



Moral Intelligence of Senior High School Students in Bandung City as a Foundation for Developing Global Citizenship

Nisrina Nurul Insani¹, Aim Abdulkarim¹, Kokom Komalasari¹, Rahmat¹,
Diana Noor Anggraini¹, Pitria Sopianingsih¹

¹Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: Nisrina Nurul Insani

Email: nisrina.n.i@upi.edu



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Abstract

The moral intelligence development is becoming critical in equipping adolescents to be able to address the twenty first century ethical, societal and global challenges. This research analyzes the moral intelligence of high-school pupils in Bandung who are in their senior years with emphasis to four major aspects, which include integrity, responsibility, self-control and empathy. The quantitative design was conducted by use of a validated questionnaire that was administered at different grades. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive summaries, reliability test, confirmatory factor analysis, and inferential statistics conducted on the data (correlation and regression) to map the moral intelligence profiles of the students. The results have shown that the total moral intelligence is high, and empathy and self-control were found as the strongest areas, whereas integrity and responsibility exhibited lower scores. Internal consistency was measured by reliability and validity which confirmed that moral intelligence is multidimensional. The correlation analysis indicated that there were some significant interrelations between the dimensions, and regression indicated that empathy and self-control were the most effective predictors of the orientation of the students towards the global citizenship. There were also gender disparities in that female students scored higher in empathy whereas males exhibited a margin of self-control. Students were less consistent with regard to responsibility and integrity despite high sensitivity and behavioral regulation. The paper also identifies the necessity of experiential and digitally enriched, including service learning, digital citizenship programs, to reinforce weaker aspects and contribute to responsible and ethical involvement in the global environment.

Introduction

Education is becoming conceptualised in the twenty first century as a process that goes beyond imparting knowledge. It also has the mandate of molding ethical, compassionate and individuals ready to face the challenges of a dynamic world. The process of globalisation, promoting digital technologies, and social changes require students to attain not only academic perfection but also character and the ability to withstand. In this context, the role of education needs to be the generation of learners who can play responsible roles in the local communities besides playing responsible roles in the world community. The above expectations highlight the necessity to promote moral intelligence in schools as a crucial component of character building (Pizarro & Salovey, 2002; Sanjani, 2024; Anisah, 2023; Mouta et al., 2024; Adel, 2024).

Moral intelligence can be described as the ability to have moral understanding and be able to apply that understanding in a logical and ethically sound way. It includes such qualities as honesty, responsibility, self-control, and empathy, which, in combination, help people make effective moral choices, as well as build positive relationships. Long theorists have pointed out that moral intelligence is one of the bases of virtuous being, as it allows one to withstand harmful desires, express compassion, and be just and impartial in diverse situations (Dacka, 2024; Raquib et al., 2022; Atiq, 2025). Empirical studies have attributed moral intelligence to good social behaviour, strength against peer pressure and improved academic performance. However, a significant amount of the current literature describes moral intelligence as a rather individual quality, without sufficiently questioning how it manifests itself in both the civic life and the environment of the school (Puspitasari et al., 2022; Sieber et al., 2025; Martinez & Partin, 2023).

This is a gap that is especially acute in case moral intelligence is discussed in the context of global citizenship. Education that seeks to build global citizenship imposes the requirement on students to not only develop internal virtues, but also to realise these virtues in the social, civic, and intercultural spheres (Kayode, 2023; Granados-Sánchez, 2023; Cerrato & Fortunato, 2023; Wiksten, 2021). Adolescents might even admit the significance of integrity or compassion, but still be reluctant to exercise such values with regularity when they are forced to do so in socially-constructed situations or when they are forced to accept responsibilities that are extrinsic to their self-interest. The lack of moral consciousness and moral action is one of the challenges that education should overcome in the process of raising active and responsible citizens in both the local and global society (Begum et al., 2022; Rahmawati et al., 2022; Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2023).

In Indonesia, the moral intelligence development is directly proportional to the national education goals (Puspitasari et al., 2022; Ngangi et al., 2024; Santoso, 2021). Based on the spirit of Pancasila, schools and colleges have a role to play in nurturing students who do not only have the intellectual capability but moral purity, a sense of responsibility, and willingness to serve the larger society. Civic and moral education is given a core place in the curriculum thus portraying the character building focus of the nation. However, the modern Indonesian teenagers are becoming more and more subject to peer interaction, digitalisation and globalisation, which pose new ethical issues and phenomena that question the effectiveness in which moral intelligence is being trained and utilized in everyday life (Graglia et al., 2021; Tangkish et al., 2024; Zhao et al., 2024).

