

# The Mediating Role of Self-Esteem in the Relationship Between Self-Efficacy and Socio-Cultural Adaptation: A Case Study of AuPair Program Alumni

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## ABSTRACT

This research aims to investigate the direct and indirect effects of self-efficacy on sociocultural adaptation, with self-esteem as a potential mediating variable, among Indonesian students participating in the Au Pair program in Germany. The sample consisted of 53 Indonesian students who took part in the program between 2017 and 2022, a relatively small cohort given the limited number of Indonesian participants in this program. The study utilized a questionnaire developed from indicators for each variable, with data analyzed using descriptive analysis, normality testing, multiple regression, correlation coefficient analysis, and hypothesis testing through SPSS 25. The findings reveal that self-efficacy is a strong predictor of both sociocultural adaptation and self-esteem. However, self-esteem did not serve as a mediating variable between self-efficacy and sociocultural adaptation. Both self-efficacy and self-esteem independently contribute to students' sociocultural adaptation. The results suggest that Indonesian students planning to study abroad should focus on enhancing their self-efficacy and self-esteem through cultural orientation and skills training. Future research with a larger sample size could provide further insights into the factors behind the lack of an indirect effect of self-efficacy on sociocultural adaptation through self-esteem.



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Cross-cultural problems arise when individuals who visit a new country or region for a short time need time to adjust to daily social life (Wen et al., 2018). Individuals who stop by will find cultural differences from their place of origin so that there will be a new cultural encounter that is felt to be different from the original. These individuals will encounter many challenges in terms of adapting to several aspects of the activities they encounter during their daily activities (Yang et al., 2006). These challenges can arise from aspects of language, food, habits and perhaps how to dress or other aspects of life. If this is not resolved immediately, it can harm the individual's survival in their new place.

The concept of cultural acculturation tries to understand various phenomena that arise from groups of individuals who have different cultures when these individuals enter a new culture (Li et al., 2021). This results in the emergence of changes in original cultural patterns that require a broader mindset. For example, if individuals from a certain culture then enter a new area, changes in cultural patterns are needed in order to adapt. These differences come from each ethnicity in different ways based on the method chosen (Schiefer et al., 2012). This results in the individual needing psychological adaptation and behavioral adaptation to live life in a new place (Asem Alkhatib et al., 2023). Adaptation is carried out not only physically but also psychologically because sometimes the behavior of local people in a new place is different from the behavior of individuals in their home area.

One of the student or young generation exchange activities that requires socio-cultural adaptation is the AuPair program. The AuPair program is one of the internship or live-in programs available in every country for foreign students to learn new cultures, explore new places, and ultimately decide to stay for a career in that new country (Goethe Institute Indonesia, 2024). The term AuPair comes from French, which means "on a pair" or equal, and can also be interpreted as remuneration (Cox & Narula, 2003). When becoming an Au Pair participant, the participants will live with a host family as part of their host family. They will help their host family to look after the children and do light household work as a form of remuneration and part of the family's responsibilities. In return, the participants and the families they live with will provide the AuPairs with free housing, free meals, language schooling, and other free facilities (Yodanis & Lauer, 2005). This program is also often referred to as a culture exchange program.

The problem faced by AuPair program participants is when starting to adapt to a new social environment (Mellini et al., 2007). Participants must discover habits that tend to be different in the host country where they participate in the AuPair program. The success of students or foreign students in adapting to other countries varies relatively, depending on the influence of self-efficacy and self-esteem on each individual (Sollund, 2010). Almost certainly there will be several obstacles in the foreigner's adjustment to the host society, regardless of the reasons that encourage him to live in the new country. The host family environment is the initial environment for AuPair program participants in carrying out sociocultural adaptation. According to the results of previous research, it has been found that there are at least three problems faced by international students, namely academic difficulties, social interaction, culture, and psychological adjustment (Presbitero, 2016). This situation also affects the individual's condition as a person and as a member of society. International students as individuals are faced with complex changes in the adaptation process in the host country. In this way, individuals are challenged to be better able to face the problems they face (Rienties & Tempelaar, 2013).

