



The Construction of Religious Messages: Objectives of Da'wah Language Styles in Undergraduate Theses

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: This study aims to identify the purposes of using da'wah language styles in undergraduate theses of students from the Da'wah Management Study Program and to examine their role in supporting da'wah messages, religious values, social values, and character development in academic writing.

Methodology: This study used qualitative research methods with an interpretive approach. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and documentation. The research instruments included interview guidelines, document analysis sheets, and coding matrices. The data sources consisted of 20 graduates and 114 undergraduate thesis manuscripts from the Da'wah Management Study Program at FDK UIN Walisongo Semarang in 2025.

Main Findings: The findings show that da'wah language styles in undergraduate theses include persuasive, empathetic, religious, contextual, and ethical expressions. These styles function to strengthen arguments, convey da'wah messages, build author credibility, and represent values of integrity, responsibility, empathy, social awareness, and ethical communication in academic writing.

Novelty/Originality of this study: This study expands da'wah language research from oral and digital communication into academic writing. It introduces undergraduate theses as a medium for internalizing religious and character values in higher education. The study demonstrates that scientific writing can integrate academic reasoning, da'wah communication, social values, and student character development through ethical and responsible language practices.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Da'wah refers to activities aimed at conveying Islamic teachings to society to promote positive changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. Da'wah involves theological content and a systematic communication process that connects Islamic teachings with the realities faced by society [1]. As an activity dedicated to communicating Islamic messages, da'wah relies on language as its primary instrument. The language of da'wah must not only provide religious information but also persuade audiences to understand, accept, and practice Islamic values in their daily lives [2].

Da'wah also serves as a central mechanism for disseminating Islamic teachings and establishing communication between the *da'i*, or preacher, and the *mad'u*, or audience. Its success depends not only on the

accuracy of the religious content but also on how the message is formulated and communicated. The language style used by the *da'i* plays an essential role in making religious messages understandable, relevant, and acceptable to different audiences. Therefore, effective language can strengthen audience comprehension, emotional engagement, and acceptance of da'wah messages [3].

Religious values in da'wah have a close relationship with social values. Islamic teachings do not only regulate individual faith and ritual practices. They also encourage honesty, justice, responsibility, compassion, mutual respect, tolerance, cooperation, and concern for disadvantaged groups. These principles become social values when individuals apply them in interpersonal relationships, academic activities, institutions, and community life. Therefore, da'wah should not separate spiritual development from social responsibility. It should translate religious principles into attitudes and actions that contribute to social harmony, justice, human dignity, and public welfare.

Islamic education also positions religious values as a foundation for developing respectful and socially responsible behavior. The internalization of Islamic teachings can support tolerance, respect for diversity, anti-discriminatory attitudes, and constructive relationships among members of society [4]. From the perspective of *maqasid al-sharia*, religious education should support the holistic development of human beings in intellectual, emotional, moral, religious, and social dimensions. This approach connects religious commitment with the protection of human dignity, social justice, and collective well-being [5]. Thus, the language of da'wah can function as an instrument of religious communication and social education. It can help audiences understand how Islamic principles should guide their relationships with other people and their responses to social problems.

Da'wah communication is therefore a crucial element in disseminating Islamic teachings. It focuses on the substance of the message and the persuasive, contextual, ethical, and communicative methods used to deliver it. From the perspective of Islamic communication, language functions as a strategic tool for conveying meaning, shaping impressions, influencing interpretation, and encouraging audiences to internalize religious and social values. Da'wah communication can also support community empowerment. In the Indonesian context, da'wah not only create opportunities for Islamic values to enter public discourse. It can also encourage social transformation by strengthening public awareness, community participation, solidarity, and concern for vulnerable groups. Effective da'wah should therefore help audiences connect religious understanding with practical responses to poverty, inequality, social conflict, educational problems, and other community needs [6], [7].

Language plays a central role in determining the effectiveness of Islamic da'wah. In addition to transmitting religious information, language serves as a strategic instrument that influences audience comprehension, emotional responses, and behavioral orientation [8]. The *da'i* must select words, sentence structures, rhetorical techniques, illustrations, and forms of address that suit the audience's social and cultural background. Inappropriate language may create misunderstanding or resistance, while contextual and respectful language can strengthen trust and audience engagement.

