Cultural intelligence and its relation to the quality of life among fresh students at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, from the perspectives of faculty members

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Abstract

This study investigates the correlation of cultural intelligence with the quality of life in fresh students at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University. The study targeted faculty members working at the university; the sample included 90 individuals. The study adopted a correlational descriptive research design, and research instruments included scales for measuring cultural intelligence and quality of life. The study obtained several findings, most importantly the following: the levels of cultural intelligence among fresh students were rated low; the quality of life among students was rated low; and cultural intelligence was found to be correlated with the levels of cultural intelligence and quality of life among fresh students at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, from the perspectives of faculty members. Findings of the study indicate that cultural intelligence is an important enabler for improving fresh students' quality of life. Therefore, promoting cultural intelligence should be taken into careful consideration by university leadership, especially in universities that annually receive large numbers of foreign students. The study presents research suggestions and practical recommendations that include the following: conducting similar studies targeting the contexts of other universities across Saudi Arabia; launching awareness campaigns at Saudi universities that focus on educating students on the value of understanding and respecting diverse cultures from around the world.

Keywords: Cultural intelligence, Faculty members, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Quality of life.

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Transparency: The author confirms that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.
Institutional Review Board Statement: The Ethical Committee of the Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia has granted approval for this study (Ref. No. SCBR-135/2025).

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Higher education in the contemporary world is characterized by globalized movement of people and knowledge. Thus, the ability to thrive in such a context requires adequate understanding of other cultures. Hence emerges the value of cultural intelligence in the lives of university students.

There has been interest in investigating how cultural intelligence influences several aspects of students' lives, notably quality of life. In fact, cultural intelligence has been found to be correlated with improved psychological, behavioral, intercultural, and performance aspects [1]. Thus, it can be stated that cultural intelligence is key to improving students' quality of life.

Improving students' quality of life is important because students are a group that often has lower levels of quality of life compared to those prevalent among the general population. This is largely attributable to the stress and significant shifts accompanying the transitioning from the life of secondary school to that of university. A university student's quality of life is influence by a variety of factors, which include life satisfaction, satisfaction with studies, presence/absence of symptoms of stress or depression, and socioeconomic status [2].

The preceding discussion highlights the potential value of cultural intelligence for improving university students' quality of life. Moreover, within the context of the ambitious Saudi Vision 2030, it is critically important that Saudi university students are equipped with the ability to   be social with others. Thus, the researcher believes that further research on how cultural intelligence correlates with fresh undergraduate students' quality of life is a potentially valuable research topic. Therefore, the present study is interested in investigating the extent to which cultural intelligence influences fresh students' quality of life.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The contemporary world is characterized by increasing cultural diversity. Adapting to environments with such a nature necessitates possessing cultural intelligence. This need is especially pressing for university students, given their need to have the ability to understand different cultures, hence emerges the importance of cultural intelligence.

Recent studies investigated how cultural intelligence impacts humans' lives. The study of Mehra [3] examined how cultural intelligence predicts well-being in undergraduate students in India. The study's findings show that cognitive and behavioral cultural intelligence are correlated with well-being among males and females, respectively. This result supports those obtained by Ayoob, et al. [4] who investigated how cultural intelligence influences psychological well-being and acculturative stress in university students. This study's findings also show that cultural intelligence and psychological well-being are positively linked. Another study that arrived at similar conclusions is that by Tzu-Ping and Chang [5] who investigated the extent to which cultural intelligence is linked to psychological well-being in international students in Taiwan. According to the study's findings, metacognitive and motivational cultural intelligence are correlated with psychological well-being.

In the light of the preceding discussion, it is evident that recent literature strongly supports the assumption that cultural intelligence is correlated with students' quality of life. However, despite the high agreement and conclusiveness in research findings, there is a noticeable lack of attention to the investigation of this relationship in the Saudi context. This represents a research gap that the present study is interested in addressing.

1.3. Questions of the Study

- What are the levels of cultural intelligence among fresh students?
- What is the degree of quality of life among fresh students?
- Does a significant correlation exist between cultural intelligence and quality of life among fresh students?

1.4. Research Objectives

- Unveiling the levels of cultural intelligence among fresh students.
- Investigating the degree of quality of life among fresh students.
- Examining whether a significant correlation exists between cultural intelligence and quality of life among fresh students.

