

**EXPLORING THE LEVELS OF CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE AND
EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE
AMONG ASIAN INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

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ABSTRACT

Cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence have gained substantial attention as integral components of the intercultural adaptation process. Despite their significance, there exists a research gap in examining the specific levels of these competencies within homogeneous cohorts of international students. Therefore, the main purpose of this study was to address this gap by assessing the levels of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence among Asian international students enrolled in Chinese universities and their associated with sociodemographic variables. The study comprised 228 student participants. Participants completed self-report questionnaires measuring their cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence. The findings reveal that a significant proportion of Asian international students exhibit moderate to high levels of both cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence. Additionally, the research highlights a positive correlation between cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence. Among sociodemographic variables, prior travel experiences and international students' friendships with local students displayed significant relationships with their cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence. However, gender, age, and educational level were not significantly related to cultural and emotional intelligence competencies. The study might offer valuable insights into the extensive body of cross-cultural literature on international students and can also serve as a practical guide for university communities seeking to implement measures that enhance the cultural and emotional intelligence of international students.

Keywords: Cultural intelligence, Emotional intelligence, Demographics, Asian international students.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid surge in the globalization of the higher education system has led to a substantial rise in the number of students choosing to pursue their education abroad. Among the plethora of host countries available, the People's Republic of China has emerged as a particularly favored destination for a large cohort of international students from various corners of the globe (Hussain et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2022). Upon their arrival in China, students find themselves navigating a significant intercultural transition within the new sociocultural and academic environment. In the sociocultural context, international students grapple with adapting to local customs, traditions, and ways of communication. This includes understanding and integrating into the local lifestyle, forming connections with Chinese peers, and navigating the cultural nuances that shape interpersonal relationships. In the academic setting, international students may encounter differences in teaching methodologies, assessment structures, and educational expectations (Liu et al., 2022; Zhu et al., 2023). Adjusting to a new educational system involves not only understanding the coursework but also comprehending the cultural context within which learning takes place. Language barriers may add an extra layer of complexity, affecting both academic and social interactions (Hussain et al., 2023).

Intercultural experiences are influenced by a myriad of factors that can either facilitate or obstruct the process. Cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence are believed to be among the psychological individual resources that have a positive contribution to students' psychological and sociocultural adjustment (Ayupitha et al., 2022). Cultural intelligence enables individuals to successfully adjust to the diversified cultural practices (Ang et al., 2006; Malay et al., 2023). Because cultural intelligence is believed to be a culture-free construct that upholds cultural adjustment and equips individual students to live and study with students of different cultures (Ng and Earley, 2006). Therefore, although international students require more time to adapt and adjust to the new environments, cultural intelligence matters and makes a difference in students' psychological and sociocultural adjustment endeavors to the new environment (Chu and Zhu, 2023). When international students emotionally, psychologically, and socio-culturally integrate with the host culture, they are more likely to experience less acculturative difficulties (Berry, 2005; Gebregergis et al., 2019; Sam and Berry, 2010). Likewise, emotional intelligence is an essential feature of psychological, and sociocultural adjustments (Salovey and Mayer, 1990). Emotions are part of our lives and profoundly affect our interpersonal communications. Therefore, people need to know their emotions and those of others to communicate effectively and avoid misunderstanding, especially in a multicultural setting. For this reason, people with a high level of emotional intelligence have a more significant advantage in dealing with emotions in the intercultural transition. Several studies have also found that emotionally smart individuals are capable of effectively dealing with acculturative difficulties (Gebregergis et al., 2020; Schmitz and Schmitz, 2012; Vergara et al., 2010). Therefore, it can be argued that cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence are critical aspects of international students' intercultural adaptation.

While acknowledging the considerable significance of cultural intelligence (Şenel, 2020) and emotional intelligence among international students, there is a noticeable dearth of empirical studies on these topics. Notably, despite the presumed

dominance of Asian international students in China (Dai et al., 2023; Hussain et al., 2023), research examining their levels of cultural and emotional intelligence, along with associations with demographic variables, is notably lacking. Additionally, there is a scarcity of literature addressing the correlation between these constructs within the context of this specific group in China. Recognizing this research gap and considering the broader relevance of these constructs in the international context, this study intended to examine the dynamics of cultural and emotional intelligence among Asian international students in China. Furthermore, the study aims to explore the significant interconnection between cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence. By addressing this gap, the study seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the levels of cultural and emotional intelligence and elucidate the interrelationships between these dimensions. Additionally, the research aims to offer insights into the nature of the connection between cultural and emotional intelligence and the demographics of students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section addresses two fundamental issues. Firstly, it presents the theoretical conceptualizations of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence. Secondly, it conducts a critical examination of empirical studies, focusing on the levels of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence among both general student populations and specifically international students. Additionally, it investigates potential relationships between these intelligences and various sociodemographic variables.

Cultural intelligence

The concept of cultural intelligence can encompass various definitions. One of the pioneering definitions of cultural intelligence originates from Early and Ang (2003). Cultural intelligence, a term initially coined by Earley and Ang (2003), refers to an individual's ability to effectively function and work across diverse cultures (Ang and Van Dyne, 2008). The theoretical foundation of the conceptual model of cultural intelligence draws upon the multidimensional perspective of intelligence proposed by (Sternberg and Detterman, 1986). Ang and Van Dyne (2008) further expanded on this multidimensional perspective, theorizing cultural intelligence to encompass metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioural dimensions. The first dimension is *metacognitive*, which represents an individual's ability to cultivate a heightened awareness of cultural dynamics within diverse environments (Van Dyne et al., 2012). The second component is *cognitive* and it pertains to an individual's capacity to comprehend and assimilate information concerning diverse sociocultural practices (Ang et al., 2007). *Motivational* constitutes the third dimension and it refers to an individual's ability to channel attention and energy towards optimal performance in multicultural environments (Ang and Van Dyne, 2008). The final dimension of cultural intelligence is *behavioural*. It represents the final dimension of cultural intelligence and pertains to an individual's proficiency in demonstrating appropriate verbal and nonverbal behaviors during sociocultural interactions with people from diverse cultural backgrounds (Ang and Van Dyne, 2008). This dimension holds particular significance as it empowers individuals to exert control and regulation over their social behaviours within a multicultural communication network, minimizing the potential for misunderstanding and attributional problems (Ghahremani et al., 2010).

Levels of Cultural intelligence and demographic variables

While there is a scarcity of scholarly literature examining the levels of cultural intelligence and its components among international students in China, particularly those originating from Asia, some studies have delved into the dynamics of cultural intelligence in intercultural contexts. One such study by Al-Jarrah and Alrabee (2020) explored the levels of cultural intelligence and adjustment among Syrian refugee students in Jordan. Their findings indicated that the students demonstrated moderate levels across all dimensions of cultural intelligence. Based on the ranking of students' scores across different dimensions, the study revealed that metacognitive cultural intelligence ranked highest, followed by motivational cultural intelligence, behavioural cultural intelligence, and finally cognitive cultural intelligence (Al-Jarrah and Alrabee, 2020). In terms of the relationship between gender and the various dimensions of cultural intelligence, the research revealed that males exhibited higher levels of cognitive, metacognitive, and motivational cultural intelligence compared to their female counterparts. Even though this study makes a valuable scientific contribution to the existing literature, it is important to note a limitation in the form of a relatively small sample size ($N = 80$), potentially constraining its generalizability.

Further, a qualitative study carried out in Malaysia explored cultural intelligence skills of international post-graduate students pursuing their studies in the country (Idrus, 2021). The findings of this study indicated that the students encountered substantial challenges during their intercultural transition, suggesting a potential lack of proficiency in cultural intelligence (Idrus, 2021). Given that the study of Idrus (2021) adopted a qualitative and exploratory approach, its findings did not explicitly evaluate the quantified levels of cultural intelligence in the participants. In an interesting study, Chkhikvadze et al. (2019) examined the emotional and cultural intelligence levels of Asian international students studying in Russia, originating from China, Vietnam, Mongolia, and South Korea. The findings revealed that Vietnamese students exhibited the highest levels of cultural intelligence, excelling in its metacognitive, cognitive, and behavioural dimensions. Conversely, Mongolian students reported comparatively lower levels of metacognitive and behavioural dimensions, while students from South Korea demonstrated lower levels of motivational cultural intelligence.

