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Internalizing 'Aqidah Shahîhah Through Al-Burhân Fî Masâ'il Al-Îmân Textbook in Modern Pesantren

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ABSTRACT

A unique phenomenon in modern Islamic boarding schools is the enrollment of students from upper-middle socio-economic backgrounds, which poses challenges for internalizing 'aqidah amid material comfort and modern lifestyles. This study explores the internalization of 'aqidah shahîhah through the teaching of *Kitâb al-Burhân fî Masâ'il al-Îmân* at Bina Anak Sholeh (BIAS) Modern Boarding School, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Using a qualitative case study design, the study involved one teacher and four students, with data collected through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. The findings reveal that 'aqidah instruction emphasizes three main objectives: positioning faith as a guiding framework for life, cultivating spiritual and moral awareness, and reinforcing personal conviction against deviant religious influences. The internalization process unfolds through five progressive cognitive stages: pre-structural (prior 'aqidah knowledge), uni-structural (understanding a single basic concept of *tawhîd*), multi-structural (understanding the distinct dimensions of *Ullûhiyyah*, *Rubûbiyyah*, and *Asmâ' wa Shifât*), relational (linking faith with morality and social realities), and extended-abstract (applying *tawhîd* values to contemporary contexts). Challenges include value conflicts encountered by the teacher due to the influence of popular culture, as well as intensive academic demands and fatigue faced by students. Theoretically, this study conceptualizes 'aqidah internalization as a structured epistemic process by integrating Islamic texts with contemporary learning theory. Practically, the findings provide pedagogical insights for Islamic Education teachers and illustrate students' processes of 'aqidah internalization within a modern pesantren context.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Notwithstanding the contemporary context, the instruction of 'aqidah continues to be predominantly conducted through traditional ways relying on classical treatises authored in the nineteenth or early twentieth centuries, which remain widely taught in mosques and Muslim learning institutions (Nasir, 2021). The *pesantren* tradition, in fact, embodies a rich methodological heritage, ranging from *sorogan* (Rifa'i & Fahmi, 2018; Ulhaq et al., 2024), to the moral exemplarity of the *kyai* as a central pedagogical authority (Saputra et al., 2023). Modern *pesantren* have also incorporated various pedagogical innovations, including the integration of digital technologies into Islamic instruction (Dobrnjić & Černetić, 2007; Huda et al., 2025). However, despite these long-standing traditions and innovations, most studies remain at a descriptive level and do not explicitly connect the role of specific 'aqidah texts within the curricular framework of modern *pesantren*. In this study, 'aqidah is conceptualized as a form of knowledge rather than merely doctrinal content. It functions as an essential component of the *pesantren* curriculum in shaping the paradigms and understanding of Muslim students regarding matters of faith.

'Aqidah itself derives from the word '*aqada*, meaning to bind or to strengthen. Terminologically, it refers to a firm conviction of the heart (*tashdiq bi al-qalb*) regarding divine truth, affirmed by the tongue (*iqrār bi al-lisān*), and manifested through bodily actions (*amal bi al-jawāriḥ*). In general, 'aqidah signifies a complete covenantal bond with God, the One and Only, with its ultimate orientation being the attainment of genuine faith in Him (Othman & Ghani, 2022). Ironically, amid globalization and the openness of information, various challenges arise that may threaten the purity of 'aqidah, such as the spread of deviant sects, distorted *tarekat* (Sufi orders) practices, ideas of religious liberalism and pluralism, the practice of *bid'ah* and anti-*madhhab* tendencies, as well as extremist mindsets that exceed proper limits, including in interpreting human rights issues (Mat Hussin et al., 2023).

Although digital technology continues to advance rapidly, moral character development does not necessarily progress at the same pace. When misused, technology can even hinder moral growth (Smit et al., 2025). Alarming statistics report 14,039 cases of violence against women and children as of 3 March 2025, with an increase of more than 2,000 cases in only seventeen days (Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak, 2025). This situation raises concerns that 'aqidah, which should function as a firm spiritual foundation, risks being reduced to mere symbolism or formalistic practice (Fakhrurroji, 2020). If not directed through a straight and systematic 'aqidah education, various phenomena have the potential to cause a crisis of faith among Muslims.