The choice of the city of Bandung as the site of this investigation, in particular, is quite considerable. Being one of the main urban centres in Indonesia, Bandung provides an example of social heterogeneity, technology development and cultural activity all these are the characteristics of the experience of young persons today. In this environment, students find themselves in a constant tug of war in an attempt to balance between the old and the new, local needs and global desires (Jimenez & Moorhead, 2021). As a result, the analysis of the moral intelligence of the senior high-school children to Bandung provides insights that are useful at the local scale as well as in the global context of how the educational practices could equip adolescents to act morally in the interconnected world.

In this paper, the researcher is going to focus on four major dimensions of moral intelligence, namely integrity, responsibility, self-control and empathy. Integrity refers to honesty and compatibility between values and behaviors. Accountability refers to responsibility and readiness to make contributions towards both personal and group performances (Vest et al., 2023; Stewart et al., 2023). Self-control focuses on the mood control and the skill to prevent

impulsive behavior, and empathy means the skill to understand and react on the emotional condition of other people. These dimensions combined form a full expression of the moral capabilities about which character education and civic and world-citizen life are all about.

This study aims at analyzing the moral intelligence among older students in senior high schools in Bandung City, as well as to define the strengths and weaknesses in the high schools. In a more precise way, the paper places the concept of moral intelligence as a cornerstone of the establishment of global citizenship education (Van, 2024; Smith et al., 2024). Connecting personal moral abilities and civic participation, the study will help to add to both theoretical debates around the topic of character formation as well as practical actions regarding curriculum and policy (Cress et al., 2023; Geiger et al., 2023; Ibrahim et al., 2024). The findings are expected to provide practical information to educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders in creating the learning experiences that go beyond the impartation of the moral values and will, on the contrary, allow the student to put the values to the test in the situations similar to real-life.

Methods

The current study was a quantitative study based on a combination of descriptive research methodology and inferential statistics to produce a detailed description of moral intelligence among the students. The selected method enables a systematization of the description of the extant conditions as well as allows testing relationships between relevant variables rigorously. The sample was a sample of senior high school students in Bandung City who were chosen using purposive sampling to ensure that it facilitated the goals of the study. The respondents were grade ten to twelve in a number of schools that were able to maintain a wide range of social and academic backgrounds. The obtained sample size met the minimum criteria of the factor analysis along with the inferential testing, thus providing sufficient statistical power and the representativeness of the results.

A questionnaire that was designed based on moral intelligence theoretical framework was used. It evaluated four major dimensions, which are integrity, responsibility, self-control, and empathy. Multiple indicators were operationalized to measure each dimension in terms of a Likert scale. The content validity was achieved through expert judgment and also pilot test was carried out to check the reliability and internal consistency before implementing the instrument in the actual phase. The research protocol has been started with the development and validation of the instruments to be used in the research, and the data collection with the use of the questionnaires to be distributed to the chosen respondents, and finally with the screening of the data with completeness and accurateness before the statistical analysis.

The analysis of data was conducted in a number of consecutive steps. First, data screening was done to remove any missing values, outliers, and to test distributional assumptions. The composite scores were subsequently calculated in each dimension of moral-intelligence. The assessment of reliability was done through Cronbach alpha. The construct validity was investigated using exploratory factor analysis and later validated using confirmatory factor analysis. It was found that model fit was evaluated based on such indices as Comparative Fit Index, Tucker Lewin Index, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, and Standardised root mean square residual.

After the verification of the measurement model, the correlation analysis was conducted to investigate the relationship between four dimensions of moral intelligence. T tests, analysis of variance and multivariate analysis of variance were used to compare the groups based on differences in terms of gender, grade level or any other demographic variables. The approach

used was multiple regression analysis to examine the degree to which integrity, responsibility, self control, and empathy would be used in predicting orientation of students towards global citizenship. The use of multilevel regression modeling was also taken into consideration in order to take into account the potential impact of school level variables. Moreover, mediation and moderation analyses were also used to investigate mechanisms in the model including role of self control to mediate the relationship between empathy and responsibility. Latent profile analysis and cluster analysis (as types of person-centered approaches) were applied to identify specific groups of students with varying patterns of moral intelligence, which offer a deeper insight into heterogeneity in the sample.

There were statistical and practical significance in that all analyses were reported with effect sizes and confidence intervals. The use of data visualization of bar charts, radar plots, and box plots was also employed to ease the interpretation. This multi-layered analytic approach not only provided the description of the degree of moral intelligence of the students but also tested the reliability and validity of the tool, took into account the correlations between the dimensions and discussed the implications of the moral intelligence on the character education and global citizenship.

