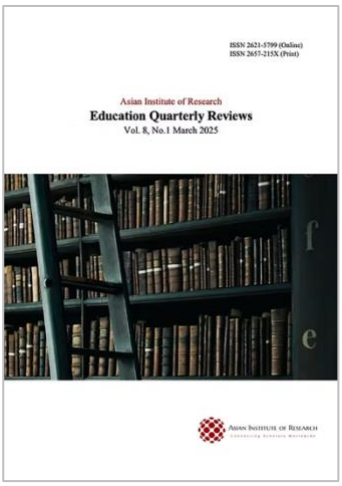

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Students' Local Cultural Identity and Its Assessment in Public and Islamic Junior High Schools

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Abstract
Considering local cultural identity is essential for school counselors who provide counseling services to junior high schools. For this purpose, counselors should use a valid and reliable instrument to measure such identity. This study aimed to design and validate the Local Cultural Identity Scale (LCIS) to support counseling services. By applying development research procedures, the study involved five school counselors who served as an expert panel in judging item content validity, followed by 20 and 685 junior high school students who gave responses for readability and construct validity. Various methods were used for data analysis, including the Content Validity Index (CVI) to assess content validity, Cronbach's alpha to test reliability, the item-item and item-total correlations, and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to evaluate construct validity. The initial item development process proposed 30 items across three dimensions. After evaluation by the expert panel, only 20 items met the criteria for content validation. A readability test was conducted with 20 respondents during the scale development stage, showing that these 20 items had good readability. The EFA revealed three factors for the LCIS: cultural pride, cultural knowledge, and ethnic group loyalty. The finalized version of the LCIS consists of 20 items. The study recommends that school counselors use the LCIS as an intentional tool to assess students' local cultural identities, ensuring that counseling meets individual needs.

Keywords: Local Cultural Identity, Junior High School, School Counseling, Assessment Scale

1. Introduction

As Indonesia develops its national culture, it preserves local cultures, which are necessary for the uniqueness of each ethnicity and region. For this acknowledgment, Indonesians can practice and express local cultures, promoting a strong sense of local cultural identity (Sujinah et al., 2020). For example, in South Sumatra, one of many provinces in Indonesia, various ethnic groups coexist (Ananta et al., 2014; Khairunisa, 2024). Young people of these groups bring their local culture to the schools to build a multicultural community. Since culture can explain relation between people and environment, for educational purposes school counselors, joining with other school personnel, are expected to understand students' local cultural identities to provide better educational services that support their development.

In Junior high school, students are in a critical developmental stage where they explore their identities (Verhoeven et al., 2019). Culture or local culture, along with other human dimensions, build their self-identity. Referring to Groen et al. (2019), it can be defined as identity continually and intentionally shaped by group norms and values, guiding individual perceptions, moral judgments, and behaviors within a shared cultural framework. In this way, local cultures play a strategic role in developing young people characters (Herlina et al., 2024), self-concept (Marshall, 2001), self-esteem (Cai et al., 2007), emotional well-being (Murrup-Stewart & Truong, 2020), and learning (Hanushek et al., 2020) that form their identity.

School counselors who understand or appreciate students' cultural backgrounds can encourage students to explore their culture to build self-identity. However, as school communities become increasingly diverse, students may experience more challenges in retaining their cultural identity with external influences. Several studies (Dharma et al., 2021; Manurung et al., 2022) found a decreasing cultural identity among the young generation that alienates them from their cultural origins. For this situation, the literature highlighted that a lack of connection to cultural origins could cause mental health problems (Davidov & Yastremski, 2023; Gopalkrishnan, 2018). To respond to these issues, school counselors, as advocates for student development (Myrick, 2011), require tools to assess their local cultural identity before addressing counseling intervention.

A demand for multicultural counseling, school counselors should consider students' local cultural identity, especially in helping students who may benefit from using cultural values to address their problems, such as interpersonal conflicts (Safdar et al., 2020), bullying (Martínez-Santiago et al., 2023; Siming et al., 2015), and intolerance (Sariyatun & Marpelina, 2023). A valid and reliable instrument for measuring local cultural identity suggests counselors a structured problem formulation in large-group guidance sessions, group counseling, and individual interventions. Furthermore, such tools can help counselors collaborate with teachers and parents to promote local cultural values to students in the learning process and neighborhood relationships.

