Cultural Intelligence and Fertility Decision-Making: Exploring Mediating Pathways in Sino-Thai Cross-Cultural Marriages

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Li-Wei Wei
General Education, Dhurakij Pundit University
liwei.wei@dpu.ac.th

Abstract

This study critically examines the mediating influence of cultural intelligence on the relationship between marital satisfaction and fertility intentions among Sino-Thai cross-cultural couples. Employing a methodologically rigorous approach, we surveyed 196 Chinese nationals married to Thai partners using validated instruments: The General Attitudes towards Intercultural Marriage Scale, the Cultural Intelligence Scale, and the Fertility Desire Scale. Correlational analyses revealed significant positive associations among marital satisfaction, cultural intelligence, and fertility intentions. Furthermore, mediation analysis demonstrated that cultural intelligence partially mediates the impact of marital satisfaction on fertility intentions. These findings underscore the pivotal role of cultural intelligence in navigating intercultural marital dynamics and fertility decision-making. The study contributes to the scholarly discourse by elucidating the complex interplay of cultural factors in cross-cultural marriages, particularly within the Sino-Thai context. Implications suggest that enhancing cultural intelligence may foster greater marital satisfaction and promote positive fertility intentions, thereby informing interventions and policies aimed at supporting intercultural couples.

Keywords: Cross-Cultural Marriage; Cultural Intelligence; Fertility Intentions; Sino-Thai Intercultural Relationship, Mediating Effects

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background and Problem Statement

Globalization has unequivocally catalyzed the proliferation of cross-cultural marriages (Gaidukova, 2022; Piller, 2010). Facilitated by advancements in mobility, communication technologies, and economic interconnectedness, it has engendered an environment conducive to cross-cultural interactions and unions (Denoux & Simou, 2022; Safronova & Michshenko, 2023). This trend is exemplified by individuals from disparate cultural backgrounds forming relationships characterized by mutual understanding and shared experiences (Khatib-Chahidi et al., 2021; Machette & Cionea, 2023). In the Sino-Thai context, the historical continuum of Chinese migration to Thailand since the 19th century has established a robust foundation for contemporary cross-cultural marriages (Yao & Nie, 2024). Chinese immigrants have significantly influenced Thai society, embedding themselves in its socio-cultural and economic

fabric (Yao & Nie, 2024). Presently, these marriages manifest in Thai individuals marrying Chinese in China and Chinese individuals relocating to Thailand to marry Thais. While enriched by shared historical ties and cultural exchanges, they navigate complexities such as language barriers, cultural expectations, and familial dynamics (Barker, 2015; Koc, 2020). Thus, the intersection of globalization and historical Sino-Thai relations provides a compelling framework for examining the multifaceted nature of contemporary cross-cultural marriages, underscoring both challenges and opportunities inherent in these unions (Piller, 2010; Skuybedina & Khimich, 2021).

Cross-cultural marriages between spouses from distinct cultural milieus have proliferated due to heightened globalization and mobility (Gaidukova, 2022; Safronova & Michshenko, 2023). These unions blend diverse customs, traditions, and worldviews, engendering enriching experiences alongside formidable challenges (Barker, 2015; Koc, 2020). The crux of the problem lies in the interplay of cultural intelligence as a mediating factor between cross-cultural marriage and fertility intentions (Gonçalves & Sousa, 2022; Inkson & Thomas, 2011). Such marriages can enhance personal growth, foster greater tolerance, and deepen relational bonds through shared navigation of cultural disparities (Barker, 2015; Inkson & Thomas, 2011). However, they confront significant obstacles like communication barriers, conflicting cultural norms, familial and societal pressures, and the arduous task of identity negotiation (Denoux & Simou, 2022; Piller, 2010). Research underscores these challenges, highlighting issues like family conflicts, communication problems, and the emotional toll on marital satisfaction (Khatib-Chahidi et al., 2021; Machette & Cionea, 2023). Moreover, diverse values toward life and fertility further complicate these relationships (Berrington, 2021; Ji, 2021). Core value clashes regarding religious beliefs, gender roles, and individualism versus collectivism can engender discord in decision-making and conflict resolution (Barker, 2015; Denoux & Simou, 2022). In summation, the nexus between Sino-Thai cross-cultural marriage and fertility intentions is profoundly mediated by cultural intelligence (Gonçalves & Sousa, 2022; Koc, 2020). Addressing this necessitates a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted cultural dynamics at play, thereby contributing to the broader discourse on intercultural relationships and their socio-demographic implications (Barker, 2015; Koc, 2020).

1.2 Gap and Values of Research

Despite burgeoning interest in cross-cultural marriage studies, a notable research gap persists in understanding how cultural intelligence mediates the relationship between intercultural marital dynamics and fertility intentions (Gonçalves & Sousa, 2022; Inkson & Thomas, 2011). The extant literature predominantly addresses superficial elements such as communication barriers and cultural conflicts, neglecting the profound influence of underlying value systems on fertility decisions (Berrington, 2021; Tan, 2023). Focusing on the Sino-Thai cross-cultural marriage context, this study addresses this lacuna by offering nuanced insights into how deeply ingrained cultural intelligence shapes reproductive intentions amid cultural confluence (Gonçalves & Sousa, 2022; Yao & Nie, 2024). The research's value lies in its potential to significantly contribute to academic discourse on intercultural relationships and their socio-demographic implications (Barker, 2015; Denoux & Simou, 2022). It provides a robust framework for policymakers and social scientists to comprehend the complexities of

cultural intelligence in cross-cultural marriages, thereby fostering informed strategies to support these unions (Gonçalves & Sousa, 2022; Inkson & Thomas, 2011). This study not only advances theoretical understanding but also has practical implications for enhancing marital satisfaction and fertility outcomes in intercultural contexts, bridging crucial gaps in cross-cultural, demographic, and sociological research (Ji, 2021; Tan, 2023).

