

Profiling Students' Interpersonal Intelligence at SMPIT Buahati Islamic School Jakarta and Its Implications for Counseling Services

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ABSTRACT: Interpersonal intelligence is a crucial socio-emotional capacity that enables adolescents to build positive peer relationships, collaborate effectively, and regulate emotions in diverse school environments. This study aimed to describe the overall profile of students' interpersonal intelligence at SMPIT Buahati Islamic School Jakarta and to identify its implications for guidance and counseling (BK) services. Using a quantitative survey design, data were collected from 60 Grade VIII students through a validated 23-item Likert-scale instrument (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.860$) covering four domains: empathy, cooperation, interpersonal communication, and social skills. The findings revealed that most students demonstrated good interpersonal competence, particularly in cooperation, while interpersonal communication emerged as the weakest domain. This suggests that although students work well in teams, many struggle to articulate ideas clearly and confidently. These results highlight the importance of school-based counseling interventions that focus on improving communication, empathy, and social interaction skills. Strengthening these dimensions can support students' emotional maturity, peer harmony, and readiness to engage in collaborative learning environments.

Keywords: Interpersonal Intelligence, Counseling, Empathy, Cooperation, Communication.



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INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a pivotal developmental stage in which individuals negotiate identity formation while learning to manage increasingly complex social relationships. In this period, interpersonal intelligence—the capacity to perceive, understand, and respond appropriately to others' emotions, needs, and perspectives—becomes foundational not only for socio-emotional adjustment but also for academic engagement and digital citizenship. In contemporary, globally connected environments, young people interact across both face-to-face and online settings that provide opportunities for collaboration yet also expose them to risks such as miscommunication and

cyberbullying. Interpersonal intelligence equips students to build healthy relationships, prevent and resolve conflict, and cultivate empathy in socially diverse contexts (Sakman, 2024).

Within classroom learning, stronger interpersonal capacities enable students to participate productively in group work, exchange ideas respectfully, and complete shared tasks more effectively. Learners high in interpersonal intelligence are typically active discussants who can listen to peers, appreciate divergent viewpoints, and navigate disagreement constructively. Empirical work indicates that such students tend to be socially attuned, better adjusted to the school environment, and more adept at positive conflict management (Nasution & Syarqawi, 2023). Over time, these competencies strengthen classroom climate and shape enduring patterns of prosocial behavior that carry into adulthood. Beyond the classroom, co-curricular activities (e.g., scouting) create authentic contexts in which students practice cooperation, leadership, and responsibility; participation in these settings has been shown to foster interpersonal growth through team interaction, communication, and constructive conflict resolution that nurtures empathy and social awareness (Abdullah, 2025). Interpersonal competence also benefits student–teacher relationships: effective communication and mutual respect support motivation, academic persistence, and a more conducive learning environment.

From a national perspective, Indonesian education stakeholders increasingly recognize interpersonal intelligence as a core competency aligned with the Profil Pelajar Pancasila, particularly its dimension of *gotong royong*—collaboration, empathy, and social care as twenty-first-century competencies. Yet system-level data suggest substantial room for improvement. According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek, 2020), only around 40% of Indonesian students demonstrate strong interpersonal communication skills, with the remainder falling in the moderate-to-low range. Contributors to this gap reportedly include the predominance of traditional pedagogies with limited active interaction, insufficient integration of character education within curricula, and increased technology use that displaces in-person communication. Findings from the Lembaga Psikologi Terapan Universitas Indonesia (2021) similarly indicate common challenges among students in adopting others' perspectives, expressing empathy, and sustaining positive peer relationships.

In response, schools have experimented with pedagogical approaches that explicitly cultivate interpersonal abilities. Active learning strategies, including cooperative learning and sociodrama, have been associated with measurable gains in empathy, communication, and teamwork. For instance, cooperative structures can elevate interpersonal intelligence by approximately 25%, particularly in empathic understanding (Tobing, Susilawati, & Mulyadi, 2019; Tobing, 2019), while the jigsaw model has been reported to improve students' interpersonal communication skills by up to 30% through structured peer interaction (Fawri & Syukur, 2022). Complementarily, sociodrama techniques enhance perspective-taking and constructive responses to social conflict (Agustiyana, 2016). These convergent findings reinforce the value of embedding social interaction–rich methods in routine instruction and of designing school counseling services responsive to students' socio-emotional developmental needs.

