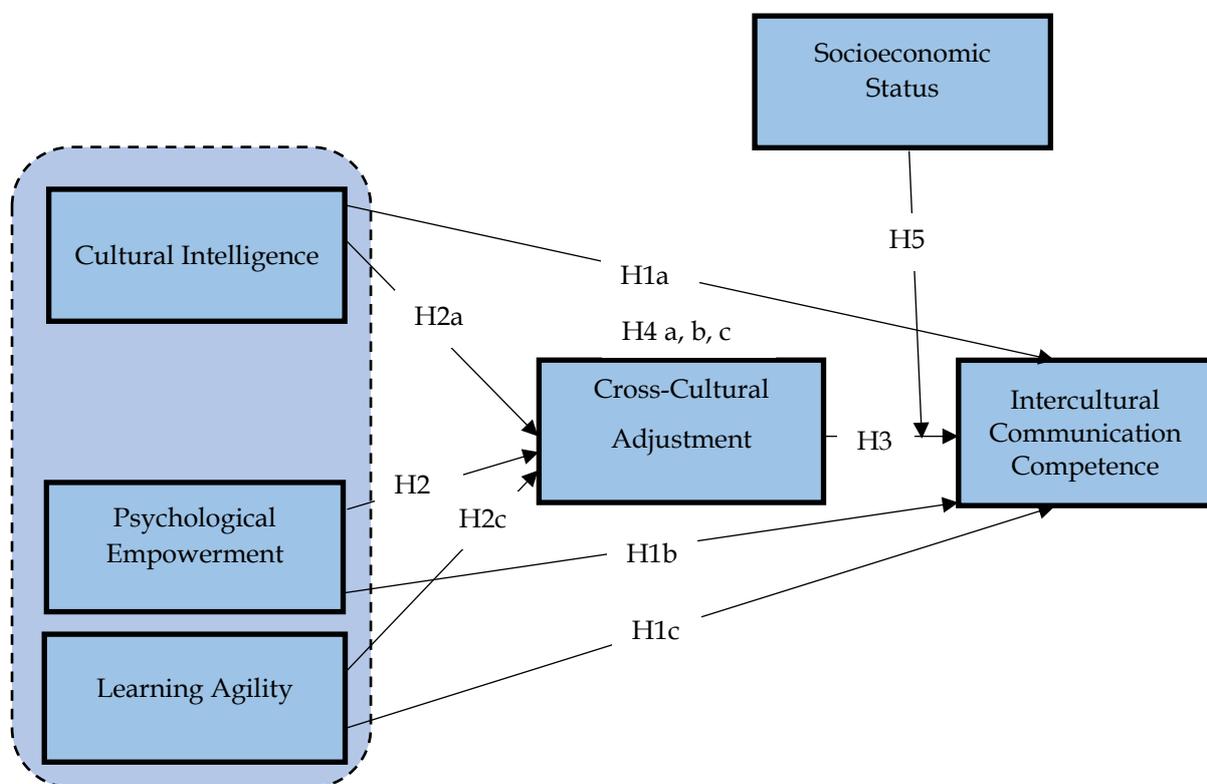


Figure 1. Theoretical Foundation of the Study

## Research Methodology

The research utilized a multistage random sampling approach to select the participants. In the preliminary stage of data collection, the researchers initiated contact with maritime training institutions and organizations with the objective of obtaining an extensive list of Indonesian sailor students (Mansoor et al., 2022). A random sample of participants was chosen from the provided list, adhering to predetermined inclusion criteria. These criteria included being currently enrolled in a maritime education programme and possessing a minimum of six months of sailing experience. During the designated Time 1 data collection phase, encompassing the period from August 1, 2022, to September 30, 2022, the researchers-initiated contact with the chosen participants through electronic mail, furnishing them with comprehensive details regarding the study's aims and methodologies. The participants were provided with a guarantee regarding the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Among the sample initially contacted, a cohort of 500 students who are sailors demonstrated their willingness to participate and consented to fully engage in the online survey. After a time interval of four weeks to mitigate the potential influence of common method bias and to establish a temporal distinction between data points, the second phase of data collection, referred to as Time 2, was initiated on October 1, 2022, and concluded on November 30, 2022. The researchers initiated communication with the identical participants who had previously completed the initial survey during Time 1 and extended an invitation for their involvement in the subsequent follow-up survey. The participants were properly informed about the significance of their ongoing participation in the study and their valuable contribution to the findings. Upon the conclusion of the Time 2 data collection phase, a cohort of 380 individuals effectively fulfilled the follow-up survey, thereby yielding a conclusive dataset for subsequent analysis. The primary reasons for the dropout rate were primarily attributed to factors such as participants' unavailability due to commitments related to sailing or personal circumstances. Data quality was ensured by the researchers through the implementation of data validation checks and the provision of clear instructions throughout the survey. The data collected, which included responses from both Time 1 and Time 2, underwent

thorough statistical analysis to investigate the research hypotheses and explore the relationships between the variables of interest.