Results and Discussion

The results of the research presented in this paper give a complete profile of moral intelligence among senior high school pupils in Bandung City. According to the descriptive analysis provided in Table 1, it can be concluded that, in general, the four dimensions of moral intelligence are in the high category. The mean scores were highest in empathy (M 4.41, SD 0.52) and self- control (M 4.39, SD 0.55) after which there was responsibility (M 4.29, SD 0.58) and integrity (M 4.26, SD 0.61). The standard deviations are relatively low implying that the majority of the students were in the high range. These findings suggest that the ability of the students to associate with peers and control individual behavior is well strong since they have the capacity to form strong relationships and regulate behavior. However, the averages in integrity were a bit lower, and responsibility was a bit lower, which means that it is not easy to be consistent in moral conduct in such situations as when there is a peer pressure or group responsibility.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Moral Intelligence Dimensions

Dimension	Mean	SD	Min	Max	Category
Integrity	4.26	0.61	2.10	5.00	High
Responsibility	4.29	0.58	2.30	5.00	High
Self Control	4.39	0.55	2.80	5.00	High
Empathy	4.41	0.52	3.00	5.00	High

The reliability of the instruments was also checked so as to have uniformity of measurements. Both Table 2 and the analysis of Cronbach alpha values demonstrated a value greater than 0.80, which is the consistency of the items that make up the scales to measure the intended construct. Such reliability enhances validity of such data and guarantees that the findings may be used with certainty.

Table 2. Reliability of Moral Intelligence Dimensions

Dimension	Cronbach's Alpha	McDonald's Omega
Integrity	0.83	0.85
Responsibility	0.84	0.86
Self Control	0.86	0.87

Empathy	0.88	0.89
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Construct validity was also determined by confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Table 3 indicates that the four factor model had a good fit indices (CFI = 0.94, TLI 0.93, RMSEA =0.05, SRMR =0.04) but the one factor model had poor fit. The evidence presented in these studies supports the notion that moral intelligence in adolescents is a multidimensional construct of integrity, responsibility, self-control and empathy, and not a undifferentiated construct. This justifies the theoretical framework and it insists on the need to nurture every dimension in a balanced way.

Table 3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Fit Indices

Model	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR	Decision
Four-Factor Model	0.94	0.93	0.05	0.04	Good Fit
One-Factor Model	0.82	0.80	0.10	0.08	Poor Fit

There were significant interrelationships as indicated by the correlations of dimensions as shown in Table 4. The highest correlation was between empathy and responsibility (r 0.56, p less than 0.01), which implies that emotionally sensitive students are also more likely to show accountability in their social and academic lives. Other relationships exhibited a high correlation as well including the integrity and self-control (r=0.53, p= <0.01) meaning that students who have a high regard to honesty and consistency are more likely to have high emotional control and behavioral discipline. These results indicate that moral capacities are interconnected that moral intelligence is a system of mutually reinforcing traits.

Table 4. Correlations Between Dimensions

Dimension	Integrity	Responsibility	Self Control	Empathy
Integrity	1	0.49**	0.53**	0.45**
Responsibility	0.49**	1	0.47**	0.56**
Self Control	0.53**	0.47**	1	0.50**
Empathy	0.45**	0.56**	0.50**	1
Note. p < 0.01				

Regression analysis has also been used to investigate the anticipatory power of the dimensions of moral intelligence on global citizenship orientation. Empathy (= 0.34, p = 0.001) and self-control (= 0.31, p = 0.001) came out to be the strongest predictors as shown in Table 5, integrity came out next with a = 0.18 (p = 0.05). Responsibility could only have a fringe effect (p = 0.056). The model explained 42 per cent of global citizenship orientation which highlights the fact that moral intelligence has a considerable effects on global awareness and civic engagement among students. These conclusions demonstrate the crucial essence of relational and regulatory capabilities within the context of preparing students to become responsible global citizens.

Table 5. Regression Predicting Global Citizenship Orientation

Predictor	β	SE	t	p
Integrity	0.18	0.07	2.57	0.011
Responsibility	0.14	0.08	1.92	0.056
Self Control	0.31	0.07	4.42	0.000
Empathy	0.34	0.06	5.67	0.000
R² = 0.42, Adj. R² = 0.41, F(4, 275) = 49.6, p < 0.001				

Gender based comparisons in groups indicated that some dimensions showed statistically significant differences as indicated in Table 6. The female students scored higher in empathy scores ($M= 4.49$, $SD=.50$) when compared with the male students ($M= 4.32$, $SD=.53$, $p=.05$). Male students on the other hand scored slightly higher in self-control as they had a score of $M=4.45$, $SD=0.52$, compared to female students that had a score of $M=4.34$, $SD=0.56$ and the difference was less than $p=0.05$. Integrity and responsibility did not show any notable gender difference. These findings suggest gender sensitive trends in the development of moral intelligence, in which, female students seem to be more receptive to relationships, and male students show more behavior control.

