

# Cultural Intelligence Profile of Junior High School Counsellors and Its Implication on Multicultural Counseling

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## Abstract

The diversity of ethnicities, religions, and races that exist in Indonesia contribute to the country's characterization as a nation with a multitude of cultures. In the context of the relationship between counselor and counselee, cultural diversity is a significant concern. The comprehension, awareness, and work behavior of the counselee's cultural diversity is indicative of the counselor's cultural intelligence. The concept of cultural intelligence is a crucial aspect that counselors must consider when providing multicultural counseling services. The objectives of this research are to determine the description of counselors' cultural intelligence and its application in multicultural counseling. The research employed a quantitative research survey design for junior high school counselors in Malang Regency. For the research instrument, this study employed an intelligence scale adapted from Early and Ang. The data were analyzed descriptively in order to describe the counselor's cultural intelligence profile. The results indicated that metacognitive indicators exhibited the highest proportion, with 40% falling within the very high category, while behavioral indicators exhibited the lowest proportion, with 5% falling within the deficient category. The results of the study indicate that there is a need for counseling assistance in the behavioral aspect of cultural intelligence in order to facilitate the implementation of multicultural counseling. In essence, cultural intelligence represents a form of counselor multicultural competence that is necessary for the implementation of multicultural counseling. An increase in cultural intelligence thus supports an increase in multicultural counseling.

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## 1. Introduction

The complexity of the problem necessitates the development of a specialized strategy for its resolution. Currently, a significant proportion of counselors in Indonesia continue to rely on Western (American and European) theories in the delivery of their services to counsees (Hidayah, Ramli, & Hanafi, 2017). However, it is crucial to recognize that theories are developed by experts who are inextricably linked to their experiences and cultural backgrounds. The influence of socio-cultural factors is inextricably linked to the development of specific theories by experts, which can occasionally result in a discrepancy between their application during counseling sessions.

The Western theories are not entirely applicable in Indonesia due to the incompatibility of the counselee's cultural background with the theory. Aside from the counseling theory, the counselor's personality is also a crucial factor. In counseling sessions between counselors and counsees from the same Indonesian cultural background, misalignment can occur due to differences in cultural backgrounds. Therefore, it is essential to exercise caution in the application of counseling theory (Mappiare-AT, Hidayah, Muslihati, & Fauzan, 2020; Rahmi, Mappiare-AT, & Muslihati, 2017).

The term "culture" is defined as the collective thoughts and behaviors of a group, manifested in habits or traditions that are transmitted from one generation to the next. The incorporation of culture into the counseling process is expected to enhance its effectiveness (Sudirman, Mappiare-AT, & Hambali, 2021). The focus on culture in the process of implementing counseling services is of significant importance and must be considered by counselors during the service delivery and interaction process with counselees, particularly in a country with cultural diversity, such as Indonesia. Indonesia, with its diversity encompassing various ethnicities, religions, races, and inter-group relations, is classified as a country with a multicultural society (Zarbaliyev, 2017).

The diverse cultures of Indonesian society require the ability to interact intelligently with individuals from different cultural backgrounds (Wahidah, Karneli, & Mudjiran, 2020). Similarly, the relationship between counselors and counselees with distinct characteristics or uniqueness when interacting with counselors is undoubtedly a form of cultural encounter (Mappiare-AT, 2022). Such appropriateness is often interpreted as cultural intelligence, which is defined as an individual's ability to adapt and function effectively in cultural diversity (Ang et al., 2007). In contrast, those with low-quality intercultural judgment and decision-making tend to assume universal norms of behavior and do not adapt their behavior to culture (Rockstuhl & Van Dyne, 2018).

The concept of cultural intelligence was first proposed by Early and Song Ang in 2003. Its initial application was to the review of the interaction of the business economy community based on the development of globalization (Latif, 2017; Leung, Ang, & Tan, 2014). The study of cultural intelligence comprises four parts, namely metacognition, cognition, motivation, and behavior of individuals in culture. The development of cultural intelligence studies has also been carried out in the fields of health, social science, and education, particularly the field of guidance and counseling (Bücker, Furrer, & Lin, 2015; Livermore, 2010; Nugraha, 2018; Rockstuhl, Seiler, Ang, Van Dyne, & Annen, 2019; Wang, Shakespeare-Finch, Dunne, Hou, & Khawaja, 2021). The measurement of cultural intelligence is conducted using the Cultural Intelligence Scale Parent Instrument, which has been applied to various fields of study (Bücker et al., 2015; Devina, 2021; Gozzoli & Gazzaroli, 2018; Van Dyne et al., 2012).

