



THE SYNERGY OF RHETORIC AND PUBLIC SPEAKING IN CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC DA'WAH

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Abstract: *This study examines the synergy between rhetoric and public speaking in contemporary Islamic da'wah, arguing that mastery of both competencies is essential for effective, ethical, and impactful religious communication. This research is a literature study employing a qualitative approach through conceptual analysis, drawing exclusively on primary and secondary written sources, including classical rhetorical texts, Qur'anic foundations, and peer-reviewed journal articles, rather than on field observation or empirical data collection. This methodological position was deliberately chosen to enable theoretical synthesis across classical rhetoric, Islamic communication studies, and digital media scholarship. The study integrates classical rhetorical principles, logos, ethos, and pathos with the Islamic communicative foundations of hikmah, mau'izhah hasanah, and jidal bil-latif as articulated in Surah An-Nahl (16:125). The central argument is that rhetoric functions as "strategy," governing message design, structure, and ethical grounding, while public speaking operates as "execution," the practical delivery of that message before an audience. Findings demonstrate that their integration is essential for producing da'i who are intellectually persuasive, emotionally resonant, and socially transformative. Illustrative case analyses of four prominent Indonesian preachers, Ustadz Abdul Somad, Ustadz Adi Hidayat, Gus Baha, and Ustadz Hanan Attaki, reveal how differentiated rhetorical styles operate across scholarly, emotional, and digital registers. The study further highlights that in the digital era, challenges such as shortened attention spans and information overload demand rhetorical recalibration toward concise, multimodal, and contextually sensitive messaging. The findings affirm that integrating rhetoric and public speaking within da'wah training is urgently needed to sustain the relevance and transformative impact of Islamic communication in contemporary society.*

Keywords: *Rhetoric, Public Speaking, Da'wah, Islamic Communication, Digital Era, Social Transformation*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji sinergi antara retorika dan keterampilan *public speaking* dalam konteks da'wah Islam kontemporer, dengan argumen bahwa penguasaan kedua kompetensi tersebut merupakan fondasi utama komunikasi keagamaan yang efektif dan berdampak. Penelitian ini merupakan studi literatur dengan pendekatan kualitatif melalui analisis konseptual, di mana data diperoleh sepenuhnya dari sumber tertulis primer dan sekunder, meliputi teks retorika klasik, landasan Al-Qur'an, dan artikel jurnal ilmiah, bukan dari observasi lapangan maupun pengumpulan data empiris. Posisi metodologis ini dipilih untuk memungkinkan sintesis teoretis lintas disiplin antara retorika klasik, komunikasi Islam, dan kajian media digital.

Penelitian ini mengintegrasikan prinsip retorika klasik *logos*, *ethos*, dan *pathos* dengan landasan komunikasi Islami berupa hikmah, mau'izhah hasanah, dan jidal bil-latif sebagaimana ditegaskan dalam Surah An-Nahl (16:125). Argumen utama penelitian ini adalah bahwa retorika berfungsi sebagai "strategi" yang menentukan desain dan struktur pesan, sementara *public speaking* berperan sebagai "eksekusi" penyampaiannya secara praktis di hadapan audiens. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa integrasi keduanya sangat diperlukan untuk menghasilkan da'i yang persuasif, menyentuh hati, dan mendorong transformasi sosial. Analisis kasus ilustratif terhadap empat da'i terkemuka Indonesia, Ustadz Abdul Somad, Ustadz Adi Hidayat, Gus Baha, dan Ustadz Hanan Attaki memperlihatkan bagaimana gaya retorika yang berbeda beroperasi dalam ranah ilmiah, emosional, dan digital. Di era digital, tantangan berupa pendeknya rentang perhatian dan kelebihan informasi menuntut rekalisasi retorika menuju pesan yang ringkas, multimodal, dan peka terhadap konteks. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa integrasi retorika dan *public speaking* dalam kurikulum da'wah merupakan kebutuhan mendesak demi menjaga relevansi dan dampak transformatif komunikasi Islam kontemporer.

Kata kunci: *Retorika, Public Speaking, Da'wah, Komunikasi Islami, Era Digital, Transformasi Sosial*

INTRODUCTION

In human civilization, language and communication are the primary foundations for social interaction and the spread of ideas. Rhetoric, as the art and science of effective language use, plays a crucial role in influencing and persuading an audience. The importance of understanding rhetoric becomes even more significant in the context of Islamic *da'wah* (preaching), where effective communication not only aims to influence but also to touch hearts and guide humanity toward goodness. This research is relevant because it examines how rhetoric and *public speaking* complement each other to create effective, positive communication in *da'wah*, both in religious and everyday contexts.

This research is highly relevant to the dynamics of *da'wah* in the modern era, particularly with the rapid growth of social media and digital platforms. Various case studies show how prominent Indonesian preachers have effectively employed rhetoric. For example, the preaching styles of Ustadz Abdul Somad and Ustadz Adi Hidayat implicitly apply the classical rhetorical techniques of Aristotle: *logos* (logic), *pathos* (emotion), and *ethos* (speaker's character) to build credibility and rapport with their audience. There are also different adaptive approaches, such as Gus Baha's style, which is known for its profound and logical scholarly depth, and Ustadz Hanan Attaki, who uses casual language relevant to youth issues like *hijrah* and the *quarter-life crisis*. These phenomena demonstrate that mastering rhetoric and *public speaking* is the key to the success of *da'wah* today. Furthermore, this research also examines the rhetoric of *Islam Nusantara* promoted by NU's intellectual elite, which uses Stephen Toulmin's argumentation method to disseminate the idea of inclusive Islam through new media platforms.