In Indonesia context, local cultural identity plays a crucial role in school counseling. Its assessment, along with other personality qualities, will assist school counselors in understanding their counselees. Yet, there is currently a lack of standardized general tools designed to assess it among junior high school students. Historically, several instruments existed in professional journals for this purpose. They were the Youth's Ethnic and National Identity (Leszczensky & Santiago, 2015), The Multicultural Identity Integration Scale (Yampolsky et al., 2016), the Multiethnic Adolescent Cultural Identity Questionnaire (Hu et al., 2014), and the Cultural Identity Questionnaire for Asians (Bhugra et al., 2009). However, they may have some limitations if used in other areas or purposes. As a result, school counselors may use inappropriate instruments that can hinder the effectiveness of their counseling strategies. Consequently, some adolescents might remain unsupported in achieving their developmental tasks when school counselors omit their cultural backgrounds. Without using validated instruments, the school counselor would fail to recognize the indecisive cultural identity of students, potentially leading to disturbing identity formation (Newark, 2014). This study overcame that limitation by aiming to develop a Local Cultural Identity Scale (LCIS) that adhered to validity and reliability standards of measurement.

2. Methodology

2.1. Procedures

This development research followed procedures suggested by Boateng et al. (2018), Hinkin (1995), and Niangchaem et al. (2024). The procedures were item development, scale development, and scale evaluation stages. The first stage involved identifying the domain, generating items, and validating item content. It started with a literature review to select which domains were representative of the scale and write items based on its constructs. Meanwhile, a panel of five experts examined the content validation of the scale based on their expertise (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2017). In the second stage, the scale was administered to a limited group of respondents to examine its readability. Finally, in the final stage, the scale was administered to a large group of students to ensure its validity and reliability. In this stage, the study used the statistical procedures of exploration factor analysis (EFA) (Tavakol & Wetzel, 2020) to examine the scale construct validity.

2.2. Respondents

This study involved junior high school counselors and junior high school students in Grades 8 and 9, aged 14 to 15 years of three selected public junior high schools (PJHS) in Palembang City, as well as two public Islamic junior high schools (PIJHS), commonly known as Madrasah Tsanawiyah in Lahat city, South Sumatera Province, Indonesia. The participant assignment followed the LCIS development stages. During the item development phase, five experienced junior high school counselors, each possessing over a decade of expertise, provided meaningful insights by reviewing the content validation. In the scale development stage, 20 selected students participated in the readability trial of the scale items. After thorough analysis and necessary item revision of the previous stages, the LCIS had 685 students participating in administering the final version of the LCIS. Table 1 provides the demographic data of school counselors and students in each stage.

Table 1: Demographic Data of Respondents

Stage	**Respondents**	**Gender**				**N**
		Male		**Female**		
Item development	5 School Counselors	1		4		5
Scale development	PJHS Students	8		12		20
	Grade	8^{th}	9^{th}	8^{th}	9^{th}	
Scale evaluation	PJHS Students	87	90	112	118	407
	IJHS Students	58	63	77	80	278

2.3. Instruments

The study utilized three instruments in the development of the LCIS: the Item Content Validation Sheet (I-CVS), the Item Readability Questionnaire (IRQ), and the Local Cultural Identity Scale (LCIS). The I-CVS consisted of 30 items designed to assess the relevance of each item to its domain and indicator. School counselors rated each item on a four-point scale: Strongly Relevant (4), Relevant (3), Not Relevant (2), and Strongly Not Relevant (1). The IRQ included 20 items aimed at evaluating item readability. students rated each item using a five-point Likert scale: Strongly Understand (5), Understand (4), Moderately Understand (3), Slightly Understand (2), and Not Understand (1). Finally, the LCIS comprised 20 items designed to assess construct validity. Students rated their agreement with each item on a five-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), No Opinion (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1).

