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The Role of the Scientific Method in Enhancing Student Faith in Aqidah Studies: A Review of Imam Al-Ghazali's Thought

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ABSTRACT

Background: Aqidah learning in higher education plays a vital role in shaping students' faith. However, many students still struggle to apply the aqidah theory to their daily lives. Therefore, the application of scientific methods in aqidah learning is urgently needed to enhance students' understanding and deepen their faith. **Objective:** This study aims to elucidate the importance of scientific methods in aqidah learning from the perspective of Imam Al-Ghazali. **Method:** This study employs a literature review, analyzing the works of Imam Al-Ghazali and related literature. **Result:** The scientific method, which involves a rational and critical approach, enables students to understand faith more deeply and practically. Imam Al-Ghazali emphasizes the importance of integrating faith and morals, which can be strengthened through a scientific approach. **Conclusion:** The application of scientific methods in the study of aqidah significantly contributes to strengthening students' faith, enhancing the quality of teaching, and fostering a more rational and systematic understanding of religious teachings. **Originality/Value:** This review article bridges an epistemological gap in the field of Islamic educational philosophy and aqidah pedagogy in higher education by synthesizing the literature on the relevance of rational-critical scientific inquiry within Imam Al-Ghazali's thought to deepen religious conviction (*faith*), an area that has thus far received limited applied pedagogical scrutiny. By mapping existing theoretical and methodological gaps, this study serves as a strategic reference and contributes to the development of a conceptual framework for reason-grounded theology curricula and outlines future research agendas on harmonizing scientific methods with Islamic theology in universities.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The religious life and faith of students in the context of aqidah learning are of significant importance. Aqidah is the foundation of a strong and true religion, as well as the worldview of its adherents (Pratama et al., 2025). Strong faith can provide a moral foundation, ethics, and a deep perspective in facing life's challenges (Gani et al., 2024). In understanding aqidah in Islam, students are expected to explore the fundamental aspects of their beliefs. Sabila (2019) argues that aqidah is the primary basis of Islamic belief, serving as the foundation for every aspect of a Muslim's life, from shari'a and morals to tarbiyah. This is because humans were created to worship the Creator, and Allah commands humans to give Him priority. Additionally, the pillars of faith are also an integral part of faith. One effective way to understand faith is to use scientific methods that provide strong guidance.

The problem that arises in the field of aqidah study in higher education is the difficulty students face in connecting theoretical understanding with practical beliefs in everyday life, as well as a lack of in-depth understanding of aqidah based on a scientific approach. Although aqidah is a crucial foundation in Islam, many students study it

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conventionally without employing rational and critical scientific methods (Bahri et al., 2025). This results in a lack of depth in understanding the teachings of aqidah and how to apply them in daily life. Meanwhile, Imam Al-Ghazali's thinking, which emphasizes the importance of integrating faith and morals through a scientific approach, is still rarely applied in the context of higher education (Madhar, 2024). Therefore, there is a need to increase students' faith through a more critical and rational scientific approach, in accordance with the views of Imam Al-Ghazali, which can strengthen their understanding of aqidah and its practical application.

According to Milasari et al. (2021), the scientific method is a systematic process used to form scientific knowledge from pre-scientific knowledge, following the principles of normative technical procedures. The purpose of the scientific method itself is to serve as a requirement for scientific validity or specificity, which is generally considered a form of scientific validity that can be scientifically accounted for (Maulidin et al., 2025). In addition, the scientific method also brings a rational, analytical, and critical approach to religious concepts, enabling students to think deeply and critically about aspects of faith.

So far, there have been very few studies discussing the learning of aqidah and the importance of religious understanding in daily life that specifically examine the role of the scientific method in learning Aqidah (Jannah, 2020; Hapidin et al., 2022). Most existing studies focus more on the normative aspects of faith or traditional ways of teaching religion, without integrating a rational and critical scientific approach (Nurfadila & Anantara, 2024; Fauzi, 2023; Parhan et al., 2024). In fact, the application of scientific methods in the context of aqidah education can provide a more systematic and objective approach, enabling students to understand aqidah concepts more comprehensively, logically, and deeply. This study aims to fill this gap by examining how scientific methods can enhance students' faith through a more structured and evidence-based approach, in line with the views of Imam Al-Ghazali.