This research is highly relevant to the dynamics of *da'wah* in the modern era, particularly with the rapid growth of social media and digital platforms. Various case studies show how prominent Indonesian preachers have effectively employed rhetoric. A study by Malik et al. (2023) analyzing the *da'wah* rhetoric of Ustadz Abdul Somad and Ustadz Adi Hidayat on YouTube demonstrates how both preachers implicitly apply the classical rhetorical techniques of Aristotle *logos* (logic), *pathos* (emotion), and *ethos* (speaker's character) to build credibility and deep emotional rapport with their audiences.¹ Complementing this, a study by Jurnal Ilmi (2024) analyzing the rhetorical strategies of global Islamic preacher Nouman Ali Khan found that *logos* is the most dominant persuasive element in his preaching, reflecting how structured, argumentative, scripturally grounded reasoning serves as the backbone of contemporary *da'wah* discourse.² There are also different adaptive approaches, such as Gus Baha's style, which is known for its profound scholarly depth, and Ustadz Hanan Attaki, who uses casual language relevant to youth issues like *hijrah* and the quarter-life crisis. These phenomena demonstrate that mastering rhetoric and public speaking is a key factor in the success of *da'wah* today.

The digital transformation of *da'wah* has further intensified the relevance of rhetorical competence. Yus and Maseleno (2025) document how Islamic preaching has undergone a fundamental shift from podium-based delivery to social media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok, enabling interactive, multimedia-rich communication that transcends spatial and temporal limitations.³ In a related vein, a systematic review by Roslan et al. (2025) examining 24 peer-reviewed studies on *da'wah* content on Instagram found that successful youth-oriented preaching is characterized by strategic content planning, creative visual presentation, and culturally contextualized messaging. These findings underscore that in the contemporary media landscape, rhetorical effectiveness must be understood not only as a matter of spoken delivery but also as a strategic design of messages suited to specific digital environments. This is especially pressing given what scholars refer to as the challenge of the "instant generation" younger audiences, characterized by significantly shortened attention spans, who demand concise, emotionally resonant, and visually engaging content.⁴ Furthermore, a study

¹ Rif'atul Khoiriah Malik et al., "Da'wah Rhetoric by Ustadz Abdul Somad and Ustadz Adi Hidayat in Conveying Da'wah Messages," *Analisa: Journal of Social Science and Religion* 8, no. 2 (2023): 220–236.

² Nurul Hafizah Sidek and Kamariah Yunus, "The Rhetorical Strategies of an Internationally Renowned Preacher: Nouman Ali Khan," *Jurnal Ilmi* 14, no. 1 (2024): 36–47, <https://unimel.edu.my/journal/index.php/JILMI/article/view/1875>.

³ Yumaira Yus and Andino Maseleno, "From The Podium To Social Media_ The Evolution Of Islamic Da'wah In The Digital Era.Pdf," *GJLSS; Greenation International Journal of Law and Social Sciences* 3, no. 4 (2025).

⁴ Muna Hajar Roslan, Siti Zafrina Mohd Zahari, and Mohamad Zulkifli Abdul Ghani, "Influence of Psychological Well-Being and School Factors on Delinquency , During the Covid-19 Period Among Secondary School Students in Selected Schools in Nakuru County : Kenya," *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science (IJRISS)* VII, no. 2454 (2025): 1175–1189,

on the rhetoric of religious moderation in digital *da'wah* analyzing Habib Husein Ja'far Al-Hadar's appearances on Deddy Corbuzier's YouTube channel shows that the most effective digital preachers integrate *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos* in a balanced manner, producing messages that are simultaneously rational, emotionally engaging, and socially relevant.⁵

Previous studies on rhetoric and public speaking in *da'wah* have been conducted extensively. A study by Rini Setyowati et al. on "Islamic Public Speaking Training",⁶ focuses on a practical approach to improving public speaking skills for a specific community.[1] More recently, Huda and Azis examined the integration of rhetorical principles within public speaking practices in *da'wah*,⁷ [2] A study on "Transformative Public Speaking: Da'wah as a Medium for Empowering the Community" further analyzed how public speaking can serve as a participatory medium for social change in Islamic communication.⁸[3] While these studies recognize the importance of both concepts, they share a common limitation: studies rooted in theological or ethical frameworks tend to neglect the technical dimensions of delivery, while studies focused on training and performance tend to neglect theoretical grounding, and studies of digital *da'wah* tend to describe phenomena without prescribing frameworks. Most critically, no existing study explicitly frames the relationship between rhetoric and public speaking as one of strategy and execution. This research addresses that gap. It does not merely reiterate previous findings, but offers a more comprehensive approach by explicitly distinguishing rhetoric as a "strategy," the what and how of designing a persuasive message from public speaking as "execution," the practical act of delivering that message in public. This distinction serves as a foundation to demonstrate how the two complement each other, resulting in an orator who is not only intellectually credible but also emotionally resonant and practically effective. Moreover, this research incorporates the modern dimension of rhetoric's adaptation in the social media era and the specific challenges this poses for contemporary *da'i* (preachers).

<https://rsisinternational.org/journals/ijriss/articles/investigating-the-influence-of-outdoor-play-environments-on-social-and-emotional-engagement-among-pre-scholars>.

⁵ Gina sonya Pane, Juni Wati Sri Rizki, and Pahri Siregar, "Moderation in Digital Da'wah_ Framing Islamic Values on YouTube," *Wasilatuna: Jurnal Komunikasi dan Penyiaran Islam* 9, no. 1 (2026).

⁶ Rini Setyowati, Yudianto Achmad, and Djoko Nugroho, "Pelatihan Public Speaking Islami Pada Ketua Dasawisma Dusun Watukudi," *Lentera Pengabdian* 1, no. 01 (2023): 47–52.