The concept of cultural intelligence is closely aligned with the concept of multicultural competence, which represents the ability of counselors to work effectively with clients from diverse cultural backgrounds. This includes possessing cultural knowledge, awareness of particular cultures, and counselor behavior or skills in dealing with counselees with diverse cultural backgrounds (Latif, 2017; O'Hara, Chang, & Giordano, 2021; Riswanto, Mappiare-AT, & Irtadji, 2017). The context of cultural intelligence in counselors provides insight and support for the successful implementation of multicultural counseling services. Therefore, this research focuses on the profile or description of cultural intelligence owned by counselors and its effects on the implementation of multicultural counseling services. The findings of the research and study offer insight into the implementation of multicultural counseling services and the development of counselor competencies in a multicultural context.

## 2. Method

This research employed a quantitative methodology utilizing a survey design. Survey design is commonly adopted in research that examines a phenomenon without the provision of special treatment to the sample (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This study explores the level of cultural intelligence of counselors at the junior high school level and its implications for the delivery of multicultural counseling services. The concept of cultural intelligence focuses on an individual's capacity to adapt to a multicultural environment, encompassing metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral aspects.

The study population consisted of counselors or guidance and counseling teachers at the junior high school level in Malang, Indonesia, with a total of 210 individuals. The determination of the actual sample size was not fixed but rather adjusted to the purpose of the results to be achieved by the researcher, with quantitative research requiring a significant amount of data to ensure the validity of the data (Dawson, 2009). The sampling was performed using probability sampling, with simple random sampling applied to guidance and counseling teachers or counselors at the junior high school

level in Malang Regency, Indonesia. Simple random sampling refers to random sampling of population members without regard to specific levels within the population (Garaika & Darmanah, 2019).

The study's findings indicate that a minimum of 10% of the total population is required for a descriptive study research sample (Alwi, 2012). Additionally, the research process employed a minimum sample size of 21 individuals based on the total population. In the implementation of this study, the sample size used was 26 counselors. The instrument utilized in the research was adapted from the Cultural Intelligence Scale (CQS), which was proposed and developed by Early and Ang (Earley & Ang, 2003). It consisted of 20 items, which were divided into four leading indicators, namely metacognitive, cognitive, motivational, and behavioral. The data collection process was conducted online using Google Forms, a technology-based platform that enabled the research to be carried out in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and during counselor activities in schools. The form employed a measurement scale of 1 to 7, with 1 indicating a strongly disagree response and 7 indicating a strongly agree response. The categorization of the level of cultural intelligence possessed by the counselor was assessed using the categories presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. Counselor Cultural Intelligence Categories**

Cultural Intelligence Level	Point
Very Low	1-2
Low	3
Moderate	4
High	5-6
Very High	7

The collected data were analyzed descriptively with the help of the SPSS version 25 application and by percentage to determine the tendency of the profile of the counselor's cultural intelligence. The presentation of data analysis with percentages facilitates the identification of actual conditions in the field and enables the interpretation of a level (Rachmawati, Multisari, Triyono, Simon, & da Costa, 2021).

### 3. Results

A survey on the profile of cultural intelligence was conducted among 26 counselors at the junior high school level in Malang, Indonesia. The results of the counselors' cultural intelligence were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques and IBM SPSS version 25. Table 2 presents the statistical calculations from the measurement of counselors' cultural intelligence. Meanwhile, Table 3 exhibits the overall percentage of cultural intelligence and the percentage of each indicator (metacognition, cognition, motivation, and behavior) in five categories, namely very high, high, medium, low, and very low. The indicator with the highest percentage in the very high category is metacognition, at 40%, while the indicator with the lowest percentage in the deficient category is behavior, at 5%.

