

From Cultural Intelligence to Adaptation: Unpacking the Mechanisms of Psychological Resilience

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Abstract:

Introduction: Cultural intelligence (CQ) influences international students' cross-cultural adaptation, yet the underlying mechanisms remain underexplored. This study investigates the mediating role of psychological resilience in the relationship between CQ dimensions and sociocultural adaptation among international students in China.

Methods: Using a sample of 450 international students in Northeast China, we administered validated measures of four CQ dimensions (metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral), psychological resilience, and sociocultural adaptation. Data were analyzed using PLS-SEM.

Results: (1) Cognitive CQ significantly predicted psychological resilience ($\beta=.213$, $p < .001$), while motivational CQ showed no significant effect ($\beta = .068$, $p = .179$). (2) Psychological resilience fully mediated the relationship between cognitive, metacognitive, and behavioral CQ and adaptation, explaining 30.4% of variance in adaptation outcomes.

Conclusion: Cultural intelligence affects international students' adaptation both directly and through the mediating pathway of psychological resilience, with cultural knowledge playing a more critical role than motivational drive.

Keywords:

Cultural intelligence, psychological resilience, sociocultural adaptation, international students, cross-cultural psychology.