2.4. Data Analysis

The study analyzed the data collected during the three stages of LCIS development. First, in the item development stage, the study examined each item to determine its content validity by utilizing I-CVI's formula. According to Lynn (1986) and Pollit et al.(2006), an acceptable I-CVI should align with the number of experts involved. For groups of five or fewer experts, an I-CVI of 1.00 was required for each item, indicating unanimous agreement among experts regarding the validity of an item's content. Considering this criterion, each item was deemed valid for the domain retained in the scale. Next, in the scale development stage, the scale readability was examined to identify misunderstanding and measurement errors. An item was adequately readable if it achieved a readability mean score among assigned respondents as follows: Strongly Understand (80-100), Understand (66-79), Moderately Understand (55-65), Slightly Understand (41-45), and Not Understand (0-40) (Lutfiyah & Supardi, 2019). Items that received scores below the Moderately Understand category were excluded from the scale. Finally, several statistical procedures were implemented to evaluate the scale. They comprised inter-item and item-total correlation analyses, Cronbach's alpha analysis for reliability assessment, and exploratory factor analysis (EFA). All data analyses were calculated using IBM SPSS 25.0.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Item Development

This study started with defining the domains necessary for the LCIS. Considering investigations conducted by Phinney (1992) and Lee and Yoo (2016), the study identified three essential domains: cognitive, affective, and behavioral for the LCIS. Following domain identification, 20 items for each domain were written and included in the scale. However, upon thorough analysis, 30 items were identified for exclusion because of excessive redundancy, leaving a refined initial set of 10 items for each domain. Each item had a code given according to its dimension. C is for cognitive, A for affective, and B for behavior. Subsequently, content validity was employed to determine the item content Validity Index (I-CVI). Five school counselors who had extensive experience in school counseling reviewed the LCIS. They reviewed each item to confirm its relevance to the defined domains. Table 2 details the evaluation results.

Table 2: Specification of LCIS from the Original Form to Final Form.

Domain	Initial form	Final form
Cognitive (C)	10	7
Affective (A)	10	6
Behavior (B)	10	7

As discussed in the data analysis section, an acceptable I-CVI was contingent upon the number of experts involved. For groups of five or fewer experts, the I-CVI must be 1.00, indicating unanimous agreement that an item is content valid. Ten items (C3, C9, C10; A3, A4, A8, A10; B2, B5, B8) were considered irrelevant to their respective domains. These items subsequently were excluded from the scale. Ultimately, only 20 items met the criteria for subsequent stages.

3.2. Scale Development

In developing the scale, items were administered to a small group of students to reduce misunderstandings and potential measurement errors. This stage helped identify poorly worded items and allowed for revisions to ensure readability, ultimately reducing the cognitive burden on respondents. Twenty students participated in testing the LCIS's readability. After analyzing its results, 20 proposed items were understandable by them in the range between 0.67 - 0.80, indicating they had good readability. To this result, the scale moved into the next step of scale evaluation.

3.3. Scale Evaluation

(1) Inter-item and item-total correlations.

The construct of the LCIS was validated using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) with a sample of 685 junior high school students. Before conducting EFA, inter-item and item-total correlation analyses were performed to assess the quality of the items. The results showed that all 20 items had acceptable item-total correlation values, with significant correlations at the .01 level (2-tailed). The correlations ranged from 0.447 to 0.776. These findings indicated that all items were suitable for further analysis using EFA.

(2) Results of Exploration Factor Analysis (EFA)

(a) KMO and Bartlett's Test

The first result of EFA to LCIS, displayed in Table 3, provided information on the value of The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy **of** 0.961. As a rule of thumb, values above 0.7 were considered commendable. Since the value of LCIS surfaced at an acceptable value of 0.70 and even was close to 1.0, it suggested excellent sampling adequacy. This value indicated that the sample size was highly suitable for factor analysis. Meanwhile, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity results showed a significant Chi-Square discount **(χ^2 =7455.953, *df* = 190, p < 0.000),** suggesting that the correlations among items were sufficiently strong to justify factor

breakdown. Both high KMO value and significant Bartlett's test demonstrate that the LCIS had a robust data structure and credibility in assessing local cultural identity.

