

## Mediating Role of Host National Connectedness on the Relationship Between Stereotype and the Psychological Adaptation of International Students in Public Universities in China

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### Abstract

This quantitative study examines the mediating role of host national connectedness in the relationship between perceived stereotypes and the psychological adaptation of international students in public universities in China. Utilising data from 433 international students across ten universities in six provinces, the research explores how perceptions of stereotypes influence students' psychological adjustment and whether connections with host nationals mediate this relationship. Structural equation modelling (SEM) was employed to evaluate the hypothesized relationships. The results suggest that perceived stereotypes significantly influence psychological adaptation, while host national connectedness positively impacts adaptation and partially mediates the effect of stereotypes. These findings emphasise the significance of facilitating meaningful interactions between international students and local peers to alleviate psychological stress and facilitate smoother transitions for international students. The study offers valuable insights for policymakers and higher education administrators in developing targeted strategies to support international students' well-being and enhance intercultural engagement within Chinese universities.

**Keywords:** international students, stereotypes, psychological adaptation, host national connectedness, China