1.5. Study Significance

The study addresses an important topic, which concerns the relationship between cultural intelligence and quality of life in fresh students. Significance of the study can be highlighted in the points outlined below:

1.5.1. Theoretical

- This study aims to contribute to research on levels of cultural intelligence among fresh students and ways for improving them.
- The present study may help in drawing the attention of professionals to the consideration of designing training courses and workshops aimed at improving fresh students' quality of life.
- The researcher hopes to present a research contribution on the relationship between cultural intelligence and quality of life in fresh students.

1.5.2. Practical
- The study aims to propose new methods for promoting quality of life and cultural intelligence among fresh undergraduate students in Saudi universities.
- Findings of the present study may help in promoting quality of life and cultural intelligence in students through actionable recommendations.

1.6. The Study's Key Terms
1.6.1. Cultural Intelligence
It is defined as the capacity to adapt effectively in a variety of cultural settings [6].

It can also be defined as an interest and desire to adapt to other cultures [7].

Another definition of the term is that it's the ability to adapt own behaviors to the nature of the culture in which interaction is taking place [8].

1.6.2. Quality of Life
It is defined as one's sense of satisfaction with their well-being and life [9].

It also refers to the levels of happiness, comfort, and health experienced by individuals or groups [10].

Another definition of the term is that it is to enjoy spiritual, emotional, social, intellectual, and occupational well-being [11].

1.6.3. Fresh Student
A basic definition of a fresh student is that they are a student in the first academic year in an educational institution [12].

A fresh student can also be defined as a student enrolled for the first time in a full-time arrangement into a higher education institute [13].

Another definition of a fresh student is that they are a student currently in their first of year of education at a university, college, or secondary school [14].

1.7. Structure of the Study
The structure of the present study is as follows:
1. Introduction: Topics of this section include background, statement of the problem, questions of the study, research objectives, study significance, and the study's key terms.
2. Literature Review: Topics of discussion in this section include importance of cultural intelligence, theoretical underpinnings of cultural intelligence, capabilities of cultural intelligence, factors influencing cultural intelligence, importance of quality of life for undergraduate students, factors influencing quality of life for undergraduate students, requirements for improving quality of life for undergraduate students, and potential correlation of cultural intelligence to students' quality of life. The discussion of these topics is followed by a presentation of a number of selected previous studies.
3. Methodology: Topics of discussion in this section include research approach, target population and sample, and research instrument.
4. Results and Discussion: This section discusses Research Questions 1 and 2 as well as the study's main hypothesis.
5. Conclusion: this section includes a summary of findings as well as discussion of research and practical implications.

2. Literature Review
2.1. Importance of Cultural Intelligence
There are various reasons why cultural intelligence is important in today's world. Cultural intelligence does not only revolve around understanding cultural differences of foreign languages, as it also requires that an individual builds a framework for dealing with situations involving interaction with new and unfamiliar cultures. Cultural intelligence is associated with being able to adjust one's experiences as well as a stronger motivation and improved capability to adapt to culturally diverse situations [15].

Another reason for the importance of cultural intelligence stems from its role in imparting people with social aptness in selecting appropriate behaviors for interaction within intercultural contexts. Cultural intelligence is associated with the capability to define the appropriate attitude and strategy for adapting to environments influenced by foreign cultures. Those who possess high levels of cultural intelligence are more confident about their own ability and are more capable of adapting their behaviors to the requirements of interaction with culturally diverse people [16].

The preceding discussion shows that cultural intelligence is crucial to effective interaction in culturally diverse contexts, which pervade contemporary societies. It is a skill that helps an individual adapt and adjust their behaviors to environments in which diverse and different cultures are influential. This means that poor or low levels of cultural intelligence can pose challenges for people frequently exposed to other cultures. This issue can lead to poor adaptability and ability to respond properly to others' actions and behaviors. The importance of cultural intelligence is even more significant for university students, especially that the higher education sector is characterized by diversity due to its internationalized and globalized nature.

2.2. Theoretical Underpinnings of Cultural Intelligence

Cultural intelligence has received increasing interest in recent literature. This trend could be attributable to the importance of understanding others' cultures in the globalized and multicultural societies of the contemporary world. Several theories sought to explain cultural intelligence as a phenomenon. Below is a brief discussion of a list of the most notable theoretical underpinnings of cultural intelligence.