Another study conducted among Turkish and international students in Türkiye highlighted that both groups reported moderate levels of perceived intercultural sensitivity and high levels of cultural intelligence (Abasli and Polat, 2019). The study also indicated that cultural intelligence and intercultural sensitivity levels showed no significant differences across various groups, including age, nationality, and educational levels. However, a statistically significant difference was observed between genders within the Turkish group, whereas no such difference was found among international students (Abasli and Polat, 2019). Likewise, carried out a cross-sectional study to examine the levels of cultural intelligence among Portuguese higher education students and their results revealed that the students showed higher levels of cultural intelligence except in one dimension which is cognitive cultural intelligence, in which the students reported lower levels. In a parallel recent study, Sousa et al. (2023) conducted a cross-sectional study to assess the levels of cultural intelligence among Portuguese higher education students. Their results indicated that, on the whole, students exhibited heightened cultural intelligence, except for one dimension—cognitive cultural intelligence,

where the reported levels were comparatively lower. Additionally, Şenel (2020) conducted a survey among Turkish university students to investigate whether variations in cultural intelligence levels exist based on demographics such as age, gender, departments, and year of study or grade level. The findings indicated a significant association between gender and department with the metacognitive dimension of cultural intelligence. Specifically, males and students from the department of French language education reported higher scores compared to their counterparts. However, there were no significant differences in cultural intelligence levels across years of study (grade level) and age groups (Şenel, 2020). It is important to highlight that as the study focused on local university students, the results may not apply to the context of international students.

In summary, the literature in this section indicates that the cultural intelligence of international students generally falls within the moderate to higher range. However, the relationship between cultural intelligence and demographics is varied and not fully established. Some demographic factors show significant associations with cultural intelligence, while others do not.

Emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence encompasses various definitions, one of which highlights an individual's ability to recognize and understand their own emotions as well as those of others (Mayer et al., 2000). Based on the broader intelligence concept, Mayer and Salovey (1997) have proposed an emotional intelligence model as a distinct cognitive ability closely linked to general intelligence. This model encompasses four branches of emotional abilities: perception of emotions, reasoning with emotions, understanding emotions, and managing emotions (Mayer et al., 2016). The first component is *perception of emotions*. It is a key component of emotional intelligence, involves the ability to discern specific emotional elements within oneself and others, as well as effectively communicate and discuss these emotions (Mayer et al., 2016). The second component is *enhancing cognitive processes*. This facet of emotional intelligence pertains to an individual's skill in harnessing emotional understanding to support cognitive functions such as thinking, problem-solving, memory, judgment, and decision-making – integral aspects for personal well-being and interpersonal relationships. The third component is *understanding emotions*. This aspect of emotional intelligence signifies an individual's capacity to comprehend that emotions unfold differently across cultures, understand how genuine feelings can impact future emotional states, differentiate between emotions and moods, identify emotional transitions, assess conditions that evoke emotions, and discern the antecedents and consequences of emotional responses (Mayer et al., 2016). The fourth and final component is *managing emotions*. The pinnacle of emotional intelligence lies in the ability to manage emotions effectively. This skill involves regulating one's own emotions and those of others.

Levels of Emotional intelligence and demographic variables

Numerous prior studies have investigated the levels of emotional intelligence within the broader higher education student community. For instance, Hamdzah et al. (2016) found that university students exhibited moderate levels of emotional intelligence. However, it was also observed that students displayed lower levels of emotional intelligence in specific components, notably in areas such as self-regulation and motivation. Similarly, Mohzan et al. (2013) employed a cross-sectional

approach with a sample of 171 undergraduate students in Malaysia to measure emotional intelligence and its four dimensions: self-emotion appraisal, others' emotions appraisal, understanding emotions, and regulation of emotions. The results of this study revealed that the students exhibited a higher level of emotional intelligence along with positive outcomes across its four sub-components. A recent study conducted among nursing students in Saudi Arabia also found that a majority of the participants reported moderate to high levels of emotional intelligence (Almansour, 2023). Additionally, the study revealed a significant association between participants' levels of emotional intelligence and their demographics, including age, marital status, and years of study (Almansour, 2023). In a similar line of research, Kant (2019) examined the levels of emotional intelligence, utilizing a sample of 200 university students in India. Kant's findings corroborated the notion that a substantial majority of the student participants demonstrated higher levels of emotional intelligence. Even though these studies enhance our comprehension of emotional intelligence within the higher education setting, their scope is limited to domestic university students. Consequently, the findings may not fully capture the experiences of international students.

More specifically, several studies have explored the emotional intelligence levels of international students. In a study carried out in Hungary, it was observed that international students exhibited moderate levels across various dimensions of emotional intelligence, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (Valishin et al., 2022). Furthermore, the study indicated that the levels of emotional intelligence showed no significant associations with age and gender. However, a significant limitation of this research stems from its reliance on a small sample size, and caution should be exercised when attempting to generalize the findings to the broader international student population. Furthermore, a study conducted in Russia among Asian international students revealed that Mongolian and Chinese students displayed higher levels of emotional intelligence compared to their Vietnamese and South Korean counterparts (Chkhikvadze et al., 2019). Another comparative analysis conducted in Singapore between undergraduate international and domestic university students revealed that international students exhibited higher levels of emotional intelligence compared to their domestic counterparts (Fatt and Howe, 2003). Among the various demographics investigated in this study, including gender, age, and level of study, gender emerged as a statistically significant factor influencing emotional intelligence. Notably, males appeared to demonstrate higher emotional intelligence compared to their female counterparts. In general, international students exhibit a range of emotional intelligence levels, with the majority falling within the moderate to high spectrum, although instances of lower levels exist in certain cases.

The synthesis of existing literature reveals that a considerable number of higher education students, both domestic and international, display moderate to high levels of emotional intelligence. Moreover, disparities in emotional intelligence levels are apparent across several demographic and cultural backgrounds, emphasizing the importance of inclusivity in research on emotional intelligence among student populations.

The association between cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence

While cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence represent distinct psychological constructs, they also exhibit notable similarities. Unlike personality traits, which tend to remain relatively stable over time, both cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence are conceptualized as constructs that can undergo change and development (Ang et al., 2006). While personality traits are typically stable across time, cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence are considered more dynamic and subject to developmental shifts (Ang et al., 2006). This trait-like nature can serve as antecedents for state-like constructs, suggesting that emotional intelligence and cultural intelligence may influence each other reciprocally (Ang et al., 2006). Despite limited empirical studies exploring the relationship between cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence (Carvalho et al., 2020), existing research suggests certain specific facets of emotional intelligence may be correlated with particular dimensions of cultural intelligence. For example, Moon (2010) conducted confirmatory and regression analyses to investigate the connection between emotional intelligence and the four dimensions of cultural intelligence. The empirical findings indicate a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and cultural intelligence. However, it is crucial to recognize that emotional intelligence and cultural intelligence are distinctive psychological states (Moon, 2010). A study involving 230 international students in Indonesia also found a positive correlation between cultural intelligence, emotional intelligence, and most of their respective components (Putranto et al., 2018). It's worth noting, however, that the observed correlations were relatively weak. Overall, existing literature indicates a positive link between cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence.

Aim of the Study

The primary purpose of the study was to investigate the levels of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence among Asian international students studying in different Chinese universities. Additionally, the study aimed to explore the relationship between the levels of cultural and emotional intelligence and various sociodemographic variables among the students.

Research objectives

The current study had five objectives and the objectives are presented as follows.

1. To investigate the levels of cultural intelligence among Asian international students in China.
2. To determine whether students' cultural intelligence scores significantly differ across their demographics.
3. To examine the levels of emotional intelligence among Asian international students in China.
4. To ascertain whether students' emotional intelligence scores significantly differ across their demographics.
5. To explore the interplay between cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence among Asian international students in China.