⁷ Chairul Huda and Akbar Maulana Abdul Azis, "Da'wah Rhetoric in Public Speaking Activities from Tubagus Wahyudi's Perspective," *International Journal of Educational Research Excellence (IJERE)* 4, no. 1 (2025): 167–176.

⁸ Safril et al., "Transformative Public Speaking: Da'Wah As a Medium for Empowering the Community," *MEDIOVA: Journal of Islamic Media Studies* 5, no. 2 (2025): 171–187.

METHOD

This research is methodologically positioned as a qualitative literature study (library research). It utilizes a conceptual analysis approach to examine and synthesize existing theories from various scholarly sources. This method was selected because the primary goal is to perform a deep-seated theoretical exploration rather than to collect new empirical data from the field. By grounding the study in rigorous textual analysis, the research establishes a solid theoretical foundation for addressing the intersection of rhetoric and da'wah.

The analytical technique applied is descriptive-analytical, proceeding through three stages. First, concept identification and classification, in which the author maps key concepts from two domains: classical rhetorical principles, particularly Aristotle's *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*, and the foundations of Islamic communication, namely *hikmah*, *mau'izhah hasanah*, and *jidal*, drawn from the Qur'an and Hadith. Second, a conceptual synthesis, in which these concepts are analyzed and integrated to construct a new framework demonstrating how rhetorical principles provide a practical foundation for Islamic da'wah, while Islamic principles supply its ethical and spiritual dimensions. Third, illustrative case analysis, in which contemporary *da'wah* phenomena, including the preaching styles of Ustadz Abdul Somad and Gus Baha, are employed not as empirical data, but as illustrative cases to ground the theoretical arguments in lived practice.

In sum, this research uses library-based conceptual analysis to deconstruct, connect, and synthesize theories from classical rhetoric and Islamic communication. This approach produces a comprehensive and coherent understanding of Islamic public speaking strictly through textual and conceptual inquiry, without recourse to surveys or field interviews.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Interrelation, Distinctions, and Complementarity of Rhetoric and Public Speaking in Islamic Da'wah Communication

In-depth analysis shows that rhetoric and public speaking in the context of Islamic da'wah are far more than mere technical communication skills; they are strategic and ethical tools indispensable for conveying Islamic teachings effectively. While the two concepts are often conflated, a critical distinction exists that makes both mutually complementary.

Rhetoric emphasizes strategic message design: selecting content, structuring arguments, and styling for persuasion. Rooted in Aristotle's framework, it balances *logos* (logical appeals), *ethos* (speaker credibility), and *pathos* (emotional resonance). Key canons

include *inventio* (argument discovery), *dispositio* (arrangement), and *elocutio* (expression), focusing on intellectual preparation to guide audiences toward truth.⁹

Public speaking, by contrast, handles live execution through verbal (vocal variety, pacing) and nonverbal (gestures, eye contact) mastery, translating rhetoric into engaging interaction. It prioritizes presence and connection to sustain attention.¹⁰

Their synergy forms the ideal da'i: rhetorically sound yet dynamically delivered. Isolated rhetoric risks dull delivery; isolated public speaking yields style without substance. Integrated, they amplify the da'wah impact.¹¹

Aristotle formalized rhetoric as persuasion's art across domains, via *logos* (argument clarity), *ethos* (character), *pathos* (emotion), and canons like *memoria* (memorization) and *pronuntiatio* (delivery). Public speaking, a modern skill-based field, hones tone, body language, and tempo for goals like informing or motivating in sermons, pitches, or interviews.¹²

Rhetoric seeks conviction through logic and philosophy; public speaking pursues broader influence, from education to leadership. Rhetoric favors academic analysis; public speaking emphasizes experiential training, such as rehearsals.¹³

In da'wah aiming for faith transformation via *hikmah* (wisdom), *mau'izhah hasanah* (good advice), and *mujadalah bil-ma'ruf* (gentle debate)—both are essential. Da'is craft *logos*-driven Qur'anic exegesis, *ethos*-backed integrity, and *pathos*-infused stories, delivered with compelling presence.¹⁴

To illustrate, four prominent Indonesian preachers exemplify this interplay: Ustaz Abdul Somad (UAS): Employs *logos* through rigorous fiqh citations and historical precedents, as seen in his detailed examination of hadith chains within viral lectures. *Ethos* is strengthened by his naval officer background and scholarly humility, which cultivate a sense of moral authority and trust. *Pathos* emerges through urgent calls to moral reform, paired with animated gestures and rising vocal cadence that transform carefully structured rhetoric into passionate public speaking.

⁹ Akhmad Agung Syahputra, "Analisis Filsafat: Retorika Aristoteles Dalam Meningkatkan Kemampuan Public Speaking Dan Relevansinya Pembelajaran," *JIM: Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa Pendidikan Sejarah* 7, no. 1 (2022): 15–25.

¹⁰ Siti Asiyah, "Implementasi Komunikasi Verbal Dan Non Verbal Dalam Kegiatan Public Speaking Santri Di Pondok Pesantren Darul Falah Amsilati Putri Bangsri Jepar," *Jurnal An-Nida* 10, no. 2 (2018): 154–165.

¹¹ Muhammad Saleh and Risma Listia, "Urgensi Retorika Dalam Perspektif Komunikasi Islami," *Liwaul Dakwah: Jurnal Kajian Dakwah dan Masyarakat Islam* 12, no. 1 (2022): 1–16.

¹² Rita Zahara et al., "Ethos, Logos, Pathos Dalam Pidato Anies Baswedan Pada Program Desak Anies Edisi 'Warga Mataram Mendesak Anies Baswedan,'" *Jurnal Bastra* 4, no. 2 (2019): 268–283.