From the preliminary analysis of previous studies, the findings reveal a lack of studies linking scientific methods with aqidah learning, especially in the context of higher education. Although numerous studies discuss the understanding of faith and its importance in students' lives, research on the application of scientific methods in faith learning remains very limited. Most of the existing literature tends to focus on normative or traditional approaches to teaching faith without considering more rational and critical scientific methods. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by examining how scientific methods, which involve critical analysis and evidence-based approaches, can be applied to enhance students' faith in the context of aqidah learning, in line with the thoughts of Imam Al-Ghazali.

This study aims to determine the urgency of scientific methods in enhancing students' faith, with a focus on the perspective of Imam al-Ghazali. We will explore how scientific methods help students better understand and internalize the concepts of aqidah, bringing them to a deeper and more convincing level of understanding. This study aims to provide insights into how scientific approaches can enhance students' faith and establish a more solid foundation for their beliefs in Islamic aqidah.

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This study uses a qualitative design with a thematic analysis approach. This design is suitable for understanding the role of the scientific method in increasing students' faith in aqidah learning, as well as exploring Imam Al-Ghazali's thoughts on the importance of the scientific method in strengthening Islamic aqidah. This approach enables researchers to examine the views that have emerged in the relevant literature and identify relationships between existing key concepts.

2.2 Research Object

The objective of this research is to examine the role of scientific methods in enhancing students' faith in aqidah learning, with a focus on Imam Al-Ghazali's perspective. This study will examine the application of scientific methods in aqidah learning, as well as Imam Al-Ghazali's views on the use of scientific methods to strengthen the faith of Muslims.

2.3 Data Collection

Data in this study were collected through library research or literature study. Several steps in data collection were: 1) Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria: Researchers will determine relevant literature related to aqidah, scientific methods, and the thoughts of Imam Al-Ghazali. The inclusion criteria include Al-Ghazali's works and literature that discusses the relationship between scientific methods and aqidah in the context of higher education; 2) Data Sources: The primary data sources include books, scientific articles, journals, and relevant works by Imam Al-Ghazali, both

those authored by Al-Ghazali himself and those written by experts who discuss his thoughts; 3) Documentation: The researcher will document relevant and important quotations from the literature found, as well as record in-depth information related to the theme being studied.

2.4 Data Analysis

The collected data will be analyzed using thematic analysis. The data analysis steps include: 1) Theme Identification: Identifying the main themes that emerge in the literature, such as the role of the scientific method in aqidah, the application of the scientific method in religious education, and Imam Al-Ghazali's views on science and faith; 2) Data Coding: Organizing relevant quotations or references into specific categories or themes to facilitate further analysis; 3) Thematic Interpretation: Organizing and interpreting the themes found in the literature, highlighting their relevance to the study of aqidah and the thoughts of Imam Al-Ghazali.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

Imam Al-Ghazali, whose full name is Abu Hamid Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Muhammad bin Muhammad Al-Ghazali Ath-Thusi An-Naysaburi Al-Faqih Ash-Shufi Asy-Syafi'i Al-Asyari, was given the title al-hujjah al-Islam Zaynuddin al-Thusi. The name Al-Ghazali originates from the village of Ghazalah in Khurasan, Iran, where he was born. However, there is another opinion that states Al-Ghazali's name originates from the word Ghazzal al-Shuf, meaning "wool spinner," which was his father's profession to support his family. Therefore, the name Al-Ghazali comes from two Ghazalas. Meanwhile, in the West, Al-Ghazali is known as Al-Qazee.