Table 3: The Results of KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.961
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	7455.953
df	*df*	190
	Sig.	.000

(b) Communalities

The second result of EFA provided item commonalities. In their review, Taherdoost et al. (2016) stated that the lowest value extraction should be 0.50-0.60 for samples larger than 500. After the first run, among 20 items, all had extraction values of >0.50, as displayed in Table 5. The "Extraction" column shows the proportion of variance in each item that is explained by the factor structure. Items with higher values indicate stronger contributions. Items such as **B4 (0.708)** demonstrate high communalities, suggesting this item is well-aligned with the latent construct of local cultural identity. Items like **B9 (0.582)**, while lower, still exceed common thresholds (e.g., 0.5), indicating acceptable levels of shared variance.

(c) Eigenvalue

As summarized in Table 5, the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) for the initial eigenvalues indicated Component 1 had an eigenvalue of 9.531, explaining 47.653% of the total variance. Component 2 contributed an additional 7.519%, raising the cumulative variance to 55.172%. In addition, Component 3 added another 5.104%, bringing the cumulative explained variance to 60.276%. Meanwhile, Components 4 through 20 have eigenvalues below 1, indicating that they explain less variance than a single variable and are unlikely to represent meaningful factors. According to Kaiser's Criterion (eigenvalues > 1), only the first three components meet this threshold, suggesting that a three-factor solution is appropriate. The data supports a three-factor model based on eigenvalues > 1 and the amount of variance explained.

(d) Rotated Matrix

The third result of EFA points to the rotated matrix. As displayed in Table 4, the 20 items have one, two, or three values. The bolded values or the highest between other values indicate they represent its component.

Table 4: Rotated Component Matrix[a] of LCIS

	Component			
	Items	**1**	**2**	**3**
C1.	I know the origins of my ethnic group.		**0.740**	
C2.	I know the region where my ethnic group originates.		0.542	**0.570**
C4.	I know the customs and traditions of my ethnic group.	0.474	**0.570**	
C5.	I know the language of my ethnic group.	0.331	**0.672**	
C6.	I know the unique traditions of my ethnic group.			**0.706**
C7.	I know the heritage of my ethnic group.	0.438	**0.581**	
C8.	I know the traditional dances of my ethnic group.	**0.569**	0.512	
A1.	I am proud of the distinct traditional clothing of my ethnic group.	0.442	**0.627**	
A2.	I am happy to be part of my ethnic group.		0.464	**0.595**
A5.	I am impressed by the cultural achievements of my ethnic group.	**0.651**	0.361	
A6.	I am disappointed when the customs of my ethnic group are disrespected.	**0.664**	0.390	
A7.	I feel called to preserve the customs and traditions of my ethnic group.	**0.544**	0.369	0.322

A9.	I feel proud whenever the traditional songs of my ethnic group are performed at an event.	**0.607**		0.303
B1.	I introduce the customs of my ethnic group to my friends at school.	**0.713**	0.357	
B3.	I take the time to learn more about the culture of my ethnic group.	0.542		**0.542**
B4.	I participate in cultural activities of my ethnic group.	**0.787**		
B6.	I possess items that symbolize the pride of my ethnic group.	**0.756**	0.301	
B7.	I communicate using the language of my ethnic group.	0.533		**0.571**
B9.	I establish friendships with peers who come from my ethnic group.	**0.573**		0.409
B10.	I defend wholeheartedly when the traditions of my ethnic group are bullied.			**0.719**

The results presented in the rotated component matrix in Table 4 revealed three factors. Factor 1 comprised nine items, and Factor 2 and 3 each included five items. Table 5 displays mean, standard deviation, Cronbach's Alpha, and the result of the exploratory factor analysis (EFA).

(e) Reliability

The results of reliability test for 20 items revealed **Cronbach's Alpha = 0.938**. This indicated a very high level of internal consistency among the items on the scale. Meanwhile, **Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items = 0.940**. This was a slightly adjusted version of Cronbach's Alpha based on standardized items, which accounted for differences in variance among items. The similarity between 0.938 and 0.940 values suggested that the scale was well-balance and demonstrated a very high level of internal consistency among the items on the scale. In conclusion, these suggested that the LCIS was well-developed and adequate for further study and practical implementation.