¹³ Siti Asiyah, "Public Speaking Dan Kontribusinya Terhadap Kompetensi DAI," *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 37, no. 2 (2017): 198–214, <https://journal.walisongo.ac.id/index.php/dakwah/article/view/2705>. Syahputra, "Analisis Filsafat: Retorika Aristoteles Dalam Meningkatkan Kemampuan Public Speaking Dan Relevansinya Pembelajaran."

¹⁴ Muhammad Saleh, "HUBUNGAN RETORIKA DAN KOMUNIKASI ISLAM DALAM PROSES INTERAKSI SOSIAL 1Muhammad," *AT-TABAYYUN : Journal Islamic Studies Volume* 4, no. 1 (2022): 1–12.

Ustaz Adi Hidayat: Masters *logos* through structured tafsir progressions that combine tahlili (verse-by-verse) and thematic per-surah approaches, as seen in his systematic breakdowns of *Surah Al-Dhuha–Al-Inshirah* and *Surah Al-Fatihah*. *Ethos* arises from his formal background in Islamic studies at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta and the Al-Azhar-linked program, as well as his role as a Muhammadiyah-affiliated da'i and founder of Quantum Akhyar Institute. *Pathos* is cultivated through relatable analogies to contemporary struggles—such as academic pressure and career uncertainty delivered with steady pacing, clear vocal modulation, and an open posture that invites reflective engagement with the Qur'anic text. Gus Baha (KH. Ahmad Bahauddin Nursalim): Leverages *logos* through Sufi-rational and fiqh-based explanations that link creed (*aqidah*) to everyday religious practice, often connecting tafsir of verses to classical fiqh rulings and social cases. *Ethos* stems from his strong scholarly background at Pondok Pesantren Al-Anwar Sarang, his mastery of *kitab kuning* (especially tafsir and fiqh), and his reputation as a *mufassir faqih*. *Pathos* is conveyed through gentle humor, relatable anecdotes from pesantren life, and warm, conversational storytelling about divine mercy and moral reflection, delivered with measured pacing and subtle gestures. Ustaz Hanan Attaki: Uses *logos* by connecting Qur'anic themes to youth-oriented contexts, such as mental health and personal growth, in series like "Kajian Muslim." *Ethos* is built on his modern, approachable "ustaz" image and openness about personal vulnerabilities, which enhance affective identification. *Pathos* emerges through emotional narratives of personal trials, amplified by melodic intonation, dynamic movement, and social media-savvy visuals, making his da'wah highly adaptive to digital audiences.

These cases affirm the complementarity of rhetoric and public speaking: profound content (*logos/ethos*) demands skilled delivery (*pathos* enhancement). In the digital era, this duo adapts to short-form videos and live streams, where concise *logos*-*pathos* hooks retain fleeting attention amid algorithms prioritizing ethical persuasion over virality.

The Foundation of Rhetoric from an Islamic Perspective: Communication Based on Wisdom and Morality

Rhetoric holds a fundamental and multifaceted position within Islam as a means to convey truth and invite goodness. The Qur'an and Hadith serve as primary foundations, underscoring the importance of effective and ethical communication in da'wah. This is famously emphasized in Surah An-Nahl (16:125), where Allah commands Muslims to:

"Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best."

This verse clearly highlights that Islamic rhetoric is not simply about the content of the message but also, critically, about delivering it through wisdom (*hikmah*), good advice (*mau'izhah*

hasanah), and respectful, gentle debate (*jidal bil-latif*). These principles stress that da'wah rhetoric must embody both thoughtfulness and gentleness to be truly effective.¹⁵

From this perspective, rhetoric is not merely an instrumental technique for persuasion, but a form of *ibadah* when practiced with sincerity and ethical intent. The Qur'an and Hadith repeatedly enjoin truthfulness, kindness, and gentleness in speech, forbidding falsehood, deceit, exaggeration, and emotional manipulation. The principles of *sidq* (truthfulness) govern the content of speech, while *adab* (etiquette) shapes its tone, manner, and delivery.¹⁶

The Qur'an also offers rich rhetorical models rooted in wisdom and moral pedagogy. For example, the dialogue between Prophet Ibrahim and his son Ismail before the sacrifice (Surah As-Saffat 37:102–107) illustrates the use of *qaulan layinan*, soft, gentle words, to convey deep faith and submission without coercion. Similarly, Luqman's advice to his son (Surah Luqman 31:12–19) combines reasoning, metaphor, and moral exhortation, demonstrating that rhetoric is about both *argument* and *relational context*—it adapts to the audience's level of understanding, emotional needs, and social situation.¹⁷

As a result, Islamic rhetoric integrates *ethos* (moral integrity and sincerity of the speaker), *logos* (rational clarity and coherence of the message), and *pathos* (emotional resonance and empathy) in a way that is consistent with *hikmah*, *mau'izhah hasanah*, and *jidal bil-latif*. This normative framework provides the basis for later case studies of contemporary Indonesian preachers Ustaz Abdul Somad, Ustaz Adi Hidayat, Gus Baha, and Ustaz Hanan Attaki whose preaching styles can be analyzed with precision through these Aristotelian–Islamic lenses.

The Role of Public Speaking in Modern Da'wah: Connecting Sacred Messages with Social Reality

Public speaking is the practical realization of rhetoric and plays a pivotal role in bridging the timeless sacred messages of Islam with the dynamic and complex realities of contemporary society. While the fundamental teachings of Islam remain unchanged, the methods of communication must continuously evolve to effectively engage diverse audiences living within fast-paced social, cultural, and technological environments. Public speaking serves as the

¹⁵ Aan Mohamad Burhanudin and A Syathori, "Peningkatan Public Speaking Mahasiswa Jurusan Kpi: Upaya Mencetak Da'I Yang Rahmatallil 'Alamin," *ORASI: Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi* 10, no. 1 (2019): 1.