The present study is situated at SMPIT Buahati Islamic School Jakarta, where preliminary school-based observations during *Pengenalan Lapangan Persekolahan* (PLP) identified several interpersonal challenges: uneven participation and dominance in group tasks, limited empathy among peers, and small-scale conflicts that undermined class discussion and engagement. Such patterns suggest both inefficiencies in collaborative learning and vulnerabilities in the broader socio-emotional climate. A systematic mapping of students' interpersonal intelligence is therefore warranted, both to establish a nuanced baseline and to inform the design of targeted guidance and counseling (*bimbingan dan konseling*, BK) interventions that can strengthen communication, cooperation, and empathy.

Theoretical foundations

Interpersonal intelligence is widely discussed within Multiple Intelligences theory (Gardner, in Fajarini, 2024), where it denotes an individual's facility in recognizing and effectively engaging with others' emotions, motivations, and needs. Building on this foundation, scholars highlight complementary lenses that emphasize communicative competence and reciprocal relationship building. Children with stronger interpersonal intelligence are often better liked by peers due to effective communication (T. Musfiroh, in Ditami, Marisa, & Seok, 2021; Ditami, 2021). Safaria (2005) defines interpersonal or social intelligence as the ability and skills to create, build, and sustain mutually beneficial social relations—underscoring bidirectionality and shared gains.

Interpersonal intelligence is also closely intertwined with emotional intelligence. Goleman (in Maitrianti, 2021) conceptualizes interpersonal capacities as a major component of emotional intelligence concerned with initiating and maintaining social bonds. Consistent with this view, Salovey and Mayer (in Simaremare, 2025) frame interpersonal intelligence as encompassing relationship management, effective communication, and empathy, while Najamuddin, Idris, and Afif (2015) highlight accurate perception and attunement to others' moods, feelings, and desires as prerequisites for harmonious cooperation. Synthesizing across these perspectives, this study treats interpersonal intelligence as a multidimensional construct integrating empathy, communication skills, perspective-taking, cooperative orientation, and adaptive social problem-solving.

With respect to determinants, prior work distinguishes genetic and environmental inputs (Safaria, 2005). While neurobiological maturation underpins information processing, environmental contexts—home socialization, instructional practices, nutrition, and schooling—exert formative influences. Musfiroh (2014) emphasizes learning experiences that center on social interaction (e.g., group work, collaborative play) and the educator's role in orchestrating structured opportunities for collaboration. Anderson (in Safaria, 2005) further articulates three organizing dimensions—social sensitivity, social insight, and social communication—each of which can be scaffolded by supportive environments that promote observation of social cues, reflection on emotions and behavior, and practice in effective verbal/nonverbal exchange.

Operationally, indicators of interpersonal intelligence include: sensitivity to peers' feelings and needs; capacity to organize and motivate peers; sociability and readiness to form new ties;

propensity to cooperate and share; and conflict mediation skills (Musfiroh, 2014). Related rubrics underscore prosocial helping and cooperation; understanding emotions, norms, and conflict-resolution strategies; and respectful speech coupled with attentive listening (Safaria, 2005, in Aprilia, 2013). Individuals high on these indicators tend to form, maintain, and deepen social relations over time, accurately interpret verbal and nonverbal messages, and flexibly adjust to situational demands.

Developmental and educational significance

For adolescents, interpersonal intelligence functions as a core life skill that facilitates acceptance within diverse peer groups, mitigates conflict, and supports collaborative learning. Gardner (in Armstrong, 2004; Gardner, 2004) characterizes it as the facility to perceive others' moods, intentions, and motivations—an ability refined through social feedback and perspective-taking. Empirical accounts link higher interpersonal intelligence to sensitivity toward others' needs, respect for individual differences, ease of cooperation, and empathy (Misbach, 2010). Deficits, by contrast, correlate with social withdrawal, aggressive or egocentric tendencies, and communicative breakdowns that can impair mental health and personal development (Safaria, 2005).