1.3 Research Questions

This study aims to elucidate the complex interplay between Sino-Thai cross-cultural marriages, cultural intelligence, and fertility intentions. To this end, given the complex interplay of cultural dynamics and personal values in Sino-Thai cross-cultural marriages, this study seeks to address the following research questions

1) What are the significant relationships among marital satisfaction, cultural intelligence, and fertility intentions in Sino-Thai intercultural unions?

2) To what extent do cultural intelligence mediate the relationship between intercultural marital dynamics and fertility intentions in Sino-Thai marriages?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Definition of Cross-Cultural Marriage, Cultural Intelligence and Fertility Intentions

Cross-cultural marriages, uniting individuals from disparate cultural backgrounds, necessitate complex negotiations of identity and communication strategies (Breger and Hill, 2021; Hsu, 2017). Influenced by factors such as linguistic proficiency, cultural fluency, and legal frameworks (Jackson, 2019; 2023; Semafumu, 2021), these relationships require cultural sensitivity, mutual understanding, and adaptive communication for success (SAGE Encyclopedia, 2017; Wiruchnipawan & Chua, 2018). Their formation and maintenance are shaped by socio-cultural contexts, individual choices, and global migration patterns (Khatib-Chahidi et al., 2021; Tremayne, 2001). Moreover, offspring experiences from such unions provide valuable insights into cultural integration and identity formation processes (Maxwell, 2021). This multifaceted phenomenon demands continuous adaptation and the development of intercultural competence to achieve relational harmony.

Cultural Intelligence (CI) denotes an individual's proficiency in functioning effectively within culturally diverse environments. This study conceptualizes CI as an integrative construct encompassing cognitive, motivational, and behavioral dimensions that facilitate cross-cultural interactions. Anchored by Ang and Dyne's (2015) definition—"a person's capability to adapt effectively to new cultural contexts"—this conceptualization aligns with perspectives emphasizing components enhancing intercultural adaptability (Thomas & Liao, 2023; Thomas & Inkson, 2017). Initially introduced by Smith (1954), CI's scope has been expanded by scholars like Gavriel (2020), who incorporated ethnographic intelligence, Caligiuri (2023), who highlighted cultural agility, and Anne-Crowne and Lo (2023), who differentiated CI from social and emotional intelligence. Berry (2022) positions CI as integral to intelligence aligned with ecological and cultural adaptation. The evolving nature of CI necessitates ongoing scholarly examination and refinement.

Fertility intentions, individuals' childbearing plans, are influenced by various factors. Recent studies underscore the complex interplay of environmental, socioeconomic, and cultural determinants shaping reproductive decisions. Bastianelli (2024) examines climate

change's impact on European fertility choices; Parra-Pérez (2020) investigates fertility dynamics in China's tourism-driven economy. Sobotka and Beaujouan (2017, 2021) analyze consequences of delayed motherhood in low-fertility nations. Gender inequality emerges as significant, evidenced by Yoon's (2016) research in South Korea and Wu et al.'s (2024) study on East Asian childcare systems. Comparative analyses of Asian fertility trends are provided by Gietel-Basten et al. (2018) and Tsuya (2019). Shreffler (2024) adopts a global public health perspective, while Brünig (2023) examines fertility intentions among European migrants and minorities.

2.2 Relationships between Cross-Cultural Marriage and Cultural Intelligence

Cross-cultural marriages serve as a profound domain for the development of cultural intelligence, as these unions inherently necessitate the continuous negotiation of diverse cultural identities and practices (Breger & Hill, 2021; Schick; 2017). The scholarly discourse posits that cultural intelligence, defined as the capability to function effectively in culturally diverse settings, is significantly enhanced through prolonged cultural exposure, such as that experienced in cross-cultural marriages (Anne-Crowne & Lo, 2023; Breger & Hill, 2021). Moreover, Maxwell (2021) contend that cross-cultural marriages provide an immersive environment that fosters the acquisition of cultural intelligence by compelling individuals to engage deeply with another culture on both cognitive and emotional levels. This continuous engagement contributes to the development of a more nuanced understanding and appreciation of cultural differences, thereby augmenting cultural intelligence (Breger & Hill, 2021; Weisfeld et al., 2017). The theoretical framework advanced by Crowne (2013) further suggests that the emotional intelligence developed within such marriages is instrumental in enhancing one's cultural intelligence, as emotional intelligence facilitates more effective interpersonal interactions across cultural boundaries. Given the empirical and theoretical evidence, it is plausible to hypothesize below:

H1a: There is a positive and significant relationship between cross-cultural marriage and cultural intelligence

This hypothesis is supported by the argument that the unique intercultural experiences inherent in cross-cultural marriages act as catalysts for the development of cultural intelligence, thereby underscoring the integral role of cross-cultural marriages in promoting intercultural understanding and competence (Maxwell, 2021; Yamani, 2021;). The potential implications of this relationship extend beyond the individual level, influencing broader sociocultural dynamics and contributing to the global discourse on cross-cultural adaptation and integration.