Studies on the internalization of 'aqidah generally share a similar focus: understanding how faith-based values are instilled through Islamic education. However, differences in social context and epistemological approaches give each study its distinctive characteristics. Some scholarly works highlighted the importance of 'aqidah instruction in shaping the religious character of students in traditional *pesantren* (Akbar et al., 2022; Othman & Ghani, 2022; Rachman et al., 2023), while others examine the effectiveness of classical texts such as *Kitāb Aqidatul 'Awām* in modern *pesantren* settings (Az-Zuhdy & Husni, 2025; Syaripudin, 2024). Meanwhile Endut & AS Affah (2015) observed that 'aqidah teaching often remains at the affective level, without adequately engaging the epistemological and reflective dimensions of faith. Differing from previous studies, the present research focuses on the internalization of 'aqidah in a modern *pesantren* through a contemporary Indonesian-authored text used as the primary reference in 'aqidah instruction for students from upper-middle socio-economic backgrounds. This context introduces new challenges for 'aqidah education, particularly regarding how to cultivate deep faith consciousness amid material comfort and modern rationality.

Accordingly, this study aims to explore the internalization process of 'aqidah *shahīhah* (sound and upright conviction) through the teaching of *Kitāb al-Burhān fī Masā'il al-Īmān* at Bina Anak Sholeh (BIAS) Modern Boarding School, Yogyakarta, by investigating how the objectives, learning materials, pedagogical methods, and challenges of 'aqidah instruction are designed and implemented within a modern *pesantren* serving students from upper-middle socio-economic backgrounds. Theoretically, this study enriches the discourse of Islamic Religious Education by conceptualizing 'aqidah internalization

as a structured epistemic process and by integrating the structure of *Kitâb al-Burhân fî Masâ'il al-Îmân* with SOLO Taxonomy to explain the progressive nature of 'aqidah learning. Practically, the findings provide a conceptual reference for teachers in designing more responsive 'aqidah learning, while also offering an empirical depiction of how students gradually transform theological understanding into personal conviction and daily practice within the structured environment of a modern *pesantren*.

2. METHODS

The research method should be included in the Introduction. The method contains an explanation of the research approach, subjects of the study, the conduct of the research procedure, the use of materials and instruments, data collection, and analysis techniques.

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore the process of internalizing 'aqidah shahîhah at the Bina Anak Sholeh (BIAS) Modern Boarding School in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), a case study allows researchers to investigate a bounded system within its real-life context in order to gain an in-depth understanding of a particular phenomenon. Participants selection was conducted through purposive sampling, based on the relevance and depth of participants' experiences in relation to the research focus. The participants consisted of one teacher and four students who were actively involved in 'aqidah learning (Table 1). This selection aimed to obtain rich and nuanced data regarding the practices of 'aqidah shahîhah internalization within the *pesantren* environment.

Table 1. Details of participants

Participants	Gender	Role	Grade	Teaching experiences (Year)
PS	Male	Teacher	-	12
AAN	Male	Student	XI	-
ARHAA	Male	Student	XI	-
MIHS	Male	Student	XII	-
MMI	Male	Student	XII	-

Data were collected using three primary techniques. First, semi-structured interviews lasting 30–45 minutes were conducted both in person and online, depending on participant availability. Interviews were carried out in March 2025 and conducted in Bahasa Indonesia to ensure clarity. Prior to each interview, ethical considerations—including informed consent, privacy, and confidentiality—were explained and secured. Second, field observations were conducted during 'aqidah learning activities to document real-time interactions between teachers and students. Third, document analysis was carried out on instructional materials, particularly the primary text used in teaching. The combination of these techniques enabled the researcher to obtain rich and comprehensive data.

All interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and subsequently analyzed using a thematic analysis approach that followed six phases: data familiarization, initial coding, theme generation, theme review, theme definition, and reporting (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis was supported by NVivo 15 software to facilitate the organization and management of qualitative data.

To ensure trustworthiness, the study employed member checking by asking participants to validate the transcripts and the researcher's interpretations, as well as source and method triangulation by comparing data from interviews, observations, and documents (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher also maintained reflexivity throughout the research process by consciously acknowledging personal assumptions and positionality to preserve analytical neutrality. These combined strategies ensured methodological rigor, transparency, and confirmability.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Learning Objectives of 'Aqidah

The instructing of 'aqidah through *Kitāb al-Burhān fī Masā'il al-Īmān* is not merely intended to enrich students' theological knowledge but, more importantly, to internalize 'aqidah *shahīhah*. Based on the findings, the learning objectives of 'aqidah at BIAS can be understood in three interrelated dimensions: positioning 'aqidah as a guide for life, cultivating spiritual awareness and moral character, and strengthening personal conviction against deviant religious views. Each of these objectives is discussed in detail in the following sub-sections.

