FROM TABOOS TO TEACHING: STRATEGIES FOR INTRODUCTING PUBERTY IN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Nadri Taja[1] (iD), Achmad Faqihuddin[2]* (iD), Arif Hakim[3] (iD), Abdillah Muflih[4]

[1][3] Universitas Islam Bandung, Indonesia
[2] Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia
[4] Islamic University of Madinah, Saudi Arabia

*faqih@upi.edu

Abstract

This study examines the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in guiding elementary school students to understand the physical and psychological changes associated with puberty (baligh). Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through interviews and classroom observations involving five PAI teachers at Islamic elementary schools in Bandung. The data were analyzed thematically to identify recurring patterns and key categories. The findings reveal six major themes: (1) puberty education as a moral and spiritual responsibility, (2) dialogic and gender - separated instructional strategies, (3) behavioral

approaches through counseling and role modeling, (4) integration of religious and general knowledge, (5) collaboration between teachers and parents, and (6) evaluation through observation and self-reflection. These findings indicate that puberty education within Islamic Religious Education should adopt a holistic framework that integrates spiritual, physical, and emotional dimensions. The study highlights the importance of curriculum strengthening, teacher professional development, and parental engagement in supporting effective puberty education grounded in Islamic values.

Keywords: *Baligh, Islamic Religious Education, Learning Strategies, Puberty.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji peran guru Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) dalam membimbing siswa sekolah dasar untuk memahami perubahan fisik dan psikologis yang berkaitan dengan masa pubertas (baligh). Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif dengan pengumpulan data melalui wawancara dan observasi kelas yang melibatkan lima guru PAI di sekolah dasar Islam di Bandung. Data dianalisis secara tematik untuk mengidentifikasi pola berulang dan kategori utama. Hasil penelitian mengungkap enam tema utama, yaitu: (1) pendidikan pubertas sebagai tanggung jawab moral dan spiritual, (2) strategi pembelajaran dialogis dan pemisahan berdasarkan gender, (3) pendekatan perilaku melalui konseling dan keteladanan, (4) integrasi pengetahuan keagamaan dan pengetahuan umum, (5) kolaborasi antara guru dan orang tua, serta (6) evaluasi melalui observasi dan refleksi diri. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa pendidikan pubertas dalam Pendidikan Agama Islam perlu menerapkan kerangka holistik yang mengintegrasikan dimensi spiritual, fisik, dan emosional. Penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya penguatan kurikulum, pengembangan profesional guru, serta keterlibatan orang tua dalam mendukung pelaksanaan pendidikan pubertas yang efektif dan berlandaskan nilai-nilai Islam.

Kata Kunci: *Baligh, Pendidikan Agama Islam, Strategi Pembelajaran, Pubertas.*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam/PAI) at the elementary school level plays a crucial role in shaping students' religious understanding, moral character, and socio-emotional development (Lee & Houk, 2006; Muzayaroh, 2021). At this stage, PAI functions not only as a medium for transmitting religious knowledge but also as a foundation for guiding students through important developmental transitions. One essential topic that must be introduced to children is *baligh* (puberty), a significant phase marked by physical, psychological, and spiritual changes that influence students' readiness to assume religious responsibility.

From a biological perspective, puberty begins with hormonal changes initiated by the hypothalamus, which stimulates increased secretion of hormones from the pituitary and gonadal glands (Ojeda & Terasawa, 2002). These neuroendocrine processes lead to the emergence of secondary sexual characteristics and changes in body composition (Muñoz Calvo, 2011; Flores et al., 2013). Psychologically, puberty affects emotional stability, often resulting in heightened sensitivity, anxiety, and uncertainty as adolescents experience shifts in self-perception and emotional regulation (Derose & Brooks-Gunn, 2008; Tarazi-Sahab et al., 2021). Without appropriate guidance, these changes may cause confusion and emotional vulnerability among elementary school students.

In Islamic teachings, the concept of *baligh* carries profound meaning that extends beyond biological maturation. It represents the beginning of *taklif*, the stage at which individuals become morally and spiritually accountable for their actions and religious obligations (Ahangaran & Abbasi, 2015; Amin et al., 2022; Hashim, 2024). This transition signifies readiness not only in physical terms but also in psychological and spiritual dimensions. Such

understanding aligns with developmental psychology theories that describe puberty as a critical period for identity formation and moral reasoning, including Erikson's stage of identity versus role confusion (Erikson, 1968) and Kohlberg's early stages of moral development (Kohlberg, 1984). Furthermore, socio-emotional learning (SEL) frameworks emphasize competencies such as self-awareness, emotional regulation, and responsible decision-making—elements that resonate with Islamic teachings on self-accountability and ethical conduct (*taklif*) (Frye et al., 2024).