2.3 Relationships between Cross-Cultural Marriage and Fertility Intentions

The literature reveals that unique socio-cultural dynamics in cross-cultural marriages influence fertility intentions through the interplay of cultural convergence and divergent reproductive strategies (Cheng & Hsu, 2020; Kohlmann, 2002). Tremayne (2001) argues these marriages necessitate renegotiation of gender roles and family planning, recalibrating fertility intentions based on educational attainment and household labor division (Cross-cultural marriage and family, 2017; Kohlmann, 2002). Family policies significantly shape these intentions, particularly via gender-role preferences (Cheng & Hsu, 2020). Hewitt and Churchill (2020) describe a hybrid family planning model incorporating both cultures, complicated by individual agency and choices inherent in cross-cultural marriages (Breger & Hill, 2021). Understanding the cross-cultural value of children is essential for grasping the

fertility intentions of couples navigating conflicting expectations (Hewitt & Churchill, 2020; Kohlmann, 2002). Intercultural couples negotiate cultural values and expectations around parenthood, influencing fertility intentions as they reconcile divergent norms (Breger & Hill, 2021; Kohlmann, 2002). Globalization necessitates nuanced study of these intentions, considering the interplay between individual preferences, cultural backgrounds, and societal influences (Hewitt & Churchill, 2020). The literature underscores the intricate relationship between cross-cultural marriage and fertility intentions, shaped by cultural, educational, and policy factors. Future research should explore these dynamics to better understand intercultural couples' reproductive decisions (Cheng & Hsu, 2020; Kohlmann, 2002; Refsing, 2021), contributing to demographic trends and social change. Given the significant role of cultural adaptation in cross-cultural marriages, the research proposes the following hypothesis 1b:

H1b: Cross-cultural intelligence is positively correlated with fertility intentions

2.4 Relationships between Cross-Cultural Marriage and Fertility Intentions

The academic discourse elucidates how cross-cultural marriages influence fertility intentio ns. Dewangan et al. (2022) argue that cultural intelligence fosters harmony and stability in cro ss-cultural unions, essential for family and fertility decisions. Wawrosz and Jurásek (2022) su ggest it preserves distinct cultural identities, easing discussions about starting a family, and le ads to better cross-cultural adjustment linked to higher fertility intentions. Malay et al. (2024) find that cultural intelligence reduces perceived cultural distance, improving relational outcom es and facilitating long-term commitments, including childbearing decisions. Lower ethnocen trism combined with higher cultural intelligence enhances intercultural interactions (Young, H affejee, & Corsun, 2017). Partners embracing each other's cultural norms, including family pl anning attitudes, enable open discussions on desired family size. Çelik et al. (2021) highlight a positive correlation between cultural intelligence and relationship satisfaction, a critical fact or in deciding to have children. Baldwin et al. (2023) demonstrate that cultural intelligence fa cilitates effective intercultural communication, increasing positive fertility intentions by helpi ng couples navigate challenges. Tremayne (2001) emphasizes the necessity of cultural intellig ence in transnational cross-cultural marriages, leading to relational stability that positively inf luences fertility intentions. Ng (2013) underscores its role across intercultural contexts in relat ional satisfaction and life decisions, including fertility. Koc (2020) notes that intercultural com petence ensures the sustainability of cross-cultural marriages; couples with strong competence have enduring relationships, correlating with higher fertility intentions as they navigate cultur al differences to reach mutually satisfying decisions. Collectively, literature supports that cros s-cultural marriage positively correlates with fertility intentions, with cultural intelligence as a central factor. It enables partners to navigate intercultural complexities, fostering stability and facilitating discussions about family formation. Therefore, based on these studies, the present research formulates the following hypothesis:

H1c: Cross-Cultural Marriage is positively correlated with fertility intentions.

This hypothesis is grounded in the extensive body of literature that underscores the role of cultural intelligence and intercultural competence in fostering successful cross-cultural marriages, which, in turn, positively influences partners' decisions regarding fertility (Baldwin et al., 2023; Dewangan et al. 2022; Koc, 2020; Malay et al., 2024; Su, 2022; Wawrosz & Jurásek, 2022; Young et al., 2017).