3.1.1 Life guide

The teacher emphasized that the core of 'aqidah instruction is not simply to convey theoretical concepts of faith, but to help students internalize the meaning of belief as a guide for life. For him, 'aqidah represents a set of values that should shape students' ways of thinking, behaving, and making decisions.

"My main goal is that the students not only understand 'aqidah as material but also practice it. It means internalize it as a life guide." (PS, personal interview, March 7, 2025)

This statement illustrates that the objectives of 'aqidah learning at BIAS are directed toward the holistic internalization of *tawhīd*. 'Aqidah is not positioned as an ordinary subject but as a belief system meant to shape students' personalities and worldviews.

3.1.2 Spiritual awareness and moral character

Furthermore, the teacher stressed that a second objective of 'aqidah learning is to cultivate strong spiritual awareness and moral character. The embedded values of *tawhīd* are expected to safeguard students against negative influences and the growing materialistic lifestyle among adolescents.

"If these values are firmly rooted, the students will develop strong spiritual awareness, humility, and won't be easily tempted by worldly distractions." (PS, personal interview, March 7, 2025)

This illustrates that the teacher views 'aqidah as a spiritual and moral force underpinning the entire educational process. Faith is not merely an internal conviction but a spiritual energy that nurtures humility, simplicity, and steadfastness in facing modernity.

3.1.3 Conviction against deviant beliefs

Students' understanding of the learning objectives further reinforces the teacher's perspective. They see 'aqidah as a means of acquiring a sound understanding of faith and strengthening personal conviction against deviant religious views.

"Yes, in this book we are taught how to view deviant teachings like Syi'ah and others; these issues are also discussed here." (AAN, personal interview, March 10, 2025)

"Our school, alhamdulillah, has annual study tours to Singapore. Because we study concepts like walā' and barā', we can position ourselves properly when encountering anything that conflicts with our beliefs as Muslims there." (ARHAA, personal interview, March 10, 2025)

These statements reflect an epistemological awareness—'aqidah learning functions to build a correct intellectual framework for understanding religion. The learning process is not merely the transmission of knowledge but an effort to develop the ability to critically assess truth based on the principles of faith. Beyond the intellectual and doctrinal dimensions, students also recognize that learning through *Kitāb al-Burhān fī Masā'il al-Īmān* is relevant to their lives in a modern context.

The excerpts above show that the learning objectives of 'aqidah in this *pesantren* are not dogmatic. This is how both the teacher and students—particularly within this upper-middle socio-economic

students' environment—understand the role of *Kitāb al-Burhān* as a medium that enables them to comprehend faith both rationally and contextually.

3.2 Content and Structure of the *Kitāb al-Burhān*

The selection of *Kitāb al-Burhān fī Masā'il al-Īmān* as the primary instructional text for 'aqidah learning at BIAS was not coincidental, but the result of a deliberate pedagogical evaluation. As stated in the *muqaddimah* (introduction), the *Kitāb* was compiled by drawing upon established 'aqidah curricula—most notably the works of Shaykh Ṣāliḥ bin Fauzān al-Fauzān and Shaykh Abū Bakr Jābir al-Jazā'irī—while incorporating selective adaptations to facilitate clearer understanding and more effective memorization for students.

The author, KH. Abdul Wahid Hasyim, is a *pesantren*-trained scholar whose educational background in various classical Islamic disciplines, including 'aqidah, *hadith*, *tafsīr*, *fiqh*, *uṣūl al-fiqh* and Arabic grammar lends scholarly authority to the text. His long-standing involvement in Islamic education and *da'wah* (preaching), as well as his intellectual connection to the BIAS environment, further reinforces the relevance of the *Kitāb* as a core reference in the *pesantren*'s 'aqidah curriculum.