2.2.1. Intelligence Theory

Cultural intelligence is rooted in intelligence theory. According to the theory, intelligence is the ability to adapt to the environment effectively. This idea was later extended to be more focused on the cultural domain. The theory also suggests that intelligence has multiple loci, which include cognition, biology, behavior, and motivation. This applies to cultural intelligence as well. Thus, cultural intelligence can be viewed as a multidimensional concept [17].

2.2.2. Theory of Multiple Intelligences

The theory of cultural intelligence is derived from the theory of multiple intelligences, which includes other types of intelligence, such as social, cognitive, and emotional intelligence. Cultural intelligence is perceived as complementary to these two other intelligences, as neither of them entails understanding of culturally diverse contexts. Moreover, cultural intelligence in not bound to a specific culture (unlike emotional intelligence), as it transcends cultural boundaries and can adapt to diverse cultural situations [18].

2.2.3. Experiential Learning Theory

The experiential learning theory offers a perspective for viewing and understanding how people learn. The theory posits that learning occurs by having experiences, thinking, contemplating, and interaction with things in the surrounding world. From this theory's perspective, students can acquire cultural intelligence through interactions in their daily lives [19].

The preceding discussion shows that the aforementioned theories adopt varied approaches in explaining the cultural intelligence phenomenon; their basic assumptions can be summed up in the following points:

1. Cultural intelligence is a domain of intelligence. Thus, it can be stated that cultural intelligence can be viewed as a skill that can be developed or influenced.
2. Cultural intelligence is multidimensional by nature, as it is inextricable from other types of intelligence. Therefore, efforts aiming at shaping individuals' cultural intelligence should take into consideration whether and how other intelligences may influence these individuals.

2.3. Capabilities of Cultural Intelligence

Cultural intelligence (CI) is driven by four main capabilities, which can also be viewed as the key steps leading to developing cultural intelligence. These capabilities are discussed below.

2.3.1. CQ Drive

In essence, CQ drive is the quality of being interested, confident, and driven to adapt in a cross-cultural setting. Not all people have the interest in acquiring new knowledge about or in interacting with new cultures, and thus CQ drive is an essential requirement for the development of cultural intelligence. This drive influences one's response to opportunities to interact with other cultures. The drive to interact with other cultures differs in terms of source, as it can be intrinsic (stemming from personal enjoyment of being or interacting in situations involving multiple diverse cultures), extrinsic (driven by seeking external benefits from interacting in situations involving multiple diverse cultures), or based on self-efficacy (one's confidence in their own ability to interact successfully within situations of a cross-cultural nature) [20].

2.3.2. CQ Knowledge

CQ knowledge is the cognition one has and that is related to cultural intelligence. It is the degree of one's understanding of the influence of cultures on the formation of patterns of thinking and behavior [21]. It is also the information that an individual has on the cultural context within which they are interacting or intend to interact. This knowledge encompasses awareness of several aspects, such as the customs, practices, and norms characterizing different cultures. It is also a factor that helps one distinguish the way in which different people share similarities or have mutual differences [22].

2.3.3. CQ Strategy

CQ strategy is metacognitive or interpretive in nature. It is linked to CQ knowledge. It helps one in managing the knowledge they have on other cultures and interpreting others' behaviors. It is also a link between one's understanding and behavior within cultural contexts. With CQ strategy, one can devise plans for interacting within culturally diverse situations. It is an enabler of effective monitoring, analysis, and adjustment of one's own behavior and is also an essential component of their understanding of new cultures [23].

2.3.4. CQ Action

CQ action is the behavioral manifestation of the three aforementioned cultural intelligence capabilities. These behaviors vary, as they can be nonverbal, verbal, or related to speech [24].

1. Nonverbal behaviors: These behaviors are noticed in how one adjusts their facial expressions and hand gestures in accordance to the nature of the cultural context.
2. Verbal behaviors: They manifest in the pace and tone of speaking and also the pronunciation as well as the accent used in speaking to someone using another language.
3. Speech acts: These are noticed when observing the way, one alters the way of communicating with others depending on the nature of the present cultural context.

The preceding discussion shows that cultural intelligence is not only a capability, but also a process. This complex process tends to be cyclical and recurring. Thus, cultural intelligence is not fixed and can be developed and improved over time. Improved capabilities of cultural intelligence help in adapting better to multicultural situations. Therefore, university educators should pay careful consideration to possibilities for improving the quality of educational and other environments in campuses in order to ensure that students enjoy opportunities for developing and improving their cultural intelligence skills. Success in developing cultural intelligence capabilities requires deep understanding of how cultural environmental factors influence each of these capabilities.