Benefits for students are multi-layered. Interpersonal intelligence enhances communication (clear expression and active listening), teamwork (appropriate role-taking, motivation of peers, coordination), social problem-solving (consideration of multiple viewpoints and preference for win-win solutions), and future readiness in education and work (networking, negotiation, and collaboration) (Lie, 2003; Gunawan, 2007; Nasution & Syarqawi, 2023; Monawati, 2015; Rahmina, 2020). These capacities can be directly cultivated through curricular and co-curricular programs, including BK services that provide explicit training in social skills, role-play for conflict resolution, and guided reflection.

Goleman's framework (2011) organizes interpersonal intelligence into four actionable aspects for school programming: empathy, cooperation, interpersonal communication, and social skills. Empathy can be developed through story-based instruction, case discussions, and service activities that evoke and regulate emotional responses. Cooperation is scaffolded through collaborative projects and extracurricular teams that stress equitable task division and mutual respect. Interpersonal communication benefits from structured opportunities for discussion, presentations, debates, and role-plays that integrate verbal and nonverbal channels (intonation, eye contact, posture). Broader social skills—greeting, thanking, apologizing, observing rules, and polite conduct—are reinforced through daily routines and recognition systems. Evidence suggests that progress in these areas positively correlates with academic success, as empathic and cooperative climates facilitate engagement and learning (Zubaedi, 2011).

Social ecology: family, peers, and school

Interpersonal intelligence is shaped by the family environment. Democratic parenting—marked by open communication and respect for the child's feelings—is associated with stronger interpersonal communication among preadolescents, explaining a substantial portion of variance

(Sari, Fakhriyah, & Pratiwi, 2021; Sari A. M. S., 2021; Sari R. P., 2020). Studies among Indonesian adolescents also suggest that emotional intelligence coupled with democratic parenting predicts higher interpersonal intelligence (Patimbangi, 2018). By contrast, authoritarian or permissive styles may impede empathic development and healthy communication. Accordingly, BK services are encouraged to involve parents through workshops and family meetings to align school interventions with supportive home practices.

Peers exert powerful influences during adolescence. Positive friendship quality and emotional connectedness to peers are linked with better perspective-taking, relationship maintenance, and adaptive social behavior among junior-secondary students (Sari & Waluyo, 2020). Classroom structures that promote healthy peer interaction—cooperative tasks, small-group discussions, and joint projects—offer safe spaces for practicing empathy and constructive feedback.

The school climate functions as a second socialization context after family. Warm, respectful, and anti-bullying environments enhance students' sense of safety and willingness to participate, thereby supporting social skill development (Purwaningsih, 2017). Extracurricular programs (e.g., scouting, team sports, choir, theatre, community service) expose students to diverse roles and perspectives, strengthening negotiation and adaptation. Character-based curricula and consistent BK programming further institutionalize prosocial norms (honesty, tolerance, responsibility), while coordinated efforts among teachers, counselors, parents, and community partners sustain a whole-school approach to socio-emotional development.

Islamic educational perspective

In Islamic education, interpersonal intelligence is integral to holistic formation of intellect, character, and spirituality. It aligns with Qur'anic and Prophetic teachings on ethical communication, social harmony, justice, and compassion. As conceptualized in the literature, interpersonal intelligence encompasses social communication, social insight, and social sensitivity, each resonant with Qur'anic guidance on mutual assistance, communal cohesion, and eloquent speech (e.g., Al-Mā'idah:2; Al-Anfāl:1; Ar-Rahmān:3–4; Āli 'Imrān:105; An-Nahl:90; An-Nisā':8; Al-Hashr:9) and with scholarly elaborations on moral conduct in social relations (Benny, 2018; Anisah, 2022; Khaeroni, 2021; Al-Jauziyah, 2017; Afrianti, 2017; Hadiyyin, 2013). In an Islamic school context, therefore, cultivating interpersonal intelligence is not merely instrumental to classroom management or academic outcomes but is constitutive of *akhlak* and communal responsibility.