Imam Al-Ghazali was born in the city of Tus, which was the second-largest city after Nishapur in Khurasan, in 450 AH/1058 AD. He was born into a Muslim family whose members were wool spinners. Imam Al-Ghazali was renowned as a philosopher, theologian, jurist, and Sufi. Al-Ghazali's father died when he was still a child, but before his father's death, Al-Ghazali was entrusted to a friend of his father who was active in the field of Sufism. This is where Al-Ghazali received his first education. At the age of seven, Al-Ghazali studied Arabic, Persian, and religious principles. At the age of 15, Al-Ghazali moved to the city of Jurjan, located 160 km from Tus. The following year, Al-Ghazali returned to Tus to memorize and understand what he had learned from his teachers. After that, he continued his education in Naisabur, one of the most important cities for the development of science in the Islamic world.

There, Al-Ghazali met a great theologian and religious community leader known as Imam al-Juwayni, also referred to as Al-Harawi, who belonged to the Ash'ari school of thought. At the age of 28, Al-Ghazali became actively involved in government political programs. For six years, he was one of the judges in Bani Saljuk. During his time as a judge, Al-Ghazali was an active writer, and one of his most important works was al-Mustaziri and al-I'tiqad fi al-I'qtishad. After holding this position for five years, from 1090 to 1095 AD, he resigned (Wahyudi, 2018). On Monday, 14 Jumada al-Akhir 505 AH/1111 AH, Imam Al-Ghazali passed away at the age of 55. His body was then buried in Zhahir al-Thabiran, the capital of Thus.

Based on his life journey, al-Ghazali produced more than 300 works covering various fields of knowledge, including "Ayyuhal Walad" and "Ihya Ulumuddin," among others. Al-Ghazali was a very productive Islamic scholar. In a relatively short period of time, spanning around 55 years, he utilized his time to play an active role in society and write various scientific works that are renowned throughout the world, both in the West and in the East. In fact, his thoughts were also embraced by Western Orientalists. The dozens of scientific works he wrote cover the importance of knowledge in various scientific disciplines, including philosophy, kalam, fiqh, usul fiqh, tafsir, tasawuf, and education (Mubarok, 2020).

Table 1. The Role of the Scientific Method in Enhancing Students' Faith in Aqidah Studies: A Perspective of Imam Al-Ghazali

Aspect	Description	Relationship with the Scientific Method
Understanding Aqidah	Aqidah as a fundamental foundation in Islam, connecting the belief of the heart with actions.	The scientific method provides a rational and analytical approach that helps students understand the concepts of Aqidah more critically and deeply, in line with Al-Ghazali's teachings.
Scientific Method in Aqidah	The scientific method helps examine and critique Aqidah concepts in a systematic, rational, and evidence-based manner.	In the context of Aqidah, the application of the scientific method allows students to research and question Aqidah teachings, enhancing their understanding of the fundamental principles of Islam.

Aspect	Description	Relationship with the Scientific Method
Integration of Aqidah and Akhlak	Aqidah and akhlak are interconnected, with the correct understanding of Aqidah resulting in good akhlak.	The scientific method encourages students to explore the relationship between Aqidah and akhlak through a scientific approach, focusing on character development and the understanding of Islamic teachings.
Application in Education	Aqidah learning should be based on systematic and logical scientific principles to ensure proper understanding and strong belief.	The scientific method helps design systematic and objective learning, improving the quality of Aqidah teaching and assisting both instructors and students in better understanding the teachings.
Students' Faith	Students with a deep understanding of Aqidah tend to have a stronger faith.	The scientific method supports strengthening students' faith by encouraging them to think critically and logically about aspects of Aqidah, providing a stronger foundation for their beliefs.

Based on the presentation of the research findings in the table above, the findings can be categorized into five aspects, as follows:

First, an understanding of aqidah. Based on the research results, the application of scientific methods in teaching aqidah helps students gain a deeper understanding of the concept of aqidah. The scientific method, which is based on a rational and critical approach, enables students to examine the basic principles of aqidah more objectively and systematically. Imam Al-Ghazali emphasized the importance of a correct understanding of aqidah as the foundation of belief and action, which aligns with the scientific approach that prioritizes systematic and rational understanding.