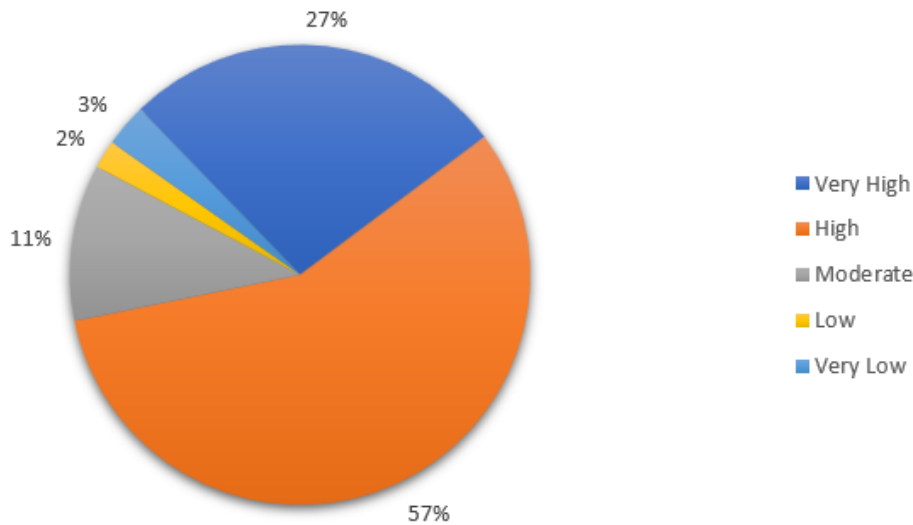
**Table 2. Statistical Results of Counselor Cultural Intelligence**

	N	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic	Mean		Std. Deviation Statistic
				Statistic	Std. Error	
Cultural Intelligence Valid N	26	80.00	137.00	113.1154	3.07462	15.67757

**Table 3. Overview of the Counselor's Cultural Intelligence**

Variable	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low
Cultural Intelligence Indicators	27%	57%	11%	2%	3%
Metacognition	40%	56%	2%	1%	1%
Cognitive	17%	61%	15%	3%	4%
Motivation	32%	54%	11%	2%	1%

Variable	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low
Behavior	25%	55%	13%	2%	5%



**Figure 1. Cultural Intelligence Profile of Counselors**

Figure 1 illustrates that 27% of counselors have a very high cultural intelligence profile, while those in the high category account for 57%. The medium category comprises 11%, the low category 2%, and the very low category 3%.

#### 4. Discussion

The results of the data analysis on the profile of cultural intelligence of counselors at the junior high school level are presented in two parts, with each part constituting a continuous narrative. The first part of the study presents the cultural intelligence profile of counselors at the junior high school level. The second part describes the aspects of counselors' cultural intelligence and their implications in multicultural counseling. Cultural intelligence is described in four main indicators, namely metacognition, cognitive, motivation, and behavior. In summary, the cultural intelligence of junior high school counselors in Malang Regency is generally high, with the majority of counselors exhibiting cultural intelligence in the very high and high categories. The findings indicated that a small number of counselors exhibited low levels of cultural intelligence, with a few even demonstrating deficient levels.

Low cultural intelligence among counselors can be influenced by a number of factors, including self-adjustment, a lack of understanding, and knowledge of other cultures (Ghaniyy & Akmal, 2018). The description of the counselor's intelligence profile is divided into four parts according to the indicators of cultural intelligence. The first indicator is metacognition, which contributes to or encompasses dimensions of awareness of cultural differences, adjustment to other cultural contexts, and confirmation to check the accuracy of a cultural interaction. In this indicator, the counselor has a satisfactory percentage, with very high and high ratings that dominate. Those with high metacognition are more likely to be able to modify their mental and strategic approaches to paying attention to the norms and perceptions of cultural differences (Ang et al., 2007; Ghislieri, Molino, Dolce, Mercogliano, & Mosso, 2018).

In addition, the second dimension is cognitive representing the capacity of an individual to process information and apply knowledge in a cultural context. In the domain of cognitive ability, an individual reflects on the relationship between knowledge and the norms, practices, and values inherent to a specific culture (Sendayu, Muslihati, Mappiare, & Atmoko, 2022). The findings indicate that the majority of counselors exhibit high cognitive abilities, while a few counselors demonstrate

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lower cognitive abilities. Consequently, it is imperative that counselors enhance their cognitive abilities by expanding their knowledge base.