METHODS

Sample of the study

The participants of the study were Asian international students who were doing their undergraduate and postgraduate studies at several universities in Wuhan, the People’s Republic of China. The decision to recruit Asian international students for this study stems from the fact that they represent the largest international students in China. Moreover, despite potential variations in their national cultures, there tends to be a degree of cultural similarity among students originating from the same continent. Consequently, examining the cultural and emotional intelligence of students with similar backgrounds may provide deeper insights compared to those from diverse continents. The study recruited a total of 228 international university students (119/52.2% males and 109/47.8% females) with an average age of 26.8 years. Concerning marital status, 64(28.1 %) of the participants were married, and the remaining 164 (71.9%) were unmarried. As per educational level, there were 55 (24.1%) – bachelor’s, 103 (45.2%) – Master’s, and 70 (30.7%) – doctorate students. Regarding prior travel experiences, while more than half of the participants reported that they had previous abroad experience ($n = 132$; 57.9%), several participants were found to have no prior travel experience before coming to China ($n = 95$; 41.1%). About their friendship with Chinese students, the majority of the student participants responded that they have Chinese friends ($n = 177$; 76.6%) and some participants reported that they were unable to make Chinese friends ($n = 51$; 22.4%). The participants originated from 28 Asian countries such as Indonesia, Pakistan, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Vietnam, Thailand, Mongolia, and Cambodia.

Table 1. Summary of demographic characteristics of the participants ($N = 228$)

Variable	Sub-groups	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	119	52.20
	Female	109	47.80
Marital Status	Married	64	28.10
	Single	164	71.90
Prior Travel Experience	Yes	133	58.30
	No	95	41.70
Educational Level	Bachelor	55	24.10
	Master	103	45.20
	Doctoral	70	30.70
Chinese Friends	Yes	177	77.60
	No	51	22.40

Source: Authors’ data

Measures

Sociodemographics. To gather information on sociodemographic variables, participants were queried to furnish details about their age, gender, continent

of origin, marital status, educational attainment, and friendship with Chinese students.

Cultural Intelligence. The Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS) developed by Ang et al. (2007) was employed to measure the cultural intelligence of international student participants. CQS is a reliable 20-item multifaceted scale encompassing four subscales rates on seven Likert scales ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). the four subscales of CQS are metacognition, cognition, motivation, and behaviour (Ang et al., 2007). Evidence for convergent validity was also provided (Ang et al., 2007; Moon, 2010). In the current study, the measure was also found to have a high overall reliability coefficient ($\alpha = .88$).

Emotional Intelligence. The variable emotional intelligence was measured using the Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test developed (SEIT) by Schutte et al. (1998). SEIT contains 33 items rated on five Likert-type scales ranging between 1 = (*Strongly Disagree*) and 5 = (*Strongly Agree*). The internal consistency of SEIT, as measured by Cronbach's alphas was found to be highly reliable with a reliability coefficient of 0.90 (Schutte et al., 1998). Notwithstanding Schutte et al. (1998) initially developed SEIT as one solution factor, following factor analytic studies, however, suggested a four-factor solution for the 33 items (Ciarrochi et al., 2001; Petrides and Furnham, 2000; Saklofske et al., 2003). The four subscales of emotional intelligence are the perception of emotions, managing one's emotions, managing others' emotions, and utilization of emotions. The overall reliability was .84 (Ciarrochi et al., 2001). The measure also appeared to be highly reliable in the current study as well with a reliability coefficient of .90.

Data collection procedure and ethical consideration

Upon receiving approval from the School of Psychology, Central China Normal University, a self-report questionnaire was disseminated to participants in their respective classrooms, libraries, and dormitories. The administration, guidance, and facilitation of the data collection process were undertaken by senior Master's or Ph.D. students from Central China Normal University, along with the assistance of country mates and friends. This collaborative effort aimed to address any potential challenges participants might encounter in understanding the item statements. In adherence to the guidelines outlined by the American Psychological Association, participation in the current study was entirely voluntary and contingent upon informed consent. Participants were explicitly informed that the gathered data would exclusively be used for research purposes and not for any other intent. Emphasis was placed on upholding individual safety, fostering respect, ensuring autonomy, maintaining data anonymity, and preserving confidentiality throughout the study.

Data Analysis

The initial dataset was entered into version 25 of SPSS (Statistical Packages for Social Sciences). Subsequently, various descriptive statistical techniques were employed for data analysis. Specifically, methods such as frequency distribution, mean, and standard deviation were utilized to provide a summary of the data. Additionally, Pearson's correlation was applied to investigate relationships between the study variables. To explore the levels of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence, as well as their respective sub-scales, the total continu-

ous scores for each variable were categorized into three groups of scores. The lower one-third of the total scores were designated as a lower level or below average, while middle scores indicated a moderate level. The upper one-third of the total scores denoted an above-average or a higher level of emotional intelligence.

RESULTS

Descriptive values of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence

Table 2 provides a comprehensive overview of essential statistical measures, encompassing mean values, standard deviations, Cronbach’s alpha coefficients, skewness, and kurtosis values for the variables under study. The reliability coefficients for all scales demonstrated robust internal consistency, exceeding the recommended threshold of .50 (Taber, 2018). To evaluate the normality assumption of the study variables, skewness and kurtosis values, indicative of distribution shape, were computed. Generally, values within the – 2 to +2 range for both skewness and kurtosis are considered acceptable for a normal univariate distribution (Gravetter and Wallnau, 2014) As evident in Table 2, all variables exhibited skewness and kurtosis values within this acceptable range, affirming the normal distribution of the data. Furthermore, descriptive analyses uncovered that student participants’ cultural intelligence scores ranged from 33 to 140, while overall emotional intelligence scores spanned from 59 to 162.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the study variables (N = 228)

Variables	Min	Max	M	SD	α	Items	Sk	Ku
Metacognitive	4.00	28.00	18.37	4.94	.82	4	-.31	-.04
Cognitive	6.00	42.00	25.95	6.74	.85	6	-.16	-.15
Motivational	8.00	35.00	26.02	5.44	.86	5	-.49	-.09
Behavioural	5.00	35.00	23.55	5.67	.86	5	-.21	.23
Total Cultural Intelligence	33.00	140.00	93.89	17.00	.90	20	-.03	.07
Perception of Emotions	20.00	50.00	35.58	4.84	.68	10	.07	1.06
Managing own Emotions	15.00	45.00	34.76	5.13	.78	9	-.66	.77
Managing Others’ Emotions	13.00	40.00	29.96	4.72	.75	8	-.46	.21
Utilization of Emotions	9.00	30.00	23.06	3.64	.72	6	-.64	.65
Total Emotional Intelligence	59.00	162.00	123.36	15.87	.91	33	-.58	.85

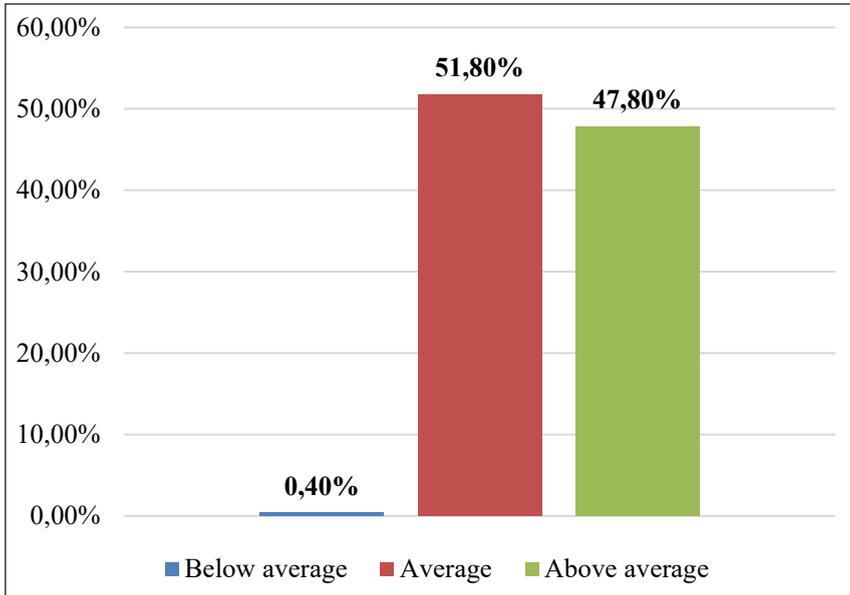
Note: *Min* = Minimum; *Max* = Maximum; *Sk* = skewness; *Ku* = Kurtosis

Source: Authors’ data

Levels of overall cultural intelligence

A frequency distribution analysis was conducted to investigate the levels of cultural intelligence and its constituent components. The results generally indicate that students demonstrated moderate to higher levels of overall cultural intelligence. Referring to Figure 1, it is evident that 51.80% ($n = 118$) of respondents reported average scores, while 47.80% ($n = 109$) scored above average on overall cultural intelligence. Only a small fraction, 0.40% of the sample, reported lower levels of overall cultural intelligence.