Table 6. MANOVA Results by Gender

Dimension	Male (M)	Male (SD)	Female (M)	Female (SD)	F	p	Partial η^2
Integrity	4.25	0.59	4.27	0.62	0.08	0.772	0.00
Responsibility	4.24	0.57	4.33	0.59	2.14	0.145	0.01
Self Control	4.45	0.52	4.34	0.56	3.94	0.048	0.02
Empathy	4.32	0.53	4.49	0.50	6.13	0.014	0.03

Heterogeneity of moral intelligence profiles was also explored with the aid of latent profile analysis, which is summarized in Table 7. Three different groups were determined. The majority cohort (61 per cent) scored consistently high in all the dimensions, which is a sign of integrated moral development. One secondary group (24%), only showed very high empathy, moderate levels of integrity and responsibility, indicating emotional sensitivity and possible difficulty in consistency and responsibility. The least number of cohort (15%) performed moderately to highly in all the dimensions but not significantly more than the other domains showing well-rounded but less pronounced moral skills.

Table 7. Latent Profile Analysis of Moral Intelligence

Profile	% of Students	Characteristics
High All Dimensions	61%	High integrity, responsibility, self control, empathy
High Empathy Moderate Integrity	24%	Very high empathy, moderate integrity and responsibility
Balanced Moderate High	15%	Scores consistently moderate to high on all dimensions

Together the data will show that students in Bandung have high moral intelligence, particularly when it comes to empathy and self-control. The competencies play a critical role in promoting interpersonal relations and personal control in an internationalized environment. On the other hand, the poor results in the integrity and responsibility scale as well as the heterogeneity in moral profiles reflect the need to provide structured platforms to facilitate honesty, accountability and civic participation. To improve these dimensions, schools can implement service-learning strategies, joint projects, and digital-citizenship classes that can allow students to use moral principles in real-life situations. Therefore, moral intelligence could be conceived not only as an individual quality but also a shared privilege that should be used to create ethically responsible citizens on the global stage.

Making the chasm between Moral Awareness and Civic Practice.

The current research points out the irregular progress of the dimensions of moral intelligence in adolescents and makes one contemplate the fact that such qualities like empathy and self-

control are more likely to be presented than such aspects as integrity and responsibility. The trend is not unique to Bandung but it is consistent with other results worldwide in the studies of adolescent development. Adolescents are often more affectively and relationally sensitive a trait which is enabled by peer interactions, however, the transfer of moral awareness into long term behaviour requires systematic guidance and reinforcement. This distinction must be identified in order to design interventions that foster not only the affective dispositions but also the behavioural enactments of students in everyday situations.

The role of empathy in the promotion of prosocial behaviour is stressed in contemporary scholarship. An example of a meta-analysis using close to fifty study conclusions is that empathy acts as a mediator between peer influences and prosocial behaviour in the adolescent stage; furthermore, it highlights the fact that teens who are immersed in positive peer groups are more likely to turn emotional sensitivity into positive social behaviour. This observation is of specific importance to the case of Bandung where the culture of peer dominance in schools has a strong impact on the moral behavior of students. Therefore, empathy is a potent basis of civic engagement, but only when this is maintained through social norms and institutional processes to provide a motive and reinforcement of prosocial engagement (Dolan, 2022; Lejano, 2023; Zahid & Darmawan, 2025). This is because without such reinforcement, empathy may only be left at the emotive state as opposed to that of an acted civic virtue.

Self-control, in addition to empathy, has become another essential component of moral intelligence, and longitudinal studies help to understand the importance of self-control. A massive longitudinal study of thousands of adolescents shows that self-control does not only correlate with a decline in problematic behaviors but also with an increased ability to withstand the disturbances created by digital technology. Such results are echoed in the modern-day state of affairs of students whose lives become mediated by the Internet more than ever. More self-regulation means that they can maintain commitments and avoid impulsive involvement which, to a significant degree, sabotages the civic responsibility. However, the same study has shown that self-control is relatively constant throughout adolescence and therefore schools cannot count on natural maturation to develop self-control. Instead, institutions need to inculcate those activities that involve persistence, discipline and accountability thus making self-regulation a quality that would sustain long-term civic practice.

