

The Influence of Understanding the Concept of 'Akil Baligh' and Psychological Readiness on Students' Puberty Preparation at State Islamic Junior High Schools

Asriani Asriani^{1*}, Kamaruddin², Adawiyah Pettalongi³, Nur Rahma Ramadhani⁴

¹ Master's Student in Islamic Education, Post-Graduate School, State Islamic University Datokarama Palu

^{2,3} Master's Student in Islamic Education Management, Post-Graduate School, State Islamic University Datokarama Palu

ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the influence of understanding the concept of puberty and psychological readiness on readiness to face puberty in students. The research method used is mixed methods using the embedded design model where in this model quantitative research methods are used as primary methods and qualitative research methods are used as secondary methods. Primary data collection with a quantitative approach using the Survey research method, while secondary data collection with a qualitative approach using interview techniques. The population in this study were all students of MTs Negeri 2 Tolitoli, and samples were taken as many as 90 respondents using the quota sampling technique. The results of multiple linear regression analysis show that understanding the concept of akil baligh (X1) and psychological readiness (X2) have a significant effect on readiness to face puberty (Y). The Adjusted R Square value of 0.509 shows that both independent variables are simultaneously able to explain 50.9% of the variation in students' readiness to face puberty. Partially, understanding the concept of Akil baligh has a greater influence ($\beta = 0.596$, sig. = 0.000) than psychological readiness ($\beta = 0.250$, sig. = 0.007). Qualitative findings from interviews support these results, showing that readiness to face puberty is a combination of religious understanding and emotional stability.

ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

Currently, numerous phenomena show that many adolescents who have reached the age of baligh (puberty) have not adequately fulfilled their duties as individuals of that age, particularly regarding mandatory worship (*ibadah wajib*).

They do not yet fully comprehend the religious obligations and laws for which they are now accountable. Furthermore, their awareness as a mukallaf (a person subject to Islamic law) remains low, with a tendency to neglect or even ignore mandatory religious practices. There is a

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noticeable imbalance between intellectual maturity (*akil*) and physical maturity (*baligh*), leading to a lack of self-awareness among these mukallaf that they have actually entered the stage of adulthood. For adolescents, understanding the essential needs when entering the stage of *akil baligh* is crucial. In this context, the role of the teacher is vital as a figure who guides and equips them with knowledge, ensuring that students recognize and understand Islamic laws and appropriate behaviors. This enables them to comprehend their roles and responsibilities in both aspects of worship (*ibadah*) and social transactions (*muamalah*).

Between the ages of 12 and 24, various forms of delinquency and deviations among the younger generation are caused by the gap between *baligh* (biological maturity) and *akil* (mental maturity). This gap is often exacerbated by social and educational systems that delay adulthood despite an individual's capacity to bear significant legal burdens and responsibilities. Such capacity is determined by the perfection of intellect (*kamal al-'aql*), which is established through two criteria: first, through specific physical signs of puberty, such as menstruation for females or *ihtilam* (nocturnal emission) for males; second, by reaching a certain age. If these physical signs of maturity do not appear due to physiological factors, the age of legal maturity is established at 15 years for both males and females (Yahya et al., 1986).

Puberty is a highly sensitive phase in which a child begins the transition into adolescence. This period represents a brilliant stage in human life characterized by several distinguishing factors such as physical strength, cognitive capacity, and shifts in thinking patterns as well as changes in attitudes when responding to new experiences. Reasoning ability serves as the

primary controller of all actions and the key to their psychological stability, making it of paramount importance to be nurtured and maintained (Manshur, 1997).