Problem context, aims, and contributions

Preliminary observations at SMPIT Buahati Islamic School Jakarta identified three salient issues: (1) difficulties expressing feelings and opinions that constrain group communication; (2) imbalances in collaboration (over-dominance by some students and passivity in others); and (3) low empathy that seeds minor conflicts and dampens class climate. These observations dovetail with national-level concerns (Kemendikbudristek, 2020; LPT UI, 2021) and with the literature's

call to embed interaction-rich pedagogies and structured BK supports (Tobing, 2019; Fawri & Syukur, 2022; Agustiyana, 2016; Musfiroh, 2014).

Accordingly, this study pursues two objectives:

1. To map the level and profile of interpersonal intelligence among students at SMPIT Buahati Islamic School Jakarta.
2. To identify implications for guidance and counseling (BK) services, particularly for planning and implementing interventions that strengthen communication, cooperation, and empathy.

Guided by these aims, the research addresses the following questions:

- *RQ1*. What is the overall profile of students' interpersonal intelligence at SMPIT Buahati Islamic School Jakarta?
- *RQ2*. What actionable implications do the observed profiles have for the design and delivery of BK services in this school?

The study makes three contributions. First, it provides a context-specific baseline of interpersonal intelligence in an Islamic junior-secondary setting, complementing broader national and theoretical accounts. Second, it translates interpersonal indicators into programmatic guidance for BK services (e.g., empathy training, cooperative-learning supports, conflict-management role-plays) aligned with school culture and Islamic values. Third, it integrates multiple theoretical strands—Multiple Intelligences, emotional intelligence, and Islamic educational ethics—into a coherent practical framework for school-level socio-emotional development.

Finally, consistent with the study's scope, the analysis focuses on descriptive **mapping** and program implications rather than evaluating the efficacy of any specific intervention. The following sections present the research method, results and discussion, and conclusions aligned with these objectives.

METHOD

This study was conducted at **SMPIT Buahati Islamic School Jakarta**, located at Jl. H. Baing No. 99, RT.11/RW.4, Kampung Tengah, Kramat Jati, East Jakarta, Indonesia (postal code 13760). The research was carried out over a one-year period, from September 2024 to August 2025, and followed three principal stages: planning, implementation, and reporting. During the planning stage, the research topic was developed, consultations with supervisors were undertaken, and the research proposal was prepared and defended. The implementation stage comprised instrument development, pilot testing, data collection, and data processing. Finally, the reporting stage involved analysis, drawing implications for guidance and counseling services, and the preparation of the final thesis report. A detailed monthly timeline was developed to ensure systematic progress across these stages.

The study employed a **quantitative survey design**. According to Sugiyono (2018), survey research is characterized by collecting data from a sample that represents a population, typically using questionnaires or structured interviews. Survey methodology is particularly appropriate when the goal is to describe characteristics, behaviors, or perceptions of a target group and to generalize findings to a broader population (Sugiyono, 2017). In this study, structured questionnaires were designed to capture indicators of interpersonal intelligence among junior secondary students. The quantitative orientation allowed systematic measurement of variables, the use of descriptive and inferential statistical tools, and the presentation of results through tables, charts, and statistical summaries. This approach was chosen to provide a reliable depiction of students' interpersonal intelligence and to support hypothesis testing regarding its variation and implications.

The population of the study comprised all Grade VIII students at SMPIT Buahati Islamic School Jakarta in the academic year 2024/2025. Population is understood as the entire group of individuals sharing relevant characteristics from which research findings are generalized (Creswell, 2016). Grade VIII was deliberately selected because early adolescence (ages 13–14) represents a developmental stage where identity formation, peer interaction, and socio-emotional competencies—including interpersonal intelligence—are particularly salient.

Table 1 below summarizes the composition of the population:

Class	Number of Students
VIII A	26
VIII B	26
VIII C	26
VIII D	26
Total	104

Source: SMPIT Buahati Islamic School Jakarta (2024/2025)

Thus, the total population consisted of 104 students, evenly distributed across four classes with 26 students each.