The multidimensional character of moral intelligence that I have indicated in this research is supported by the emerging psychometric studies. In the recent scale-development programs in various kinds of population, there is consistent finding of specific, but interacting factors, including moral sensitivity, commitment, and reasoning. These papers support the opinion that moral intelligence is not a single construct; it is better viewed as a constellation of abilities that are not developed evenly, depending on the effect of context and pedagogical factors. This has great consequences to teachers: character education needs to develop all of the dimensions deliberately. It is inadequate to concentrate on empathy without consideration of responsibility, or to concentrate on the rules of honesty without strengthening skills of emotional-regulation. Holistic approaches that combine classroom learning, experiential projects and reflective dialogue are required to guarantee balanced learning.

The comparatively lower expression of integrity and responsibility in the current research is reminiscent of the findings of other studies that suggest that the two aspects are especially prone to contextual demands. Recent research study revealed that the less occurrence of moral intelligence is linked to the increased prevalence of internet addiction using psychological distress as an intervening variable. This implies that the feeling of responsibility is the first one that is destroyed in cases where adolescents are stressed or inopportune environments. Even

integrity can be compromised with the lack of an active modeling and kind of reward of the honesty inside the school communities. These results emphasize that integrity and responsibility are not only personal virtues; they are social practices that need to be reinforced constantly by the organized possibility to be responsible and always behave in a similar way in both physical and virtual environments.

Educational interventions, which are effective in mediating the gap between moral awareness and civic practice, are likely to have some salient characteristics. A meta-analysis of the community-engaged learning proves that effects on citizenship outcomes are small, but always positive, especially in case the programmes are implemented over an extended time and incorporated in the reflective practice. This observation supports this interpretation: empathy and self-control, although strong, need to receive systematic civic experiences in order to grow into stable integrity and responsibility. As in the case of Indonesian schools, this can be in the form of service learning, community projects, or digital citizenship programmes in which students are provoked to engage their moral abilities in a more prolonged and real-life setting.

This interpretation is also reinforced by the literature on global citizenship education. A methodical review of the recent literature shows that a lot of the implementation is based on the knowledge and attitudes but not on the participatory action. Such a gap is indicative of the current study trend, where the students possess sound moral awareness but do not show even civic responsibility. To address this, the schools need to go beyond just having a classroom discussion about the global issues and avenue the students opportunities to exercise global citizenship by collaborating, advocating and serving both in the local and international communities. Moral intelligence can be instilled in an international structure so that moral values are not merely an abstract ideology, but concrete behaviors.

The online aspect brings in the additional complexity. Recent policy frames have stressed the fact that digital citizenship is not an option but a part of moral and civic development. Moral intelligence on part of students needs to be thus practiced in internet areas where false information, anonymity and fast communication presents new ethical dilemmas. The instruction of integrity and responsibility in the digital sphere is the guarantee that teenagers are not only sensitive and well-controlled in real-life communication, but can also maintain these principles in the conditions where the higher part of their social and civic life is now developed. The combination of the idea of digital citizenship and moral intelligence is, therefore, one of the most promising directions in the future curriculum development.

Combined, the points of the discussion lead to an obvious conclusion. Moral development is firmly rooted in empathy and self-control, which should be developed along with integrity and responsibility through experiential, deliberate, and digitally mediated education. Recent studies confirm that, in the absence of such scaffolding, moral intelligence is not well distributed; students can easily experience, but they cannot take a consistent action. It follows that schools have a central role not only to outline the moral abilities of their learners but to actualize them into long-term, habits of perpetual skills that equip youth to become moral and active citizens of the planet.

Conclusion

The current research was in exploring the moral intelligence of senior high school students in Bandung, especially the dimensions of integrity, responsibility, self-control and empathy. Findings suggest that the students have more or less well developed empathy and self-control but the manifestations of integrity and responsibility seem to be more uneven. This trend highlights an important difference between civic praxis and moral cognizance and suggests

that even as students have emotional sensitivity and regulatory behaviour, they might have challenges translating these abilities into long-term accountability and action consistency.

The way these findings are interpreted in terms of modern scholarship is that empathy and self-control form a solid basis of moral development but cannot work independently to ensure that integrity and responsibility are executed. The available literature proves that empathy can be made effective in the environment of positive social norms, and that self control requires organized room where the empathy can be solidified into permanent civic skills. Integrity and responsibility, on the other hand, are especially prone to situational influence, which makes the need to create learning environments that develop modelling, accountability, and experiential practice especially pressing.

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