Compiled in Pati, Central Java, Indonesia, in 2012, *Kitāb al-Burhān fī Masā'il al-Īmān* consists of 153 pages and is systematically organized. Its overall structure may be summarized in table 2:

Table 2. Structure of *Kitāb al-Burhān fī Masā'il al-Īmān*

Chapter	Title	Translation	Scope
الباب الأول	<i>Madkhal li Dirāsati al-'Aqidah</i>	Introduction to the Study of 'Aqidah (Faith)	<i>Ma'nā al-'Aqidah wa Bayānu Ahammiyyatihā</i>
			<i>Maṣḍir al-'Aqidah al-Shahīḥah wa Manhaj al-Salaf fī Talaqqihā</i>
			<i>Al-akhrāfu 'an al-'aqidah, wa subulu al-taḳwa minhu</i>
الباب الثاني	<i>Tawḥīd al-Rubūbiyyah</i>	The Oneness of God in His Divinity	<i>Tawḥīdu al-Rubūbiyyah wa Iqrāru al-Musyirkina Bihī</i>
			<i>Ilṭizāmu Tawḥīdi al-Rubūbiyyah li Tawḥīdi al-Ulūhiyyah</i>
			<i>Ta'rīfu Tawḥīdi al-Ulūhiyyah</i>
الباب الثالث	<i>Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah</i>	The Oneness of God in Worship	<i>Maḥtūmu al-'Ibādah</i>
			<i>Maḥtūmu al-Waṣilah</i>
			<i>Fī Bayāni Ma'nā al-Syāhādātayn wa Mā Waḳ'a Fihimā mina al-Akḥṭā' wa Arkānihimā wa Syurūthihimā wa Muqaddimah wa Nawāqidihimā</i>
			<i>Fī al-Tasyrī'</i>
			<i>Ma'nā Tawḥīdi al-Asmā' wa al-Shifāt</i>
الباب الرابع	<i>Tawḥīd al-Asmā' wa al-Shifāt</i>	The Oneness of God in His Names and Attributes	<i>Manhaj al-Salaf fī Asmā' Allāh wa Shifātihī</i>
			<i>Asmā' Allāh al-Ḥusnā wa Mā Tadullu 'Alayhi min Shifāti al-Kamāl wa Dirāsah Mufassshalah liba'd al-Shifāt wa Aqwāl al-Firāq al-Ḍallāh fī al-Shifāt</i>
الباب الخامس	<i>Al-Walā' wa al-Barā'</i>	Love and Hate (for the Sake of Allah)	<i>Ta'rīfu al-Walā' wa al-Barā'</i>
			<i>Makānatu al-Walā' wa al-Barā' fī al-Islām</i>
			<i>Al-Mudāharah wa 'Alāqatuhā bi al-Walā' wa al-Barā'</i>

			Al-Mudārāh wa Atharuhā 'alā al-Walā' wa al-Barā'
			Namādzij min al-Walā' wa al-Mu'ādāt fī Allāh
			Muwāḍāt al-Kuffār wa Mu'ādātuhum
			Al-Ilḡfāl bi A'Yād al-Kuffār wa Musyārakatuhum fī Afrāḡihim wa Atrḡihim
			Huknu al-Isti'ānah bi al-Kuffār fī al-Wazā'if wa al-Qitāl wa Naḡwih
			Al-'Amalū 'inda al-Kuffār wa al-Iqāmah Baynahum
			Taqlīdu al-Kuffār, Aqsāmuh wa Āthāruh
			Al-Mawqif al-Salbi min al-Islām wa al-Muslimīn wa Qaḍāyāhum
			Al-Khawārij
			Al-Su'ah
			Al-Mu'tazilah
			Al-Tashawwuf
			Al-'Imāniyyah
الباب السادس	Inḡirāf al-'Aqīdah	The Loss of the Perfection of 'Aqīdah (Deficiency in 'Aqīdah)	

The first chapter serves as an epistemological introduction, underscoring the centrality of 'aqīdah as the foundation of faith and outlining its primary sources: the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the methodology of the *salaf*. At this stage, students are introduced to the idea that 'aqīdah is not merely a set of dogmatic memorization tasks, but the outcome of a truth-seeking process (*talqī al-īmān*) that integrates reason and revelation.

The second and third chapters examine *tawḥīd al-rubūbiyyah* and *tawḥīd al-ūlūhiyyah*, emphasizing the relationship between rational acknowledgment of God's sovereignty and the spiritual act of worshipping Him. This structure illustrates the link between the conceptual and practical dimensions of faith: from knowing God as the Creator to embodying sincere servitude.