Despite the recognized importance of puberty education from both psychological and religious perspectives, students' understanding of puberty is often overlooked or insufficiently addressed in elementary school settings. Many students experience physical and emotional changes without adequate explanation or support, while topics related to puberty remain perceived as taboo in some educational contexts (Lahoti & Sills, 2015). As a result, instruction may focus primarily on ritual obligations without sufficiently addressing the accompanying psychological and emotional dimensions of development. This condition indicates a gap between the acknowledged significance of puberty education and its practical implementation within PAI classrooms.

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of integrating religious instruction with emotional and character development in Islamic education (Alimni et al., 2022; Wasehudin et al., 2024). However, empirical research that specifically examines how PAI teachers guide elementary school students through both the physical and psychological aspects of *baligh* remains limited. Existing literature tends to emphasize biological changes or moral instruction separately, leaving insufficient insight into holistic pedagogical practices that integrate physical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions within everyday classroom contexts.

Therefore, this study aims to explore the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers in guiding elementary school students to understand the physical and psychological changes that occur during puberty (*baligh*). By adopting a qualitative case study

approach, this research seeks to examine teachers' pedagogical strategies, their efforts to address students' emotional needs, and their role in fostering holistic development aligned with Islamic values. The findings are expected to provide practical and theoretical contributions to strengthening puberty education within PAI at the elementary school level.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative case study approach to explore the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in guiding elementary school students through the physical and psychological changes associated with puberty (*baligh*). A qualitative approach was selected because the study sought to gain an in-depth understanding of teachers' experiences, perspectives, and pedagogical strategies in addressing puberty-related issues within real classroom contexts (Cleland, 2017; Subrahmanyam, 2025; Sekar & Bhuvaneswari, 2024). The research design was descriptive, allowing the researcher to portray phenomena as they naturally occur in elementary education settings (Kalaiselvi & Vetrivel, 2019; Cook & Cook, 2016; Aggarwal & Ranganathan, 2019). The data collected were narrative and non-numerical, providing a holistic understanding of how teachers support students during this developmental transition (de Lemos et al., 2023).

The participants consisted of five Islamic elementary school teachers (coded T1–T5) from Islamic-based schools in Bandung. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on two criteria: (1) having more than five years of teaching experience at the elementary level and (2) being actively involved in teaching Islamic Religious Education. These criteria ensured that participants possessed sufficient experience and familiarity with students' developmental challenges during puberty. The selected schools were chosen for their emphasis on Islamic guidance related to *akil baligh* and for representing urban Islamic educational

contexts. Each participant contributed insights reflecting both shared patterns and individual variations in pedagogical practice.

Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews and classroom observations over a six-week period. The interviews aimed to explore teachers' understanding of puberty education, instructional strategies, and approaches to addressing students' physical and emotional needs (Fong, 2012). Classroom observations were carried out to examine how puberty-related topics were introduced and managed in instructional settings. This combination of methods allowed for data triangulation and provided a comprehensive depiction of teachers' roles and practices.

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (George, 2021; Suh et al., 2024). During the data reduction stage, interview transcripts and observation notes were coded and categorized into emerging themes. The data were then organized and presented narratively to facilitate interpretation. To support systematic and rigorous analysis, NVivo 12 software was used to organize qualitative data, conduct word queries, and identify thematic patterns across participants (AlYahmady & Al Abri, 2013; Rylee & Cavanagh, 2022).

Ethical considerations were carefully addressed throughout the research process. All participants were informed about the study's objectives and procedures prior to data collection and provided their consent to participate. Participants were assured of confidentiality, and pseudonyms were used to protect their identities. They were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without any consequences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of interview and classroom observation data using NVivo 12 revealed consistent patterns regarding how Islamic

Religious Education (PAI) teachers conceptualize and implement puberty education in elementary schools. Word Query analysis identified ten frequently occurring terms, including *baligh*, *masa*, *siswa*, *perubahan*, *agama*, *fisik*, and *psikologis*. The prominence of these terms indicates that teachers primarily framed puberty as a transitional phase (*masa*) involving students (*siswa*) who experience multidimensional changes (*perubahan*) encompassing physical, psychological, and religious aspects. While word frequency alone does not determine meaning, these results provide an initial indication of teachers' focus on holistic preparation for puberty rather than solely biological change.