Table 5: The Summary of EFA

Components	Commu-nalities	Mean	SD	Loading Factor	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Cultural Pride (Eigenvalues= 9.531)					
B4. I participate in cultural activities of my ethnic group.	.708	3.35	.913	.787	.934
B6. I possess items that symbolize the pride of my ethnic group.	.680	3.40	.894	.756	.934
B1. I introduce the customs of my ethnic group to my friends at school.	.668	3.56	.820	.713	.933
A6. I am disappointed when the customs of my ethnic group are disrespected.	.648	3.56	.856	.664	.934
A5. I am impressed by the cultural achievements of my ethnic group.	.595	3.62	.845	.651	.945
A9. I feel proud whenever the traditional songs of my ethnic group are performed at an event.	.523	3.52	.804	.607	.933
B9. I establish friendships with peers who come from my ethnic group.	.508	3.35	.913	.573	.934
C8. I know the traditional dances of my ethnic group.	.592	3.40	.894	.569	.934
A7. I feel called to preserve the customs and traditions of my ethnic group.	.536	3.69	.874	.544	.936
Cultural Knowledge (Eigenvalues 1.505)					
C1. I know the origins of my ethnic group.	.616	3.57	.817	.740	.936
C5. I know the language of my ethnic group.	.627	3.30	.924	.672	.936

A1. I am proud of the distinct traditional clothing of my ethnic group.	.605	3.63	.880	.627	.934
C7. I know the heritage of my ethnic group.	.590	3.52	.899	.581	.934
C4. I know the customs and traditions of my ethnic group.	.551	3.54	.823	.570	.934
Ethnic Group Loyalty (Eigenvalues 1.021)					
B10. I defend whole heartedly when the traditions of my ethnic group are bullied.	.582	3.89	.829	.719	.936
C6. I know the unique traditions of my ethnic group.	.529	3.81	1.122	.706	.941
A2. I am happy to be part of my ethnic group.	.628	3.88	.788	.595	.935
B3. I take the time to learn more about the culture of my ethnic group.	.613	3.73	.814	.542	.935
B7. I communicate using the language of my ethnic group.	.622	3.73	.814	.571	.934
C2. I know the region where my ethnic group originates.	.633	3.82	.865	.570	.935

4. Discussion

Designing the Local Cultural Identity Scale (LCIS) follows a systematic process involving item development, scale development, and scale evaluation. Initially, 60 items were generated across three domains—cognitive, affective, and behavioral—drawing insights from relevant literature. After content validity analysis, 20 items have acceptable I-CVI scores and are adequate for further testing. Readability testing and subsequent item-total correlation analysis confirmed that 20 items were suitable for EFA. The EFA results demonstrated strong sampling adequacy (KMO = 0.961) and significant correlations among items (Bartlett's test, $p < 0.001$). A three-factor solution emerged, explaining 60.276% of the variance, with factors interpreted as Cultural Pride, Cultural Knowledge, and Ethnic Group Loyalty. The rotated component matrix and Cronbach's alpha test confirmed that 20 items aligned well with these factors, showcasing a scale structure and adequate reliability to assess local cultural identity.

Content validation is essential in developing the LCIS since its purpose is to ensure that its items accurately represent the intended construct. The study had five experts review the LCIS to confirm that all items are relevant to the construct. Since this study specifically focuses on local culture, involving five experts for content validation according Grand and Davis (1998) and Yusoff (2019) is sufficient, although other, such as Zamanzadeh et al. (2015), suggest more than five experts. Meanwhile, the initial scale's overall S-CVI is 0.90, which resulted in retaining 20 out of 30 items, leading to a final S-CVI of 1. This outcome aligns with other research considering a S-CVI value of 0.92 (Almanasreh et al., 2019).

In addition to content validation, examining the LCIS's reliability will confirm whether the scale meets junior high school students. The present study indicates that the items of LCIS have mean scores between 0.67 - 0.80 in readability, suggesting adequate readability values. This score falls within the "understand" and "strongly understand" categories (Lutfiyah & Supardi, 2019). A study by Patalay et al. (2018) and Lenzner (2014) examined the readability of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) and the Survey Question Difficulty (SQD) by adopting standard tools, such as the Flesch–Kincaid Reading Grade, Gunning Fog Index, Coleman Liau Index, and Dale–Chall Readability Formula. Their findings emphasized disparities in readability across subscales and tools, implying the need for caution when using the SDQ and SQD. Their studies also underline the importance of considering readability during instrument development. The present study has not used these tools, however, based on calculations, the LCIS is relevant and appropriate for the designed group.