Second, the scientific method in Aqidah. The scientific method serves as a tool for examining and critiquing religious teachings, including in the field of aqidah. From Al-Ghazali's perspective, the scientific method facilitates an in-depth understanding of Islamic teachings through a comprehensive process that includes observation, analysis, and reflection. This aligns with Al-Ghazali's view that rationality and critical thinking are essential for understanding and applying religious teachings. Students can develop their faith through structured and evidence-based thinking, rather than simply accepting without understanding.

Third, the integration of faith and morals. In Imam Al-Ghazali's perspective, faith and morals are interrelated and must be understood as an inseparable unity. According to Al-Ghazali, a correct understanding of faith will lead to good morals.

The scientific method supports this by providing a systematic approach to examining the relationship between faith and morals. Students who correctly understand the concepts of faith will find it easier to integrate this understanding into their daily lives, including their moral values. Fourth, application in education. The scientific method provides a structured and systematic approach to learning about faith. This is important to ensure that students not only understand religious teachings theoretically, but can also apply them in their lives. In the context of education, the use of the scientific method enhances the quality of teaching and learning, helps students think critically and deeply, and provides a strong foundation for their understanding of the Islamic faith. Fifth, student faith.

The results of the study indicate that applying the scientific method to learning aqidah can enhance students' faith. By employing a scientific approach, students are encouraged to delve deeper and critically examine various concepts of aqidah, thereby strengthening their understanding of and faith in these concepts. This aligns with Al-Ghazali's thought, which emphasizes the importance of a mature and solid understanding of aqidah as a strong foundation for faith.

The results of the analysis indicate that, when applied correctly, the scientific method can be an effective tool in enhancing students' understanding and confidence in aqidah, as per the thoughts of Imam Al-Ghazali.

3.2. Discussion

3.2.1 Scientific Method

The method is the way scientists obtain new knowledge correctly and update their previous knowledge. This method consists of systematic observation, measurement, experimentation, and the formulation of questions or hypotheses (Tu et al., 2022). In this context, methodos refers to the research, scientific method, and scientific review, which involves acting in accordance with a specific set of rules. On the other hand, methodology consists of the words

"method" and "logos," which means the science of discussing methods. Therefore, a method can be interpreted as a systematic process or procedure based on existing scientific principles and techniques (Kafara, 2022). Sari et al. (2023) state that the scientific method is carried out by following predetermined procedures to answer questions that scientists face. Observation is the key to formulating problems.

From a positivist perspective, the scientific approach has scientific attributes that include empirical, rational, and systematic aspects. The empirical aspect shows that all ideas and concepts originate from experience, and truth can only be constructed based on that experience (Berger & Luckmann, 2016). Therefore, empirical methods can be observed by humans, allowing others to observe and learn from that experience. Meanwhile, the rational aspect implies that truth can be known through reason, so that research activities must be conducted in a manner that is reasonable and comprehensible to human reason. Meanwhile, the systematic aspect means that a process must be carried out in accordance with established or agreed procedures.

In this case, the meaning of the scientific method itself refers to a system and approach that governs knowledge about natural and social phenomena. Research is a conscious and deliberate effort to understand these phenomena based on scientific methods from relevant disciplines. According to Sholihah (2020), the components of scientific truth include the rules of inductive (empirical) logic and deductive (theoretical) logic, which are used together to test the truth of scientific theories. The goal is to discover new principles or insights contained within the meaning of these phenomena (Hayek, 2018).

According to the definition of the scientific method presented, the scientific method is a systematic and organized approach to research and problem-solving, based on scientific principles. It includes three important elements. First, the word “method” originates from the Greek, describing an organized way of acting and following specific rules. Second, the characteristics of the scientific method involve empirical elements, namely, based on experience and observation, rationality, with research that must be carried out in a reasonable manner, as well as a systematic approach that follows established procedures. Observation also plays a key role in formulating problems and implementing the scientific method (Dźwigoł & Barosz, 2020). In addition, the scientific method combines the principles of inductive and deductive logic to test and develop scientific theories, thereby facilitating the discovery of new principles or facts underlying natural and social phenomena. Overall, the scientific method serves as a crucial foundation for the development of knowledge and understanding in various disciplines, enabling scientists to answer questions and gain a deeper understanding of the world around us.