2.5 Cultural Intelligence as a Mediating Factor toward Cross-Cultural Perspective

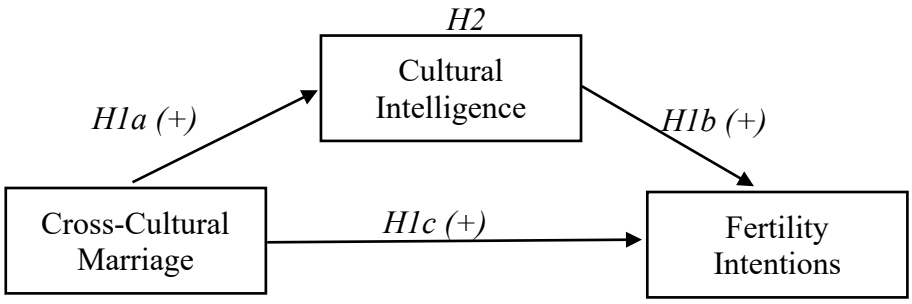
In the evolving field of cross-cultural psychology, contemporary research increasingly hig hlights the complexities of cross-cultural marriages, particularly in relation to fertility intentio ns. The concept of cultural intelligence (CI), defined as an individual's ability to navigate and adapt to diverse cultural contexts (Crowne, 2013), has emerged as a pivotal mediating variabl e in the dynamic between cross-cultural unions and reproductive decisions. Regarding researc h hypothesis 2:

H2 Cultural intelligence exerts a mediating effect in the relationship between cross-cultura l marriage and fertility intentions.

The hypothesis is substantiated by a substantial body of literature as illustrated below. Res earch indicates that higher levels of CI enable more effective communication, mutual understa nding, and conflict resolution among partners from different cultural backgrounds, thereby fos tering a more collaborative approach to family planning (Liao & Thomas, 2020; Thomas & Li ao, 2023). The confluence of diverse cultural norms, values, and practices inherent in cross-cu ltural marriages can often lead to misunderstandings or conflicts, particularly regarding fertilit y decisions (Hewitt & Churchill, 2020; Schick; 2017). In this context, CI emerges as a crucial competence that mitigates these challenges by enhancing the ability to interpret and respond t o cultural cues in a manner that promotes empathy, reduces ethnocentric biases, and fosters re lational harmony (Crowne, 2013; Liao & Thomas, 2020). Empirical studies further elucidate t he mediating role of CI, demonstrating that culturally intelligent individuals are more adept at negotiating cultural norms and societal expectations, thereby influencing fertility intentions i n cross-cultural marriages (Khatib-Chahidi et al., 2021). For instance, Bisin and Tura (2019) f ound that couples with higher cultural integration and understanding are more likely to align t heir fertility intentions, underscoring the importance of CI in harmonizing divergent cultural e xpectations. Moreover, CI not only mediates the relationship between cross-cultural marriage and fertility intentions but also moderates the impact of external stressors on marital stability, as couples with high CI are better equipped to handle cultural conflicts and adapt to changing circumstances (Liao & Thomas, 2020). This perspective is echoed by Thomas and Liao (202 3), who assert that CI enhances relational dynamics by fostering a conducive environment for discussing and aligning fertility intentions. Additionally, research suggests that CI empowers i ndividuals to resist societal pressures and make autonomous decisions regarding family plann ing, further highlighting its significance in cross-cultural contexts (Hewitt & Churchill, 2020; Liao & Thomas, 2020). In conclusion, the hypothesis that CI generates a mediating effect in t he relationship between cross-cultural marriage and fertility intentions is robustly supported b y empirical evidence. Enhancing CI among cross-cultural couples could thus be a strategic int ervention to promote marital harmony and facilitate cohesive decision-making processes rega rding fertility, aligning with broader socio-cultural factors and fostering an environment cond ucive to informed and mutually agreeable reproductive decisions (Bisin & Tura, 2019; Khatib -Chahidi et al., 2021). This underscores the imperative of integrating CI development into pro grams aimed at supporting cross-cultural marriages, thereby enhancing both relational and rep roductive outcomes in an increasingly globalized society.

In summation, the prevailing hypotheses articulated within this study have been synthesiz ed into the accompanying theoretical framework as illustrated in Figure 1 below. This framew ork serves as a schematic representation, mapping the conjectured relationships and variables under investigation. It is constructed with the intention of guiding subsequent empirical inquir y and facilitating a deeper understanding of the phenomena at hand.

Figure 1
Theoretical Framework of the Current Research



3. Methodology

3.1 Sample Cohort Selection and Description

The research cohort comprised 196 Chinese nationals (N=196) residing or working in Thailand, all engaged in heterosexual marriages with Thai nationals. Participants were recruited via a meticulously designed survey disseminated through the "Chinese Working and Living in Thailand" social media platform. Geographically, the sample spanned Bangkok, Chiang Mai, and Chonburi, and was stratified by gender, age cohorts, and location to provide a multifaceted depiction of the population.

The gender composition exhibited a slight male majority, with 104 men (53.1%) married to Thai women and 92 women (46.9%) wedded to Thai men, enhancing the study's capacity to explore gender-specific variations in cross-cultural marital dynamics and fertility intentions. A pronounced urban concentration was evident, with Bangkok hosting the majority of participants (n=115, 58.7%), followed by Chonburi (n=44, 22.4%) and Chiang Mai (n=37, 18.9%), allowing for comparative analysis of urban, industrial, and cultural milieus on cross-cultural couples. Age stratification revealed a predominance of participants in middle adulthood, with the majority between 30 and 50 years: 76 participants (38.8%) aged 30–40 and 92 participants (46.9%) aged 41–50. A smaller proportion included those under 30 (n=11, 5.6%) and over 50 (n=17, 8.7%). This age distribution is particularly pertinent for investigating fertility intentions during prime reproductive years. As elucidated in Table 1, this demographic profile demonstrates a relatively balanced gender ratio and significant urban concentration, particularly in Bangkok. The emphasis on midlife participants provides a rich substrate for exploring the complex interplay between cultural background, age, and fertility intentions within cross-cultural marriages. This sets the stage for a nuanced examination of how cultural adaptation, socioeconomic status, and life stage intersect to shape the reproductive decisions and family-building aspirations of Chinese expatriates in Thailand.