The fourth chapter, *tawḥīd al-asmā' wa al-shifāt*, extends theological understanding into the metaphysical domain, guiding students to comprehend the perfection of God's attributes while avoiding interpretive deviations (*ta'thīl dan tasybīh*). This stage deepens both cognitive knowing and spiritual believing simultaneously.

The fifth chapter, *al-walā' wal-barā'*, shifts the focus from theology to social ethics. The values of loyalty and dissociation from disbelief are not framed as exclusivist doctrines, but as expressions of an identity-based consciousness that shapes social conduct—how a Muslim engages with others without compromising the principles of *tawḥīd*. This chapter thus bridges personal faith and social commitment.

The final chapter, *inḡirāf al-'aqīdah*, highlights the critical and applicative dimension of 'aqīdah learning: the ability to identify, assess, and reject theological deviations. By discussing groups such as the *Khawārij*, *Syī'ah*, *Mu'tazilah*, forms of extreme *Tashawwuf*, as well as modern secularism, the book equips students with epistemic clarity and spiritual firmness when encountering contemporary religious discourses.

The teacher explained that the *Kitāb*'s layered and systematic structure makes it easier for BIAS students to grasp its content:

"We chose this book because the language is very simple, yet the substance is profound. KH Wahid, its author from East Java, really understands the context of modern pesantren, especially since the students here are different from those in traditional pesantren. We once used a thick classical text, but the students quickly

lost interest because of its length. The diction might be fine for students familiar with *Kitāb kuning*, but this institution is not oriented toward teaching *turāth*.” (PS, personal interview, March 7, 2025)

3.3 Methods of Teaching ‘Aqidah

The teacher employed an integrative and participatory instructional method that combines teacher-centred learning (*ceramah*), discussion, and question-and-answer activities. At BIAS, the internalization of ‘*aqidah* functions not merely as the transmission of knowledge (*ta’lim*), but as a process of cultivating faith consciousness (*tarbiyyah imāniyyah*) that links knowledge, reflection, and students’ lived experiences.

3.3.1 Participatory instruction

In practice, the lesson begins with the reading of *Kitāb al-Burhān fī Masā’il al-Īmān*, followed by an explanation of its grammatical structure and conceptual content. Students are then asked to translate and discuss the text to understand the relevance of its faith-based values in everyday life.

“First, we listen to the teacher read the vocabulary, then we translate it, and afterwards the meaning is explained along with examples that often occur in daily life.” (MMI, personal interview, March 10, 2025)

This statement demonstrates that the instructional method is both dialogical and contextual. The teacher does not simply guide students to comprehend theological concepts literally; rather, he invites them to reason, reflect, and internalize the meaning of faith within their social environment.

3.3.2 Bayānī, Burhānī, and ‘Irfānī approach

In line with this method, the teacher emphasized that the teaching of ‘*aqidah* is grounded in the integration of three epistemological orientations as the main approaches:

“I combine three approaches. First, *bayānī*, which refers to conceptual explanation supported by textual evidence. Then *burhānī*, encouraging students to think critically and logically. And then ‘*irfānī*, where we try to enliven the sense of faith through reflection and spiritual stories.” (PS, personal interview, March 7, 2025)

The *bayānī* (textual-normative) approach is implemented through explanations of Qur’anic verses, *ḥadīth*, and excerpts from *Kitāb al-Burhān fī Masā’il al-Īmān*. The *burhānī* (rational-demonstrative) approach is applied when the teacher engages students in discussion and logical analysis. Meanwhile, the ‘*irfānī* (spiritual-intuitive) dimension is incorporated through reflective activities and narratives of exemplary conduct within the pesantren context.



Figure 1. The teaching process of *Kitāb al-Burhān fī Masā’il al-Īmān*

Based on observations (Figure 1), the researchers witnessed how the internalization of *'aqidah* unfolds in practice. Each class is taught by a different instructor, a strategy intended to help students focus under the guidance of a specific teacher. The *'aqidah* lessons take place twice a week in various locations within the pesantren. Each session lasts one hour, beginning after the *Maghrib* prayer and continuing until 8 PM.