Figure 1. Total Cultural Intelligence



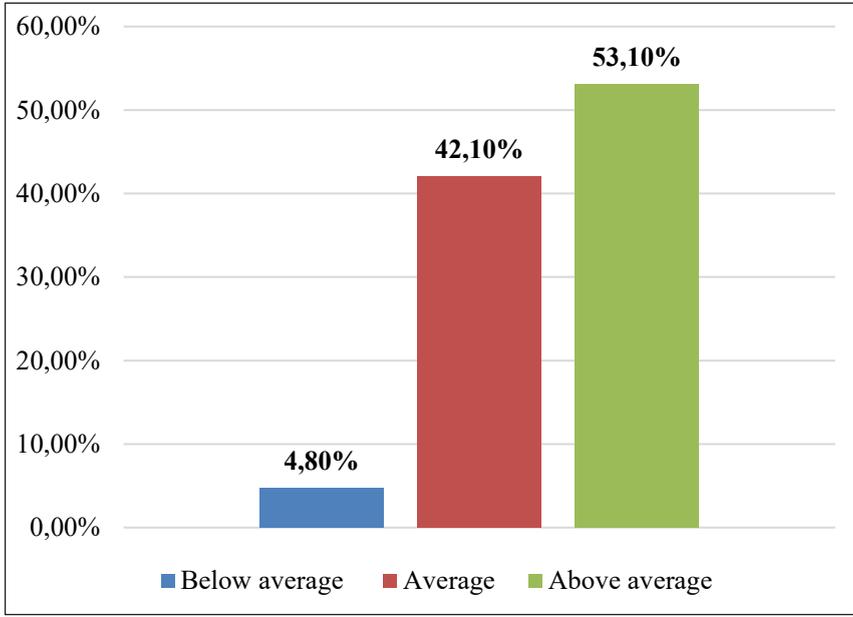
Source: Authors' data

Levels of components of cultural intelligence

In addition to assessing overall cultural intelligence, the study also examined individual components. Figure 2 illustrates the levels of the first component, metacognitive cultural intelligence. The results show that more than half of the students demonstrated higher levels ($n = 126$; 53.10%), while 42.10% ($n = 96$) and 4.80% ($n = 11$) reported moderate and lower levels, respectively. Moving on to Figure 3, the majority of students exhibited moderate ($n = 135$; 59.20%) and higher ($n = 83$; 36.40%) levels of cognitive cultural intelligence, the second component. Only a small proportion ($n = 10$; 4.10%) reported lower levels in this dimension. Figure 4 presents the levels of motivational cultural intelligence, the third component, indicating that around two-thirds of the sample had higher levels ($n = 150$; 65.30%). Moreover, 33.30% ($n = 76$) demonstrated moderate levels, and only 0.90% ($n = 2$) reported below-average scores. The final component, behavioural cultural intelligence, is depicted in Figure 5. Results revealed that 52.20% ($n = 118$) of participants scored average, while 44.56% ($n = 101$) scored above average. On the other hand, there were a few participants who scored lower in behavioural cultural intelligence ($n = 8$; 3.50%). Comparing

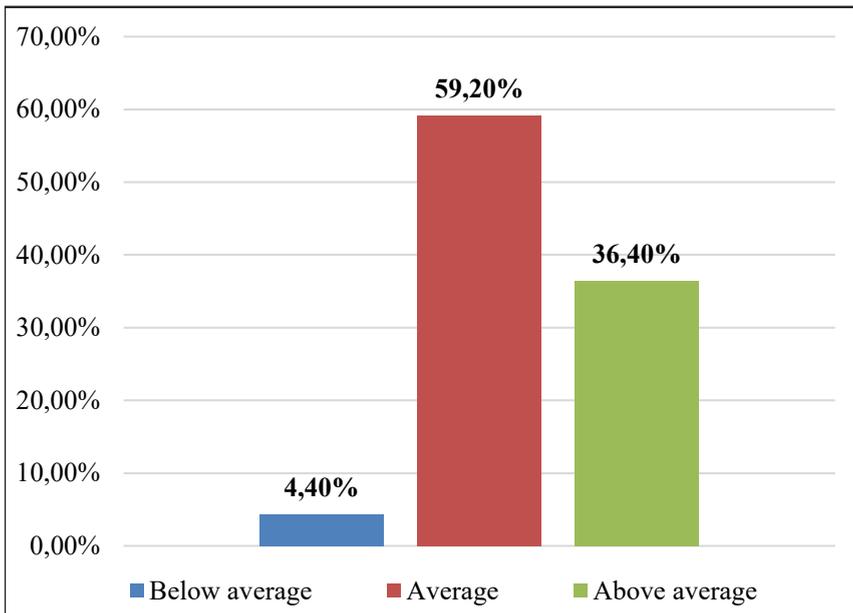
students' levels across the four dimensions, it is evident that they performed highest in motivational cultural intelligence, followed by metacognitive cultural intelligence.

Figure 2. *Metacognitive Cultural Intelligence*



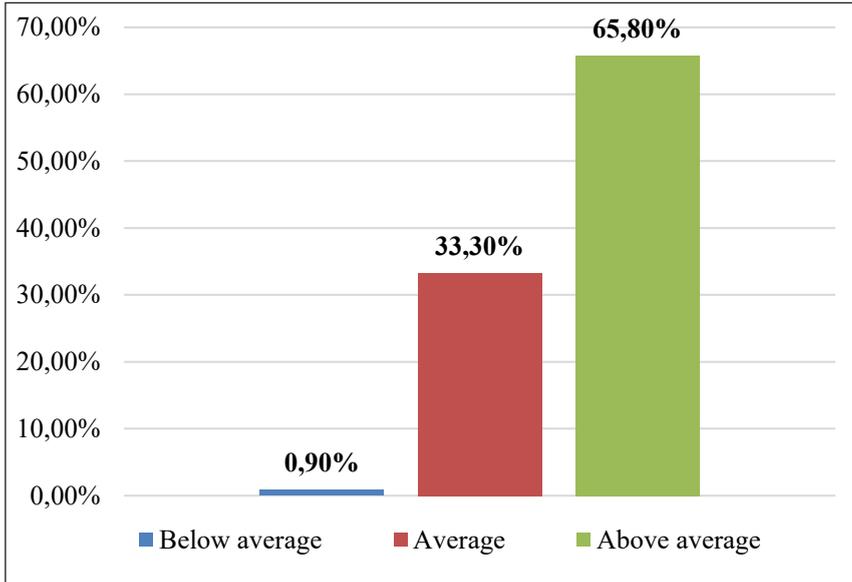
Source: Authors' data

Figure 3. *Cognitive Cultural Intelligence*



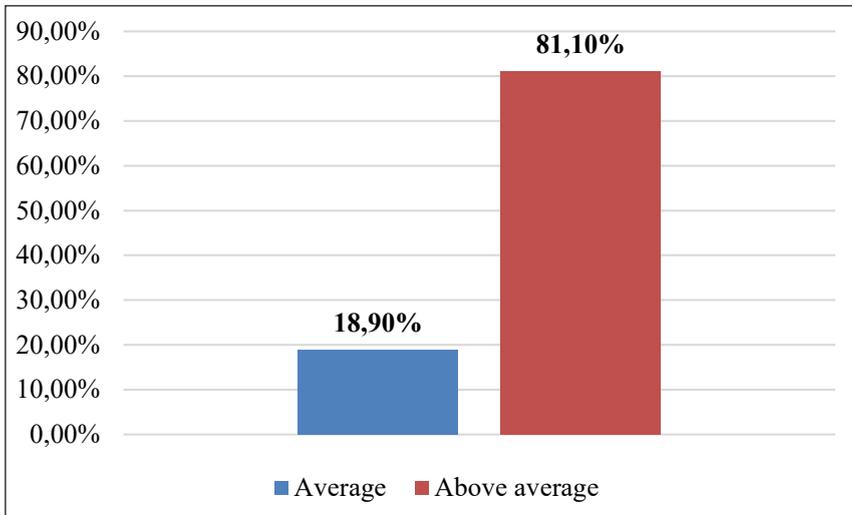
Source: Authors' data

Figure 4. *Motivational Cultural intelligence*



Source: Authors' data

Figure 5. *Behavioral Cultural Intelligence*



Source: Authors' data

Levels of cultural intelligence and demographics

Gender and marital status, age, and educational level

To assess the statistical significance of the relationships of participants' demographic variables of gender and marital status with their scores for cultural intelligence and its dimensions, an independent sample t-test was conducted. As shown in Table 3 and Table 4, the findings revealed no statistically significant

differences in the scores of all variables for gender and marital status sub-groups ($p > .05$). This suggests that both males and females as well as married and unmarried demonstrated similar levels of cultural intelligence. A Pearson product-moment correlation was employed to examine the association between age and cultural intelligence and the obtained result indicated that there was no statistically significant relationship between the variables ($p > .05$). Concerning the participants' educational levels, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine potential variations in cultural intelligence and its components among students with bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees. The results revealed there were no statistically significant mean differences among the groups for the specified variables ($p > .05$).