Table 1

Overview of Research Participants' Demographic Characteristics (N=196)

Characteristic	Categories	N	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	104	53.1
	Female	92	46.9
Age	<30	11	5.6
	30-40	76	38.8
	41-50	92	46.9
	>50	17	8.7
Residence Area	Bangkok	115	58.7
	Chiang Mai	37	18.9
	Chonburi	44	22.4

3.2 Research Instrumentations

3.2.1 General Attitudes towards Intercultural Marriage Scale (GAIMS)

The General Attitudes towards Intercultural Marriage Scale (GAIMS) was adapted from the General Attitudes towards Marriage Scale (GAMS) developed by Park and Rosén (2013). This scale, comprising 10 items, is designed to measure individuals' perceptions and attitudes toward marriage, including positive attitudes, negative attitudes, and associated fears. The scale operates on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), providing a quantitative means of measuring an individual's stance on marriage. The internal consistency of the GAMS, reported in its original validation, was robust with a Cronbach's alpha of .84, indicating high reliability. The construct validity of the scale was confirmed through various statistical tests, ensuring its applicability in cross-cultural contexts. In this study, the scale's adaptability allows for nuanced insights into how cultural factors may influence intercultural marriage attitudes.

3.2.2 Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS)

The Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS), initially developed by Ang et al. (2007), was employed in its adapted form as validated by Bücker, Furrer, and Peeters Weem (2016). The scale assesses individuals' cultural intelligence across four dimensions: cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, and behavioral, with a total of 20 items. To ensure cross-cultural applicability, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was utilized, revealing adequate model fit indices, including an RMSEA of .050 and .071 for Chinese and Dutch samples, respectively. Reliability was demonstrated through Cronbach's alphas ranging between .72 and .83, indicating strong internal consistency across cultural contexts. The scale's discriminant validity was partially supported, necessitating further examination of social desirability influences. Nevertheless, the two-dimensional adaptation of the CQS provided improved psychometric properties, supporting its use in cross-cultural studies, including the current investigation of Sino-Thai marriages.

3.2.3 Fertility Desire Scale (FDS)

The Fertility Desire Scale (FDS), as adapted from Naghibi et al., (2019), consists of 16 items grouped into three dimensions: Positive Childbearing Motivations, Childbearing Worries, and Social Beliefs. This newly modified version emphasizes positive statements and was validated using exploratory factor analysis (KMO = 0.761, $\chi^2(78) = 1966.558$, $p<0.05$), indicating suitable sampling adequacy for the analysis. Cronbach's alpha values, ranging from 0.718 to 0.781 across the dimensions, demonstrate the scale's good reliability, while test-retest Pearson correlations confirmed its stability over time. This instrument is vital for capturing individuals' fertility intentions within the specific context of cross-cultural marriage, where cultural intelligence may play a significant mediating role. All in all, Table 2 below detailed the summary

of research instruments provides a clear, organized presentation of the scales used in this stud y, ensuring methodological rigor and clarity.

Table 2
Breakthrough of Research Instruments

Scale	Author (Year)	Item	Dimensions	Reliability	Validity
General Attitudes towards Intercultural Marriage Scale (GAIMS)	Park & Rosén (2013)	10 items	Positive, Negative Attitudes; Fears	Cronbach's α =.84	Construct validity confirmed; adapted for intercultural marriage context
Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS)	Bücker et al. (2016)	20 items (adapted)	Cognitive, Metacognitive, Motivational, Behavioral	Cronbach's α =.72-.83	CFA conducted, acceptable RMSEA and model fit indices; discriminant validity partially supported
Fertility Desire Scale (FDS)	Naghibi et al. (2019)	16 items (adapted)	Positive Childbearing Motivations, Childbearing Worries, Social Beliefs	Cronbach's α =.718-.781	KMO=]0.761, $\chi^2(78)=1966.558$, $p< 0.05$; Pearson correlations confirmed test-retest reliability

3.3 Procedure and Data Analysis

The study employed validated instruments, including the General Attitudes towards Inter cultural Marriage Scale (GAIMS), the Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS), and the Fertility Des ire Scale (FDS). A comprehensive online principal survey questionnaire was developed, integ rating these scales to guarantee accurate measurement of the constructs under scrutiny. The su rvey was disseminated through a social media platform, specifically aimed at Chinese individ uals residing and working in Thailand. Data collection commenced on 16 January 2024 and c ontinued until 15 February 2024. Of the 208 questionnaires received, 12 were excluded due to invalidity, yielding a final sample of 196 valid responses. This equates to a valid response rat e of 94.2%, indicating robust participant engagement and high data reliability. The structured methodology employed in the design, distribution, and validation of responses ensures that th e data are both representative and methodologically sound, thus facilitating robust conclusion s regarding the interrelationship between cultural intelligence, attitudes towards intercultural marriage, and fertility intentions within Sino-Thai cross-cultural contexts.