¹⁶ M. Alaika Nashrulloh, "Retorika Dakwah Dalam Perspektif Tafsir Al-Qur'an," *Jurnal Darussalam: Jurnal Pendidikan, Komunikasi dan Pemikiran Islam* VIII, no. 1 (2016): 160–174.

¹⁷ Ahmad Sakrani, "Integrasi Nilai-Nilai Islam Dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris Di Mi Al-Islamiyah Bebidas," *Al-Mujahidah* 4, no. 1 (2023): 70–81. Mia Fitriah Elkarimah, "Self-Efficacy Orang Tua Dalam Pendidikan Anak (Telaah Tafsir Surat Ash-Shaffat Ayat 99-113)," *The 1st Ar-Raniry International Conference on Psychology (ARICPSY) SELF-EFFICACY* (2024): 291–298.

essential conduit through which religious knowledge is transformed into relevant, accessible, and impactful guidance.¹⁸

A key challenge in modern da'wah is making sacred texts and classical Islamic teachings resonate meaningfully within lived experiences marked by globalization, technological change, social justice concerns, economic hardship, and identity struggles. Public speaking enables the *da'i* to contextualize these teachings by interpreting core Islamic principles to address contemporary issues while preserving the authenticity of the message. This contextualization allows listeners to perceive Islam as relevant to their daily lives and motivates them to apply spiritual principles to personal growth, family life, community cohesion, and social betterment.¹⁹

Modern societies are marked by diversity in age, education level, cultural background, and religious literacy. Public speaking allows for flexible communication tailored to different audiences: Youth engagement may require a conversational tone infused with contemporary language and references to social media and popular culture. Educated or scholarly audiences often appreciate deeper theological insights expressed with logical coherence and supporting scholarly references. General audiences benefit most from clear, straightforward, and emotionally captivating storytelling that invokes shared values and aspirations.²⁰

By adjusting tone, language, and delivery style, the *da'i* cultivates genuine connection, trust, and receptivity, transforming passive listeners into active participants in the da'wah process.

Effective public speaking skillfully integrates rational argument (*logos*) with emotional appeal (*pathos*). Intellectual clarity ensures the audience comprehends the message, while emotional resonance inspires heartfelt engagement and motivates moral and behavioral change. Achieving this balance is crucial because da'wah aims not only at cognitive understanding but at spiritual and ethical transformation. Nonverbal communication—facial expressions, gestures, vocal modulation, and eye contact—further strengthens engagement by conveying sincerity, passion, and empathy, reinforcing the speaker's *ethos* and enhancing persuasiveness.²¹

In an era marked by skepticism, misinformation, apathy, and ideological opposition, skilled public speaking equips the *da'i* to respond respectfully to criticism, clarify misunderstandings,

¹⁸ Umdatul Hasanah, "Rhetoric in Islamic Tradition: Paradigm and Its Development," *KOMUNIKA: Jurnal Dakwah dan Komunikasi* 15, no. 2 (2021): 241–252.

¹⁹ Nazar Naamy, "The Challenges of Multiculturalism in Dawah: A Sociological Approach," *Mudabbir: Jurnal Manajemen Dakwah* 3, no. 1 (2022): 344.

²⁰ Bakti Putra, "Unveiling Audience Engagement in Public Speaking: The Strategies," *Journal of English Studies and Business Communication* 1, no. 1 (2024): 13–20. Saleh and Listia, "Urgensi Retorika Dalam Perspektif Komunikasi Islami." Bobby H. Trilaksono et al., "Media Retorika Dakwah Pada Era Milenial," *Virtu: Jurnal Kajian Komunikasi, Budaya dan Islam* 1, no. 1 (2021): 1–16.

²¹ Bizurai Chillyness and Fikri Zuhriyah, "Jurnal Peurawi : Media Kajian Komunikasi Islam Virtual Da ' Wah Through Youtube Channel (Communication Strategy Of Koh Dennis Lim ' s Content In Building Public Trust) Influencer Akun Dennis Lim Di YouTube , Submitted to the Institut Agama" 8, no. 1 (2025): 1–20.

and gently counter false narratives. It also enables the sensitive handling of controversial topics with wisdom and tact, minimizing alienation and promoting constructive dialogue. In the context of shortened attention spans and fragmented media consumption, compelling public speaking becomes indispensable for maintaining focus and rendering complex religious concepts accessible and memorable.²²

Ultimately, public speaking in da'wah transcends mere knowledge transmission; it serves as a catalyst for individual and social transformation. It strengthens faith, promotes ethical conduct, encourages social justice advocacy, and fosters communal solidarity. Well-crafted speeches inspire listeners to engage in charity, education, community service, and leadership, thus actualizing Islamic values in everyday practice. For the *da'i*, mastery of public speaking supports personal growth—enhancing confidence, empathy, and leadership capacity necessary for responsible and enduring religious guidance. In sum, public speaking is a vital instrument through which Islamic da'wah connects sacred teachings with the realities of modern life, building emotional and intellectual bridges that foster meaningful dialogue, spiritual growth, and positive social change.

Adapting Rhetoric and Public Speaking in the Digital Era: Challenges and Opportunities in Contemporary Da'wah

The digital era has transformed how information is produced, shared, and received, reshaping the methods and impact of Islamic da'wah. With the proliferation of social media, podcasts, video-sharing platforms, and messaging apps, da'wah has moved beyond mosques and lecture halls into virtual spaces accessible anytime and anywhere. This shift offers unprecedented opportunities but also demands that Muslim communicators adapt their rhetorical strategies and public speaking techniques to function effectively in this new environment.