Many previous studies have explored socio-cultural adaptation in various countries, including Indonesia. Research by Connor & Nick Higginbotham, (1986) integrated social and cultural sciences into the curriculum for the health community in Bali, Indonesia. The integration of social culture into the curriculum is due to cultural differences which often become obstacles in the health service process in Bali (Indonesia). Problems that arise due to socio-cultural differences also arise in aspects of higher education. Yang et al's (2006) research with students studying in Canada proves that self-confidence is one of the key factors in successful socio-cultural adaptation. Further research from Brisset et al., (2010) involved young people from Vietnam who studied in France. The results are the variables that determine the success of French students from Vietnam, namely trait anxiety, attachment intimacy and attachment anxiety, psychological stress, and satisfaction with social support.

The phenomenon of cultural acculturation can appear in every citizen throughout the world, including citizens from Indonesia. The effects of globalization mean that Indonesia's young generation is starting to study in all corners of the world. However, the diversity of social and cultural backgrounds makes it a challenge to continue living in a foreign country. The results of the study show that the socio-cultural adaptation of Indonesians abroad still needs to be improved (Al Hayyan et al., 2023). Furthermore, Quinton's (2020) research researched 256 students from Southeast Asia in the United States. The results stated that self-esteem was very important for them to be able to adapt well.

The novelty of this research is that the research sample came from Au Pair program participants who were classified as a type of non-formal education and used the self-efficacy variable as an independent variable that influenced self-esteem and socio-cultural adaptation. This is very important because so far previous research has used students or students who are continuing their education in formal education and have not used self-efficacy as the main independent variable. It is hoped that the findings from this research can strengthen the theory of socio-cultural adaptation from aspects of self-efficacy variables directly and indirectly through self-esteem, which is a mediating variable (Gebregergis et al., 2020).

Building on the previous explanation, the research team aims to explore the sociocultural processes that shape the adaptation experiences of individuals in a host country. This study empirically investigates the impact of self-efficacy and self-esteem on the sociocultural adaptation of participants in the AuPair program in Germany. Participants in this program must navigate and learn the host country's culture to successfully integrate into its social environment. Sociocultural adaptation serves as a cognitive framework for personal development. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's specific set of beliefs about their ability to execute actions in future situations. In simpler terms, it reflects a person's confidence in their capacity to succeed in a given context (Rabiei et al., 2022). This confidence, particularly in adapting to new environments and demonstrating work performance, contributes to an individual's sense of self-fulfillment.

Self-efficacy is related to an individual's belief in their ability to achieve good educational outcomes (Diseth et al., 2014). Self-efficacy is a person's self-confidence to increase good interactions in social situations with the surrounding environment (Vidergor, 2023). Self-esteem is a major component of an individual's daily experiences, forming a psychological construct. This condition refers to the way individuals feel about themselves so that it reflects and influences the individual's ongoing interactions with the environment and the people around them they encounter. (Sedikides et al., 2015). Previous experts constructed self-esteem as a general feeling of liking oneself, self-worth, respect, and acceptance (Adigun, 2020).

This research aims to determine self-efficacy's direct and indirect influence on socio-cultural adaptation through self-esteem. The direct impact is known by knowing the significance of the influence of self-efficacy on socio-cultural adaptation. Individuals who have high self-efficacy make the individual have the confidence to achieve a goal (Sedikides et al., 2015). This makes it easier to adapt socio-culturally to a new place. On the other hand, if an individual has low self-efficacy, then their self-confidence will also be low, so socio-cultural adaptation tends to be more difficult (Yorra, 2014).

Individuals who have a high sense of trust usually also have a sense of liking and respect for themselves. Individuals who have high self-confidence to be able to complete an important task have a sense of pride in themselves (Rabiei et al., 2022). This is the basis for indirectly self-efficacy having an indirect influence on socio-cultural adaptation through self-esteem. This level of significance can be determined by comparing the results of multiplying the path coefficients of self-efficacy on self-esteem and self-esteem on socio-cultural adaptation with the path coefficients of self-efficacy on socio-cultural adaptation.