Several previous studies have demonstrated the importance of language style in religious communication. Effective da'wah language requires appropriate diction, an engaging rhetorical structure, and stylistic strategies that reflect the intended objectives of da'wah. Linguistic studies of da'wah show that metaphor, repetition, parallelism, analogy, and formal or informal expressions influence the attractiveness and clarity of religious messages [9]. Religious extension workers who used polite, persuasive, and socially contextual language achieved greater audience acceptance. Their findings indicate that successful da'wah does not depend solely on religious content. It also depends on the linguistic strategies used by the preacher to build understanding and maintain positive relationships with the audience [10].

The integration of cultural elements, humor, and interpersonal approaches in Islamic preaching could strengthen the emotional relationship between preachers and listeners. Their findings suggest that linguistic style should not be regarded merely as a form of expression. Instead, it functions as an adaptive da'wah strategy that must correspond to the audience's cultural and social context [11]. Previous studies have also shown that media characteristics and audience profiles influence the language style used in da'wah. Research on da'wah communication through Instagram indicates that combining formal and informal language can broaden message reach and encourage audience engagement [12]. The selection of language style in digital media must consider platform characteristics, user behavior, message length, visual elements, and interaction patterns.

The transformation of digital media has also changed the structure of da'wah communication. Digital platforms encourage *da'i* to communicate in a more interactive, audience-oriented, and contextual manner. Arifin et al. found that da'wah blogs could function as dialogical spaces where audiences receive religious information and provide responses, questions, and opinions [13]. This interaction transforms audiences from passive recipients into active participants in religious communication. Studies of da'wah posters on social media have also shown that diction and language style play essential roles in constructing meaning and attracting audience attention. Communicative language that matches the characteristics of visual media can reinforce da'wah messages through the integration of verbal and visual elements [14]. These findings confirm that language style should adapt to the communication medium and the social characteristics of the intended audience.

However, most previous studies have examined da'wah language in sermons, public lectures, social media content, blogs, and visual communication. Limited attention has been undergraduate theses written by students of the Da'wah Management Study Program. Academic writing has distinctive characteristics because it requires logical reasoning, verifiable evidence, clear argumentation, ethical citation practices, and formal communication. Therefore, examining da'wah language in undergraduate theses can reveal how students combine religious communication principles with academic language conventions.

An undergraduate thesis, or *skripsi*, is a scholarly work prepared by undergraduate students to investigate a specific issue based on systematic research and the applicable academic writing guidelines [15]. It serves as a capstone academic activity that enables students to integrate theoretical knowledge, methodological competence, critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and scientific communication. The thesis-writing process also requires students to formulate research problems, collect and analyze evidence, evaluate previous studies, and communicate conclusions responsibly [16].

Nevertheless, a thesis does not only function as evidence of students' scientific competence. It can also function as a medium for character development. Indonesian Law Number 12 of 2012 concerning Higher Education states that higher education should develop abilities, shape character, promote noble conduct, and encourage responsible academic behavior. The law also requires students to exercise academic freedom by prioritizing reasoning, moral conduct, and responsibility within an academic culture [17]. Therefore, thesis preparation should be understood as an educational process that develops students' intellectual competence and ethical character.

Academic honesty represents one of the main character values developed through thesis writing. Students must present original ideas, report data accurately, acknowledge the contributions of other scholars, avoid plagiarism, and distinguish their arguments from cited information. Responsibility appears in the student's commitment to applying appropriate methods, checking the accuracy of evidence, completing research procedures, and considering the possible consequences of published claims. Communication ethics appears in the use of respectful, non-manipulative, inclusive, and accountable language. Social awareness also influences academic writing. Students demonstrate social awareness when they select relevant research problems, recognize the experiences of affected communities, avoid harmful representations, and formulate recommendations that respond to social needs. Consequently, a thesis can become a learning medium through which students practice honesty, responsibility, respect, fairness, ethical communication, and concern for society.

The International Center for Academic Integrity identifies honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage as fundamental values of academic integrity [18]. UNESCO also explains that integrity in education includes honesty, accountability, and fairness, which create trust within educational institutions [19]. Character education scholars further argue that universities share responsibility for developing students' intellectual, moral, civic, and professional character. These perspectives indicate that academic activities, including thesis writing, should not focus only on producing knowledge. They should also cultivate responsible individuals who can use knowledge for the benefit of society.

In the context of the Da'wah Management Study Program, thesis writing has an additional educational function. Students do not only communicate scientific findings. They also interpret issues related to Islamic communication, institutions, communities, leadership, management, and social empowerment. Their linguistic choices may reflect how they understand and communicate religious and social values. The use of persuasive, ethical, contextual, and socially sensitive language can demonstrate the integration of da'wah competence with academic responsibility.