2.4. Factors Influencing Cultural Intelligence

A misconception about cultural intelligence is that it is an innate skill that one cannot control or influence. The level of cultural intelligence is largely influenced by a variety of factors in one's surrounding environments. Below is a discussion of some of these factors.

Cultural intelligence is not fixed but a malleable skill. Thus, it can be improved and developed by increased exposure to various and diverse cultures. It can also be improved by a variety of forms of training and active interaction within intercultural contexts, such as travel and studying abroad [18].

One can improve their level of cultural intelligence by increased interaction with diverse cultures over time. The increase in such interaction is associated with increased appreciation and understanding of other and new cultural beliefs [25].

The preceding discussion shows that the development of cultural intelligence capabilities is largely influenced by consistency. In other words, cultural intelligence does not develop in an instant or swift manner, but rather through a continuous process of evolvement enabled by adequate exposure to contexts in which foreign cultures are strongly present. Therefore, since universities play a significant role in nurturing students' skills and abilities, it is of utmost importance that educators take into consideration possible solutions for increasing students' exposure to foreign cultures. In that regard, it is important to encourage voluntary, self-driven desire in students to seek intercultural communication opportunities and also foster in students the conviction that increased exposure to foreign cultures is beneficial and meaningful for their personal development as students and as professionals in their future careers.

2.5. Importance of Quality of Life for Undergraduate Students

Quality of life is a multidimensional concept. Understanding the importance of that concept in undergraduate students' lives necessitates discussing the importance of its individual dimensions. Below is a brief discussion of why quality of life is important in a student's life.

In essence, quality of life is a sense of happiness and interest that students have toward their lives as students. Educational quality of life is a notion derived from the broad quality of life concept. Education is viewed as one of aspects of a student's overall quality of life. Educational quality of life is considered attained if a student perceives satisfaction and well-being within educational life [26].

Maintaining good quality of life, especially in the health-related aspect, is important for university students. This is because poor health-related quality of life results in various poor outcomes for students, with examples of such outcomes including lower self-esteem, depression, and poorer interpersonal relations. These problems may, in turn, negatively impact a student's educational outcomes, which mainly include performance, achievement, and productivity [27].

Therefore, the importance of quality of life for undergraduate students should not be underestimated. The negative impacts on quality of life may also negatively affect not only their studies by also their performance in professional lives. Therefore, establishing healthy environments for learning and practice is important for ensuring that students enjoy quality opportunities at universities.

From the preceding discussion, it can be concluded that quality of life has positive effects on various domains of university students' lives. Good quality of life ensures that students enjoy a state of well-being and attain improved achievement outcomes in studies. Thus, the quest towards generating improved outcomes in the higher institution sector requires viewing and treating students' quality of life as a top priority. In practice, this should be translated into initiatives for adapting the campus environment to students' needs and expectations, as that would lead to higher levels of satisfaction among students thus improving their quality of life in university.

2.6. Factors Influencing Quality of Life for Undergraduate Students

University students belong to an age group that witnesses the transition from adolescence to adulthood, which is one of the most crucial stages of human development. This transition brings a variety of factors that can significantly influence students' quality of life, with examples of such factors including development in the social, psychological, physical, and sexual domains. University students also become more autonomous and responsible in steering their own life paths. Moreover, they form new attitudes and beliefs regarding personal health and how to protect it. For university students, the educational transitioning they are witnessing can be associated with new demanding pressures, such as pressures to achieve

high academic performance, increasingly fierce competition with other students, shifts in the nature of support networks and academic workload, and, in many cases, drastic changes in personal life conditions, such as the need to leave life with the family for extended periods of time. Combinations of the aforementioned factors can have detrimental effects on university students' quality of life, both in the long and short term [2].

Moreover, many students leave their family environments and move to other cities where their universities are located; this is a major transition for students and may impact their quality of life. There are other factors that may impact students' physical and mental health, with examples of such factors including overload associated with educational activities, overload associated with academic tasks, and stressful situations associated with practical training [28].

This discussion shows that university students are particularly exposed to a variety of factors that may influence their quality of life. This is probably because university students experience massive changes in all domains of life, thus they are in a pivotal stage of their lives. These changes are often associated with great pressures and stresses that may negatively impact quality of life. Due to these numerous pressures and stresses, enjoying a healthy and happy life as a university student is a significant challenge. Adapting to this challenge requires not only that a student is resilient in responding to events and situations, but also that they have access to various and adequate forms of support and assistance, mainly from family and the university campus.