According to Islamic teachings, *akil baligh* is not merely understood as a physical change but also as a significant transition in an individual's spiritual and social life. Once a person reaches the phase of *baligh*, they are required to take full responsibility for their deeds and actions before Allah. However, in reality, there are still many individuals who do not yet fully and properly understand the concept of *akil baligh*.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Concept of Akil Baligh

The term *akil baligh* consists of two words which are *āqil* and *baligh* where both originate from the Arabic language. In Arabic the word *āqil* comes from *āqala* which signifies the state of being knowledgeable, knowing, or understanding. (Rifa'i & Sholichah, 2021). This refers to an individual who is healthy and whole and capable of distinguishing between good and bad as well as right and wrong. Such a person knows and understands their obligations and recognizes what is beneficial versus what is harmful. Adolescents or students who are intelligent and competent as well as capable of making choices considered good are referred to as *akil*. In Islamic law a person is categorized as *akil* when they can know and understand and differentiate between what is good and what is evil. Meanwhile the word *baligh* originates from the Arabic word *bulugh* which means to reach signifying that a person has reached the age of adulthood (Wardah, 2018).

Etymologically al-bulugh is al-wushul wal idrak which means reaching and recognizing or understanding. Meanwhile terminologically al-bulugh is the end of childhood in the view of Islamic jurisprudence. Baligh means having reached the age of 15 years and above or menstruation for women even if her age is less than 15 years.

Studies concerning the influence of understanding *akil baligh* on the psychological readiness of adolescents remain relatively limited. Most existing research tends to focus on the physical aspects of puberty or discusses religious education in general without specifically examining the relationship between the understanding of *akil baligh* and the psychological preparedness of students facing puberty. This research is necessary to answer critical questions regarding the extent of students' understanding of the *akil baligh* concept and their psychological readiness in facing this transition. It seeks to determine whether a sound understanding of *akil baligh* can enhance their emotional and mental readiness or if conversely a lack of understanding may lead adolescents to be more vulnerable to psychological pressure.

Many children who are physically mature already have a tendency to act solely to satisfy their desires rather than using their intellect to decide whether their actions are appropriate or not. Furthermore they often act recklessly and even negligently when performing mandatory worship despite realizing that they are *mukallaf*. These *mukallaf* lack self awareness as true adults due to a kind of imbalance between intellectual and sexual development known as Baligh. This situation is exacerbated by

the increasing span of adolescence which leads to a stigma in society that they are still considered children and have not yet reached full maturity. Consequently the negative behavior of these Baligh adolescents is justified because they are considered not yet mature.

2.2 Psychology in Facing Puberty

Readiness is the general state of an individual that prepares them to respond to a situation in a specific manner. The tendency to respond is influenced by the adjustments made at a given time. There are at least three components of an individual's condition which include: (a) physical mental and emotional conditions (b) motivational needs and goals (c) skills and knowledge.

Thus readiness is defined as an individual internal factor both before and during the process of facing problems and activities. This attitude encompasses the mental attitudes and skills that must be prepared before and during the execution of activities in the form of planning to address issues that may arise (Kristiyari et al., 2017).

The following factors influence readiness and can be modified by both the individual and others:

- a) Internal Factors: there are two categories of internal factors which are physical and spiritual factors that originate from within. The sensory organs and their physical state are examples of physical factors. Interest, IQ, talent, drive, and cognitive capacity are examples of psychological conditions. Each of these factors will influence an individual's readiness. The following psychological factors can affect readiness: a) maturity, b)

intelligence, c) talent, d) attributes and interests, e) health, and f) motivation.

- b) External Factors: external factors are those that come from outside an individual such as environmental factors, systemic factors, socio-cultural instructional factors, and health education factors (Kristyari et al., 2017).

Students at Madrasah Tsanawiyah are students at the formal junior high education level after completing their primary school education. Generally the age of these students ranges from 12 to 15 years which can be categorized as the period of adolescence. At this stage they are in a transition phase from childhood toward adulthood (Santrock, 2011).

In Islam puberty is known by the term *baligh*. Puberty is defined not only as a stage of life when bodily changes occur but also as a shift in behavior. Another name for puberty is a period of rapid growth and change which can lead to uncertainty, feelings of insecurity, and frequently inappropriate behavior. Islam maintains that human development must be viewed as a holistic and interrelated process. This indicates the interdependence and inseparability of mental, emotional, social, and physical growth.