Table 3. *Levels of cultural intelligence and gender*

Variables	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Metacognitive	Male	18.43	4.72	.178	.859
	Female	18.31	5.19		
Cognitive	Male	26.56	6.79	1.444	.150
	Female	25.28	6.67		
Motivational	Male	25.78	5.24	-.696	.487
	Female	26.28	5.67		
Behavioural	Male	23.41	5.54	-.379	.705
	Female	23.69	5.83		
Cultural Intelligence	Male	94.18	16.88	.273	.785
	Female	93.57	17.21		

Source: Authors' data

Table 4. *Levels of cultural intelligence and marital status*

Variables	Marital Status	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Metacognitive	Married	18.53	5.72	.302	.763
	Unmarried	18.31	4.61		
Cognitive	Married	25.23	7.19	-.997	.320
	Unmarried	26.22	6.56		
Motivational	Married	26.09	5.52	.124	.901
	Unmarried	25.99	5.42		
Behavioural	Married	23.90	5.78	.595	.552
	Unmarried	23.40	5.63		
Cultural Intelligence	Married	93.76	18.76	-.069	.945
	Unmarried	93.93	16.32		

Source: Authors' data

Prior travel experience

An independent sample t-test was conducted to investigate the potential impact of students' prior international travel experience on their cultural intelligence scores as well as its four dimensions. The summarized results in Table 5 reveal noteworthy findings. The data suggests that students with prior travel experience exhibited higher mean values ($M = 96.86, SD = 15.85$) in total cultural intelligence compared to those without prior travel experience ($M = 89.79, SD = 17.79$). This mean difference was proved to be statistically significant ($t = 3.18, p < 0.05$). Moreover, students with prior travel experience demonstrated elevated scores in three dimensions of cultural intelligence (cognitive, motivational, and behavioural) when contrasted with their counterparts lacking travel experience. However, there was no statistically significant difference in metacognition scores between the two groups ($t = 1.26, p > 0.05$).

Table 5. *Level of cultural intelligence and prior international travel experience*

Variables	Prior ex- perience	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Metacognitive	Yes	18.72	4.74	1.26	.207
	No	17.88	5.19		
Cognitive	Yes	26.88	6.73	2.50	.013
	No	24.64	6.58		
Motivational	Yes	26.99	4.91	3.25	.001
	No	24.66	5.87		
Behavioural	Yes	24.26	4.99	2.27	.024
	No	22.55	6.39		
Cultural Intelligence	Yes	96.86	15.83	3.18	.002
	No	89.74	17.79		

Source: Authors' data

Friendship with Chinese students

To examine the association between cultural intelligence levels and participants' friendships with Chinese students, we employed an independent t-test. Table 6 illustrates a statistically significant difference between students with Chinese friends and those without in overall cultural intelligence scores and its three components: metacognitive, motivational, and behavioural. The results suggest that students with Chinese friends exhibited higher cultural intelligence compared to their counterparts. However, no significant difference was observed in the cognitive dimension of cultural intelligence among the groups.

Table 6. Levels of cultural intelligence and participants’ friendship with Chinese students

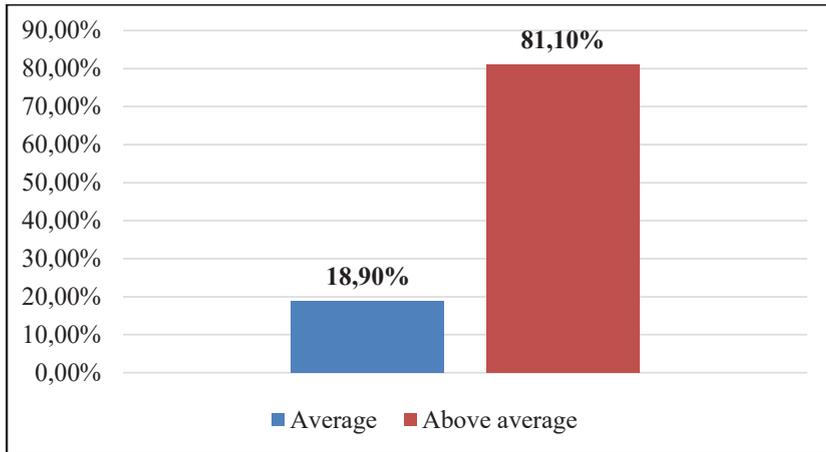
Variables	Chinese friends	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Metacognitive	Yes	18.71	4.96	2.00	.048
	No	17.19	4.69		
Cognitive	Yes	26.40	6.80	1.90	.052
	No	24.37	6.36		
Motivational	Yes	26.63	5.23	3.22	.001
	No	23.90	5.65		
Behavioural	Yes	23.99	5.58	2.23	.026
	No	22.00	5.73		
Total Cultural Intelligence	Yes	95.74	16.51	3.12	.002
	No	87.47	17.25		

Source: Authors’ data

Levels of emotional intelligence and its components

To assess the levels of emotional intelligence among the students, we computed a frequency distribution. As illustrated in Figure 6, the majority of international students exhibited above-average or higher levels on the overall emotional intelligence scale ($n = 185$; 81.1%). Conversely, a portion of students demonstrated average levels of emotional intelligence ($n = 43$; 18.90%).

Figure 6. Total Emotional intelligence



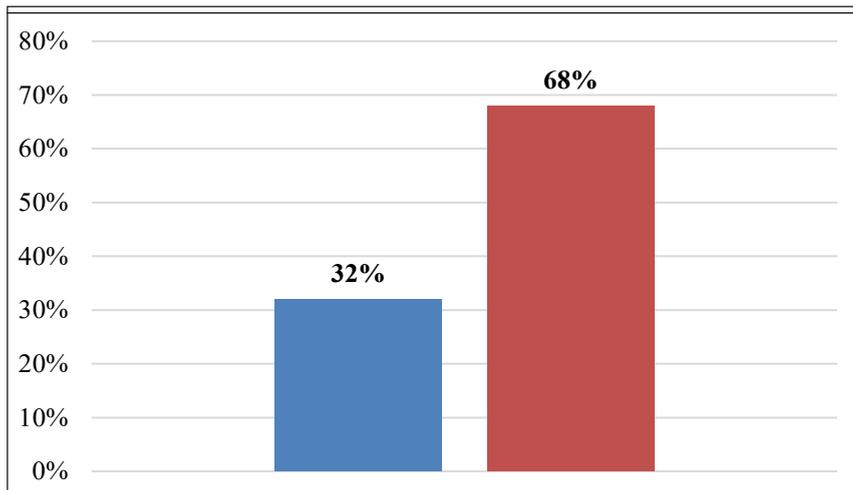
Source: Authors’ data

Levels of components of emotional intelligence

Furthermore, we evaluated the students’ emotional skills in specific components of emotional intelligence, revealing that most students attained levels ranging from average to higher. For instance, more than two-thirds of the participants (n