In today's content-saturated landscape, audiences face constant information overload, forcing them to skim or scroll quickly through messages. As a result, da'wah content must be compelling, concise, and well-targeted if it is to capture and retain the attention of increasingly distracted viewers. Traditional rhetorical approaches that rely on long, discursive speeches now need to be reconceived for short attention spans and mobile-first consumption habits.²³

Younger audiences, in particular, tend to prefer brief, visually engaging content over lengthy oration. The proliferation of short-form video content on platforms like TikTok has created a new frontier for Islamic preaching (da'wah), fundamentally altering how religious messages are communicated to younger audiences, posing new challenges and opportunities, particularly in

²² Asiyah, "Public Speaking Dan Kontribusinya Terhadap Kompetensi DAI."

²³ Akmal Rizki et al., "Analysis of Digital Technology on Da ' Wah," *AL-Balagh* 10, no. 1 (2025): 33–64.

engaging Generation Z.²⁴ This cultural shift challenges preachers to convey substantive, theologically sound messages in reduced time formats without losing depth or authenticity. Findings from studies of digital preachers reveal that a succinct, humor-infused style can successfully engage younger audiences while simultaneously inciting controversy over doctrinal fidelity, underscoring the delicate balance between accessibility and theological rigor in digital religious discourse.²⁵ It calls for a rhetorical recalibration: stronger opening hooks (logos + pathos), tighter argument structure (*inventio* and *dispositio*), and clear, memorable conclusions that encourage reflection or action. Digital platforms also connect audiences with diverse levels of religious literacy, cultures, and languages. This heterogeneity demands that communicators design *rhetorically flexible* messages using layered explanations, relatable analogies, and culturally sensitive language while preserving the core Islamic message. Public speaking, in this context, is not only about *what* is said but also *how* it is adapted to the audience's cognitive and emotional context.²⁶

Another challenge is the relative absence of face-to-face interaction online, where nonverbal cues are limited, and context can easily be lost. This makes digital communication more prone to misunderstanding, oversimplification, and even misinterpretation. Rhetorically, this means that clarity, simplicity, and sincerity in language become central virtues. Public speakers must compensate for the missing physical cues with precise wording, controlled pacing, and explicit framing to maintain *ethos* and reduce ambiguity.

Moreover, the digital space is crowded with competing voices, including misinformation and extremist narratives. For Muslim communicators committed to authentic, moderate da'wah, building and sustaining credibility and trust is more difficult and more critical than ever. Ethical communication grounded in *sidq* (truthfulness), *adab* (etiquette), and *hikmah* (wisdom) becomes essential to distinguish responsible *da'i* voices from polarizing ones.²⁷

Despite these challenges, the digital era opens new horizons for da'wah. It transcends geographical boundaries, allowing Islamic messages to reach people who may have limited access to formal religious education or local communities. This democratization of knowledge enables wider and more direct engagement with Islamic discourse, particularly for youth and non-practicing Muslims.

²⁴ Khalid Rahman et al., "THE RHETORIC OF DA ' WAH IN THE TIKTOK ERA : AN ANALYSIS OF DIGITAL PREACHERS ' COMMUNICATION STYLES AND THEIR" 5, no. 2 (2025): 101–118.

²⁵ Taufikin Taufikin, Sri Nurhayati, and Kurnia Muhajarah, "Da'wah in the TikTok Era: Analyzing Gus Miftah's Rhetoric, Controversy, and Community Character Education Impact," *Jurnal Ilmu Dakwah* 45, no. 1 (2025): 87–106.

²⁶ Muhammad Khasanul Huda, "Strategi Dakwah Lintas Budaya Dalam Menghormati Keberagaman Dan Membangun Komunikasi Efektif," *Meyarsa: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi dan Dakwah* 5, no. 2 (2024): 158–168.

²⁷ Rizki et al., "Analysis of Digital Technology on Da ' Wah."



Digital platforms also offer multimedia tools, videos, animations, infographics, podcasts, and live streams—that can simplify and dramatize complex theological concepts. When integrated with strong rhetorical design, these tools help translate *logos* into visual and auditory understanding, while *pathos* is amplified through music, pacing, and storytelling. This multimodal approach is especially effective for audiences who learn best through audiovisual media.

Interactive features such as live chats, comment sections, and polls allow preachers to receive real-time feedback, respond to questions, and adjust their messages promptly. This two-way interaction strengthens the *ethos* of the speaker, as it demonstrates responsiveness, transparency, and a willingness to clarify, rather than merely “broadcast.” Networks of scholars, influencers, and lay Muslims can also collaborate across platforms, sharing resources, coordinating initiatives, and amplifying positive messages.

Finally, digital analytics help communicators segment audiences by age, region, language, and interest, enabling them to tailor content and style more precisely. This strategic targeting enhances the effectiveness of rhetorical and public-speaking choices, ensuring that messages are not only broadly accessible but also contextually relevant.

To harness these opportunities while navigating the risks, da’wah communicators must adapt their skills in several key ways: Concise yet substantial messaging: Condense complex ideas without sacrificing depth, using clear openings, well-structured arguments, and memorable conclusions. Multimodal communication: Combine speech with visual elements, subtitles, and short graphics to enhance comprehension and retention. Authenticity and transparency: Speak with sincerity and self-awareness, acknowledge limitations, and invite dialogue to build trust in skeptical online environments. Cultural sensitivity and contextualization: Adapt language, examples, and references to diverse audiences while preserving core Islamic values. Digital literacy and technical competence: Master platform-specific features, formats, and algorithms to maximize reach and interaction. Ethical communication online: Uphold honesty, respect, and humility in all digital interactions, aligning online practice with the wisdom-based, morally grounded foundations of Islamic rhetoric.