2.7. Requirements for Improving Quality of Life for Undergraduate Students

Improving students' quality of life requires that universities devise policies that emphasize health promotion initiatives, while focusing on improving the quality of university environments, rather than on changing students' behaviors. This entails the necessity of creating social, psychological, and physical environments that can influence quality of life. Such changes will drive favorable changes in students' behaviors [29].

For improving university students' quality of life, it is also important to provide policymakers with information that can help them highlight constraints in environmental, social, physical, and psychological domains to improve quality of life for students. In that regard, it is imperative to implement practices for improving physical health and socialization, devising programs for addressing students' unhealthy behaviors, and providing educators with appropriate training in order to become capable of identifying students' psychological needs [2].

The discussion above highlights that improving quality of life for university students necessitates working on introducing changes to make campus environments safer and more appropriate for meeting their needs and expectations. Policymakers and educators in the higher education sector should adopt a broad and comprehensive view for designing and building environments in universities, as a healthy environment is one that fulfills students' needs in all domains, including, the physical, social, psychological, and educational.

2.8. Potential Correlation of Cultural Intelligence to Students' Quality of Life

Cultural intelligence may lead to improved quality of life by means of improving a student's sense of satisfaction. This is attributable to that cultural intelligence is associated with improved self-efficacy skills, which, in turn, positively influence a student's attitudes as well as satisfaction with studies. Thus, students who are high on cultural intelligence are often more committed in life and have high levels of satisfaction due to their perceptions of their own skill improvement. On the other hand, students who perceive lack of improvement in their own skills often have lower levels of satisfaction and commitment. Thus, cultural intelligence is linked to feelings of satisfaction, thus improved quality of life [2].

According to Yousaf, et al. [30] there is a significant and positive correlation linking cultural intelligence to student satisfaction, which is related to quality of life, is significant. The authors argue that the nexus of these two variables instills an outgoing personality in students. Such students are likely to spread positive word-of-mouth on their universities, thereby enabling universities to attract more students in the long run.

Singh, et al. [31] also suggest that cultural intelligence and quality of life can improve together due to a variety of factors, such as having access to modern information and communication technologies, living in urban areas, availability of public services (e.g., healthcare), availability of recreation locations.

Although the preceding discussion indicates a significant positive relationship between the study's two main variables, namely cultural intelligence and quality of life, the researcher believes that the dynamics of this relationship are still ambiguous and unclear. Although the two variables seem to increase and decrease together, this may be related or caused by their relations to other factors which may influence each variable independently but in the same direction. Therefore, the present study aims to arrive at new findings that can highlight the dynamics of this relationship more clearly.

3. Previous Studies

The relationship between cultural intelligence and quality of life in students is a growing research area. This is evident in the consistently growing number of relevant studies. Below is a presentation of a number of studies on that topic.

Mehra [3] examined the extent to which cultural intelligence predicts well-being in undergraduate students. The selected population for the study consisted of university students (aged 21-32) residing in all states across India, except the Punjab state; a total of (200) students were selected for the final sample. The researcher implemented a descriptive research methodology, and data collection instruments included the Cultural Intelligence Scale and the Friedman Well-Being Scale.

The study's main findings include the following: in males, well-being was found to be significantly and positively predicted by cognitive cultural intelligence; on the other hand, in females, well-being was significantly and positively predicted by behavioral cultural intelligence.

These findings are in line with those obtained by the study of Tzu-Ping and Chang [5] which investigated whether cultural intelligence is linked to psychological well-being in international students in Taiwan, with the focus on the moderating impact of mindfulness. The study targeted of international students in Taiwan; the sample included (110) students. The researcher followed a quantitative research methodology, and data collection instrument included Mindful Attention Awareness Scale and the Cultural Intelligence Scale. Findings yielded from the study include the following: metacognitive and motivational cultural intelligence were found to be positively associated with psychological well-being; and mindfulness had no moderating impact on the identified correlations.

Another study that obtained similar findings is that by Ayoob, et al. [4] which investigated the role of cultural intelligence as a factor predicting levels of psychological well-being and acculturative stress in university students. The study targeted Kashmiri university students residing, at the time of conducting the study, in the city of Bhopal, India; the sample consisted of a total of 219 students. The research design was descriptive, and a questionnaire was used for the collection of data. The study obtained several findings, including the following: cultural intelligence and psychological well-being are positively correlated, and cultural intelligence and acculturative stress are negatively correlated.