Table 1. Results of the Word Query Analysis from Interviews with Five Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Teachers Using NVivo 12

No	Word	Translate	Length	Count	%
1	Baligh	Puberty	6	47	3,27%
2	Masa	Phase	4	40	2,78%
3	Siswa	Student	5	38	2,64%
4	Perubahan	Transformation	9	31	2,16%
5	Agama	Religion	5	29	2,02%
6	Mereka	They	6	26	1,81%
7	Anak	Children	4	19	1,32%
8	Fisik	Physical	5	18	1,25%
9	Psikologis	Psychological	10	18	1,25%
10	Mempersiapkan	Preparing	13	16	1,11%

Thematic analysis further identified six major categories that characterize teachers' roles and strategies in puberty education: (1) the importance of puberty education in Islamic Religious Education, (2) learning strategies and material delivery, (3) approaches to student behavioral change, (4) integration of religious values with general knowledge, (5) collaboration between teachers and parents, and (6) evaluation and indicators of success. These themes reflect a comprehensive pedagogical framework

through which teachers guide students in understanding *baligh* as both a developmental and religious milestone.

Table 2. Analysis from Interviews with Five Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Teachers

Theme Categories	Code	Detailed Information (Source)	Participants
The Importance of Puberty Education in Islamic Education (PPP)	PPP1	Puberty education as part of religious responsibility (*taklif*) and moral formation	T1, T2, T3, T4, T5
	PPP2	The period of puberty = readiness to carry the shari'a	T1
	PPP3	The beginning of sharia obligations, preventing confusion	T2
	PPP4	To know what to do & maintain social interactions	T3
	PPP5	Religion as a guide to life	T4
	PPP6	to be ready to face change, maintain cleanliness, & be responsible to Allah	T5
Learning Strategy and Material Delivery (SPM)	SPM1	Using a dialogical approach, chatting and sharing	T1, T3, T4
	SPM2	Separate forums for men & women, with polite visual media	T2
	SPM3	Simple language and a safe atmosphere so that students feel	T5

		comfortable asking questions	
Approaches to Student Behavior Change (PPS)	PPS1	Channeling nature (sports, responsibility)	T1
	PPS2	Personal counseling, the value of *haya'* (shame)	T2
	PPS3	Chat according to the teachings of the Koran	T3
	PPS4	Discussion & evaluation of learning activities	T4
	PPS5	Religious advice and teacher role models	T5
Integration of Religious Values with General Knowledge (INA)	INA1	Preventive-curative religious and scientific values	T1
	INA2	Linked to the chapter on jurisprudence & morals	T2
	INA3	Integrated into science lessons	T3
	INA4	Through Indonesian language lessons (stories & poetry)	T4
	INA5	Emphasizing bodily changes as a sign of God's greatness	T5
Teacher and Parent Collaboration (KGO)	KGO1	Parenting program, Daughterhood/Sonhood, communication via WhatsApp	T1
	KGO2	There is general collaboration (without details)	T2
	KGO3	Not directly involved	T3

	KGO4	Informal discussions with parents if there are any special problems	T4
	KGO5	Active communication via WA, invitation to accompany children at home	T5
Social and Emotional Approach (PSE)	PSE1	Positive character formation	T1
	PSE2	Social activities, emotional control, and patience	T2
	PSE3	Two-way dialogue and open communication	T3
	PSE4	Empathetic and safe learning environment	T4
	PSE5	Compassionate approach and spiritual formation	T5
Evaluation and Success Indicators (EIK)	EIK1	Success through observation and reflection	T1, T2, T3, T4, T5
	EIK2	Mutaba'ah (routine evaluation) and student self-reflection	T1
	EIK3	Understanding of Islamic jurisprudence, behavioral change, openness to ask questions	T2
	EIK4	Positive behavioral changes	T3
	EIK5	Attitude observation and self-reflection	T4

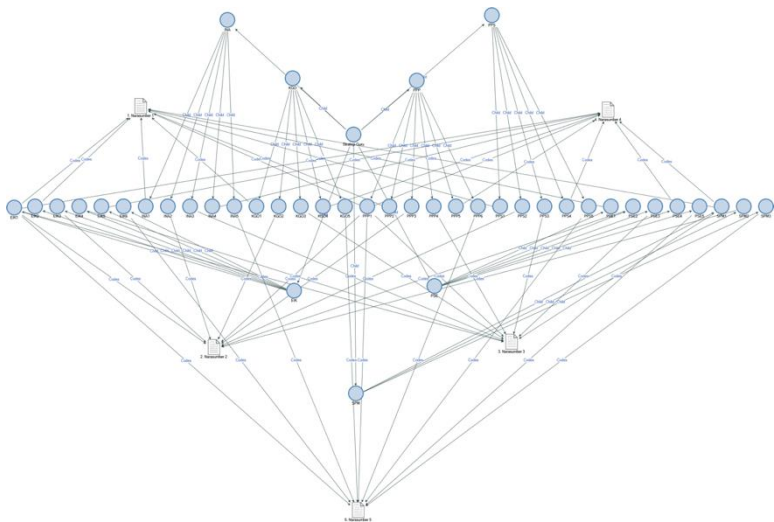|	EIK6	Increased self-confidence, politeness and personal hygiene	T5

Figure 2. Project Map of NVivo Analysis from Interviews with Five Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Teachers

Based on the NVivo interview data analysis, which was categorized into six thematic areas, a comprehensive understanding emerged regarding the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in guiding students to recognize physical and psychological changes during puberty.