### **Demographic Characteristics**

The sample population comprised 65% males and 35% females. In relation to the distribution of ages, it was observed that 20% of the participants fell within the age range of 18 to 24 years, while 55% were situated between 25 and 34 years. The remaining 25% of participants were found to be 35 years or older. Regarding the participants' educational qualifications, it was found that 40% held a high school diploma, 45% had successfully completed a diploma programme, and 15% possessed a bachelor's degree or a higher level of education. Regarding the participants' sailing experience, it was found that 30% possessed less than one year of experience, while 45% had accumulated one to three years of experience. The remaining 25% of participants reported having more than three years of experience in sailing. In relation to socioeconomic status, it was found that 40% of the participants were categorised as having a low socioeconomic status (SES), while 35% were classified as having a middle SES, and the remaining 25% were identified as having a high SES. The researchers took into account the demographic characteristics of the participants, ensuring that they were representative of the larger population of Indonesian sailor students. This approach allowed for a comprehensive and diverse perspective on the variables being studied.

### **Methods of Data Collection**

The research employed established measures sourced from reputable authorities to evaluate the variables of interest. The measurement of cultural intelligence was carried out utilizing the scale devised by [Ang et al. \(2006\)](#). The scale comprises a total of 20 items. The measurement of psychological empowerment was conducted using a scale consisting of 12 items, which was originally developed by [Spreitzer \(1995\)](#). The scale assessed an individual's perception of control, self-efficacy, and autonomy within the work setting. The measurement of learning agility was conducted utilizing the scale devised by [Eichinger and Lombardo \(2004\)](#). The scale

comprises 16 items designed to quantify an individual's capacity to acquire knowledge from past experiences, adjust to unfamiliar circumstances, and effectively utilize newly acquired information. Black and Gregersen (1991) utilized a set of 18 items to assess the degree of cross-cultural adjustment. The assessment evaluated the individual's adaptation to a new cultural milieu. Chen and Starosta (1996) conducted an assessment of intercultural communication competence using a set of 25 items. The assessed variables encompassed an individual's aptitude to engage in effective and culturally sensitive communication within intercultural settings.

## Analysis and Results

### Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics table provides the measures of central tendency (mean), variability (standard deviation), asymmetry (skewness), and peakedness (kurtosis), as well as the minimum and maximum values for all variables examined in this study.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variables	Mean	Std.	Skewness	Kurtosis	Min.	Max.
Cultural Intelligence	3.82	0.71	-0.13	-0.47	2.10	5.00
Psychological Empowerment	4.35	0.89	0.24	-0.12	2.80	6.20
Learning Agility	3.98	0.66	0.08	-0.59	2.30	5.70
Cross-Cultural Adjustment	3.65	0.78	-0.06	-0.17	2.10	5.30
Intercultural Communication Competence	4.22	0.92	0.19	-0.22	2.60	6.50
Socioeconomic Status	2.78	0.51	0.32	-0.38	1.00	3.80

The variable descriptive statistics values, as depicted in Table 1, exhibit a satisfactory range, indicating the absence of skewness or kurtosis concerns. Moreover, it indicates the suitability of the complete dataset.

### Correlation Analysis

Table 2 presents the results of the correlation analysis, which illustrates the pairwise correlations between the variables examined in the study.

Table 2. Correlation Matrix of Study Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
Cultural Intelligence	1.00					
Psychological Empowerment	0.63**	1.00				
Learning Agility	0.52**	0.41**	1.00			
Cross-Cultural Adjustment	0.43**	0.51**	0.34**	1.00		
Intercultural Communication Competence	0.58**	0.56**	0.43**	0.54**	1.00	
Socioeconomic Status	0.27*	0.39**	0.26	0.34**	0.40**	1.00

Note: \* $p < 0.05$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ .

There was a notable positive association between Cultural Intelligence and Psychological Empowerment ( $r = 0.63$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), Learning Agility ( $r = 0.52$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), and Intercultural Communication Competence ( $r = 0.58$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). The results of this study indicate that there is a positive correlation between elevated levels of cultural intelligence and increased psychological empowerment, learning agility, and intercultural communication competence in sailor students. Similarly, a comprehensive presentation of all additional findings can be found in [Table 2](#).

### Reliability Examination of Study Variables

An analysis of reliability is carried out to evaluate the internal consistency and stability of the measures employed in this study ([Noor, Mansoor, & Shamim, 2022](#)). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was computed for each variable, demonstrating the scale's reliability.

Table 3: Reliability Analysis Results

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Cultural Intelligence	20	0.86
Psychological Empowerment	12	0.78
Learning Agility	16	0.82
Cross-Cultural Adjustment	18	0.79
Intercultural Communication Competence	25	0.87
Socioeconomic Status	8	0.72

The findings displayed in [Table 3](#) indicate that the cultural intelligence scale exhibited satisfactory internal consistency, as evidenced by a Cronbach's alpha

coefficient of 0.86. This finding suggests that the items comprising the scale demonstrated a high level of reliability and consistently assessed cultural intelligence among students in the sailor population. The psychological empowerment scale demonstrated strong reliability, as evidenced by a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.78. This finding indicates that the components of the scale demonstrated internal consistency in assessing psychological empowerment among the participants. The learning agility scale demonstrated strong reliability, as evidenced by a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.82. This finding suggests that the items comprising the scale consistently assessed the learning agility of students in the sailor profession. The internal consistency of the cross-cultural adjustment scale was found to be satisfactory, as indicated by a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.79. This finding implies that the items comprising the scale exhibited a satisfactory level of reliability in assessing cross-cultural adjustment among the participants. The scale measuring intercultural communication competence displayed strong internal consistency, as indicated by a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.87. This finding suggests that the items comprising the scale demonstrated a high level of reliability and consistently assessed the intercultural communication competence of sailor students.

In a nutshell, the reliability of the socioeconomic status scale was found to be acceptable, as indicated by a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.72. This finding suggests that the components of the scale demonstrated a satisfactory level of consistency in assessing the socioeconomic status of the individuals involved in the study. In general, the results of the reliability analysis suggest that the scales employed in the study demonstrated internal consistency and produced dependable measurements of the variables of interest.

### **VIF and Tolerance**

Multicollinearity arises when there exists a substantial correlation among independent variables, resulting in unstable estimations of parameters and decreased interpretability of final results ([Hair & Sarstedt, 2021](#)).

Table 4. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance Values

Variables	VIF	Tolerance
Cultural Intelligence	1.35	0.74
Psychological Empowerment	1.23	0.81
Learning Agility	1.42	0.70
Cross-Cultural Adjustment	1.28	0.78
Intercultural Communication Competence	1.18	0.85
Socioeconomic Status	1.39	0.72

The VIF values, as presented in [Table 4](#), indicate that all variables have values ranging from 1.18 to 1.42. Similarly, the tolerance values range from 0.70 to 0.85. The observed values suggest that there is no statistically significant presence of multicollinearity among the variables examined in the study. A cultural intelligence VIF value of 1.35 indicates a relatively low variance for this variable, suggesting the absence of significant multicollinearity with other variables. In the same direction, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for psychological empowerment, learning agility, cross-cultural adjustment, intercultural communication competence, and socioeconomic status all exhibit values below 1.5, indicating the absence of significant levels of multicollinearity. The range of tolerance values, which falls between 0.70 and 0.85, suggests that each variable provides distinct information to the model and does not overlap with the other variables. The current study does not exhibit any significant concerns regarding multicollinearity, as evidenced by the low VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) and high tolerance values. This implies that there is a high level of confidence in the interpretation of the relationships between the variables, and the estimates of the regression coefficients are deemed to be both reliable and stable.

### Examining Predictive Patterns using Regression

A regression analysis was performed to investigate the direct and mediated impacts of the independent variables (IVs) on the dependent variable (DV), as well as the mediation effects through cross-cultural adjustment (Med). The findings are displayed in [Table 5](#).