Quantitative research design employed a rigorous data analysis protocol. Utilizing SPSS 25.0, a mediation analysis (Independent Variable-Mediating Variable-Dependent Variable) wa s conducted following Baron and Kenny's (1986) paradigm to elucidate indirect variable relat ionships. The model posited cross-cultural marriage as the independent variable, fertility inte ntions as the dependent variable, and cultural intelligence as the mediator. Linear regression a nalysis elucidated the mediator's influence on the IV-DV relationship. The four-step Baron an

d Kenny procedure was implemented to assess: (1) IV-DV effects, (2) IV-MV influence, (3) MV-DV impact, and (4) attenuation of IV-DV direct effects post-MV inclusion. This methodo logical approach illuminated Cultural Intelligence's pivotal mediating role in fertility decision -making within Sino-Thai unions.

4. Results

4.1 Positive Relationships Found among Three Research Variables

The correlation analysis, utilizing Pearson's correlation coefficients, identifies significant associations among the three variables under investigation. Specifically, cross-cultural marital satisfaction (IV) displays a strong positive correlation with cultural intelligence (MedV) (r=.615, $p < .001$), suggesting that higher levels of marital satisfaction correspond with greater cultural intelligence. Moreover, cross-cultural marital satisfaction demonstrates an even stronger correlation with fertility intentions (DV) (r =.693, $p < .001$), indicating that individuals reporting higher marital satisfaction are more likely to express positive fertility intentions. Cultural intelligence also exhibits a significant correlation with fertility intentions (r=.609, p <.001), reinforcing the notion that increased cultural intelligence is positively linked to heightened fertility intentions within these intercultural marriages. The descriptive statistics reveal relatively moderate mean values for cross-cultural marital satisfaction (M= 3.341, SD =.735), cultural intelligence (M=3.352, SD=.856), and fertility intentions (M=3.309, SD =.803), indicating variability within the sample. This underscores the presence of a spectrum of experiences within these marriages, thereby emphasizing the importance of cultural adaptation in promoting both marital satisfaction and fertility intentions. The correlations provide further support for the proposition that cultural intelligence functions as a mediator in shaping fertility intentions, particularly in the context of Sino-Thai marriages.

Table 3

Breakthrough of Research Instruments

	Mean	Std. Deviation		N
Cross-Cultural Marriage	3.410	.73502		196
Cultural Intelligence	3.3515	.85584		196
Fertility Intentions	3.3089	.80207		196
		CCM	CI	FI
CCM	Pearson Correlation		.615**	.693**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	196	196	196
CI	Pearson Correlation	.615**		.609**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	196	196	196
FI	Pearson Correlation	.693**	.609**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	196	196	196

Note 1: CCM: Cross-Cultural Marriage; CI: Cultural Intelligence; FI: Fertility Intentions
*Note 2: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

4.2 Linear Regression Analysis (Mediation Analysis)

A mediation analysis was performed to investigate the extent to which Cultural Intelligence mediates the relationship between Cross-Cultural Marriage and Fertility Intentions

among Sino-Thai couples. Following the Baron and Kenny (1986) four-step approach, the analysis proceeded as follows:

Step 1: Effect of Cross-Cultural Marriage on Cultural Intelligence

The first step assessed whether cross-cultural marriage significantly predicts cultural intelligence, the proposed mediator. The regression analysis demonstrated a significant positive relationship between cross-cultural marriage and cultural intelligence (B=0.717, SE=0.066, β=0.615, t(194)=10.875, p<0.001). The model explained 37.9% of the variance in cultural intelligence (R^2=0.379). The 95% CI for B was between 0.587 and 0.847, and the VIF was 1.000, indicating acceptable levels of collinearity. These results fulfill the second mediation criterion, establishing that cross-cultural marriage is a significant predictor of cultural intelligence among Sino-Thai couples.

Step 2: Effect of Cultural Intelligence on Fertility Intentions

In the second step, the researcher evaluated the impact of cultural intelligence on fertility intentions. The regression analysis revealed that cultural intelligence significantly predicted fertility intentions (B=0.572, SE=0.053, β=0.609, t(194)=10.703, p<0.001). This model accounted for 37.1% of the variance in fertility intentions (R^2=0.371). The 95% CI for the unstandardized coefficient was between 0.466 and 0.677, with a VIF of 1.000, indicating no multicollinearity concerns. These findings satisfy the third condition for mediation, demonstrating that cultural intelligence is significantly associated with fertility intentions.

Step 3: Direct Effect of Cross-Cultural Marriage on Fertility Intentions

In the third step of the mediation analysis, we examined the direct relationship between cross-cultural marriage and fertility intentions among Sino-Thai couples. The linear regression analysis revealed a significant positive effect of cross-cultural marriage on fertility intentions (B=0.758, SE=0.057, β=0.693, t(194)=13.404, p<0.001). This model accounted for 48.1% of the variance in fertility intentions (R^2=0.481), indicating a substantial influence. The 95% confidence interval (CI) for the unstandardized coefficient ranged from 0.646 to 0.869. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was 1.000, suggesting no multicollinearity issues. These findings satisfy the first condition of Baron and Kenny's (1986) mediation criteria, confirming that cross-cultural marriage significantly predicts fertility intentions.