The first theme, *The Importance of Puberty Education in Islamic Religious Education*, revealed that all participants viewed puberty education as an integral component of religious responsibility (*taklif*). Teachers emphasized that the onset of *baligh* marks the beginning of students' accountability for religious obligations and moral conduct. Participants highlighted the importance of introducing puberty education early to prevent confusion and to help students prepare mentally, emotionally, and spiritually for forthcoming changes. The second theme, *Learning Strategies and Material Delivery*, showed that teachers employed dialogic and student-centered approaches. These included informal discussions,

storytelling, and sharing sessions conducted in a safe and respectful atmosphere. Several teachers implemented gender-separated learning sessions to reduce discomfort and encourage openness, while others emphasized the use of simple, age-appropriate language to ensure comprehension. These strategies were designed to foster trust and allow students to ask sensitive questions without fear or embarrassment.

The third theme, *Approaches to Student Behavioral Change*, illustrated teachers' roles beyond instruction, extending into counseling and character formation. Teachers described efforts to channel students' emotional energy through positive activities, personal counseling, and moral guidance grounded in Islamic values such as *haya'* (modesty). Through role modeling and continuous guidance, teachers sought to help students interpret behavioral changes as part of a natural and meaningful developmental process. The fourth theme, *Integration of Religious Values with General Knowledge*, demonstrated that teachers connected puberty-related topics with other subjects, including Fiqh, Akhlaq, Science, and Bahasa Indonesia. This integrative approach enabled students to understand bodily changes through both scientific explanations and religious meanings, reinforcing the idea that physical development is part of God's design. Teachers emphasized that such integration helped students develop a holistic understanding of puberty rather than perceiving it as a fragmented or taboo topic.

The fifth theme, *Collaboration between Teachers and Parents*, revealed varying degrees of parental involvement. Some teachers actively engaged parents through parenting programs and communication platforms such as WhatsApp, while others reported more limited interaction. Nevertheless, most participants acknowledged that parental collaboration plays a crucial role in reinforcing puberty education at home and ensuring consistency between school and family guidance. The final theme, *Evaluation and Indicators of Success*, indicated that teachers assessed the effectiveness of puberty education through observation, *mutaba'ah*

(routine evaluation), and student self-reflection. Indicators of success included improved understanding of Islamic jurisprudence related to puberty, positive behavioral changes, increased self-confidence, politeness, and heightened awareness of personal hygiene.

The Urgency of Puberty Education in Islamic Context

Education on *akil baligh* (puberty) plays a crucial role in shaping children's character and determining their overall educational success (Crockett et al., 2019; Martinez et al., 2024). The period of *baligh* marks a significant physical and psychological transformation and represents the beginning of an individual's accountability for their religious duties (Ahangaran & Abbasi, 2015). Findings from interviews with five teachers revealed that many students lack sufficient understanding of these changes, both from religious and social perspectives. Likewise, parents often demonstrate limited awareness of the importance of guiding their children through this stage. Puberty education serves as a preparatory process that helps children transition into a life of greater spiritual and social responsibility—where their deeds are recorded, and they become individually accountable for practicing Islamic obligations such as prayer, fasting, and modesty. Hence, structured education on puberty is essential as a foundation for holistic child development.

The importance of puberty education also encompasses understanding the physical and emotional transformations that occur within the child's body (Muganwa et al., 2025). Teachers highlighted that early education about puberty can minimize confusion as students begin to experience noticeable bodily changes. Children should be taught to accept these transformations with wisdom rather than anxiety or shame. Additionally, they should receive instruction on maintaining personal hygiene—such as proper bathing practices and cleanliness in clothing—as part of their religious responsibility. Such guidance introduces children to

the Islamic concept of cleanliness (*thaharah*) as an integral part of daily worship, instilling early habits of discipline and responsibility. Furthermore, puberty education aims to cultivate moral responsibility in accordance with Islamic teachings (Wasehudin et al., 2024). Teachers emphasized that adequate understanding of *baligh* helps children independently fulfill their religious duties. During this stage, they become obligated to perform prayers, fast during Ramadan, and observe proper modesty—acts that form the foundation of *taklif* (religious accountability). The objective extends beyond mere compliance; it encourages internalization of spiritual values and comprehension of the moral meaning behind religious practices. Thus, students develop not only outward obedience but also inner awareness, allowing these principles to guide their future conduct.