## 2. METHODS

The research uses a quantitative approach with survey methods. This research involved AuPair alumni from Indonesia who had participated in the AuPair program from 2017 to 2022 in Germany with a total of 53 respondents. The instrument used was a questionnaire which was arranged based on the dimensions of each variable. Self-efficacy consists of three dimensions, namely level, generality, and strength (Carranza Esteban et al., 2022). The dimensions of self-esteem are power, virtue significance, and competence (Brookes, 2015). Sociocultural Adaptation Dimensions, namely helping to solve problems, making it easier to take action, expanding abilities, and (Zlobina et al., 2006) doing things with their natural capacities.

Each dimension of these variables was developed into a questionnaire with a total of 31 statement items. The questionnaire was tested for validity and reliability on 30 respondents to find out whether the statement items that had been prepared were valid or not. After calculating it turned out that 23 items out of 31 statements were more than 0.363 so they were valid and the reliability coefficient was 0.88 which means the questionnaire is reliable so it can be used in research. Then the questionnaire was distributed to 53 AuPair Program alumni from Indonesia using Google Form. The results were analyzed using the stages of descriptive analysis, normality test, multiple regression, correlation coefficient analysis, and hypothesis testing using the SPSS 25 application. The research hypothesis is as follows:

H1: self-efficacy has a positive and significant effect on socio-cultural adaptation

H2: self-efficacy has a positive and significant effect on self-esteem

H3: self-esteem has a positive and significant effect on socio-cultural adaptation

H4: self-efficacy has a positive and significant effect on socio-cultural adaptation through self-esteem

The research design framework can be seen in Figure 1 below:

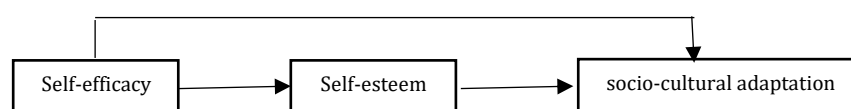


Figure 1. Research Design

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The first step in data analysis, namely descriptive analysis, the results of which are presented in table 1 below:

Table 1. Description of data for each variable

		Self-efficacy	Self-esteem	socio-cultural adaptation
N	Valid	53	53	53
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		3.90	3.77	4.04
Max		5	5	5
TCR		78	74.4	81

Based on Table 1, it is known that descriptively, based on the respondent's achievement level (TCR) value, the frequency value of the self-efficacy and self-esteem variables is quite high, namely 78 for the self-efficacy value, 74.4 for the self-esteem value and 81 for the sociocultural adaptation value. The mean value of the sociocultural adaptation variable is the highest, namely 4.04 and the self-efficacy variable is 3.90. This means that descriptively the tabulated results of the questionnaire for all variables have quite large values and can be continued to the next calculation stage. The calculation is continued with a normality test as a prerequisite test for analysis, the results of which are presented in Table 2 below:

**Table 2.** Normality Test Results

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
Unstandardized Residual		
N		53
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Mean	.000000
	Std. Deviation	2.93395503
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.124
	Positive	.085
	Negative	-.124
Test Statistic		.124
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.040 <sup>c</sup>

a. Test Distribution is Normal

b. Calculated from data

According to the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, conducted using SPSS version 25 and shown in Table 2, it can be concluded that the variables follow a normal distribution. This is indicated by the significance level of 0.40, which exceeds the threshold value of 0.05 ( $0.40 > 0.05$ ), confirming the normality of the data. Given that the data is normally distributed, the analysis proceeds with parametric statistical methods, specifically multiple linear regression, as presented in Table 3 below.

**Table 3.** Multiple Linear Test Results  
Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.684	3.047		1.866	.068
	X1	.985	.205	.553	4.804	.000
	X2	.494	.173	.329	2.858	.006

From the SPSS output in Table 3, it can be seen that the regression equation is:

$$Y = 5.684 + 0.985 X_1 + 0.494 X_2 + e$$

Based on the regression equation, a constant value of 5.684 is obtained, indicating that if there is no self-efficacy and self-esteem, the sociocultural adaptation value is 5.684. The regression coefficient value The regression coefficient value The calculation continues by analyzing the correlation coefficient results presented in Table 4 below:

**Table 4.** Calculation of Correlation Coefficient  
Correlations

		Self-Efficacy	Self-Esteem	Socio-cultural adaptation
Self-Efficacy	Pearson Correlation	1	.713**	.788**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	53	53	53
Self-Esteem	Pearson Correlation	.713**	1	.724**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	53	53	53
Socio-cultural adaptation	Pearson Correlation	.788**	.724**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	53	53	53