Although BIAS is recognized as a modern pesantren that has integrated information technology into various aspects of its instructional activities, the teacher deliberately refrains from using digital media or IT tools in the teaching of *'aqidah*. This choice is not due to limited facilities, but rather reflects a conscious pedagogical and philosophical stance.

"For 'aqidah lessons, we intentionally avoid using digital media, because learning about faith requires calmness and the engagement of the heart. If we use phones, slides, or even games, the students will focus on the visuals instead of the meaning. We want them to listen, reflect, and engage in direct dialogue." (PS, personal interview, March 7, 2025)

This statement illustrates a deep pedagogical awareness that faith is not transmitted through technology, but through exemplification, contemplation, and spiritual experience. In this context, the non-digital approach becomes a deliberate strategy to preserve the spiritual atmosphere of the *halaqah*, ensuring that the learning of *'aqidah* remains reflective and consciously internalized. Thus, the absence of technology in *'aqidah* instruction within this modern pesantren should not be viewed as a sign of backwardness, but as an epistemological and ethical choice—affirming that the understanding of faith must grow through the heart and through direct interpersonal interaction between teacher and student.

3.4 Challenges

Several challenges were encountered during the process of internalizing *'aqidah shahihah* at BIAS. These challenges emerged from both the teacher's and students' perspectives. For clarity, the challenges are categorized into teacher-related and student-related issues, as described below.

3.4.1 Value Conflict

From the teacher's perspective, the main challenge lies in the difficulty of translating students' theoretical understanding of *'aqidah* into lived practice. Exposure to popular culture and the overflow of information often creates a gap between theological ideals and students' daily behavior.

"The big challenge is the clash of values. Many of them understand 'aqidah theoretically, only in their minds, but have not yet been able to translate it into a way of life." (PS, personal interview, March 7, 2025)

This statement indicates that the problem of internalization is not merely cognitive, but involves affective transformation and behavioral embodiment. Understanding *'aqidah* does not automatically develop into existential awareness or concrete action, as students must navigate a social environment increasingly shaped by global values that tend to be secular and pragmatic.

3.4.2 Academic and Linguistic Constraints

From the students' perspective, one major challenge concerns academic and linguistic difficulties, particularly limited Arabic vocabulary and time constraints due to dense learning schedules.

"Sometimes the schedule clashes with other activities, because in the afternoon we read and memorize vocabulary, and at night we have the study sessions. So, it becomes difficult to memorize." (ARHAA, personal interview, March 10, 2025)

This reflects that internalizing *'aqidah* is also a matter of time management. Studying textbook such as *al-Burhân fî Masâ'il al-Îmân* requires high consistency and discipline, meaning that students need strong spiritual motivation to maintain their enthusiasm amid demanding academic routines.

3.4.1 Psychological Fatigue

Meanwhile, MMI and AAN highlights that the challenges are not only technical but also psychological. They mention the feelings of boredom and fatigue that arise during the learning process, even though they fully recognize the importance of *Kitāb al-Burhān fī Masā'il al-Īmān* as a moral compass that guides them away from deviant behavior:

"I feel bored, a bit lazy because I'm tired from a full day of school, and then at night we study again." (MMI, personal interview, March 10, 2025)

"It is tiring, because we are at school all day and only return to the dormitory at four in the afternoon. After a short rest, right after Maghrib we must study again." (AAN, personal interview, March 10, 2025)

Their reflections reveal that sustained engagement with the *Kitāb al-Burhān fī Masā'il al-Īmān* requires significant emotional discipline, especially within the demanding rhythm of a modern *pesantren*.

MMI expresses moments of boredom and fatigue due to the intensity of daily academic activities, yet he maintains a strong sense of intrinsic motivation by viewing the *Kitāb al-Burhān* as a moral compass that protects him from deviant beliefs and behavior. His statement illustrates a form of value-oriented resilience, where commitment to religious learning is anchored in personal meaning rather than external pressure. Similarly, AAN highlights the exhaustion that results from a tightly structured schedule extending from early morning school hours to evening study sessions. His experience demonstrates how physical tiredness can limit students' attentional capacity and emotional readiness for subjects such as *'aqidah*. Nonetheless, both accounts show that despite psychological strain, students persist in their engagement due to an awareness of the *Kitāb al-Burhān*'s significance.