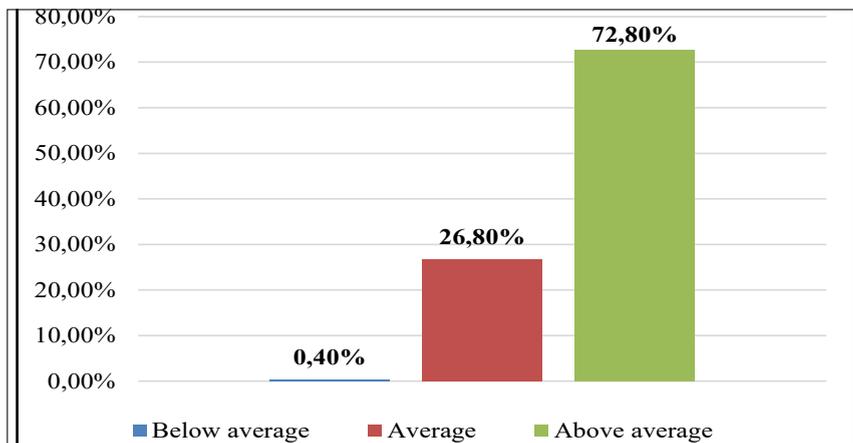
= 155; 68%) demonstrated higher levels of perception of emotion, while the remaining one-third ($n = 73$; 32%) exhibited moderate levels (see Figure 7). Similarly, in the assessment of managing own emotions, 72.80% of participants ($n = 166$) displayed higher levels, while 26.80% ($n = 61$) and 0.40% ($n = 1$) showed moderate and lower levels, respectively (see Figure 8). Examining the component of managing emotions of others (see Figure 9), 172 students (75.40%) reported higher levels, 55 (24.10%) reported moderate levels, and only one student (0.40%) reported lower levels of emotional skill. Likewise, Figure 10 indicates that over three-fourths of students scored above average or higher in the utilization of emotions ($n = 173$; 75.90%). In contrast, approximately one-fourth achieved moderate levels ($n = 54$; 23.70%). Among the four components of emotional intelligence, students scored highest in the utilization of emotions, followed by managing the emotions of others.

Figure 7. Perception of emotions



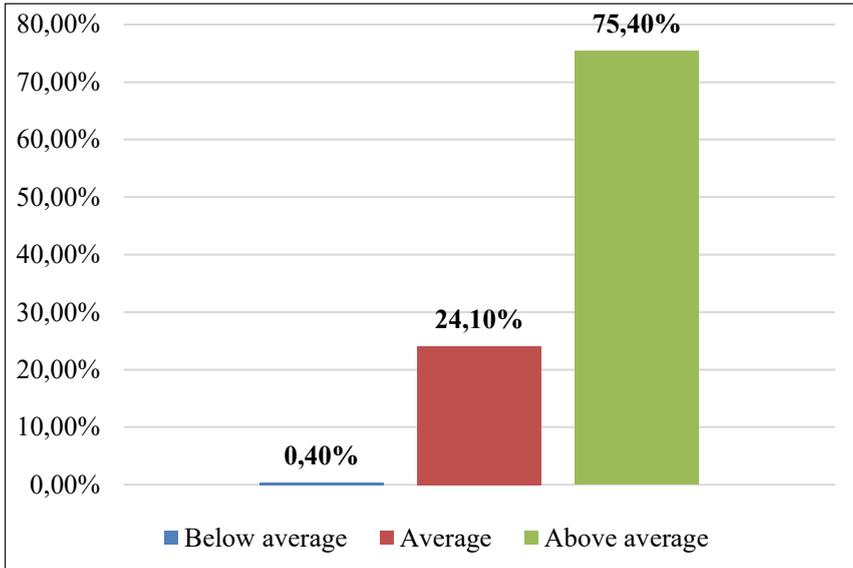
Source: Authors' data

Figure 8. Managing Own Emotion



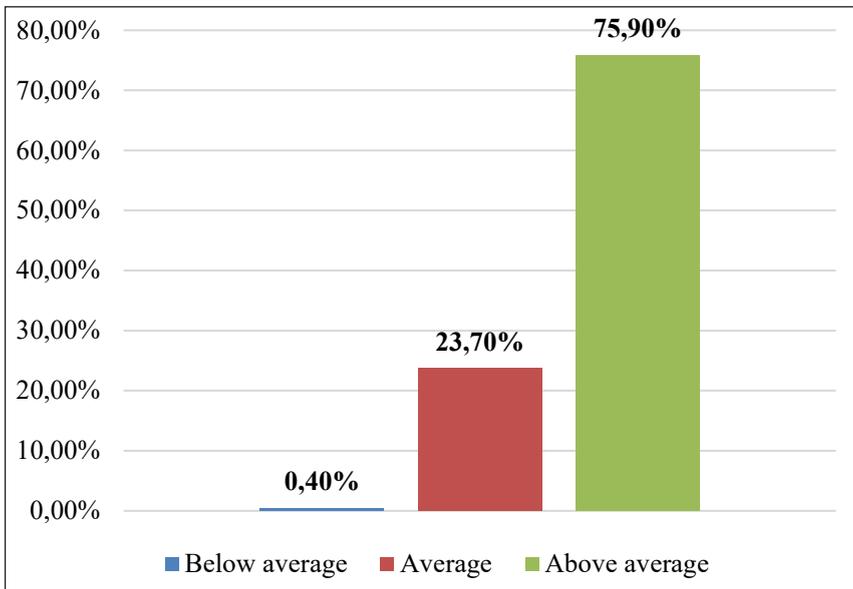
Source: Authors' data

Figure 9. *Managing Others' emotions*



Source: Authors' data

Figure 10. *Utilization of emotions*



Source: Authors' data

Emotional intelligence and demographic variables

Gender and marital status, age, and educational level

To evaluate the statistical significance of associations between participants' demographic variables, such as gender and marital status, and their scores on emotional intelligence and its dimensions, an independent sample t-test was employed. As presented in Table 7 and Table 8, the results indicated no statistically significant differences in the scores across all variables for gender and marital status sub-groups ($p > .05$), except managing own emotions for marital status. In this specific dimension, married participants demonstrated superior skills in managing their emotions compared to their unmarried counterparts. This generally implies that individuals, regardless of gender or marital status, exhibited comparable levels of emotional intelligence. A Pearson product-moment correlation was employed to investigate the relationship between age and emotional intelligence and its four dimensions and the findings revealed no statistically significant correlation ($p > .05$). Regarding participants' educational levels, a one-way ANOVA was conducted to explore potential differences in emotional intelligence and its components among individuals with bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees. The results showed no statistically significant mean variations among the groups for all the variables ($p > .05$).

Table 7. *An independent sample t-test for emotional intelligence and gender*

Variables	Gender	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Perception of Emotions	Male	35.68	5.16	.316	.752
	Female	35.47	4.48		
Managing Own Emotions	Male	34.82	5.12	.199	.843
	Female	34.68	5.15		
Managing Others' Emotions	Male	29.99	4.90	.144	.886
	Female	29.90	4.54		
Utilization of Emotions	Male	23.02	3.92	-.165	.869
	Female	23.10	3.32		
Total Emotional Intelligence	Male	123.52	16.78	.166	.869
	Female	123.17	14.88		

Source: Authors' data

Table 8. *An independent sample t-test for emotional intelligence and marital status*

Variables	Marital status	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Perception of Emotions	Married	35.65	4.59	.142	.887
	Unmarried	35.55	4.94		
Managing own Emotions	Married	35.59	4.83	1.541	.125
	Unmarried	34.43	5.21		
Managing Others' Emotions	Married	30.81	4.33	1.719	.087
	Unmarried	29.62	4.83		
Utilization of Emotions	Married	23.93	3.26	2.294	.016
	Unmarried	22.71	3.73		
Total Emotional Intelligence	Married	126.00	14.72	1.576	.116
	Unmarried	122.32	16.22		

Source: Authors' data

Prior travel experience

To investigate the correlation between students' prior international travel experiences and their emotional intelligence scores, including its four dimensions, an independent sample t-test was employed. The findings, as detailed in Table 9, revealed that students with prior travel experience exhibited significantly higher levels of emotional intelligence compared to those without such experiences ($t = 2.35, p < 0.05$). Additionally, students with previous travel exposure displayed notably greater scores in the perception of emotions ($t = 2.41, p < 0.05$), managing own emotions ($t = 2.38, p < 0.05$), and managing others' emotions ($t = 2.02, p < 0.05$). However, there was no statistically significant difference observed in the utilization of emotions between the two groups ($t = 1.07, p > 0.05$).