3.2.2 Aqidah

Aqidah means bond or, in this context, refers to something that is believed and determined by the human heart and feelings (conscience). On the other hand, terminologically, aqidah is something strong and deep that is embedded in a person's soul, which cannot be removed or replaced. Therefore, when a person has faith in their heart, they will indirectly form a bond of faith within themselves. This has a profound impact on every aspect of their life, because their actions and words reflect their beliefs.

Aqidah is a fundamental principle that connects and determines all aspects of religious judgment (Muhammadong, 2024). If interpreted as a fundamental principle of something that causes a reaction, then in this case, aqidah can be understood as an Islamic worldview. This fundamental principle is built in the minds and hearts of every Muslim and provides a certain description of their existence. Aqidah can also be referred to as a collection of beliefs and the things behind them.

Therefore, belief in faith influences all actions. According to Shaykhul Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, as explained by Sabila (2019), aqidah is considered something that must be believed in the heart in order to provide peace of mind, firm conviction, and stability, free from doubt or worry.

The heart is an element that must be present in faith. It is not enough to follow physically if it is not balanced with belief in the heart. Not only that, but it will also affect mental peace. Because in the hearts of believers, there is gentleness of soul.

Therefore, the author concludes that aqidah is a fundamental belief in Islam, referring to a person's understanding and acceptance of the basic principles of Islam. This includes belief in Allah, the prophets, the Holy Book, the Day of Judgment, destiny, and other key elements in Islam. Aqidah is the core of a Muslim's faith, which must be firmly embedded in their hearts and minds, influencing their worldview and daily actions. In other words, aqidah is the foundation of belief that guides an individual's life and religious practice in Islam.

3.2.3 Understanding Aqidah from the Perspective of Imam Al-Ghazali and Its Relation to the Urgency of Scientific Methods

Al-Ghazali was a renowned Islamic figure who possessed a keen intellectual spirit, always seeking to know about everything and study various fields of science. His profound love for science made him an expert in numerous fields and one of the most influential figures in Islamic history. His contributions to the development of Islamic science are reflected in his numerous writings and discussions on aqidah. As an Islamic figure, Al-Ghazali also played a role in strengthening the aqidah system in Islam. However, some have criticized his teachings on faith because they are considered to be similar to the moral teachings of Greek philosophers, notably Plato and Aristotle, as well as earlier Muslim scholars.

According to Sabila (2019), faith is the foundation of a Muslim's life and forms the basis for all aspects of life, including sharia, morals, and tarbiyah (education). Al-Ghazali's approach to faith is based on the integration of faith and morals. He believes that faith and morals are interrelated, and that a correct understanding of faith will lead to good morals. Al-Ghazali's concept of aqidah is grounded in the Qur'an and the Sunnah. He believed that the Qur'an and Sunnah are the primary foundations of aqidah and should serve as the basis for all discussions about aqidah. As stated in QS. An-Nisa:59

يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ أَطِيعُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُواْ ٱلرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي ٱلۡأَمۡرِ مِنكُمۡۖ فَإِن تَنَٰزَعۡتُمۡ فِي شَيۡءٖ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ وَٱلرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمۡ تُؤۡمِنُونَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلۡيَوۡمِ ٱلۡأٓخِرِۚ ذَٰلِكَ خَيۡرٞ وَأَحۡسَنُ تَأۡوِيلًا ٥٩

Meaning: O you who believe, obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. Moreover, if you disagree about something, refer it to Allah and the Messenger, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is the best [way] and the best result.

According to Al-Ghazali, a renowned Islamic scholar, the concept of aqidah must be based on the primary sources of Islam, namely the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad. This verse emphasizes important principles in Islam related to belief (aqidah) in religion. First, this verse begins by commanding obedience to Allah and His Messenger, which in this case refers to the Qur'an and Sunnah. Al-Ghazali supports this principle and emphasizes the importance of understanding and following the teachings of Allah and the Prophet as the primary basis of faith.