The interviews also revealed that one of the central goals of *akil baligh* education is fostering appropriate social behavior, particularly in relationships with the opposite sex. As children enter adolescence, social interactions broaden, and understanding religious boundaries becomes essential. Puberty education helps students recognize limits aligned with Islamic ethics, preventing misinterpretations or behavior inconsistent with religious norms. With clear guidance, students are better equipped to navigate social interactions respectfully and responsibly, ensuring that their relationships remain within ethical and moral boundaries. Overall, puberty education in Islamic Religious Education transcends the transmission of religious obligations; it is fundamentally a character formation process. It equips students to be self-aware, responsible, and respectful individuals within their communities (Omar, 2003; Picci & Scherf, 2016). Teachers agreed that with proper guidance, students approach adolescence with confidence, moral integrity, and spiritual grounding. Religion becomes their compass for daily life, guiding them to act with virtue, avoid misconduct, and uphold good manners in all aspects of their personal and social development.

Strategies for Introducing Psychological and Physical Changes

Education on the physical and psychological transformations that occur during puberty requires a thoughtful and empathetic approach. Based on interviews with five teachers, one effective strategy involves engaging students in direct conversations about the changes occurring in their bodies. This approach allows students to ask questions and receive clear explanations regarding the physical and emotional processes they are experiencing. Teachers also recommended providing age-appropriate reading materials or books related to puberty, enabling students to gain a deeper understanding and accept bodily changes calmly and confidently. The goal of this strategy is to enhance students' comprehension of puberty while fostering a sense of comfort and emotional readiness to embrace these changes without confusion or anxiety.

Delivering the content appropriately is also a key pedagogical concern. Teachers found that presenting puberty-related material in separate sessions for male and female students helps reduce discomfort and facilitates more open discussion. They emphasized the importance of using respectful, scientific, and religiously grounded language when explaining these topics. This method ensures that students receive accurate and comprehensible information while connecting scientific understanding of puberty with Islamic teachings. Through this integrated approach, students not only grasp the biological aspects of puberty but also appreciate how these changes align with their religious values.

In addition, the use of appropriate visual media—such as diagrams or educational videos—was identified as an effective strategy to help students visualize the physical and psychological changes of puberty. Teachers highlighted that incorporating such tools into science lessons enhances comprehension and engagement, as visual materials clarify abstract concepts and present them in relatable ways. These media resources bridge knowledge between the biological and spiritual dimensions of

puberty, allowing students to better understand and respect their own bodies. Another significant strategy involves building personal connections with students. Teachers emphasized the importance of acting as approachable mentors and providing opportunities for private conversations or informal discussions. Given that puberty can cause confusion, anxiety, or embarrassment, creating a safe and supportive classroom atmosphere is crucial. A personal and empathetic relationship helps students feel accepted, fostering trust and openness. Teachers play a dual role as educators and emotional guides, assisting students in navigating developmental transitions while strengthening their confidence and self-understanding.

Moreover, the success of puberty education also depends on parental involvement. Teachers noted that consistent collaboration between schools and parents is essential to ensure coherent messaging at home and in the classroom. Teachers can provide parents with informational guidelines to help them offer emotional and spiritual support to their children. This partnership helps establish a stable, nurturing environment where students feel safe discussing and managing their developmental changes. When schools and families work together, children are more likely to face puberty with confidence, positivity, and a sense of spiritual grounding.

Addressing Behavioral Changes in Students

Behavioral shifts during puberty often require special attention from teachers. According to the interviews, one of the teacher's primary roles is to develop empathy by understanding the emotional experiences of their students. Feelings of confusion, anxiety, or embarrassment are common during this transition, making it vital for teachers to create a classroom climate where students feel respected and supported. An empathetic approach allows teachers to build closer relationships with students and provide space for emotional expression, helping them navigate change without feeling isolated. Providing religious-based

guidance was also identified as an effective strategy. Teachers stressed the importance of linking behavioral changes to Islamic principles, emphasizing obedience to God and self-restraint from inappropriate actions. By contextualizing behavior within the framework of faith, students learn to view puberty as a divine process that requires moral discipline and accountability. This method not only guides students' behavior but also instills lasting spiritual and ethical values.

Teachers also serve as role models, demonstrating through example how to behave wisely and ethically. During puberty, students look to adults for behavioral cues; thus, teachers' consistency in language, manners, and character becomes an implicit lesson in moral conduct. By embodying good behavior, teachers inspire students to emulate these qualities, reinforcing positive attitudes and adherence to Islamic values. Additionally, channeling students' energy into constructive activities—such as sports, social programs, and extracurricular initiatives—helps them manage the heightened enthusiasm and restlessness that accompany puberty. These activities provide productive outlets while building self-confidence and resilience, reducing susceptibility to negative influences.