Table 9. *An independent sample t-test for emotional intelligence and prior travel experience*

Variables	Prior travel experience	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Perception of Emotions	Yes	36.12	4.92	2.02	.042
	No	34.82	4.64		
Managing own Emotions	Yes	35.43	5.14	2.38	.017
	No	33.81	4.97		
Managing Others' Emotions	Yes	30.58	4.75	2.41	.016
	No	29.07	4.56		
Utilization of Emotions	Yes	23.27	3.71	1.07	.284
	No	22.75	3.53		
Total Emotional Intelligence	Yes	125.42	16.18	2.35	.018
	No	120.45	15.03		

Source: Authors' data

Friendship with Chinese friends

To investigate the link between emotional intelligence levels and participants' friendships with Chinese students, we utilized an independent t-test. Intriguingly, the outcomes, as depicted in Table 4, demonstrated a statistically significant difference between participants with Chinese friends and those without in both overall emotional intelligence scores ($t = 3.17, p < 0.05$), and its four components: perception of emotions ($t = 3.03, p < 0.05$), managing own emotions ($t = 2.86, p < 0.05$), managing others' emotions ($t = 2.41, p < 0.05$), and utilization of emotions ($t = 2.56, p < 0.05$). These results suggest that participants with Chinese friends exhibited a higher degree of emotional intelligence compared to those without such social connections.

Table 10. *An independent sample t-test for emotional intelligence and friendship with locals*

Variables	Chinese friends	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>
Perception of Emotions	Yes	36.09	4.72	3.03	.003
	No	33.80	4.86		
Managing own Emotions	Yes	35.27	4.79	2.86	.005
	No	32.98	5.86		
Managing Others' Emotions	Yes	30.35	4.50	2.41	.017
	No	28.56	5.21		
Utilization of Emotions	Yes	23.38	3.60	2.56	.011
	No	21.92	3.57		
Emotional Intelligence	Yes	125.11	14.91	3.17	.002
	No	117.27	17.66		

Source: Authors' data

The relationship between cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence

The study employed Pearson product-moment correlation analysis to examine the relationship between cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence, including their respective sub-components. Preliminary analysis ensured that the assumption of normality was not violated (refer to Table 11). The correlation analyses revealed that the overall scores of cultural intelligence among international students were positively and significantly associated with their scores in emotional intelligence ($r = .53, p < .001$). Furthermore, students' cultural intelligence demonstrated positive correlations with the four sub-components of emotional intelligence: perception of emotions ($r = .47, p < .001$), managing own emotions ($r = .47, p < .001$), managing emotions of others ($r = .53, p < .001$), and utilization of emotions ($r = .32, p < .001$). Conversely, emotional intelligence exhibited statistically significant relationships with the four components of cultural intelligence: metacognitive ($r = .24, p < .001$), cognitive ($r = .38, p < .001$), motivational ($r = .56, p < .001$), and behavioural ($r = .39, p < .001$). Importantly, all correlations between the components of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence were positive and statistically significant. Detailed values are provided in Table 2.

Table 11. *Bivariate relationship between cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Meta									
2. Cog	.28**								
3. Moti	.36**	.50**							
4. Beh	.33**	.39**	.56**						
5. CI	.63**	.77**	.81**	.76**					
6. POE	.16*	.44**	.49**	.29**	.47**				
7. MOE	.21**	.32**	.52**	.36**	.47**	.64**			
8. MEO	.25**	.38**	.54**	.42**	.53**	.65**	.79**		
9. UOE	.19**	.14*	.34**	.29**	.32**	.55**	.67**	.65**	
10. EI	.24**	.38**	.56**	.39**	.53**	.83**	.91**	.90**	.81**

Note. * $p < 0.05$. ** $p < 0.01$. Meta = Metacognitive; Cog = Cognitive; Moti = Motivational; Beh = Behavioural; CI = Cultural Intelligence; POE = Perception of Emotions; MOE = Managing Own Emotions; MEO = Managing Emotions of Other; UOE = Utilization of Emotions; EI = Emotional intelligence

Source: Authors' data

DISCUSSION

The primary objective of our research was to explore the levels of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence among Asian international students studying in China, examining how these abilities relate to various sociodemographic variables. Specifically, the study had five guiding objectives. Our first objective was to thoroughly investigate the degree of cultural intelligence and its different dimensions among Asian international students enrolled in Chinese universities. The results revealed a noteworthy trend, indicating that a significant portion of the students exhibited moderate to high levels of cultural intelligence during their intercultural interactions. This suggests a commendable ability to adapt to the new intercultural environment. Specifically, the students demonstrated a robust set of skills, including substantial cultural awareness, a deep understanding of different cultures, comprehensive cultural knowledge, intrinsic motivation, and notable intercultural competence. These findings underline the students' capacity not only to navigate diverse cultural contexts but also to engage effectively with individuals from varied cultural backgrounds. Our research findings are in accordance with prior studies, indicating a convergence in the observed levels of cultural intelligence. These studies consistently report that both domestic and international students exhibit moderate to high levels of cultural intelligence (e.g., Al-Jarrah, 2016; Al-Jarrah and Alrabee, 2020; Chkhikvadze et al., 2019; Sousa et al., 2023).

Asian international students demonstrated moderate to high levels of cultural intelligence, and this can be attributed to several potential explanations. First and foremost, their origin from Asian countries, likely played a role, as the cultural

similarities between their home cultures and Chinese culture may have positively influenced their cultural intelligence. For instance, a shared characteristic among Asian international students and Chinese culture is their collective cultural orientation. Additionally, some researchers contend that cultural distance stands out as a noteworthy factor influencing international students' capacity to adapt effectively within diverse cultural contexts (Fedotova, 2023; Malay et al., 2023). Additionally, a significant portion of the students reported having prior travel experiences before coming to China. This prior cultural exposure is thought to have significantly contributed to the development of their cultural intelligence. Furthermore, Chinese universities are widely recognized for their commitment to intercultural exchange programs integrated into co-curricular activities. This institutional emphasis on cross-cultural interactions within the university setting likely played a substantial role in enhancing the proficiency of international students in navigating diverse cultural contexts.

Our research's second objective was to explore the connections between students' cultural intelligence levels and various sociodemographic factors, including gender, marital status, age, educational level, prior travel experience, and friendships with local students. The study results indicate that gender, educational level, and age do not exhibit significant correlations with students' cultural intelligence. These findings are parallel to several previous researches, echoing the consensus that demographic variables, such as those considered, have minimal impact on cultural intelligence (e.g., Abasli and Polat, 2019; Şenel, 2020). However, it's worth noting that some studies have reported statistically significant associations between gender and cultural intelligence, suggesting potential differences favoring males in effective intercultural functioning. These variations may be influenced by methodological limitations in studies, such as small sample sizes and data analytical techniques, and should be considered cautiously. Moreover, our study underscores the importance of prior travel experience and friendships with local students in enhancing international students' cultural intelligence. The findings highlight that international students can derive substantial benefits from previous exposure and positive interpersonal relationships with local students, facilitating a more effective adaptation to the host environment. This supports a body of research consistently demonstrating that international students with prior international travel experiences and positive intergroup contact, such as friendships with local students, are more likely to exhibit higher levels of cultural intelligence and enhanced intercultural functioning (Crowne, 2013; Gebregergis et al., 2019; McKay et al., 2022; Sousa et al., 2019).

In its subsequent objective, the current study assessed the levels of emotional intelligence. The findings indicate that the emotional intelligence levels and sub-dimensions of the students range from average to high. Overall, the results suggest that the majority of Asian international students exhibit emotional intelligence in their intercultural interactions within the host society. Specifically, these students demonstrate high levels of sensitivity and perceptiveness to culturally specific emotional expressions, both in themselves and others. This heightened awareness enables them to make necessary adjustments and effectively adapt their emotional frameworks, thereby fostering more meaningful and successful communication with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. Moreover, the students display an ability to recognize challenges by assessing

how their current emotional states contribute to and influence cognitive processes. Additionally, they exhibit a comprehensive understanding of the nature of emotions and their connection to thoughts and actions, empowering them to navigate emotional and cognitive challenges within the intercultural communication network. The study further highlights the students' capacity to learn and exert control over both personal and others' emotions in a multicultural context. The results broadly support previous research on emotional intelligence levels in both domestic and international students, as evidenced by works such as those by Almansour (2023), Chkhikvadze et al. (2019), and Valishin et al. (2022).