The third indicator plays a pivotal role in influencing the other indicators, providing counselors with the motivation to cultivate high cultural intelligence. The dimensions of the motivation indicator demonstrate comprehensive coverage, as evidenced by the prevalence of achievements in the high and very high categories, with only a few instances of very low achievements. The coverage of the motivation indicator facilitates the ability to direct attention and energy toward the acquisition of knowledge about cultural differences (Bücker et al., 2015). The development of other indicators in the cultural intelligence profile of a counselor is contingent upon the presence of high motivation.

The aspect that is inevitably affected by three indicators in the form of understanding, knowledge, and motivation is behavior. The dimensions of behavior indicator describe the manifestation of the other three indicators and can be interpreted as future sustainable goals (Alexandra, Ehrhart, & Randel, 2021). There is a need to enhance behavioral indicators as a direct and observable manifestation of the cultural intelligence possessed by a counselor. A person's cultural intelligence is manifested in their behavior the manner in which a person responds to movements of a particular culture (Lam, Cheung, & Lugosi, 2022). Consequently, cultural intelligence represents a crucial aspect for counselors to navigate interactions with counselees from diverse cultural backgrounds.

The results of the research indicate that cultural intelligence is a crucial skill for scientists and guidance and counseling practitioners. The objective is for counselors to provide services that align with the abilities or cultural competence of their counselees (Sendayu et al., 2022). The implications of cultural intelligence in the implementation of multicultural counseling are fourfold. First, it enables counselors to understand certain cultural differences (metacognitive). Second, it provides them with knowledge regarding certain cultures (cognitive). Third, it motivates them to learn about certain differences or cultures (motivation). Fourth, it enables them to make adjustments to non-verbal behavior in certain cultural contexts. In the context of multicultural counseling implementation, the four indicators play distinct yet interrelated roles in achieving integration and effective multicultural counseling.

The four elements of the counselor's cultural intelligence indicator, if applied and assessed at a high level, will significantly contribute to the implementation of multicultural counseling. This is a form of multicultural awareness for the counselor. The estuary of cultural intelligence owned by counselors is multicultural competence in the implementation of multicultural counseling. One of the factors that determine the counselor's multicultural competence is personality, which is a form of social experience and desire (Hotifah & Hamidah, 2019). The development of counselor cultural intelligence is a prerequisite for achieving counselor competence in the implementation of multicultural counseling.

Another clear consequence of cultural intelligence is the manner in which individuals interact with those from different cultural backgrounds (Chédru & Ostapchuk, 2023; Chen et al., 2023; Song, Varma, & Zhang Zhang, 2023). Therefore, the implementation of multicultural-based interventions will contribute significantly to addressing the challenges faced by students (Muslihati et al., 2023). This is a dominant factor that has implications for the level of cultural intelligence possessed by a counselor. In the case of a tendency for the low behavioral aspects of cultural intelligence possessed by the counselor to slow down the response given by the counselor to culturally different counselees, the implications are significant.

## 5. Conclusion

Cultural intelligence is comprised of four interrelated dimensions, namely metacognition, cognitive, motivation, and behavior. A profile of cultural intelligence possessed by counselors at the junior high school level in Malang Regency has been interpreted based on these four dimensions. The profile revealed that 27% of counselors exhibited a very high level of cultural intelligence, 57% demonstrated a high level, 11% exhibited a medium level, 2% showed a low level, and 3% exhibited a deficient level. To enhance the cultural intelligence of counselors, it is essential to prioritize improvements in several dimensions. These include the cognitive and behavioral dimensions, which

require particular attention to facilitate their growth. This can be achieved through intensive development and mentoring, as well as the intensification of multicultural counseling practice. The cognitive dimension, in particular, plays a pivotal role in equipping counselors with the knowledge and understanding of the scope of multicultural counseling. Subsequently, the behavioral dimension is enhanced by the frequency and intensity of interactions with culturally diverse clients. The impact of counselor cultural intelligence on the delivery of multicultural counseling services is profound, influencing factors such as awareness, knowledge, motivation, and behavior.

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