Furthermore, this verse offers guidance on resolving disputes or differences of opinion in matters of religion. Disputes must be resolved by referring to Allah and His Messenger, that is, by referring to the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad. This is in accordance with Al-Ghazali's principle that the Qur'an and Sunnah must be the primary basis for discussions and the resolution of disputes related to faith. Finally, this verse emphasizes that these steps must be taken by someone who "truly believes in Allah and the Last Day." This reflects Al-Ghazali's concept that faith must be based on firm belief and conviction in the teachings of Islam as preparation for this world and the hereafter. Therefore, this verse supports Al-Ghazali's view of faith based on the Qur'an and Sunnah, as well as the importance of referring to these primary sources in overcoming differences of opinion and building strong faith in Islam.

According to Sari (2022), Al-Ghazali's approach to faith was shaped by his background as both a philosopher and a Sufi. He believed that a proper understanding of faith requires intellectual and spiritual development. Al-Ghazali developed a concept of faith that has religious, rational, and Sufi-intuitive elements. Additionally, this concept demonstrates diversity because Al-Ghazali studied various sources.

Therefore, in Al-Ghazali's perspective on aqidah, the scientific method can help students develop a deeper understanding of aqidah through a rational and objective approach. By employing scientific methods, students can conduct research, analysis, and critique of various views, including those of Al-Ghazali, while remaining faithful to the principles of Islamic teachings.

In this case, the scientific method can also help students understand and apply Islamic teachings in the context of today's complex modern society. Thus, students will not only have strong faith, but also a more mature understanding of the creed in line with the demands of the times. This can be combined with intellectual and spiritual aspects, as applied by Al-Ghazali, and can also be part of a scientific method that involves holistic learning. Therefore, students can develop their faith not only through intellectual aspects, but also through spiritual experiences and daily practices.

3,2,4 The Urgency of Scientific Methods in Increasing Faith

According to Nasrullah (2022), scientific methods are a systematic approach used to acquire knowledge and solve problems by observing, formulating hypotheses, testing hypotheses, and drawing conclusions based on the data obtained. To understand religion and deepen faith, it is necessary to demonstrate through observation of an

event. Therefore, the scientific method used in science also applies to the study of religion. The following is the urgency of the scientific method in increasing faith:

a) Increasing understanding of religion

According to Ramadhani et al. (2021), the scientific method enables a person to study religion more deeply and objectively. This can help improve understanding of religious teachings and strengthen belief in Islamic doctrine. The scientific method can help students study religion systematically and logically, enabling them to gain a deeper understanding of the concepts underlying various religions.

b) Overcoming doubts

The scientific method can help a person overcome doubts or uncertainties about religious teachings. By conducting observations and tests, a person can gather evidence that strengthens their belief in religious teachings (Hidayatullah, 2019). In this context, observation and testing can be conducted by studying scriptures, observing natural phenomena, and examining the history of religion. By conducting observations and tests, a person can gather evidence that strengthens their belief in religious teachings. However, it is essential to note that the scientific method cannot be used to prove the existence of God or the absolute truth of religious teachings. This is because God and religious teachings are metaphysical and cannot be tested empirically. Therefore, the scientific method can only help a person to gain a better understanding of religious teachings and overcome any doubts or uncertainties that may exist.

c) Improving the quality of research

The scientific method can also be used in research on religion. By using the scientific method, research can be conducted systematically and objectively, ensuring that the results are more accurate and reliable.

d) Improving the quality of teaching

Lecturers in teaching religion can use the scientific method. By applying the scientific method, lecturers can present religious teachings systematically and objectively, enabling students to gain a deeper understanding of these teachings. The scientific method can help lecturers design effective and enjoyable learning experiences, as well as improve their ability to apply learning that aligns with the characteristics of their students.