Finally, personal counseling is a vital strategy for supporting students through behavioral changes. Through one-on-one sessions, teachers can help students understand their new emotional and physical experiences in healthy, faith-aligned ways. Counseling often addresses themes such as modesty (*haya'*), self-respect, and controlling one's gaze, providing essential moral grounding for adolescence. Teachers also use informal school moments for open dialogue, ensuring students feel valued and guided as they transition toward maturity. Overall, these strategies highlight the integral role of teachers as educators, counselors, and moral exemplars in helping students navigate puberty holistically—combining knowledge, faith, and emotional care to promote balanced personal growth.

Implications for Education

The findings of this study indicate that puberty education within the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at the elementary school level carries broad implications for curriculum development, pedagogy, teacher roles, and the overall school environment. From a curricular perspective, puberty-related content should be explicitly integrated into PAI as a cross-thematic competency—particularly within Fiqh and Akhlaq—and across other subjects such as Science and Bahasa Indonesia. This interdisciplinary approach enables students to comprehend physical and emotional changes while connecting them to moral and religious values. The curriculum should adopt a spiral model, beginning with basic introductions in lower grades, understanding of bodily and emotional changes in middle grades, and development of spiritual responsibility and social ethics in upper grades. To support this structure, culturally sensitive learning modules are needed—combining scientific and shar'i terminology, complemented by infographics and real-life case studies.

In terms of pedagogy, teachers are encouraged to employ dialogical methods such as guided discussions, circle time, or anonymous question boxes, allowing sensitive issues to be discussed safely and openly. Separate sessions for male and female students, supported by modest visual media, can reduce embarrassment and enhance participation. Value-based learning activities—such as role-playing appropriate social conduct, simulating purification rituals, or creating self-hygiene posters and gratitude journals—should be incorporated. Teacher professional development is also crucial: training in puberty literacy, empathetic communication, and basic counseling skills ensures preparedness. Practical handbooks containing key terms, common student questions, ethical boundaries, and protocols for sensitive cases should be provided. Additionally, PAI teachers are expected to serve as moral exemplars, demonstrating courtesy and sincerity in both language and behavior. From a school climate perspective,

institutions should establish policies ensuring students' privacy and comfort—such as standard operating procedures (SOPs) for managing first menstruation or nocturnal emissions, access to clean water and hygiene facilities, and child-friendly counseling spaces. Schools can also implement hygiene campaigns and wellness activities to channel energy positively and promote healthy habits.

Parent–teacher collaboration is another essential aspect. Strengthened partnerships can be achieved through parenting programs, active communication (e.g., via WhatsApp), and interactive guides to align home and school guidance. Meanwhile, puberty education assessments should be formative and non-stigmatizing, using reflective journals, hygiene checklists, and mutaba'ah (routine self-evaluations). Evaluation should focus not only on knowledge but also on behavioral changes, independence in worship, and improved self-confidence. Institutionally, schools should adopt anti-bullying policies related to physical or psychological changes and include puberty education outcomes in school work plans and teaching documents such as lesson plans (*RPP*) or teaching modules (*ATP*).

The development of digital learning resources—including short videos, educational comics, and interactive quizzes—is also imperative, ensuring student privacy and reliable content. Materials must be curated carefully to prevent misinformation from online sources. Moreover, inclusivity and sensitivity should be prioritized by adapting materials for students with special needs and maintaining respectful language that upholds children's dignity. Finally, this study opens opportunities for future research to examine the effectiveness of holistic PAI–Science learning models through mixed-method and longitudinal designs. Further studies could also evaluate the impact of parenting programs and school SOPs on reducing anxiety and bullying among students during puberty.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that puberty education within the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at the elementary school level constitutes a critical educational component that should not be overlooked. The stage of baligh represents not merely a biological transition but the beginning of children's moral and spiritual accountability in practicing Islamic teachings (taklif). As such, puberty education requires an integrated approach that addresses physical, psychological, and spiritual dimensions simultaneously.

The findings demonstrate that PAI teachers play a strategic role as educators, moral guides, and counselors in supporting students through this developmental transition. Teachers emphasized the importance of dialogic and empathetic instructional strategies, gender-sensitive learning environments, the use of respectful language and visual media, and continuous guidance through role modeling and personal counseling. Collaboration with parents and systematic evaluation through observation and student self-reflection further strengthen the effectiveness of puberty education. Collectively, these practices position puberty education as a process of character formation rather than a purely informational activity.

The implications of this study highlight the need to strengthen the PAI curriculum by explicitly integrating puberty education across relevant subjects such as Fiqh, Akhlaq, Science, and Bahasa Indonesia. Schools are encouraged to support teachers through professional development, establish child-friendly policies and facilities, and foster active partnerships with parents to ensure consistent guidance both at school and at home. When grounded in Islamic and scientific values, puberty education can transform perceptions of puberty from a "taboo" topic into a meaningful and empowering learning experience that nurtures students' emotional maturity, moral awareness, and spiritual readiness.