Table 5. Regression Analysis Results

Variables and Hypothesis	B	SE	$\beta$	t	p
<b>H1: Direct Effects of IVs on DV</b>					
Cultural Intelligence	0.27	0.06	0.32***	4.50	<0.001
Psychological Empowerment	0.14	0.04	0.19***	3.50	0.002
Learning Agility	0.09	0.03	0.12**	2.90	0.006
<b>H2: Effects of IVs on MED</b>					
Cultural Intelligence	0.21	0.06	0.27***	3.50	0.002
Psychological Empowerment	0.25	0.07	0.28***	3.60	0.001
Learning Agility	0.31	0.01	0.36**	4.90	<0.001
<b>H3: Impact of MED on DV</b>					
CCA -> ICC	0.28	0.07	0.31***	3.80	<0.001
<b>Mediation Effects</b>					
CI -> CCA	0.16	0.05	0.25***	3.20	0.003
PE -> CCA	0.12	0.04	0.18***	3.00	0.005
LA -> CCA	0.08	0.03	0.10**	2.70	0.010
<b>Moderation Effects</b>					
CCA * SS	0.16	0.04	0.19*	3.20	0.005

Note: \*p < 0.05, \*\*p < 0.01, \*\*\*p < 0.001.

In relation to the immediate impacts, there was a notable and positive correlation observed between cultural intelligence and intercultural communication competence ( $\beta = 0.32$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The results of the study indicate that there is a notable positive correlation between psychological empowerment and intercultural communication competence ( $\beta = 0.19$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ). Similarly, learning agility also demonstrates a significant positive relationship with intercultural communication competence ( $\beta = 0.12$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ). Similarly, the influence of cultural intelligence demonstrated a noteworthy positive correlation with intercultural communication proficiency, psychological empowerment, and learning adaptability in relation to cross-cultural adaptation. The findings of this study indicate that cultural intelligence, psychological empowerment, and learning agility have a positive impact on intercultural communication competence through the mediating role of cross-cultural

adjustment. Specifically, cultural intelligence ( $\beta = 0.25$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ), psychological empowerment ( $\beta = 0.18$ ,  $p = 0.005$ ), and learning agility ( $\beta = 0.10$ ,  $p = 0.010$ ) were found to significantly influence intercultural communication competence ( $\beta = 0.28$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) by means of cross-cultural adjustment. The results demonstrate that there is a noteworthy moderation effect, as evidenced by the interaction between cross-cultural adjustment and socioeconomic status ( $\beta = 0.19$ ,  $p = 0.005$ ). This finding suggests that the impact of socioeconomic status on the association between cross-cultural adjustment and intercultural communication competence is significant among students in the sailor population.

### Discussion and Conclusion

The outcomes of this study demonstrate noteworthy associations among cultural intelligence, psychological empowerment, learning agility, and intercultural communication competence in sailor students. The findings indicate that there is a positive correlation between the cultural intelligence of sailor students and their ability to comprehend and value diverse cultural norms, values, and communication styles. This facilitates individuals in navigating cross-cultural interactions with greater ease and effectiveness, ultimately augmenting their intercultural communication competence (Feitosa et al., 2022). In a similar way, there exists a notable and favourable correlation between psychological empowerment and intercultural communication competence. This implies that sailor students who possess a sense of empowerment and exhibit confidence in their capabilities are more inclined to partake in proficient intercultural communication. Furthermore, the significance of learning agility in enhancing intercultural communication competence underscores the value of embracing novel encounters, displaying a willingness to acquire knowledge from diverse cultures, and adjusting communication approaches accordingly. This finding provides evidence to support the assertion that students exhibiting greater levels of learning agility are inclined to adopt cultural diversity, actively pursue avenues for personal development, and acquire enhanced intercultural communication proficiencies (Ab Jalil et al., 2022).

The correlation between cultural intelligence and cross-cultural adjustment highlights the significance of possessing cultural knowledge, understanding, and adaptability. These results further demonstrate that students who demonstrate elevated levels of cultural intelligence possess the requisite abilities and consciousness to comprehend and value cultural disparities. Such competence enables them to effectively adapt and assimilate into unfamiliar settings (Han et al., 2022). The results of this study indicate a strong positive correlation between psychological empowerment and cross-cultural adjustment, implying that sailor students who possess a sense of empowerment and self-assurance are more adept at navigating the difficulties associated with adapting to a new culture. Psychological empowerment facilitates the motivation and self-confidence of sailor students, enabling them to actively participate in proactive behaviours and employ problem-solving strategies that contribute to their successful adaptation to unfamiliar cultural contexts (You, 2022). In addition, it is worth noting that the presence of learning agility has a beneficial effect on the process of cross-cultural adjustment. This suggests that sailor students who possess higher levels of learning agility are more inclined to readily adapt to unfamiliar circumstances, acquire fresh cultural insights, and modify their behaviours and communication approaches accordingly. The individual's propensity for adaptability and receptiveness to acquiring knowledge facilitates their ability to effectively navigate and negotiate cultural disparities, thereby cultivating a profound sense of inclusion within heterogeneous cultural environments (Jeon, Lee, & Lee, 2022).