Sampling was conducted using purposive sampling, a technique that selects participants based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives (Creswell, 2016). The sampling process occurred in two phases: instrument tryout and main study.

- Instrument tryout. To establish validity and reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted with 30 students purposively selected from Grade VIII. This phase ensured that each item was clearly worded, theoretically grounded, and psychometrically sound before large-scale administration.
- Main study. Once the instrument was validated, the main data collection was conducted with 60 students from Grade VIII. This number was judged sufficient to represent the overall population of 104 students, while allowing effective data management and statistical analysis. Thus, a total of 90 respondents were engaged in the overall research process (30 in the pilot,

60 in the main study), but the final analysis focused on the 60 students who participated in the main data collection.

This sample provided a balance between methodological rigor and practical feasibility, ensuring that results could meaningfully reflect the characteristics of the larger population.

Data collection was carried out using a structured questionnaire administered directly to the students. Creswell (2014) emphasizes that data collection in quantitative studies must be systematic, planned, and aligned with the research purpose to yield trustworthy results. Questionnaires are well-suited for this purpose because they can efficiently gather standardized information from many respondents at once (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). Their advantages include efficiency of time and resources, uniformity of response formats that facilitate statistical analysis, and suitability for assessing psychological constructs such as attitudes, perceptions, and interpersonal intelligence that are difficult to capture through observation alone.

The questionnaire in this study was constructed on the basis of established indicators of interpersonal intelligence. It employed a four-point Likert scale with response options ranging from *Selalu (Always)*, *Sering (Often)*, *Pernah (Sometimes)*, to *Tidak Pernah (Never)*. This scale was chosen for its ability to convert qualitative perceptions into quantitative data, enabling meaningful statistical interpretation.

The Interpersonal Intelligence Scale was developed for the study to measure students' empathy, communication, cooperation, and conflict management abilities. Following Sugiyono (2017), careful attention was given to both conceptual clarity and psychometric soundness. The instrument consisted of favorable and unfavorable statements, designed to reduce response bias and encourage more authentic answers.

Responses were scored as shown in Table 2:

Response Option	Favorable Items	Unfavorable Items
Always	4	1
Often	3	2
Sometimes	2	3
Never	1	4

This dual structure ensured that high scores consistently reflected higher levels of interpersonal intelligence.

Conceptually, **interpersonal intelligence** is defined as the student's ability to understand others' feelings, needs, and motivations, to communicate effectively, and to build healthy social relationships through cooperation and constructive conflict resolution (Santrock, 2018; Lestari & Fauziah, 2020; Rahmawati, 2021). Operationally, interpersonal intelligence was measured by students' scores on the Interpersonal Intelligence Scale. The scale's items reflected everyday

school-based behaviors across four domains: empathy, cooperation, interpersonal communication, and social skills.

The blueprint of the instrument included 40 initial items distributed across the four domains, with both favorable and unfavorable statements. Examples of indicators include showing concern for peers' feelings, sharing responsibilities in groups, listening attentively, and demonstrating politeness in social interactions. After validity and reliability testing, 23 items were retained for the final instrument.

Data analysis comprised three stages: descriptive statistics, validity testing, and reliability testing.

1. Descriptive statistics. Descriptive analysis was used to summarize students' scores and provide an overall picture of interpersonal intelligence levels. Measures included means, medians, modes, standard deviations, and frequency distributions (Creswell, 2016). Scores were then categorized into high, moderate, and low levels of interpersonal intelligence based on predetermined cutoffs.
2. Validity testing. Instrument validity was assessed through item–total correlations using Pearson's Product-Moment correlation, calculated with SPSS. An item was considered valid if its correlation coefficient (r) exceeded the critical value at the 5% significance level ($r_{\text{table}} = 0.361$). Of the 40 items piloted, 23 items met this criterion and were retained. Items with lower correlations were discarded or revised to improve precision.
3. Reliability testing. Instrument reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha, which measures internal consistency. Following Bandur (2018), a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient above 0.70 was considered evidence of acceptable reliability. The retained 23 items demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, indicating that the scale reliably measured the same construct across different respondents.