Discussion

The first finding indicates that the primary goal of learning *'aqidah* at BIAS is not merely to increase students' theological knowledge, but to cultivate a holistic consciousness of faith. This reinforces the view that Islamic education should not be confined to the cognitive domain; rather, it must encompass affective cultivation and spiritual praxis (Niyozov & Memon, 2011). Within the context of teaching *Kitāb al-Burhān fī Masā'il al-Īmān*, students are guided to understand *tawhīd* as a foundation of personality formation and moral orientation, rather than merely as doctrinal content. This aligns with Jalil (2022) who asserts that *'aqidah* contributes to the consolidation of virtuous character and the development of a robust epistemic consciousness. Furthermore, the aim of *'aqidah* education reflects an effort to safeguard the younger generation from the forces of secularization and hedonism that increasingly challenge the spiritual values of modern Muslim youth (Cloutier, 2024; Khamis, 2024). By positioning *'aqidah* as the spiritual core of education, teachers assume the role of *murabbi*—spiritual mentors who cultivate a living and reflective awareness of *tawhīd*. Such an approach has proven effective in strengthening religious identity amid rapid social transformation (Yucel & Whyte, 2023). Overall, the goal of *'aqidah* internalization at BIAS is oriented toward the formation of a sound and upright conviction in Allah SWT.

The second finding illustrates that the structural organization of *Kitāb al-Burhān fī Masā'il al-Īmān* reflects a systematic and layered pedagogical design, progressing from foundational definitions of *'aqidah* to more complex analyses of deviations in faith. This progressive structure resonates with the SOLO (Structure of Observed Learning Outcomes) Taxonomy developed by Biggs and Collis (1982), which conceptualizes learning as a continuum from surface-level understanding to deep conceptual mastery (Figure 2). At The Pre-Structural Stage, students activate their prior knowledge through an introduction to the meaning of *'aqidah* and the centrality of *tawhīd*. This stage lays the groundwork for the formation of basic epistemic awareness before students move to The Uni-Structural Stage, where they begin to understand a single concept in isolation—such as recognizing Allah as *al-Khāliq* without connecting this understanding to broader social implications.

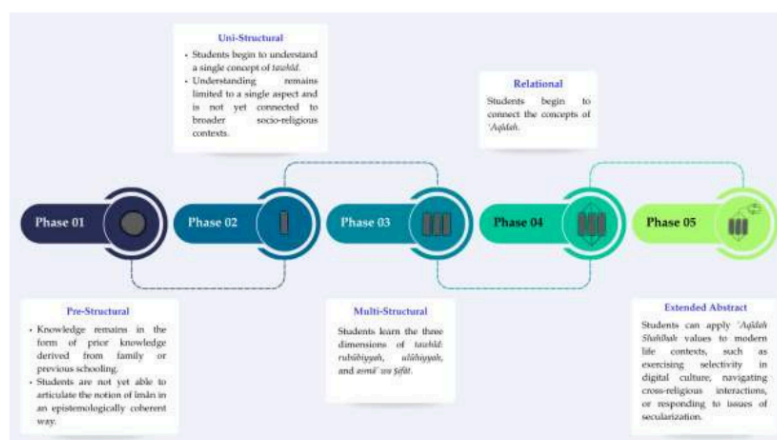


Figure 2. SOLO taxonomy framework for mapping the process of internalizing '*aqidah shahihah*

As students explore multiple dimensions of *tauhid*—namely *rubūbiyyah*, *ulūhiyyah*, and *asmā' wa shifāt*—their learning transitions into The Multi-Structural Stage. This phase corresponds to what Brainerd (1982) refers to as *surface learning*, where understanding remains segmented and descriptive. A deeper grasp emerges at The Relational Stage, in which students synthesize theological concepts and discern how *tauhid* informs moral conduct, social responsibility, and spiritual awareness. This represents the deep learning phase, marked by a comprehensive understanding of the interconnectedness between knowledge, faith, and action.

At the highest level, The Extended Abstract stage (Figure 2), students demonstrate the ability to transfer the values of *tauhid* into contemporary contexts—exercising discernment toward digital culture, navigating interreligious interactions, and responding reflectively to the challenges of secularism. As Wen (2022) notes, this reflects a mature form of *transfer learning*, whereby learners not only master textual content but also transform it into lived ethical principles. These findings affirm that an '*aqidah* curriculum grounded in hierarchical and progressive understanding fosters critical thinking and equips students with an adaptive religious consciousness capable of engaging modern complexities. Viewed from a curricular perspective, the thematic structure of the *Kitāb* demonstrates a coherent movement from epistemological (knowledge of faith), to ontological (experience of faith), and ultimately to axiological (embodiment of faith in action) dimensions.