Step 4: Mediation Effect of Cultural Intelligence

The final step involved testing the mediation effect by including both cross-cultural marriage and cultural intelligence in the regression model predicting fertility intentions. The combined model was significant (F(2, 193)=110.788, p<0.001) and accounted for 53.4% of the variance in fertility intentions (R^2=0.534), an increase of 5.4% over the model with only cross-cultural marriage (ΔR^2=0.054). In this model, both cross-cultural marriage (B=0.560, SE=0.068, β= 0.513, t(193)=8.225, p<0.001) and cultural intelligence (B=0.276, SE=0.058, β=0.294, t(193)=4.717, p<0.001) remained significant predictors of fertility intentions. The 95% CIs for B were 0.426 to 0.694 for cross-cultural marriage and 0.160 to 0.391 for cultural intelligence. The VIF values for both predictors were 1.610, indicating no issues with multicollinearity. The decrease in the standardized coefficient for cross-cultural marriage from β=0.693 (in Step 1) to β=0.513 suggests partial mediation. This attenuation confirms that cultural intelligence partially mediates the relationship between cross-cultural marriage and fertility intentions, highlighting its pivotal role in fertility decision-making within Sino-Thai unions. Table 4 below succinctly presents the key statistics from each step of the mediation analysis, reinforcing the conclusion that Cultural Intelligence plays a crucial mediating role in fertility decision-making within Sino-Thai cross-cultural marriages.

Table 4

Summary of Hierarchical Mediating Regression Analysis (N=194)

Variables	Linear Regression Path Analysis Model Dependent Variable (DV)							
	CI				FI			
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	β	t	β	t	β	t	β	t
CCM	0.615	10.875			0.693	13.404	0.513	8.225
CI			0.609	10.703			0.294	4.717
F-value	118.266		114.554		179.655		110.788	
Sig.	<.0001		<.0001		<.0001		<.0001	
R^2	0.379		0.371		0.481		0.054	
ΔR^2	-		-		-		0.054	
VIF	1.000		1.000		1.000		1.610	
95% CI (lower, Upper)	(0.587, 0.847)		(0.466, 0.677)		(0.646, 0.869)		CCM: (0.426, 0.694) CI: (0.160, 0.391)	

Note 1: CCM: Cross-Cultural Marriage; CI: Cultural Intelligence; FI: Fertility Intentions; B: Unstandardized Coefficient; SE: Standard Error; β: Standardized Coefficient; R^2: Coefficient of Determination; ΔR^2: R^2 Change; t: t-value; CI: Confidence Interval; VIF: Variance Inflation Factor

*Note2: *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001*

4.3 Testing of Hypotheses

Correlation analysis confirms Hypotheses H1a, H1b, and H1c, revealing significant positive relationships among cross-cultural marital satisfaction, cultural intelligence, and fertility intentions. Specifically, cross-cultural marital satisfaction showed a strong positive correlation with cultural intelligence (r=.615, p<.001), confirming H1a and indicating that higher marital satisfaction associates with enhanced cultural intelligence. Additionally, cultural intelligence positively correlated with fertility intentions (r=.609, p<.001), supporting H1b and suggesting that individuals with higher cultural intelligence are more likely to have positive fertility intentions. Cross-cultural marital satisfaction exhibited an even stronger correlation with fertility intentions (r=.693, p<.001), affirming H1c and indicating that higher marital satisfaction significantly predicts fertility intentions.

Mediation analysis, employing Baron and Kenny's (1986) methodology, provided evidence for Hypothesis H2, proposing that cultural intelligence mediates the relationship between cross-cultural marriage and fertility intentions. Regression analyses demonstrated that cross-cultural marriage significantly predicts cultural intelligence (B=0.717, p<.001), which in turn significantly predicts fertility intentions (B=0.572, p<.001). Notably, when both variables were included in the regression predicting fertility intentions, the effect of cross-cultural marriage remained significant but diminished (β decreased from 0.693 to 0.513), indicating partial mediation. The combined model explained a substantial variance in fertility intentions (R^2=0.534), thus affirming H2 and emphasizing the pivotal role of cultural intelligence in fertility decisions among Sino-Thai cross-cultural marriages.

Overall, these findings underscore cultural intelligence's integral role in fostering positive fertility intentions among Sino-Thai couples, mediated through the quality of cross-cultural marital relationships. The significant associations and partial mediation effect highlight the complex interplay between marital satisfaction, cultural adaptation, and fertility intentions. These results suggest that enhancing cultural intelligence may improve marital satisfaction and

promote positive fertility intentions in cross-cultural unions. Thus, the study contributes to the literature by elucidating mechanisms through which cultural factors influence fertility decisions in intercultural marriages. Table 5 provides a comprehensive summary of the hypothesis testing.