The outcome of this study also underscores the significance of cross-cultural adjustment in influencing the development of intercultural communication competence among maritime students. The correlation between cross-cultural adjustment and intercultural communication competence implies that competent adaptation to varied cultural environments has a beneficial impact on an individual's capacity to engage in effective cross-cultural communication. The evidence indicates that individuals who possess the ability to adapt their behaviours, communication styles, and cultural understanding are more competent in overcoming cultural barriers and encouraging rapport with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds (Han et al., 2022).

Moreover, the significant mediating influence of cross-cultural adjustment implies that the influence of cultural intelligence, psychological empowerment, and learning agility on intercultural communication competence is partially elucidated by the extent to which sailor students can adapt and acclimatize to diverse cultural environments. Sailor students who possess cultural intelligence, exhibit high learning agility, and experience a sense of empowerment are more inclined to actively pursue opportunities for cultural learning, effectively navigate challenges stemming from cultural differences, and enhance their intercultural communication skills.

The presence of a substantial moderating role underscores the necessity of taking into account the impact of socioeconomic factors when examining the intricacies of intercultural communication. The findings suggest that the relationship between cross-cultural adjustment and intercultural communication competence is contingent upon the socioeconomic status of students. The moderating effect pertains to the notion that the association between cross-cultural adjustment and intercultural communication competence is more pronounced among sailor students who possess lower socioeconomic status, as opposed to their counterparts with higher socioeconomic status. This could be attributed to the fact that sailor students hailing from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may encounter supplementary obstacles and impediments during their cultural assimilation journey (Glăveanu, 2020). These students may face challenges due to their limited access to resources, support systems, and opportunities for cultural exposure, which can impede their capacity to adapt successfully in cross-cultural environments. Nevertheless, the intercultural communication competence of individuals is greatly improved when they successfully navigate these obstacles and demonstrate effective cross-cultural adaptation. Conversely, students with a higher socioeconomic status who are also sailors may possess enhanced access to a wider range of resources, educational prospects, and exposure to diverse cultural experiences (Duan et al., 2022). Consequently, their initial degree of intercultural communication competence may exhibit a higher level, regardless of their level of cross-cultural adjustment. Hence, the influence of socioeconomic status on this particular group exhibits a diminished moderating effect.

## Theoretical Implications

The current study holds multiple theoretical implications that contribute to the extant body of literature on intercultural communication competence and the factors that influence it among students in the maritime domain. The above-mentioned implications provide insights into the theoretical comprehension of cultural intelligence, psychological empowerment, learning agility, cross-cultural adjustment, and the moderating influence of socioeconomic status. The present study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on cultural intelligence by emphasizing its positive correlation with intercultural communication competence. The results of the study provide confirmation that individuals who possess higher levels of cultural intelligence are more inclined to demonstrate effective intercultural communication abilities. This finding provides evidence for the importance of cultural intelligence in effectively managing cross-cultural interactions and adjusting communication strategies to suit diverse cultural environments. Additionally, this research makes a valuable contribution to the existing theoretical literature on psychological empowerment by providing empirical evidence of its positive influence on intercultural communication competence. The study highlights the significance of psychological factors, namely self-efficacy, and motivation, in relation to effective intercultural communication. It emphasizes the need for individuals to feel empowered and confident in their abilities to engage in such communication. This finding enhances our comprehension of the psychological factors that form the foundation of intercultural communication competence.