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

From the results above in Table 4, it is known that the Pearson Correlation coefficient value for self-efficacy towards socio-cultural adaptation is 0.788, which means the relationship is strong. Self-

efficacy towards self-esteem is 0.713 which means a strong relationship and self-esteem towards socio-cultural adaptation is 0.724, which means a strong relationship. The significance of the variable relationship can be determined if the Sig value. is smaller than 0.05 or  $\text{Sig} < 0.05$ , then the relationship in  $r$  is considered significant. Based on Table 4, it is known that the entire sig value of self-efficacy for socio-cultural adaptation, self-efficacy for self-esteem, and self-esteem for socio-cultural adaptation is 0.000. This means  $\text{sig} < 0.05$ , thus the correlation between variables is significant. These results show that there is a strong and significant relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem with sociocultural adaptation. The calculation process continues with hypothesis testing, the SPSS output results are presented in Table 5 and below:

**Table 5.** Results of calculating the coefficients of self-efficacy and self-esteem on socio-cultural adaptation  
Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.684	3.047		1.866	.068
	X1	.985	.205	.553	4.804	.000
	X2	.494	.173	.329	2.858	.006

**Table 6.** Results of calculating the self-efficacy coefficient on self-esteem

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5.772	2.334		2.473	.017
	Self_Efficacy	.847	.117	.713	7.268	.000

H1: self-efficacy has a positive and significant effect on socio-cultural adaptation

As shown in Table 5, the Beta coefficient is 0.553, indicating that self-efficacy has a direct influence on sociocultural adaptation at a magnitude of 0.553. Additionally, Table 5 reports a t-value ( $t_{\text{count}}$ ) of 4.804 and a significance (sig) value of 0.000. Since the sig value is less than 0.05 ( $\text{sig} < 0.05$ ) and the t-value is greater than the critical t-value ( $4.804 > 2.009$ ), it can be concluded that self-efficacy has a positive and significant direct effect on sociocultural adaptation, with a Beta value of 0.553. This supports the hypothesis that self-efficacy significantly and positively impacts sociocultural adaptation.

The strong connection between self-efficacy and sociocultural adaptation highlights the crucial role of self-assessment in helping individuals adjust to a foreign culture. When individuals are aware of their strengths and limitations, it becomes easier for them to integrate into a new environment (Sánchez-Hernández, 2018). This aligns with previous studies, which have shown that self-efficacy significantly and positively influences sociocultural adaptation (Bikos et al., 2021). Self-efficacy refers to a person's belief in their ability to plan and execute the actions required to complete specific tasks (Hajloo, 2014). Thus, individuals with high self-efficacy are more confident in organizing and carrying out the necessary steps to adapt to the culture of a new country. These steps may involve learning about cultural differences, local customs, traditions, food, clothing, and lifestyle (Lee & Ciftci, 2014).

H2: self-efficacy has a positive and significant effect on self-esteem

Based on Table 6, it is known that the Beta coefficient value is 0.713. This means that there is a direct influence of self-efficacy on self-esteem of 0.713. Furthermore, from Table 6 it is obtained that the  $t_{\text{count}}$  is 7.268 and the sig value of 0.000. This means that the sig value is smaller than 0.05 or  $\text{sig} < 0.05$  and  $t_{\text{count}}$  is greater than  $t_{\text{table}}$  or  $7.268 > 2.009$ . So self-efficacy has a direct positive and significant effect on self-esteem of 0.713. Self-efficacy has a positive and significant effect on self-esteem in this study,

which was proven by the hypothesis test. This is similar to the results of previous research which stated that self-efficacy has a significant influence on self-esteem (Solanki, 2022). Self-esteem is the view or value that a person subjectively gives to himself as a whole. So that the individual assesses himself so that it influences behavior in daily life (Hajloo, 2014). Examples of self-esteem are reflected in firm behavior in expressing opinions, being confident in making decisions and being able to establish safe and honest relationships (Wicaksono & Ratnawati, 2022). Of course, whether you are confident or not can be influenced by how confident an individual is in their abilities. If this belief is high, it will automatically increase the individual's self-esteem (Gebreggis et al., 2020).