Table 5

Summary of Research Hypotheses Testing

Hypo.	Statement	Result	Evidence
H1a	Cross-cultural marriage positively relates to cultural intelligence	Supported	Significant positive correlation (r=.615, p<.001); Regression analysis (B=0.717, SE=0.066, β=0.615, p<.001).
H1b	Cultural intelligence positively relates to fertility intentions	Supported	Significant positive correlation (r=.609, p<.001); Regression analysis (B=0.572, S=0.053, β=0.609, p<.001)
H1c	Cross-cultural marriage positively relates to fertility intentions	Supported	Significant positive correlation (r = .693, p<.001) Regression analysis (B=0.758, SE=0.057, β=0.693, p<.001)
H2	Cultural intelligence mediates the relationship between cross-cultural marriage and fertility intentions	Supported	Partial mediation demonstrated; attenuation of β from 0.693 to 0.513 when cultural intelligence included Significant indirect effect (p < .001)

5. Conclusion

This study endeavored to elucidate the intricate interplay between cultural intelligence, marital satisfaction, and fertility intentions within Sino-Thai cross-cultural marriages. By examining the mediating role of cultural intelligence, we sought to deepen the understanding of how intercultural competence influences reproductive decision-making in these unique marital contexts (Ng, Ang, & Rockstuhl, 2022; Kim, 2017). The findings revealed significant positive relationships among the three variables under investigation. Cross-cultural marital satisfaction was strongly correlated with both cultural intelligence and fertility intentions, underscoring the pivotal role of marital harmony in shaping reproductive goals (Scelza, 2023; Ramlan, 2020). Furthermore, cultural intelligence emerged as a crucial mediator, partially mediating the relationship between cross-cultural marriage and fertility intentions. This suggests that individuals with higher cultural intelligence are better equipped to navigate cultural differences, thereby fostering marital satisfaction and aligning fertility intentions (Varela, 2019; Young, Haffejee, & Corsun, 2017).

Additionally, the results affirm the initial hypotheses, demonstrating that cultural intelligence not only enhances marital satisfaction but also positively influences fertility intentions. These findings contribute to the existing body of knowledge by highlighting the importance of cultural intelligence in cross-cultural marital dynamics, particularly in the context of Sino-Thai unions (Robinson, 2024). Implications of this research extend to both theoretical and practical realms. Theoretically, the study enriches the discourse on cross-cultural marriages by integrating cultural intelligence as a mediating construct, offering a nuanced understanding of how intercultural competence impacts marital and reproductive

outcomes (Kim, 2017). Practically, the findings suggest that interventions aimed at enhancing cultural intelligence may promote marital satisfaction and facilitate positive fertility intentions among cross-cultural couples (Ng, Ang, & Rockstuhl, 2022). Future research should consider exploring this phenomenon in different cultural contexts to further generalize the findings. Additionally, longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how cultural intelligence and fertility intentions evolve over time within cross-cultural marriages (Ramlan, 2020).

6. Discussion

The results highlight the pivotal role of cultural intelligence in fostering positive marital and reproductive outcomes within Sino-Thai cross-cultural marriages. Significant positive relationships among marital satisfaction, cultural intelligence, and fertility intentions corroborate prior research emphasizing intercultural competence in marital dynamics (Kim, 2017; Varela, 2019). The strong correlation suggests that spouses with higher cultural intelligence adeptly navigate intercultural complexities, aligning with Ng, Ang, and Rockstuhl's (2022) assertion that cultural intelligence enhances adaptation to diverse cultural contexts, thereby promoting marital harmony. Furthermore, the positive association between cultural intelligence and fertility intentions implies that culturally intelligent individuals are more likely to align on reproductive goals, attributable to their ability to reconcile differing cultural norms regarding family planning (Young, Haffejee, & Corsun, 2017). The mediating role of cultural intelligence underscores its critical function in bridging cultural gaps and influencing fertility decisions. These findings extend Robinson's (2024) exploration of intercultural family formation and provide empirical support to Scelza's (2023) theoretical frameworks on marriage and monogamy, suggesting cultural intelligence as a key factor in successful intercultural unions. Moreover, the study aligns with Ramlan's (2020) examination of cross-cultural marriage issues, emphasizing the necessity of cultural intelligence in addressing globalization's impact on marital dynamics. The influence of cultural intelligence on fertility intentions also resonates with Kim's (2017) model of cross-cultural adaptation, underscoring the importance of intercultural competence in navigating life transitions. Notably, while the mediating role of cultural intelligence was anticipated, its influence was more substantial than initially hypothesized, suggesting it plays a more critical role in fertility decision-making than previously understood, warranting further investigation.

7. Recommendations

In light of the study's findings, several recommendations emerge for practitioners, policymakers, and future research. Practitioners working with cross-cultural couples should prioritize the development of cultural intelligence as a core component of marital counseling and family planning services. Tailored programs that enhance intercultural sensitivity and competence can facilitate better communication and understanding between partners, thereby promoting marital satisfaction and positive fertility intentions (Kim, 2017; Varela, 2019). Educational institutions and organizations can also play a role by incorporating cultural intelligence training into curricula and professional development programs. As Ng, Ang, and Rockstuhl (2022) suggest, fostering cultural intelligence in individuals contributes to more harmonious intercultural interactions across various domains. For policymakers, considering the impact of cultural intelligence on family formation can inform the development of support systems for cross-cultural marriages. Policies that encourage cultural exchange and provide resources for intercultural couples can enhance marital stability and reproductive decision-

making (Ramlan, 2020). Future research should expand on this study by exploring the longitudinal effects of cultural intelligence on marital satisfaction and fertility intentions. Investigating diverse cross-cultural contexts will also enhance the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, examining the role of other mediating factors, such as communication styles and conflict resolution strategies, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play in cross-cultural marriages (Robinson, 2024).

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