In sum, the digital era presents both profound challenges and exciting opportunities for Islamic da’wah. Communicators who adapt their rhetoric and public speaking to this context, innovatively yet ethically, can effectively connect timeless Islamic teachings with the realities of contemporary, digitally mediated life.

Case Study: The Rhetorical Style of Ustadz Abdul Somad (UAS)

Ustadz Abdul Somad (UAS) is a prominent contemporary Islamic preacher whose sermons are intellectually satisfying, morally compelling, and emotionally touching, thanks to the effective synergy of his rhetoric and public speaking skills.

He builds strong ethos (credibility) through his deep scholarly background, recognizable voice, and sincere demeanor. His respectful tone and authentic religious knowledge foster trust and respect among his audience. For pathos (emotional appeal), he often uses storytelling, personal anecdotes, and humor to connect emotionally with listeners. This empathetic approach evokes feelings of hope, humility, and spiritual motivation, making the *da'wah* not only informative but also inspiring.²⁸

Beyond his rhetorical appeals, UAS's public speaking techniques are equally crucial to his effectiveness. He speaks with clarity and at a measured pace, ensuring his message is easily understood by listeners from diverse linguistic backgrounds. He frequently incorporates humor and colloquial language, making his talks lively and relatable, especially for younger audiences. Furthermore, his nonverbal communication—including expressive gestures and facial expressions amplifies his verbal messages and keeps the audience engaged. Finally, UAS skillfully adapts his tone, examples, and language depending on the audience, bridging the gap between scholarly knowledge and everyday concerns.

Case Study: The Rhetorical Style of Adi Hidayat

Ustadz Adi Hidayat is a renowned Islamic preacher and scholar in Indonesia, known for his distinctive rhetorical style that combines deep Islamic scholarship with clear, accessible, and engaging communication. His rhetorical approach emphasizes scholarly depth while ensuring his messages are understandable to a broader audience. He frequently references Qur'anic verses, prophetic traditions, and classical Islamic jurisprudence, thereby reinforcing his credibility (ethos) and appealing to the audience's logic (logos).

His speeches are characterized by calm and measured delivery, maintaining a composed tone that fosters thoughtful reflection among listeners. Unlike more emotive preaching styles, his approach appeals to audiences who prefer introspective and analytical presentations of Islamic teachings. While his style is primarily scholarly, he effectively integrates practical examples and occasional storytelling to connect theological concepts with everyday life. This technique adds an emotional appeal (pathos) that enriches his messages without detracting from their intellectual

²⁸ Pia Khoirotun Nisa et al., "Komunikasi Efektif Gaya Ceramah Ustadz Abdul Somad (UAS) Versus Adi Hidayat (UAH)," *WACANA: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Komunikasi* 23, no. 2 (2024): 317–326.

foundation. Overall, Adi Hidayat's rhetorical style is marked by its balance of academic depth, logical clarity, calm presentation, and empathetic engagement.²⁹

Rhetorical Style of Gus Baha

Gus Baha is known for his profound Islamic scholarship and a relaxed, humble speaking style. His rhetoric is characterized by deep theological insights delivered in a calm, measured tone, emphasizing clarity and logical coherence (*logos*). He often addresses complex religious concepts with simplicity and wisdom, making them accessible without losing depth. Gus Baha's credibility (*ethos*) is reinforced by his reputation as a respected scholar and his sincere, gentle manner. Though his approach is not overtly emotional, his sincerity and wit create a warm connection with audiences, inspiring thoughtful reflection and spiritual growth.³⁰

Rhetorical Style of Ustadz Hanan Attaki

Ustadz Hanan Attaki employs a casual, relatable style aimed mainly at younger audiences. His rhetoric is marked by conversational language, humor, and storytelling that address contemporary issues faced by youth such as *hijrah* (spiritual migration) and quarter-life challenges. He uses strong emotional appeal (*pathos*) to engage and motivate listeners, encouraging personal transformation and renewed faith through inspiration rather than formal scholarly discourse. Despite the informal style, he maintains credibility (*ethos*) by grounding his messages in authentic Islamic teachings. This energetic and accessible approach helps bridge traditional Islamic values with modern social realities for the youth.³¹

Islamic Rhetoric as a Tool for Education and Social Transformation

Besides functioning as a means of da'wah, rhetoric in Islam serves as a vital tool for moral education and social transformation. Through effective persuasive techniques, da'wah fosters collective awareness of fundamental values such as justice (*'adalah*), compassion (*rahmah*), brotherhood (*ukhuwah*), and social responsibility (*mas'uliyah*). Islamic rhetoric not only helps audiences intellectually comprehend religious teachings but also engages their emotions and spirituality, motivating genuine changes in attitudes and behavior.³²

²⁹ Nisa et al., "Komunikasi Efektif Gaya Ceramah Ustadz Abdul Somad (UAS) Versus Adi Hidayat (UAH)."

³⁰ Kristina et al., "Penyebaran Dakwah Gus Baha' Melalui Media Sosial Pada Lingkungan Mahasiswa UIN Salatiga," *KOMUNIDA : Media Komunikasi dan Dakwah* 13, no. 2 (2023): 174–192.

³¹ Muhamad Parhan et al., "Analisis Metode Baru Dakwah Hanan Attaki Di Era Konvergensi Media:(Studi Deskriptif Pada Akun Instagram @Hanan_Attaki) Analisis Metode Baru Dakwah Hanan Attaki Di Era Konvergensi MediA (Studi Deskriptif Pada Akun Instagram @hanan_attaki)," *Komunida: Media Komunikasi dan Dakwah* 10 (2020): 175–196, <http://ejurnal.iainpare.ac.id/index.php/komunida/index>.