Together, these procedures ensured that the instrument was psychometrically robust, producing data that were both accurate and dependable.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive statistics of overall scores

Using the validated 23-item Interpersonal Intelligence Scale (Likert 1–4), data were obtained from 60 Grade VIII students with no missing responses. Table 1 summarizes the descriptive statistics.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics (N = 60)

Statistic	Value
Mean	67.70
Median	69.00

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Standard Deviation	8.52
Range	43.00
Minimum	45.00
Maximum	88.00

The mean and median clustered around the upper-mid range, suggesting that, on average, students exhibit adequate to high interpersonal intelligence. The standard deviation indicates moderate dispersion, with scores spanning a broad interval (45–88), which points to meaningful heterogeneity across students.

Categorical distribution

Scores were categorized into four levels—Very Low, Low, High, Very High—using predetermined cutoffs. Table 2 shows the frequency distribution.

Table 2. Frequency distribution of interpersonal intelligence

Category	Score range	f	%
Very Low	48–59	6	10.00
Low	60–69	19	31.67
High	70–79	30	50.00
Very High	80–91	5	8.33
Total	—	60	100

Half of the sample (50%) fell in the High category, with a further 8.33% in Very High. Notably, 41.67% were still in Low or Very Low, indicating a substantial subgroup for targeted support.

Indicator-level results

Indicator scores were computed for four subdomains—Empathy, Cooperation, Interpersonal Communication, and Social Skills—with the following means and percentage-of-maximum scores:

Table 3. Indicator-level profile of interpersonal intelligence

Subdomain (items)	Mean	% of max	SD	Category
Empathy (3)	8.50	70.83	1.53	High
Cooperation (8)	25.70	80.31	3.05	Very High
Interpersonal Communication (5)	13.40	67.00	2.35	High (lower bound)
Social Skills (7)	20.13	71.89	3.60	High

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Total (23)	67.73	73.60	2.63	High
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The Cooperation subdomain achieved the highest relative score (80.31%, Very High), while Interpersonal Communication registered the lowest (67.00%, lower end of High), indicating that—despite generally positive interpersonal functioning—students are comparatively less proficient at expressing ideas and feelings clearly and confidently.

Reliability evidence

Following the item-level validity screening in the pilot, internal consistency for the retained 23 items was strong: Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.860$, which falls within the “very high” reliability band (0.80–1.00). This supports the stability and coherence of the instrument for the main study.

Positioning the findings in the literature

The distribution observed here—a majority of students in the High category with a nontrivial minority in Low/Very Low—is in line with prior studies reporting junior secondary students' interpersonal intelligence to cluster around moderate-to-high, while still leaving room for improvement for a notable subset (Wahyudi & Suryani, 2019). Evidence from school-based interventions shows that group guidance and counseling can effectively enhance interpersonal competencies, particularly empathy and social skills (Ananda & Sari, 2020). More broadly, scholarship on Multiple Intelligences in school contexts underscores the importance of interpersonal intelligence for healthy peer relations and learning engagement (Yuliani & Pratama, 2023).

The indicator pattern in this study is theoretically coherent. Students demonstrated very strong cooperation (80.31%), suggesting they can share responsibilities, support teammates, and prioritize collective goals—an encouraging alignment with collaborative pedagogies and *gotong royong* values emphasized in Indonesian curricula. By contrast, interpersonal communication was comparatively weaker (67.00%). This asymmetry suggests that while students can *participate* in group tasks, some struggle to articulate ideas, feelings, and arguments with clarity and appropriate assertiveness. Similar gaps are documented in studies where adolescents display prosocial intentions and teamwork orientation but still require explicit scaffolds for communication performance (e.g., turn-taking, summarizing peers' points, asking clarifying questions, and using respectful disagreement).