The study by Chen, et al. [32] examined the link between overseas life satisfaction and social connectedness as well as the mediating effect of cultural intelligence and moderating effect of the socioeconomic status. The study targeted Taiwanese students studying abroad; the sample included (431) students. The study's methodology was descriptive, and the research instrument was a questionnaire. The study's findings show that social connectedness and cultural intelligence are positively correlated. Cultural intelligence was also found to have a positive relationship with overseas life satisfaction and to be partially mediating the correlation between overseas life satisfaction and social connectedness. Moreover, socioeconomic status was found to moderate the aforementioned correlations.

A study that discussed a different aspect of the relationship between cultural intelligence and quality of life is that by Singh, et al. [31] which explored cross-cultural differences in quality of life and cultural intelligence among adults. The targeted cohort consisted of adults aged 18-40 who belonged to the Punjabi and Himachali cultures; the sample included a total of 120 individuals. A qualitative research design was selected for the study, and data collection instruments included the Quality of Life Scale and the Cultural Intelligence Scale. Findings showed the following: differences were identified among sample members in cultural intelligence, favoring males; males and females had similar levels of quality of life; and differences were identified among sample members in cultural intelligence and quality of life regarding the culture variable, favoring those belonging to the Punjabi culture.

4. Methodology

4.1. Research Approach

The present study adopted a correlational descriptive research design. It is an approach of structured scientific analysis and interpretation for describing a certain phenomenon or problem and portraying it quantitatively by collecting, categorizing, analyzing, and carefully studying data and information.

4.2. Target Population and Sample

The target was faculty members of Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University. From among this population, a sample totaling (90) individuals was selected.

4.2.1. Sample Attributes

Percentages and frequencies were calculated as regards the variables of (years of experience – gender – academic rank).

Table 1.
Distribution on the basis of the variable of gender.

No.	Gender	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Male	53	58.9%
2	Female	37	41.1%
Total		90	100.0%

From Table 1, it is evident that (58.9%) of the sample are male, while the rest are female.

Table 2.
Distribution on the basis of the variable of years of experience.

No.	Experience	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Experience is < 5 years	28	31.1%
2	From 5 to 10 years	44	48.9%
3	Experience is ≥ 10 years	18	20.0%
Total		90	100.0%

From Table 2, it is evident that (31.1%) of sample members have experience that is less than 5 years, (48.9%) have an experience ranging between 5 and less than 10 years, and (20.0%) have an experience of 10 years or more.

Table 3.
Distribution on the basis of the variable of academic rank.

No.	Academic rank	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Associate professor	7	7.8%
2	Assistant professor	53	58.9%
3	Professor	30	33.3%
Total		90	100.0%

From Table 3, it is evident that (7.8%) of the sample have the academic rank of an Associate Professor, (58.9%) are Assistant Professors, and (33.3%) are Professors.

4.3. Research Instrument

After reviewing literature relevant to the present study's topic, the researcher developed two scales, which are the "Cultural Intelligence Scale" and "Quality of Life Scale".

4.3.1. Overview of the Instruments

The researcher used the Cultural Intelligence Scale and Quality of Life Scale:
- Part One: Basic data (Years of experience – gender –academic rank).
- Part Two: It includes measures. In its final form, the scales include (30) statements, distributed as follows:
- Cultural Intelligence Scale: It includes (20) statements distributed on four main dimensions, as follows:
- Metacognition: It includes (5) statements.
- Cognition: It includes (5) statements.
- Motivations: It includes (5) statements.
- Behaviors: It includes (5) statements.
- Quality of Life Scale: It includes (10) statements.

A five-point likert scale is used for measuring the variables under study.

4.3.2. Validity
4.3.2.1. Internal Validity

For measuring the research instrument's internal consistency, Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated between the score for each of the statements and its respective axis' total score. The findings of this step are outlined in Table 4.

Table 4.
Pearson's coefficients.

First: Cultural intelligence scale

Statement	Correlation coefficient	Statement	Correlation coefficient	Statement	Correlation coefficient
1	0.689**	8	0.696**	15	0.794**
2	0.745**	9	0.856**	16	0.536**
3	0.879**	10	0.816**	17	0.764**
4	0.891**	11	0.702**	18	0.751**
5	0.811**	12	0.845**	19	0.800**
6	0.609**	13	0.796**	20	0.845**
7	0.704**	14	0.890**		

Second: Quality of life scale

Statement	Correlation coefficient	Statement	Correlation coefficient	Statement	Correlation coefficient
1	0.688**	5	0.809**	9	0.890**
2	0.891**	6	0.845**	10	0.897**
3	0.909**	7	0.845**		
4	0.935**	8	0.479**		

Note: ** statistically significant at the significance level of (0.01).