This study is limited by its focus on a small number of Islamic elementary school teachers within an urban context, which

may not fully represent diverse educational settings or regional variations. Future research could expand the scope by involving a wider range of schools, employing mixed-method or longitudinal designs, and examining the long-term impact of holistic puberty education on students' character development, emotional well-being, and religious practice.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

REFERENCES

Aggarwal, R., & Ranganathan, P. (2019). Study designs: Part 2 – Descriptive studies. *Perspectives in Clinical Research*, 10(1), 51–56. https://doi.org/10.4103/picr.PICR_154_18

Ahangaran, M. R., & Abbasi, Z. (2015). The age of criminal responsibility in children: Some of Islamic views. *International Journal of Pediatrics*, 3(4), 777–787. https://doi.org/10.22038/ijp.2015.4455

Alimni, A., Amin, A., & Kurniawan, D. A. (2022). The role of Islamic education teachers in fostering students' emotional intelligence. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 11(4), 1881–1892. https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v11i4.22116

AlYahmady, H. H., & Al Abri, S. S. (2013). Using Nvivo for Data Analysis in Qualitative Research. *International Interdisciplinary Journal of Education*, 2(2), 181–186.

Amin, I., Lendrawati, Efendi, F., & Hertasmaldi. (2022). The Concept of Baligh Perspective of Fiqh and Positive Law. *Al-Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam*, 7(2), 441–466. https://doi.org/10.29240/jhi.v7i2.5268

Cook, B. G., & Cook, L. (2016). Research Designs and Special Education Research: Different Designs Address Different Questions. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice*, 31(4), 190–198. https://doi.org/10.1111/ldrp.12110

Crockett, L. J., Deardorff, J., Johnson, M., Irwin, C., & Petersen, A. C. (2019). Puberty Education in a Global Context: Knowledge Gaps, Opportunities, and Implications for Policy. *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, 29(1), 177–195. https://doi.org/10.1111/jora.12452

de Lemos, J. S., Mendonça, A. M. M. C., & Vilela, R. B. (2023). Step By Step: Using Educational Design Research To Implement

Student Teacher Assement. *New Trends in Qualitative Research*, 17. https://doi.org/10.36367/ntqr.17.2023.e818

Derose, L. M., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2008). Pubertal Development in Early Adolescence: Implications for Affective Processes. In N. B. Allen & Lisa. B. Sheeber (Eds.), *Adolescent Emotional Development and the Emergence of Depressive Disorders* (pp. 56 - 73). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511551963

Erikson, Erik H. (1968). *Identity Youth and Crisis*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

Flores, D. L. J., Díaz, M. Q., Sharpe, A. R., & González, P. L. (2013). Neuroendocrinal Mechanisms at the Beginning of Puberty. Revista Mexicana de Pediatria, 80(6), 240–246. https://www.medigraphic.com/cgi-bin/new/resumenI.cgi?IDARTICULO=47163

Fong, D. Y.-T. (2012). Research Instruments for Domestic Violence Studies in Hong Kong. In K.-L. Chan (Ed.), *Preventing Family Violence: A Multidisciplinary Approach* (pp. 113–134). Hong Kong University Press. http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1xwfx4.9

Frye, K. E., Boss, D. L., Anthony, C. J., Du, H., & Xing, W. (2024). Content Analysis of the CASEL Framework Using K–12 State SEL Standards. *School Psychology Review*, *53*(3), 208–222. https://doi.org/10.1080/2372966X.2022.2030193

George, K.M. (2021). Data Reduction with Distance Correlation. In Hong, TP., Wojtkiewicz, K., Chawuthai, R., Sitek, P. (Eds), Recent Challenges in Intelligent Information and Database Systems. ACIIDS 2021. *Communications in Computer and Information Science*, vol 1371. Springer, Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-1685-3_9

Hashim, M. (2024). Developmental Stages: an Islamic Psychology Perspective. *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health*, *27*(4), 534–556. https://doi.org/10.1080/19349637.2024.2439438

Cleland, J. A. (2017). The Qualitative Orientation in Medical Education Research. *Korean J Med Educ*, 29 (2), 61-71. https://doi.org/10.3946/kjme.2017.53

Kalaiselvi, K. and Vetrivel, M. (2019). A Study on Attitude of Female Teachers Towards Inclusive Educationwth Special Reference to Schools in Chennai District. *Indian Journal of Public Health Research & Development*, 10 (11), 443. https://doi.org/10.5958/0976-5506.2019.03510.1

Kohlberg, L. (1984). *The Psychology of Moral Development: The Nature and Validity of Moral Stages*. Vol. 2. New York: Harper & Row.