3.2.5 Application of Scientific Methods in Teaching Aqidah

The application of scientific methods in teaching Aqidah involves the use of observation and experimentation to obtain data. The use of appropriate teaching methods is also crucial in enhancing students' understanding and character development in Aqidah. The application of scientific methods in teaching Aqidah plays an important role in ensuring that religious teachings are delivered systematically and logically. One of the primary methods employed is observation, where teaching is conducted by observing students' behavior and understanding of Aqidah material (Zahro & Jannah, 2024). This observation enables teachers to assess the extent to which students can internalize Aqidah values and how they apply them to their daily lives. With this approach, teachers can identify areas that need reinforcement and provide more in-depth explanations according to students' needs.

In addition to observation, experiments can also be applied in teaching Aqidah to assess students' understanding of and acceptance of abstract concepts in Islamic teachings. For example, teachers can conduct simulated discussions or debates that allow students to test their own arguments and thoughts based on the principles of Aqidah. Such experiments encourage students to think critically and reflectively about their beliefs, while also prompting them to question and further explore the religious teachings they receive. This supports the development of more open and deeper thinking.

The use of appropriate teaching methods also contributes to improving students' understanding of Aqidah. One such method is the use of a discussion-based or question-and-answer approach, which allows students to actively participate and ask questions related to the material being taught. By providing space for students to speak and listen to their friends' opinions, Aqidah teaching becomes more interactive and dynamic (Nugraha, 2025). This method helps students not only understand religious texts but also relate these teachings to their personal experiences and social realities.

The importance of applying scientific methods in Aqidah learning also lies in its ability to shape students' character. By employing an approach that emphasizes analysis and reflection, students are encouraged not only to accept religious teachings passively but also to develop a critical and responsible attitude towards their own beliefs. Aqidah learning based on scientific methods teaches students to appreciate religious wisdom while encouraging

them to become individuals who think deeply and act in accordance with the moral principles contained in Islamic teachings.

The findings of this study reveal that the scientific method plays a crucial role in enhancing students' understanding and faith in Aqidah studies, especially by promoting a rational and critical approach to religious teachings. Imam Al-Ghazali emphasizes the importance of integrating faith with reason and ethics, presenting them as complementary rather than opposing forces. He encourages deep reflection on religious principles through logical reasoning, enabling students to engage critically with theological concepts. By applying the scientific method, students can analyze the principles of faith not only emotionally but also intellectually, creating a deeper, more grounded belief system. This approach also offers a practical framework for applying Islamic teachings in real-life situations, extending beyond mere theoretical knowledge.

The use of scientific methods in Aqidah studies significantly improves the quality of teaching by providing a more systematic, structured, and intellectually rigorous approach to exploring faith. This method helps students develop a rational understanding of religious doctrines, strengthening their beliefs through critical thinking and reflection. Furthermore, by linking faith to reason, Imam Al-Ghazali's thought promotes a balanced approach in which knowledge and morality are intertwined, fostering both intellectual and spiritual growth in students. This method not only strengthens their faith but also encourages a more thoughtful, informed, and reflective understanding of Islamic teachings.

4. IMPLICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

4.1 Research Implications

This study has significant implications for the practice of teaching aqidah in higher education. The application of scientific methods in teaching aqidah not only improves students' understanding of aqidah theory but also encourages them to develop a critical attitude towards their beliefs. By using a systematic and rational scientific approach, students can more easily understand and integrate aqidah into their daily lives. Another implication is the importance of incorporating scientific methods in designing evidence-based curricula and teaching methodologies, so that aqidah learning becomes more relevant to the challenges of the times and more easily accepted by students who are increasingly critical of the religious concepts being taught.

4.2 Research Contributions

The contribution of this research lies in emphasizing the importance of scientific methods in strengthening students' faith, particularly in the context of aqidah learning. By linking the thoughts of Imam Al-Ghazali, this research adds insight into how scientific methods can be applied in religious education to strengthen aqidah. This research also contributes to the development of religious learning methodologies in higher education by emphasizing the need for a more systematic, analytical, and evidence-based approach to the field. Through this approach, students not only gain knowledge but also develop a deeper and more solid understanding of faith, which ultimately strengthens their faith.