According to Islamic teachings it is of paramount importance to recognize the signs of puberty in order to fulfill the Sharia responsibilities associated with it. An individual is considered a *mukallaf* or one who is bound by religious obligations if they meet two primary characteristics which include having reached the age of puberty and possessing a sound mind such as not suffering from mental disorders or insanity.

2.3 Adolescent Developmental Psychology Theory

According to Prof. Dr. F.J. Monks, Prof. Dr. A.M.P. Knoers, and Prof. Dr. Siti Rahayu Haditoro, developmental psychology is defined as a branch of science that discusses the general factors influencing the developmental process of an individual. This study emphasizes the relationship between personality and the developmental processes that occur within a person (Ajhuri, 2019).

Developmental psychology is a branch of psychology that focuses on the analysis of child behavior. The analysis of aspects of child behavior that may become significant for the development of complex adult behavior has historically been the primary focus of discussion (Incorporated, 1963).

Erik Erikson is a developmental psychologist renowned for his theory of psychosocial development. He developed a framework emphasizing the psychological progression of individuals throughout the entire lifespan, which is categorized into eight stages, each characterized by a crisis or conflict that must be resolved to ensure healthy psychosocial development (Emiliza, 2019).

Adolescents currently require peers who can share both joy and sorrow, providing sympathy and necessary support. During this period, the desire to establish a way of life, to discover something of value, and to find principles worthy of respect and devotion begins to emerge. The process of forming life attitudes or aspirations can be understood as an effort to discover life values through self exploration during adolescence. According to Sumardi

Suryabrata, this process consists of three distinct stages: (Ramayulis, 2004)

3. Methodology

This study employs a mixed methods research approach, which is a methodology that combines or integrates quantitative and qualitative research methods to be utilized concurrently within a single research activity. This integration aims to obtain data that is more comprehensive, valid, reliable, and objective (Creswell & Poth, 2018). a mixed methods research design is a procedure for collecting, analyzing, and "mixing" both quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study or a series of studies to understand a research problem (Creswell & Poth, 2018)

Primary data collection through a quantitative approach in this study utilizes the survey research method, while secondary data collection through a qualitative approach employs interview techniques. Since the embedded design model allows for data collection to be conducted either concurrently or sequentially for both quantitative and qualitative data, this research will commence with quantitative data collection followed subsequently by qualitative data collection.

In this study, the population defined by the author encompasses all students at MTs Negeri 2 Tolitoli, totaling 338 students. From the total population of 338 students distributed across 15 classes, 6 students were selected from each class, resulting in a sample size of 90 students, which represents more than 10% of the total population. The instrument utilized in this research consists of a questionnaire. The testing of instrument item validity in this study was conducted using SPSS version 27 for Windows

software. To determine the validity of each instrument item, an interpretation of the correlation coefficient values was performed. An item is declared valid if the calculated r value is greater than the r table value. The researcher employed Cronbach Alpha reliability to test the reliability.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Result

4.1.1 Frequency Distribution of Akil Balig Concept Understanding

Based on the questionnaire results distributed to 90 respondents, it was found that the students' understanding of the Akil balig concept falls within the very high category, with an overall average score of 3.34. This value lies within the range of 3.25 to 4.00, which, according to the Likert scale interpretation of 1 to 4, is classified as the "Very High" category. The data also indicate that for the Akil balig concept understanding variable, the highest score obtained was 3.64 and the lowest score was 3.12. These results demonstrate that students at MTs Negeri 2 Tolitoli possess a good to very good understanding of the meaning of Akil balig. This understanding encompasses biological, religious, and social responsibility dimensions. This reflects the sufficiently effective role of Islamic religious education in providing conceptual and practical understanding regarding puberty and the accompanying obligations.