Implications for school-based guidance and instruction

Given that 41.67% of students remain in Low or Very Low categories, prevention- and promotion-oriented programming is warranted:

1. BK-led interpersonal communication training.

Prioritize structured practice in expressive and receptive skills—concise message framing, perspective-taking responses, evidence-based argumentation, and nonverbal congruence (eye

contact, posture, vocal tone). Techniques can include micro-role-plays, think–pair–share, and brief debate formats with rubrics that reward clarity and respectful discourse. These align with evidence that group guidance can elevate empathy and social interaction quality (Ananda & Sari, 2020).

2. Cooperative learning with speaking roles.

Existing strength in cooperation can be leveraged by assigning rotating communicative roles (discussion leader, summarizer, questioner, evidence-checker). Models such as jigsaw have previously shown benefits for interpersonal communication and collaboration, partly by requiring each learner to articulate content for peers.

3. Feedback-rich classroom routines.

Embed feedback scripts (e.g., “I heard you say...,” “One question I have is...,” “An alternative view is...”) to normalize constructive critique. Brief reflection logs after group tasks can help students monitor which communication behaviors aided or hindered collaboration.

4. Targeted support for the lower-performing subgroup.

For students in Low/Very Low categories, BK can offer small-group counseling focused on social problem-solving and communication anxiety reduction, with peer mentoring to model effective interaction.

5. Family and peer ecology.

Consistent with literature linking democratic parenting and positive peer ties to stronger interpersonal functioning, the school can host parent workshops on supportive communication at home and run peer-ally initiatives that foster inclusive friendship networks.

Program evaluation and future research

Because this study mapped current levels rather than evaluating an intervention, a logical next step is to implement the above strategies and assess pre–post changes using the same 23-item scale. Given the instrument’s very high reliability ($\alpha = 0.860$), it is well-suited for repeated measures. Future analyses might also (i) examine subdomain-specific change (e.g., gains in Interpersonal Communication), (ii) explore associations with academic and behavioral outcomes, and (iii) investigate moderators (e.g., gender, extracurricular participation) to tailor programming.

Summary interpretation

Overall, students at SMPIT Buahati Islamic School Jakarta display generally strong interpersonal intelligence, especially in cooperation. Nonetheless, expressive communicative competence is the relative weakness, and a sizeable minority require focused support. These results are consistent with prior research on adolescents’ interpersonal functioning and with the demonstrated effectiveness of school-based group guidance. Accordingly, BK services should prioritize communication-focused training while amplifying existing strengths in collaboration—an approach likely to improve socio-emotional climate and academic engagement in tandem (Wahyudi & Suryani, 2019; Ananda & Sari, 2020; Yuliani & Pratama, 2023).

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and data analysis, it can be concluded that the level of interpersonal intelligence among students at SMPIT Buahati Islamic School Jakarta varies across categories. In general, most students demonstrated relatively good abilities in empathy, cooperation, interpersonal communication, and social skills. These competencies were reflected in their capacity to understand others' feelings, actively participate in group activities, and establish harmonious peer relationships.

Nevertheless, a number of students still require further development, particularly in expressing ideas clearly, collaborating effectively in groups, and mediating conflicts constructively. Some students tended to remain passive during group discussions, struggled to convey ideas in a structured manner, or preferred to withdraw when disagreements arose.

The results indicate that interpersonal intelligence is not solely innate but is also shaped by several factors, including supportive family environments, peer interactions that build everyday communication skills, and school climates that provide a safe space for expression. Moreover, involvement in extracurricular activities, inclusive school policies, and teachers' roles as models of effective communication further strengthened the development of interpersonal intelligence.

These findings carry important implications for the planning and implementation of guidance and counseling (GC) services in schools. Counselors can use this evidence to design more targeted programs, such as content mastery services focusing on communication skills, group counseling activities to strengthen empathy and cooperation, and conflict resolution simulations to foster negotiation skills. Such programs are expected to assist students in the lower categories of interpersonal intelligence to improve their abilities while sustaining and enhancing the skills of those already performing at a high level.

In sum, this study not only portrays the actual condition of students but also provides strategic guidance for optimizing the role of schools, teachers, and social environments in shaping a generation capable of interacting effectively, respecting diversity, and resolving problems wisely across various social contexts.

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