5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

5.1 Research Limitations

This study has several limitations, one of which is its limited scope, as it focuses solely on the application of scientific methods in the teaching of faith from the perspective of Imam Al-Ghazali. Additionally, this study relies solely on literature studies as a method of data collection, which may not include direct perspectives from students or teachers in the field. This limits the understanding of the application of scientific methods in the context of learning aqidah in various educational institutions with different characteristics. Another limitation is the lack of empirical research that can thoroughly explore the direct impact of applying scientific methods on changes in students' faith.

5.2 Recommendation for Future Research Direction

For further research, it is recommended to conduct field studies involving interviews with students and lecturers in higher education institutions to gather more comprehensive empirical data on the application of scientific methods in teaching aqidah. Furthermore, additional research can expand the scope of inquiry by comparing the application of scientific methods across various religious disciplines or Islamic education, as well as examining the

impact of scientific methods on fostering student character in spiritual and social contexts. Research can also integrate quantitative approaches to measure the impact of applying scientific methods on increasing student faith more objectively.

6. CONCLUSION

Understanding aqidah from Imam Al-Ghazali's perspective places great emphasis on the centrality of correct belief as the foundation for a Muslim's life. According to Al-Ghazali, aqidah, or faith, is not merely a theoretical concept but is intrinsically tied to one's behavior and character. He underscores the interrelationship between aqidah and akhlak (morality), positing that a proper understanding of aqidah naturally leads to the cultivation of good akhlak. Al-Ghazali's perspective suggests that faith is not solely about belief in the unseen but is also about how that belief manifests in daily life through ethical conduct and virtuous actions. This holistic approach to faith and character development aligns with the core teachings of Islam, where faith and actions are inseparable.

Al-Ghazali's integration of faith and morality draws heavily from the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad, which he identifies as the primary sources of Islamic faith. His approach, however, has faced criticism, particularly from those who argue that his emphasis on moral philosophy bears similarities to the teachings of Greek philosophers, such as Aristotle and Plato. Critics suggest that Al-Ghazali's moral teachings may have been influenced by these external philosophies, which some view as incompatible with Islamic principles. Despite this, it is essential to acknowledge Al-Ghazali's profound contribution to Islamic thought, particularly in his synthesis of Islamic teachings with broader philosophical ideas, which provides a unique framework for understanding faith, ethics, and spirituality.

The scientific method plays a crucial role in enhancing the understanding of aqidah. By applying scientific approaches, Islamic scholars and educators can improve religious comprehension, address doubts, and elevate the quality of both research and teaching. The scientific method in studying aqidah involves a combination of critical thinking, structured discussion, and pedagogical techniques such as lectures, peer tutoring, and team-based activities. These methods facilitate a more systematic exploration of religious concepts, thereby fostering a deeper understanding among students. Moreover, by integrating these techniques into the study of faith, students can develop a stronger, more informed belief system, reinforcing the importance of both intellectual engagement and spiritual growth in the Islamic educational process.

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Author Contribution Statement

All authors discussed the results, contributed to the final manuscript, and approved the final version for publication. Amelia Khoirunisa: Conceptualization and Design; Writing - Original Draft; Fachril Achmad Aziz: Methodology, Writing - Review & Editing; Performed data collection and Analysis; Moh. Faizin: Interpretation of the results.

Declaration of Generative AI (GenAI) Usage in Scientific Writing

The authors declare that Jenni AI was utilized to support literature compilation, reference searches, text analysis, and the preparation of an initial draft. All AI-assisted outputs were reviewed and refined by the authors. The ideas, analyses, interpretations, and conclusions presented in this study are based on the authors' own scholarly judgment and interpretation of primary sources, particularly the works of Imam Al-Ghazali and other relevant scientific references. The authors remain fully responsible for the accuracy and academic integrity of the manuscript. All instances of Generative AI usage in this article were conducted by the authors in accordance with the IJRIS GenAI Tool Usage Policy, with the authors assuming full responsibility for the originality, accuracy, and integrity of the work.

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