³² Suud Sarim Karimullah et al., "Da'wah for Social Justice: Creating Awareness of Social Issues Through a Religious Approach," *Jurnal Dakwah Risalah* 34, no. 2 (2023): 110.

At its core, Islamic rhetoric operates on multiple levels to promote transformation. Cognitively, it clarifies and presents religious texts and principles in a clear, logical, and coherent manner. Yet, its influence extends beyond the intellectual to deeply touch the listener's emotional and spiritual dimensions. Through heartfelt, empathetic, and inspiring communication, rhetoric encourages the internalization of faith values, sparking authentic shifts in mindset, motivation, and conduct.

Storytelling stands out as one of the most powerful rhetorical methods in Islamic tradition for educating and transforming. Prophetic narratives, anecdotes from the lives of the Companions, and historical episodes convey timeless lessons vividly. Delivered with eloquence and inspiration, these stories do more than impart information; they awaken listeners' sense of purpose, resilience, and moral responsibility. For instance, recounting the perseverance and sacrifices of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his followers during trying times not only imparts historical knowledge but also instills the spirit of struggle (*jihad*) in pursuit of justice and ethical renewal.

Moreover, Islamic rhetoric encourages self-reflection and spiritual renewal by urging individuals to examine their faith, behavior, and social relationships. Ethical exhortations and calls for repentance challenge complacency and promote continual self-purification (*tazkiyah*). Personal transformation thus fuels broader social change, as rejuvenated individuals help build just, compassionate, and unified communities.³³

Islamic rhetorical discourse emphasizes dialogue, inclusivity, and compassion, vital elements for fostering harmony in diverse societies. By fostering respectful dialogue and mutual understanding, rhetoric helps resolve conflicts, alleviate social tensions, and nurture peaceful coexistence. In summary, Islamic rhetoric transcends mere persuasion in da'wah; it is a versatile and potent instrument for educating the heart and mind, awakening collective moral consciousness, and advancing social transformation grounded in Islamic principles. When applied skillfully, it inspires not only the acquisition of knowledge but also profound spiritual and ethical renewal, reflected in both individual behavior and community progress.

Given the vital roles that rhetoric and public speaking play in Islamic da'wah, several practical implications and strategic recommendations arise for its development in the modern era. First, da'wah curricula should ideally incorporate intensive training in rhetorical techniques and public speaking skills. This would equip dai (preachers) with effective and ethical communication strategies necessary for impactful and responsible messaging.

³³ Suud Sarim Karimullah, "The Influence of Humanist Da'wah in Social Transformation and Social Change in Muslim Societies," *Syiar: Jurnal Komunikasi dan Penyiaran Islam* 3, no. 2 (2023): 51–70.

Second, the utilization of digital technology is essential. Preachers and da'wah institutions must develop competencies in leveraging social media platforms, video applications, podcasts, and other digital tools. This enables them to reach diverse and wide-ranging audiences efficiently and adaptively, meeting people where they are in today's technology-driven world.

Third, da'wah rhetoric must be designed with contextual and cultural sensitivity. Tailoring messages to the social and cultural backgrounds of specific audiences makes them more relatable and easier to accept, without compromising core Islamic principles. Such cultural contextualization enhances relevance and resonance in diverse communities.

Fourth, the ethics of Islamic communication must underpin rhetorical practice. The development and application of rhetorical skills should always adhere to Islamic ethical values, firmly rejecting manipulative tactics and instead emphasizing honesty, empathy, and respect for human dignity. Lastly, interdisciplinary collaboration offers substantial benefits for modern da'wah. Combining insights and methodologies from communication sciences, psychology, theology, and social sciences can help formulate comprehensive and effective strategies for da'wah communication that address both spiritual and societal dimensions.

CONCLUSION

Based on an in-depth analysis, it can be concluded that rhetoric and public speaking are two complementary and vital elements in Islamic da'wah. Rhetoric provides the strategic framework in the *what* and *how* of message design and structure rooted in Islamic principles of wisdom (*hikmah*), good advice (*mau'izhah hasanah*), and gentle debate (*jidat bil-latif*), ensuring that persuasion remains ethically grounded and intellectually coherent. Public speaking, in turn, is the practical instrument that brings this strategy to life before an audience, encompassing body language, vocal modulation, and the ability to adapt tone and style to different listeners. Together, they enable the da'i to deliver messages that are not only logically structured and theologically sound but also emotionally resonant and socially transformative, thereby reaching both the *intellect* and the *heart* of the audience. In the digital era, where information overload, short attention spans, and cultural diversity are prominent, Muslim communicators must be more innovative and strategic, crafting messages that are concise yet substantial, authentic, and contextually sensitive to maintain the relevance and impact of da'wah across diverse platforms and audiences.

This study is not without limitations. First, the analysis relies predominantly on theoretical and textual sources and selected case studies of contemporary preachers (e.g., Ustaz Abdul Somad, Ustaz Adi Hidayat, Gus Baha, and Ustaz Hanan Attaki), which may not fully reflect the diversity of preaching styles, contexts, and regional practices across the Muslim world. Second, it focuses on rhetorical and public-speaking aspects without direct empirical observation or

audience-based measurement, so the actual impact of these strategies on behavioral change remains largely interpretive. Third, the discussion on the digital-era dimension is largely conceptual, lacking detailed quantitative or platform-specific data on audience engagement and reception. For further research, it is recommended to: (1) expand the case-study scope by including a broader range of preachers and contexts, (2) apply mixed-method approaches combining content analysis with audience surveys or interviews to measure attitudinal and behavioral responses, and (3) investigate platform-specific da'wah performance using digital analytics to explore how different rhetorical and public-speaking choices affect reach, engagement, and retention across social media and streaming platforms.

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