H3: self-esteem has a positive and significant effect on socio-cultural adaptation

Based on Table 5, it is known that the Beta coefficient value is 0.329. This means that there is a direct influence of self-esteem on socio-cultural adaptation of 0.329. Furthermore, from Table 5, it is obtained that the  $t_{count}$  is 2,858 and the sig value. of 0.006. This means that the sig value is smaller than 0.05 or  $sig < 0.05$  and  $t_{count}$  is greater than  $t_{table}$  or  $2.858 > 2.009$ . So self-esteem has a direct positive and significant effect on socio-cultural adaptation of 0.329. Self-esteem has a positive and significant effect on socio-cultural adaptation in this study, which was proven by the hypothesis test. The results of this study support previous research from Wu et al (2024) who researched students from Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan which showed that self-esteem had a significant influence on socio-cultural adaptation. Students who have self-confidence will make the individual have the desire to socialize and learn new things and people. So that the socio-cultural adaptation process will be easier for the individual to carry out, adopt, and apply. On the other hand, if self-esteem is low, the individual will be reluctant or embarrassed to socialize with other people and learn new habits in other countries (Sarmiento et al., 2019).

H4: self-efficacy has a positive and significant effect on socio-cultural adaptation through self-esteem

The calculation of the hypothesis test that self-efficacy has a positive and significant effect on socio-cultural adaptation through self-esteem can be seen by comparing the results of multiplying the path coefficients of self-efficacy on self-esteem and self-esteem on socio-cultural adaptation with the path coefficients of self-efficacy on socio-cultural adaptation. If the result is greater than the product of the path coefficient of self-efficacy to self-esteem and self-esteem to socio-cultural adaptation compared to the path coefficient of self-efficacy to socio-cultural adaptation, then it is positive and significant. However, if the results are the opposite then they are not positive and significant. The result of multiplying the coefficient between the path coefficient of self-efficacy on self-esteem and self-esteem on socio-cultural adaptation is  $0.713 \times 0.329 = 0.235$ , while the coefficient of the direct influence of self-efficacy on socio-cultural adaptation is 0.553. This means that  $0.553 > 0.235$  means that self-efficacy does not have a positive and significant effect on socio-cultural adaptation through self-esteem.

Self-efficacy does not have an indirect effect on socio-cultural adaptation through self-esteem. Individuals who can evaluate themselves can find out their strengths and weaknesses, but this cannot be used as a foundation for interacting with other people better (Wu et al., 2024). This is due to differences in cultural and linguistic backgrounds between various countries. These calculations strengthen the results of previous research conducted by Gebregergis et al. (2020) which concluded that the variables self-esteem and self-efficacy are independent variables that are not bound by other variables. So both self-esteem and self-efficacy are independent variables and can be predictor variables for socio-cultural adaptation in research involving individuals in formal and non-formal educational institutions. Students who feel confident in their ability to carry out various activities and adapt to other countries may not necessarily make it easy for these students to make socio-cultural adaptations. Various factors were not examined in this research which could be the reason why self-efficacy does not have an indirect effect on socio-cultural adaptation through self-esteem.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, the study concludes that self-efficacy is a strong predictor of both sociocultural adaptation and self-esteem in Indonesian students participating in the Au Pair program. However, self-esteem does not mediate the relationship between self-efficacy and sociocultural adaptation, as confidence in one's abilities does not necessarily translate into higher self-esteem, making sociocultural adaptation easier. Both self-efficacy and self-esteem independently contribute to sociocultural adaptation. This finding is significant for understanding the dynamics of sociocultural adaptation, reinforcing the idea that self-efficacy plays a crucial role in this process. Indonesian students who plan to study abroad should focus on enhancing their self-efficacy and self-esteem through training and mentorship programs, such as improving foreign language skills and cultural adaptation strategies. A key limitation of this research is the small sample size of 53 participants, as few Indonesian students have participated in the Au Pair program. Future studies with a larger sample could offer more insights, particularly regarding why self-efficacy does not have an indirect effect on sociocultural adaptation through self-esteem.

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