4.1.2 Frequency Distribution of Psychological Readiness Variable

This frequency is derived from the responses of 90 students, explaining the extent of psychological readiness influence in facing puberty among students at MTs Negeri 2 Tolitoli. The psychological readiness variable was measured using a

rating scale with 4 response alternatives, ranging from a maximum score of 4 to a minimum score of 1. Data for the psychological readiness variable were obtained through a closed ended questionnaire consisting of 9 items.

The research results regarding the psychological readiness variable of students indicate that, in general, their level of readiness falls within the High category. This is demonstrated by an overall average score of 3.08 on a scale of 1 to 4. In other words, the majority of students possess sufficiently good psychological readiness in facing puberty. The data also show that for the psychological readiness variable, the highest score obtained was 3.34 and the lowest score was 2.92, which sits at the lower limit of the "High" category, indicating that emotional control still needs to be strengthened through psychological coaching and counseling guidance.

These findings suggest that students at MTs Negeri 2 Tolitoli have good psychological readiness in facing puberty. They are able to face physical and emotional changes with relative stability, feel confident, and demonstrate rational thinking and responsibility. Nevertheless, several indicators such as the ability to control emotions and anxiety levels show that psychological assistance is still required. Therefore, the roles of guidance and counseling teachers, homeroom teachers, and parents are crucial in supporting the psychological development of students during this transition phase.

4.1.3 Frequency Distribution of Readiness to Face Puberty

Based on the questionnaire results from 90 respondents, it is identified that the readiness of students to face puberty falls within the "Very High" category with an

average score of 3.29. This indicates that most students possess excellent readiness in facing various aspects of changes during puberty, including physical, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions. The data also reveal that for the variable of readiness to face puberty, the highest score obtained was 3.48, reflecting strong readiness in spiritual aspects and gradual maturity, while the lowest score was 3.10. Although the lowest score remains within the "High" category, it indicates challenges in emotional management and anxiety, which still require attention in the psychological development process of the students.

These results demonstrate that students at MTs Negeri 2 Tolitoli generally have good readiness in facing puberty. They feel prepared for the changes occurring and are capable of managing responsibility and self development. Nevertheless, aspects of anxiety management and emotion remain areas that require strengthening, particularly through character building approaches, counseling, and religious activities that encourage mental and spiritual maturity.

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Impact of Akil Balig conceptual understanding on student puberty preparedness

Based on the analysis conducted through the SPSS program, it was found that there is a significant partial influence of Akil balig conceptual understanding on the readiness to face puberty among students at MTs Negeri 2 Tolitoli. This is evidenced by the t test results which yielded a significance value of 0.000, which is lower than the 0.05 significance level. This means that the understanding of the Akil balig concept contributes significantly to the readiness for puberty, with an influence of 59%, while the

remaining 41% is influenced by other variables not included in this study. Consequently, the first hypothesis of this research is declared accepted.

This finding is supported by an interview with Khairunnisa, a ninth grade student, who stated that she felt calmer and more prepared after understanding that the physical changes she experienced were part of the process toward adulthood according to Islamic teachings. The religious insight obtained from fiqh lessons provided mental reinforcement and contextual understanding of the biological events she underwent. Nevertheless, other students indicated that not everyone possesses a complete understanding of the sharia obligations after reaching Balig. This suggests that a gap in understanding still exists among some students, which potentially diminishes their readiness to face puberty.

4.2.2 Predicting Puberty Preparedness: The Role of Akil Balig Knowledge and Psychological Factors

Data analysis results using the SPSS program indicate that there is a significant partial influence of psychological readiness on the readiness to face puberty among students at MTs Negeri 2 Tolitoli. This is evidenced by a significance value of 0.007 which is lower than the 0.05 significance level, leading to the conclusion that psychological readiness provides a significant contribution to puberty readiness. The magnitude of this influence is 25%, while the remaining 75% is influenced by other variables not analyzed in this study. Therefore, the second hypothesis stating the existence of a partial influence between psychological readiness and the readiness to face puberty is accepted.