A potential explanation for the moderate to higher levels of emotional intelligence observed in the students could be attributed to the collective cultural orientation of Asian societies. In collective cultures like those in Asia, individuals are encouraged to control their emotions and live in harmony with others, possibly contributing to their enhanced emotional intelligence. Similarly, within societies with collectivist cultures, the use of an indirect, high-context communication style and an emphasis on subtle cues may have facilitated the Asian international students' better understanding of subtle emotional cues in themselves and others. In their comparative examination of university students from individualist (Australia) and collectivist (India) cultures, Bhullar et al. (2012) confirmed that a collectivistic cultural orientation is linked to increased emotional intelligence and enhanced mental health outcomes. An alternative explanation for the observed outcomes of our study could be attributed to the dynamic nature of students' emotional intelligence, considered as a state-like ability. It is conceivable that daily intercultural experiences have played a role in altering and enhancing the students' emotional intelligence levels. The argument posits that engaging in intercultural communication and interacting with individuals from diverse cultures may contribute to a noticeable increase in the emotional intelligence of international students (Cho and Ulwiyyah, 2020). Furthermore, factors such as prior travel experience and social connections with local people, similar to cultural intelligence, may also contribute to explaining the moderate to high levels of emotional intelligence among the participants.

In the fourth objective of the study, we examined the correlation between students' demographic variables and their levels of emotional intelligence. The overall findings indicate that factors such as age, gender, and educational level did not exert a significant influence on emotional intelligence. Our study produced results that corroborate the results of several prior investigations (e.g., Fatt and Howe, 2003; Kaur et al., 2023; Valishin et al., 2022). It is noteworthy, however, that existing literature on the exploration of demographic variables such as gender, age, marital status, and educational level in relation to emotional intelligence has yielded mixed and inconsistent results. This inconsistency may be attributed to methodological limitations and variations in theoretical conceptualizations of emotional intelligence. Additionally, while most studies on sociodemographic factors among international students primarily focus on variables such as gender, age, and year of study, our research underscores the importance of considering other significant factors. Specifically, prior travel experiences and establishing friendships with domestic students, often overlooked in various international students' investigations, should be recognized. The present study further supports the proposition that prior travel experience and friendships with Chinese students correlate with emotional intelligence. This suggests

that international students with previous travel exposure and those who have Chinese friends demonstrate higher emotional intelligence compared to their counterparts without such experiences. Crowne (2013) argues that gaining cultural exposure through international experiences enhances emotional learning, ultimately raising levels of emotional intelligence. It is plausible to assert that international exposure and establishing friendships with local students can significantly contribute to the development of a broad spectrum of socioemotional skills for international students. These skills encompass emotional management, cultural empathy, interpersonal communication skills, and open-mindedness. Likewise, engaging in international exposure and forming friendships with domestic students can enhance international students' capacity to effectively navigate the emotional challenges that may arise during intercultural interactions.

In the final analysis, this study examined the connections between cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence, encompassing their respective sub-dimensions. The findings reveal a correlation indicating that international students exhibiting higher levels of cultural intelligence also demonstrated higher emotional intelligence. Even though there is limited research on this subject, some existing body of literature highlights a positive correlation between cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence (e.g., Carvalho et al., 2020; Moon, 2010; Putranto et al., 2018). The positive correlation between the constructs can be explained within the context of their theoretical conceptualizations. Although cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence are conceptually and empirically distinct constructs (Earley and Ang, 2003), they are also similar and interrelated (Moon, 2010). Cultural intelligence, which involves the ability to adapt and navigate effectively in diverse cultural contexts, enhances the capacity to recognize, understand, and manage one's own emotions as well as those of others. On the other hand, individuals who excel in recognizing and managing emotions of others are often better equipped to navigate the complexities of diverse cultural interactions (Moon, 2010). According to Ang et al. (2007), individuals with high cultural intelligence must possess a clear understanding of both their thought processes and those of others. This necessitates a significant emphasis on the perception of emotion, a crucial component of emotional intelligence. Moon (2010) further contends that certain aspects of emotional intelligence, such as social awareness and relationship management, may be closely intertwined with cultural intelligence, as these skills prove valuable in intercultural interaction and communication. Components of emotional intelligence, such as self-awareness and self-management may be less likely to be applied in an intercultural context (Moon, 2010). However, our study contradicts this assumption, revealing that all components of emotional intelligence, including the management of one's emotions, exhibit positive associations with all dimensions of cultural intelligence. In our study, participants were international students from Asia studying in China. The observed statistically significant relationships between all subcomponents of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence may be influenced by the cultural similarity between the participants' background culture and that of China. This finding suggests that emotional intelligence functions effectively within a culturally similar context, supporting the idea that a shared cultural context enhances the relationship between emotional and cultural intelligence.

Implications and limitations

The present study is expected to have significant implications both in terms of theory and practical applications. From a theoretical perspective, exploring the levels of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence, and their interplay with demographic variables contributes valuable insights to the extensive body of cross-cultural literature related to international students. By examining these dimensions, the study enriches our understanding of how well individuals navigate and interact within diverse cultural contexts. Moreover, this research offers insight into the intricate dynamics of the relationships between cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence, unraveling the nuanced interconnections between their respective sub-components. In addition, the results of the current study suggest that prior travel experience and friendship with local students can also inform host universities to understand the importance of those factors in fostering the levels of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence.

Practically, the empirical knowledge and insights derived from this study can serve as a practical guide for university communities aiming to implement measures that enhance the cultural and emotional intelligence of international students. This, in turn, facilitates their smooth intercultural adaptation to the new sociocultural and academic environments. Given the adaptable and dynamic nature of cultural and emotional intelligence, universities can employ various programs and activities, such as orientations, cultural exchanges, festivals, seminars, and workshops, to bolster these capacities (Kővári and Raffay-Danyi, 2022). It is recommended that universities organize excursions, engaging international students in different communal activities within the host society. This exposure helps them establish social connections with members of the host community, crucial for the development of cultural and emotional intelligence (Crowne, 2013; McKay et al., 2022). Additionally, host universities should strive to create multicultural and inclusive campuses where diverse cultural and emotional perspectives are not only acknowledged but also valued. To further support international students in developing cultural and emotional competencies, universities could integrate teachings on cultural and emotional intelligence into their curricula. Moreover, instructors working with international students should be mindful of varying levels of emotional and cultural intelligence, adopting teaching methods that accommodate diverse student backgrounds and enhance all aspects of cultural and emotional skills.

Despite the study's theoretical and practical contributions, it is essential to acknowledge several limitations for future considerations. Firstly, the sample size was relatively small and confined to a specific group of students from the same continent, limiting the generalization of the findings to the broader international student population. Consequently, future researchers must replicate the study with a larger and more diverse sample. Another limitation is the use of a cross-sectional research approach, despite the malleable and state-like nature of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence, which can develop over time. To address this, future research efforts may benefit from adopting a longitudinal approach to examine how these variables evolve. Additionally, the study's reliance on self-report instruments for assessing cultural and emotional intelligence introduces the potential influence of participants' social desirability bias on the results. This impact should be considered in future research endeavors, prompt-

ing the exploration of alternative or supplementary assessment methods for a more comprehensive understanding.

CONCLUSION

Previous research has predominantly concentrated on investigating the factors influencing the intercultural adaptation of international students, particularly in prominent study-abroad destinations such as China. Among these factors, cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence have received considerable attention as crucial contributors to the intercultural adaptation process. However, limited studies have examined the specific levels of cultural and emotional intelligence among homogenous cohorts of international students. Acknowledging this research gap, the current study aims to evaluate the levels of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence among Asian international students in China. Furthermore, it sought to explore potential variations in these levels across various sociodemographic variables of the students. The study's findings reveal that the students exhibit moderate to high levels of both cultural and emotional intelligence. Moreover, the research highlights a positive interrelation between students' levels of cultural intelligence and emotional intelligence. Additionally, the study underscores the significance of prior travel experiences and forming connections with local students as crucial factors in cultivating cultural and emotional competencies. These findings might contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics involved in the intercultural adaptation of Asian international students in China and provide valuable insights for academic institutions and policymakers aiming to enhance the overall intercultural experiences of international students.

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