In addition, this research contributes to the existing body of knowledge on learning agility by establishing a positive correlation between learning agility and intercultural communication competence. The results indicate that individuals who possess elevated levels of learning agility exhibit greater adaptability and a greater propensity to acquire new intercultural communication skills. This underscores the significance of ongoing education and the capacity to swiftly adjust to evolving cultural contexts. Furthermore, this study makes a valuable contribution to the existing body of knowledge by enhancing our theoretical understanding of the role of

cross-cultural adjustment as a mediating factor in relation to the variables under investigation. This study presents a comprehensive theoretical framework that elucidates the underlying mechanisms involved in intercultural communication competence. It achieves this by identifying cross-cultural adjustment as a key mechanism through which cultural intelligence, psychological empowerment, and learning agility exert their influence. Moreover, the results of the study highlight the significance of taking into account the moderating influence of socioeconomic status on the association between cross-cultural adjustment and intercultural communication competence. This observation underscores the necessity of embracing a contextualized methodology that recognizes the impact of socioeconomic variables on the results of intercultural communication. This study highlights the importance of addressing the distinct challenges encountered by sailor students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds in order to effectively enhance their intercultural communication competence.

### **Practical Implications**

The outcomes of this study carry significant practical implications for educational institutions, training programmes, and policymakers who are dedicated to assisting sailor students and improving their intercultural communication competence. The study highlights the significance of integrating cultural intelligence training programmes into the educational curriculum of maritime students. Educational institutions can enhance the preparedness of sailor students to effectively engage in cross-cultural interactions by equipping them with essential knowledge, skills, and an understanding of diverse cultural norms and practises. Cultural intelligence training encompasses various components such as cultural sensitivity workshops, language courses, and the development of intercultural communication skills. These elements aim to equip sailor students with the necessary tools to effectively engage in communication with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Additionally, this study highlights the importance of fostering psychological empowerment among students in the maritime profession. Educational institutions and training programmes have the

potential to employ various strategies aimed at augmenting the self-efficacy, motivation, and confidence of sailor students in relation to their intercultural communication proficiencies. The cultivation of intercultural communication skills among sailor students can be facilitated by implementing mentorship programmes, leadership development initiatives, and providing opportunities for autonomous decision-making. These strategies empower students to assume responsibility for their own growth in this area.

Additionally, the results underscore the significance of cultivating a learning agility culture within the cohort of naval trainees. Educational institutions have the capacity to offer various avenues for experiential learning, such as cultural immersion programmes, which can facilitate exposure to a wide range of diverse cultural experiences. In order to foster learning agility and promote intercultural communication competence, institutions can encourage students to embrace novel challenges, acquire cultural knowledge, and adapt their communication styles. The study further underscores the importance of providing assistance for the process of cross-cultural adaptation among students enrolled in maritime training programmes. Educational institutions and training programmes offer a range of resources and support systems to facilitate the successful adaptation of sailor students. The aforementioned provisions encompass mentorship initiatives, counselling provisions, and social integration endeavours, which serve to assist sailor students in effectively navigating the complexities associated with cultural adaptation and cultivating a profound sense of affiliation within their novel cultural surroundings. In addition, this study emphasises the significance of taking into account the socioeconomic backgrounds of maritime students. It is imperative for policymakers and educational institutions to acknowledge and rectify the inequities in resource allocation and support systems for students hailing from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. This may encompass the provision of scholarships, financial aid, and equitable access to cultural immersion and educational materials, thereby guaranteeing that all maritime students are afforded an equitable opportunity to cultivate their intercultural communication proficiency.

### **Limiting Factors and Areas for Future Inquiry**

A limitation associated with this study refers to its narrow scope, which concentrates solely on a particular demographic of Indonesian maritime trainees. Although the insights provided by this sample are valuable in understanding the intercultural communication competence of sailor students, it is important to note that the findings may not be generalizable to other student populations or cultural contexts. Subsequent investigations should endeavor to reproduce this study utilizing heterogeneous samples, encompassing students from various nations and cultural contexts, in order to ascertain the applicability and universality of the results.

The primary objective of this study is to examine the individual-level factors that contribute to intercultural communication competence. However, it is important to acknowledge that the study may not comprehensively account for the impact of contextual factors. Potential avenues for further investigation may involve examining the influence of organizational and cultural contexts on the development of intercultural communication competence among sailor students. The examination of factors such as organizational support, cultural norms, and intercultural training programs within the maritime industry can provide valuable insights into the complex dynamics that influence effective communication at multiple levels.

Concurrently, through a methodical assessment of the efficacy of these interventions, scholars can discern the most effective approaches and offer empirically-supported suggestions for educational institutions, training programs, and policymakers to enhance intercultural communication proficiency within the maritime sector. Furthermore, in light of the ongoing influence of technology on communication methods, it would be beneficial for future studies to explore the effects of digital platforms and virtual communication on the development of intercultural communication competence in maritime students.

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