This is reinforced by an interview with Uswatun Hasanah, an eighth grade student, who felt more emotionally prepared because she received support from her mother during her first menstruation. She also stated that the presence of supportive peers helped reduce feelings of shame and anxiety. Meanwhile, Mr. Mahpuding, as the Guidance and Counseling teacher, emphasized that some students exhibit emotional instability and a lack of psychological readiness, particularly those who have not received adequate sexual and religious education.

Interviews with the Guidance and Counseling teacher also indicate that religious understanding without emotional readiness is insufficient to build student resilience in facing puberty. Therefore, a holistic approach is required, specifically by combining applicative religious education with open and sustainable psychological guidance.

According to the cognitive development theory of Jean Piaget, from the age of 12 years and above, a new operational period emerges. During this period, children can utilize their concrete operations to form more complex operations. Students at the junior high school level (approximately 12 to 15 years old) are generally in the formal operational stage, which is the phase where individuals begin to be capable of thinking abstractly, logically, and systematically.

In the context of the research at MTs Negeri 2 Tolitoli, students who have entered this stage theoretically already possess better psychological readiness in facing various changes, including physical, emotional, and social changes that occur during puberty.

4.2.3 Student Readiness for Puberty: An Analysis of Akil Balig and Psychological Readiness

Based on the results of multiple linear regression analysis using the SPSS version 27 program, it was found that there is a significant simultaneous influence of Akil balig conceptual understanding (X_1) and psychological readiness (X_2) on the readiness to face puberty (Y) among students at MTs Negeri 2 Tolitoli. The regression coefficient for the Akil balig conceptual understanding variable is 0.596, while for the psychological readiness variable it is 0.250, with a constant value of 5.976. Thus, the regression equation model can be written as follows:

$$Y = 5,976 + 0,596X_1 + 0,250X_2$$

The equation indicates that if variables X_1 and X_2 are considered constant, the value of (Y) is 5.976. Furthermore, every one unit increase in Akil balig conceptual understanding (X_1) will increase the readiness to face puberty (Y) by 0.596 units, assuming psychological readiness remains constant. Similarly, every one unit increase in psychological readiness (X_2) will increase the readiness to face puberty by 0.250 units, assuming (X_1) remains constant. Therefore, this regression model demonstrates a positive relationship between both independent variables and the dependent variable.

This finding is in line with the research by Wahidah which emphasizes the importance of structured Akil balig education through curriculum design, project based learning models, and the formation of learning communities. Although Wahidah utilized a literature review approach, whereas this study employs a mixed methods approach with an embedded design model, both consistently demonstrate that understanding the Akil

balig concept is essential as a foundation for student readiness in facing puberty changes. This reinforces the regression coefficient of 0.596 in this study, which indicates that understanding the Akil balig concept is a dominant factor in enhancing student readiness.

Consequently, the results of this study are not only consistent with previous findings but also provide a new quantitative contribution by proving that understanding the Akil balig concept exerts a stronger influence compared to psychological readiness in shaping student preparedness for puberty. This carries important implications for Islamic Religious Education teachers, Guidance and Counseling teachers, and school authorities to develop educational and coaching programs that emphasize both aspects in a balanced manner.

As for the results of the coefficient of determination test, an Adjusted R Square value of 0.509 or 50.9% was obtained. This value indicates that 50.9% of the variability in puberty readiness among students at MTs Negeri 2 Tolitoli can be explained by the variables of Akil balig conceptual understanding and psychological readiness. Meanwhile, the remaining 49.1% is influenced by other factors not included in this regression model. Thus, it can be concluded that both independent variables provide a substantial contribution to explaining the puberty readiness variable.

The implication is that the Madrasah needs to develop learning and guidance approaches that not only emphasize normative religious understanding but also support students emotionally and socially through counseling and open communication.

5. Conclusion

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the understanding of Akil balig is the most dominant factor in influencing student readiness to face puberty, with a standardized beta value of 0.596. This finding reinforces the importance of religious education as a foundation in shaping the spiritual and social readiness of students at MTsN 2 Tolitoli.

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