The third finding demonstrates that teacher at BIAS employs an integrative pedagogical method in teaching '*aqidah*, combining three principal epistemological approaches: *bayānī*, *burhānī*, and '*irfānī*. This methodological synthesis aligns with the notion of *integrative pedagogy* in Islamic education, which emphasizes the harmonious interplay of revelation, reason, and experiential insight in cultivating faith consciousness (Anam et al., 2024). It also revitalizes the classical tradition of *ta'lim wa tarbiyah* in pesantren, wherein the teacher assumes the role of a *murabbi*—a spiritual cultivator—rather than merely a transmitter of information (Ma'rufi et al., 2024; Mustafidin et al., 2024). Moreover, this finding illustrates that the reflective and dialogical strategies employed by the teachers successfully foster a participatory and meaningful learning environment. This observation resonates with Jusubaidi et al. (2024), who highlight the importance of transforming pesantren pedagogy from a knowledge-transmission model into a reflective, value-based learning community. Such an approach also supports

Angranti's (2024) findings on strengthening religious moderation through contextual and dialogic learning.

In addition, the teaching of *'aqidah* at BIAS is deliberately kept minimally integrated with technology, despite the institution's reputation as a modern *pesantren*. This pedagogical decision is grounded in the belief that the comprehension and internalization of *'aqidah* require presence, emotional proximity, and meaningful interaction between teacher and student—dimensions that are difficult to replicate through digital media. While various studies indicate that technology can enhance the delivery of Islamic concepts (Abdelgalil, 2025; Adiyono et al., 2025; Whyte, 2022), its uncontrolled use may obscure spiritual focus and contribute to the dilution of *'aqidah* consciousness (Ami et al., 2025). Therefore, for teacher at BIAS, reducing technological mediation in *'aqidah* instruction enables a deeper, more intentional internalization process—one that remains free from distraction and allows faith-based values to be transmitted through authentic dialogue, exemplary conduct, and reflective engagement.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the internalization of *'aqidah shahihah* at BIAS unfolds through a pedagogical–processual trajectory that situates students within a gradual pathway of faith development. This process is constructed through the integration of three epistemological approaches—*bayānī*, *burhānī*, and *'irfānī*—which function as a coherent framework for cultivating theological understanding by balancing textual knowledge, rational inquiry, and spiritual experience. This epistemic triad aligns with students' cognitive progression as articulated in the SOLO Taxonomy, wherein they advance from partial comprehension toward a more comprehensive, integrated, and reflective conceptual mastery. Through the layered structure of *Kitāb al-Burhān fī Masā'il al-Īmān*, students begin with fundamental notions of *Tawḥīd*, proceed to recognize its various dimensions independently, learn to connect theological concepts with moral and social realities, and ultimately develop the capacity to transfer the values of *Tawḥīd* into contemporary life contexts. Thus, the learning of *'aqidah* in this modern *pesantren* does not merely produce knowledge but shapes a living and adaptive disposition of faith.

The findings of this study suggest that *'aqidah* curriculum development in modern *pesantren* should be approached as a process of epistemic internalization rather than merely the transmission of doctrinal content. Integrating contemporary *'aqidah* texts within a coherent pedagogical framework enables students to develop contextual and applicable understandings of faith. This study highlights the importance of direct teacher–student interaction as a central space for cultivating spiritual awareness and moral orientation, particularly in faith-based learning. While digital technologies offer pedagogical benefits, their selective and intentional use in *'aqidah* instruction is recommended to preserve depth of reflection and minimize cognitive distraction. Furthermore, *pesantren* serving students from middle-to-upper socio-economic backgrounds are encouraged to adopt contextual and value-oriented approaches that address tensions between theological ideals and contemporary urban lifestyles. Future research is encouraged to conduct comparative studies across diverse *pesantren* typologies, both domestically and internationally, to examine how differing institutional contexts, curricular designs, and pedagogical orientations shape the internalization of *'aqidah*.

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