The content validation and readability test of LCIS provide confidence for the next step of exploratory factor analysis (EFA). The EFA results for 20 items reveal a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling

Adequacy value of 0.961, with item communalities ranging from 0.508 to 0.708. Additionally, the EFA scatter plot indicates the emergence of a three-factor structure, explaining 60.276% of the variance. These factors form a construct validity that includes cultural pride, cultural knowledge, and ethnic group loyalty that originally contained cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains. Studies provide additional evidence regarding the appropriateness of dimensions and the number of items for cultural-related measurements. For instance, Fu and Luo (2023) suggested a 12-item measurement model encompassing knowledge, emotional, and behavioral dimensions. On the side, Abdollah et al. (2016) identify seven factors comprising 30 items for assessing cultural values in consumer research. In their review, Matsunaga et al. (2023) examine 16 survey instruments related to culture and find mixed results, with the number of factors ranging from 2 to 7 and the number of items varying between 11 and 50. However, most studies report an average of approximately 20 items and three factors. These findings have supported the current study, where a 20-item structure appears to be a common and appropriate choice.

The LCIS, the main finding of this study, is one of the first instruments specifically designed for junior high school students to measure their local cultural identity. Unlike many counseling and psychological studies that treat local culture for adolescent or adult respondents, this scale identifies cultural pride, cultural knowledge, and ethnic group loyalty as factors of the local cultural identity for early adolescents. These findings hold significant practical implications for guidance and counseling at the junior high school level. By utilizing the scale, schools can assess students' cultural identity and better understand how their cultural knowledge, affective, and behavior shape their sense of belonging. Consequently, counselors, teachers, and principals can integrate the scale into comprehensive programs, including a guidance curriculum that fosters inclusivity for all students and responsive services for those requiring immediate intervention. For instance, counselors can draw on the scale results to design local cultural identity-strengthening group guidance and multiculturally responsive counseling sessions, thereby creating more supportive learning environments that encourage students to embrace their cultural identity while fostering respect for diversity. Although initially developed for junior high school students, high school counselors can adapt the scale for their students. To some extent, junior and senior high school students have certain commonalities. Finally, given that many existing identity measures stem from several cultural frameworks, the LCIS contributes to Indigenous counseling by integrating local cultural values in its development and validation, ensuring its relevance to students' lived experiences.

Instead of the beneficial findings, the study may have some limitations. For example, although the present study has involved public and Islamic junior high schools practicing slightly different curricula, it still involves a somewhat heterogeneous sample. These limit the applicability of the LCIS across more diverse local cultural school populations. It does not explore how students' cultural identity evolves, missing insights into developmental changes. Moreover, the study does not investigate how local cultural identity interacts with other factors, such as student well-being, academic performance, and social-emotional interactions. In addition, the current study does not examine its concurrent validity as different studies did. It potentially may affect its accuracy and reliability. For these limitations, future studies can consider several aspects. First, they should involve students from more diverse cultural and geographical backgrounds. These may help establish the scale's generalizability across different school populations. Second, future studies focus on whether the three factors remain stable across various student ethnic groups. Finally, the studies should explore the LCIS's face and concurrent validity using several relevant methods. Such studies may enhance the scale's reliability and construct validity.

5. Conclusion

This study develops a local cultural identity scale (LCIS) for school counseling purposes in junior high schools. By using this scale, school counselors will have confidentiality in providing interventions aligned with students' cultural backgrounds and personal experiences. The scale is designed and validated through expert review for content validity, student responses for readability, and statistical analyses (e.g., item-item and item-total correlation, Cronbach alpha, and Exploratory Factor Analysis). The final content of the LCIS consists of 20 items across three key dimensions: cultural pride, cultural knowledge, and ethnic group loyalty. Findings verify the scale's validity and reliability for measuring local cultural identity among junior high school students. The scale is a valuable resource for school counselors, enabling them to design more personalized and cultural-based

counseling interventions suitable to students' backgrounds. Future research on the LCIS may focus on improving its applicability across diverse school settings to establish its validity and reliability.

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