Lahoti, A., & Sills, I. (2015). Update on Puberty and Its Disorders in Adolescents. *Adolescent Medicine: State of the Art Reviews*, 26(2), 269–290. https://doi.org/10.1542/9781581109498-puberty

Lee, P. A. (2006). Puberty and Its Disorders. In Lifshitz, F. (Ed.), *Pediatric Endocrinology: Growth, Adrenal, Sexual, Thyroid, Calcium, and Fluid Balance Disorders* (5th ed., pp 273–304). CRC Press. https://doi.org/10.3109/9781420042726

Martinez, S., Marfo, S. O., Ibrahim, A. F., Carney, A., Vavrus, F., Kabba, M., Wyss, N., & Sommer, M. (2024). Piloting Puberty Content Books and A Teacher Training Guide in Sierra Leone: A Qualitative Assessment. *Frontiers in Education*, 9. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2024.1398477

Muganwa, K., Bazirete, O., Uwimana, M. C., Musabwasoni, M. G. S., Tengera, O., et al. (2025). Adolescent Awareness and Experience of The Pubertal Changes: A Qualitative Study

from Rwanda. *Plos One*, 20(6): e0325502. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0325502

Muñoz Calvo, M. T. (2011). Normal Puberty and Its Variants. *Pediatria Integral*, 15(6), 507–518.

Muzayaroh, A. (2021). Strengthening Religious and Character Education in Madrasah Diniyah Ali Maksum Yogyakarta. *Millah: Journal of Religious Studies*, 20(2), 245–274. https://doi.org/10.20885/millah.vol20.iss2.art3

Ojeda, S. R., & Terasawa, E. (2002). Neuroendocrine Regulation of Puberty. In Donald W. Pfaff, Arthur P. Arnold, et al. (Eds.), *Hormones, Brain and Behavior* (Vol. 04, pp. 589–659). Academic Press. https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-012532104-4/50077-9

Omar H, McElderry D, Zakharia R. (2003). Educating Adolescents About Puberty: What are We Missing? *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health*, 15(1), 79-83. https://doi.org/10.1515/ijamh.2003.15.1.79

Leilei Peng and Ke Chen. (2023). "Mining Library Virtual Reference Service Data by Using the Software NVivo 12." *In Proceedings of the International Conference on Computer Graphics, Artificial Intelligence, and Data Processing* (ICCAID 2022). China: Guangzhou. https://doi.org/10.1117/12.2674684

Picci, G., & Scherf, K. S. (2016). From Caregivers to Peers: Puberty Shapes Human Face Perception. *Psychological Science*, 27(11), 1461–1473. https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797616663142

Rylee, T. L., & Cavanagh, S. J. (2022). Using NVivoTM as a Methodological Tool for a Literature Review on Nursing Innovation: A Step-by-Step Approach. *Health Services and Outcomes Research Methodology*, 22(4), 454–468. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10742-022-00270-2

Sekar, D. & Bhuvaneswari, M. (2024). Exploring the Depths: Qualitative Research in Psychology. In A. Demircioğlu (Ed.), *Methodologies and Ethics for Social Sciences Research* (pp. 267-292). IGI Global Scientific Publishing. https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3693-1726-6.ch014

Subrahmanyam, S. (2025). Qualitative Research Designs in Higher Education. In A. Mdikana (Ed.), *Social Implications of Research in Higher Education* (pp. 263-296). IGI Global Scientific Publishing. https://doi.org/10.4018/979-8-3373-0654-4.ch010

Suh, A., Appleby, G., Anderson, E. W., Finelli, L., Chang, R., & Cashman, D. (2024). Are Metrics Enough? Guidelines for Communicating and Visualizing Predictive Models to Subject Matter Experts. *IEEE Transactions on Visualization and Computer Graphics*, 30(7), 4137–4153. https://doi.org/10.1109/TVCG.2023.3259341

Tarazi-Sahab, L., El Husseini, M., & Moro, M. R. (2021). "When Does Puberty Become Traumatic? " *Case Report*, Frontiers in Psychiatry (Vol. 12). https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyt.2021.480852

Wasehudin, Nizarudin Wajdi, M. B., Silahuddin, Syafei, I., Sirojudin, R., Bahtiar, M., & Hasanah, U. (2024). The Paradigm of Character Education in Islamic Elementary School. *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura*, 24(2), 368–397. https://doi.org/10.22373/jiif.v24i2.22546

Willison, M. L., Fraley, A. L., Oglesby, L. W., Wright, C. J., & Winkelmann, Z. K. (2024). Spiritual Fitness, Spiritual Readiness, and Depressive Symptoms in Reserve Officers' Training Corps Cadets. *Journal of Athletic Training*, 59(4), 419–427. https://doi.org/10.4085/1062-6050-0323.23