Table 4 shows that Pearson's coefficients are all statistically significant. All values were high, as they ranged, in the Cultural Intelligence Scale, between 0.536** and 0.891** and in the axes of the Quality of Life they ranged between 0.479** and 0.935**. Thus, statements of the two axes are characterized by high internal consistency.

Table 5.
Reliability of the research instrument.

No.	Statements	No. of statements	Cronbach's alpha coefficient
1	Cultural intelligence scale	20	0.943
2	Quality of life scale	10	0.957

Table 5 shows reliability coefficients for two scales were at high values, as they at (0.943) for the "Cultural Intelligence Scale" and (0.957) for the "Quality of Life Scale". These values indicate that the two scales are reliable and can be used to obtain reliable findings.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1. Discussion of Question 1: "What are the Levels of Cultural Intelligence among Fresh Students?"

For answering the question, the standard deviations and means for each dimension were calculated. Results are listed in a descending order, as outlined in Table 6.

Table 6.
Levels of cultural intelligence.

No.	Axis	Mean	Standard deviation	Axis' ranking	Level of responsiveness
1	First dimension: Metacognition	2.460	0.5809	2	Low
2	Second dimension: Cognition	2.428	0.5817	4	Low
3	Third dimension: Motivations	2.713	0.8073	1	Low
4	Fourth motivation: Behavior	2.447	0.5854	3	Low
Total score for the cultural intelligence scale		2.534	0.5760	---	Low

Table 6 shows that "levels of cultural intelligence among fresh students" was rated (low). The overall mean for the Cultural Intelligence Scale is (2.534), with a standard deviation of (0.5760), while the standard deviations for the Scale's dimensions ranged between 0.5809 and 0.8073, which are low values, indicating strong homogeneity of opinions.

The researcher believes that these low values are attributed to sample members' low ability to cope and communicate effectively with peers from diverse cultural backgrounds, which is probably due to that university years begin with a significantly high level of cultural openness that students have not been accustomed to before.

Supporting this finding is the study of Ayoob, et al. [4] which indicates that university students in culturally diverse contexts are prone to acculturative stress, which is often an outcome of poor cultural intelligence. On the other hand, the finding contradicts those obtained by the study of Tzu-Ping and Chang [5] which shows that levels of metacognitive and motivational cultural intelligence are high among international students in Taiwan.

5.2. Discussion of Question 2: "What is the Degree of Quality of Life among Fresh Students?"

For answering the question, the standard deviations and means for each dimension were calculated. Results are listed in a descending order, as outlined in Table 7 below.

Table 7 shows that quality of life among students was rated (low) from the perspectives of faculty members. The overall mean was valued at (2.46), with a standards deviation of (0.557). The values of standard deviations for the scale's statements ranged between 0.622-0.810, which are low values, indicating strong homogeneity among sample members' opinion on the statements.

The researcher believes that these low values are attributed to potential multitude of challenges of encountered by fresh students such as the challenges of adapting to university life, which significantly differs from educational life in previous educational stages, resulting in elevated levels of stress, thus lower levels of quality of life.

This conclusion is congruent with that attained by the study of Ramón-Arbués, et al. [2] which indicates that quality of life for university students, especially the fresh ones, may be undermined due to the massive life changes and transformation they witness, resulting in elevated levels of stress, which in turn lead to poorer quality of life. Another study with supportive findings is that by Singh, et al. [31] which indicates that a student's cultural background influences their ability to enjoy good quality of life at university. On the contrary, the study by Tzu-Ping and Chang [5] shows that levels of metacognitive and motivational cultural intelligence tend to be high among undergraduate students.

Table 7.
Quality of life among students.

Statement		Level of responsiveness						Mean	Standard deviation	Statement ranking	Level of responsiveness
			Very low	Low	Moderate	High	Very high				
2	Students feel that studying at university is very beneficial	f	9	12	69	0.0	0.0	2.67	0.653	*1*	Moderate
		%	10.0	13.3	76.7	0.0	0.0				
4	Students have a desire to play the role of active citizens in society	f	9	24	55	2	0.0	2.56	0.705	*2*	Low
		%	10.0	26.7	61.1	2.2	0.0				
10	Students do their best to help those who ask them for help	f	6	30	54	0.0	0.0	2.53	0.622	*3*	Low
		%	6.7	33.3	60.0	0.0	0.0				
1	Students feel that they are smart enough to understand the creativity of others	f	8	32	48	2	0.0	2.49	0.691	*4*	Low
		%	8.9	35.6	53.3	2.2	0.0				
9	Students encourage each other to complete work that benefits everyone	f	9	30	51	0.0	0.0	2.47	0.674	*5*	Low
		%	10.0	33.3	56.7	0.0	0.0				
7	Most relationships among students are characterized by understanding and harmony	f	18	12	60	0.0	0.0	2.47	0.810	*6*	Low
		%	20.0	13.3	66.7	0.0	0.0				
6	Most students feel a sense of belonging to family and society	f	9	33	48	0.0	0.0	2.43	0.671	*7*	Low
		%	10.0	36.7	53.3	0.0	0.0				
3	Students feel able to cope with their problems	f	12	30	48	0.0	0.0	2.40	0.716	*8*	Low
		%	13.3	33.3	53.3	0.0	0.0				
5	Some courses are not suitable for students' abilities	f	9	39	42	0.0	0.0	2.37	0.661	*9*	Low
		%	10.0	43.3	46.7	0.0	0.0				
8	Students feel that they did not receive the education they had hoped for	f	15	30	45	0.0	0.0	2.33	0.750	*10*	Low
		%	16.7	33.3	50.0	0.0	0.0				
Overall mean for the academic competence scale								2.46	*0.980*	---	Low

5.3. Discussion of the Main Hypothesis: A Correlation Exists between Cultural Intelligence and Quality of Life

Testing this hypothesis required calculating Pearson's coefficients of correlation between the two scales were calculated. The findings are outlined in Table 8.

Table 8.
Cultural intelligence scale.

Cultural intelligence scale dimensions	Total score for quality-of-life scale	
	Correlation coefficient	**Statistical significance**
First dimension: Metacognition	0.927**	0.000
Second dimension: Cognition	0.936**	0.000
Third dimension: Motivations	0.784**	0.000
Fourth motivation: Behavior	0.935**	0.000
Total score for cultural intelligence	0.821**	0.000

Note: ** statistically significant at the significance level of (0.01).

Table 8 shows that a positive correlation exists between the two variables. The correlation coefficient is valued at (0.821**), indicating that when one variable increases the other increases as well.

The researcher believes that this finding is attributable to the important role of cultural intelligence in helping students adapt to their educational and social environments and building relationships with others, leading to enjoying a satisfactory life at university.

This finding concurs with a conclusion discussed in the study by Ramsey and Lorenz [18], which suggests that cultural intelligence leads to an improved quality of life by promoting positive perceptions of one's skill development and self-efficacy abilities. Other studies with similar findings include those by Mehra [3] and Ayoob, et al. [4].

6. Conclusions

The analyses in this study show that levels of both cultural intelligence and quality of life among fresh students at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University are low. The study also shows that there is a positive correlation between cultural intelligence and quality of life. These findings are generally in line with those obtained by most relevant research studies, as most studies show that the two variables are positively correlated. However, the low levels of both cultural intelligence and quality of life among sample members represent a pattern that warrants further research attention. These findings may seem unexpected, especially given the fact that Saudi Arabia is an increasingly multicultural society. However, the present study's findings cannot be generalized to the rest of Saudi universities due to certain limitations, including small sample size, investigation of the limited context of only one university, and use of only quantitative research methods. It is recommended that future studies targeting the Saudi context take these limitations into careful consideration.

In the light of these general conclusions, the study presents a number of research suggestions and practical recommendations.

6.1. Research Suggestions
- Conducting similar studies targeting the contexts of other universities across Saudi Arabia.
- Carrying out studies that adopt qualitative research designs in order to form deeper understandings and insights on the nature of university students' intercultural experiences and how they impact different aspects of their quality of life.

6.2. Practical Recommendations
- Launching awareness campaigns at Saudi universities that focus on educating students on the value of understanding and respecting diverse cultures from around the world.
- Offering counseling programs at Saudi universities to provide students with appropriate help for improving their sense of happiness and life satisfaction, thereby improving their quality of life.

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