Cultural context also influences linguistic choices in da'wah. Indonesia consists of diverse ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and social communities. Students who write about da'wah must understand local values and use language that respects differences. Gudykunst's cross-cultural communication framework emphasizes the importance of cultural understanding and adaptation in reducing misunderstanding and building effective communication. Therefore, da'wah language in academic writing should communicate Islamic principles without ignoring the social and cultural characteristics of the communities discussed in the research.

Despite the importance of these dimensions, existing research still shows two related limitations. First, studies of da'wah language largely focus on spoken preaching and digital media. They rarely examine undergraduate theses as a distinctive form of da'wah communication. Second, studies of academic writing generally focus on structure, methodology, language accuracy, plagiarism, or students' writing difficulties. They rarely analyze academic writing as a medium for internalizing religious values, social values, communication ethics, and student character within Islamic higher education.

More specifically, previous research has not adequately explained how da'wah language styles in student theses may simultaneously perform several functions. These functions include communicating Islamic messages, maintaining academic objectivity, presenting socially relevant arguments, demonstrating ethical communication, and reflecting values such as honesty, responsibility, respect, and social awareness. This gap limits the understanding of undergraduate theses as both scientific products and educational media for developing students' academic and social character.

The novelty of this study lies in its integration of da'wah communication analysis, linguistic style, academic character, and social-value internalization within the context of undergraduate theses. Unlike previous studies that mainly examine language style as a rhetorical device, this study views da'wah language style as part of a broader academic and educational practice. It examines how linguistic choices can support the communication of religious messages while reflecting academic ethics and sensitivity to social issues. The study does not claim to measure students' character development directly. Instead, it analyzes the textual function and value orientations represented through the language style used in their theses.

This research is urgent because undergraduate theses represent one of the most comprehensive academic products produced by students before graduation. Weaknesses in language use, ethical communication, social relevance, and value orientation can reduce the quality and public usefulness of student research. In contrast, theses that combine scientific rigor, communicative language, academic integrity, and social awareness can contribute to the development of responsible graduates and strengthen the social relevance of Islamic higher education. The findings can also provide an empirical basis for evaluating thesis-writing guidance in the Da'wah Management Study Program. Lecturers and study-program administrators may use the results to improve writing guidelines, supervision practices, assessment indicators, and learning activities. These improvements can encourage students to produce theses that meet academic standards and communicate Islamic and social values responsibly.

Therefore, this study aims to identify and explain the purposes of using da'wah language styles in undergraduate theses written by students of the Da'wah Management Study Program. It specifically examines how these language styles support the communication of da'wah messages, reflect religious and social values, and represent the principles of academic honesty, responsibility, communication ethics, and social awareness. The study is expected to contribute theoretically to da'wah communication, academic literacy, and character education. Practically, it is expected to support the development of thesis-writing practices that are scientific, ethical, communicative, socially relevant, and consistent with the educational objectives of Islamic higher education.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1. Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design with an interpretive approach. Qualitative research enables researchers to construct meaning through a careful interpretation of interviews, documents, and social practices [20]. This approach was used to identify the purposes of da'wah language style and their role in supporting da'wah messages in undergraduate theses.

2.2. Research Subjects and Data Sources

The research subjects consisted of 20 graduates of the Da'wah Management Study Program at UIN Walisongo Semarang from graduation 96, 97, and 98 in 2025. The participants were selected purposively they had completed theses included in the research corpus and were willing to explain their language choices. The primary data consisted of interview results from the 20 graduates' thesis manuscripts from the same graduation period. Books, journal articles, thesis-writing guidelines, and other relevant documents were used as secondary data.

2.3. Research Instruments

The researcher served as the main research instrument. Supporting instruments included a semi-structured interview guide, a document analysis sheet, a recording device, and a data coding matrix.

Table 1. Research Instrument Grid

Research Aspect	Indicators	Data Source	Technique
Da'wah language styles	Diction, sentence structure, repetition, metaphor, persuasive and contextual expressions	Thesis manuscripts	Documentation
Purposes of language use	Informing, explaining, persuading, motivating, advising, and inviting	Graduates and theses	Interviews and documentation
Support for da'wah messages	Clarity, relevance, persuasiveness, and suitability for the audience	Graduates and theses	Interviews and documentation
Religious and social values	Honesty, responsibility, justice, tolerance, social concern, and respect	Graduates and theses	Interviews and documentation

Communication ethics	Respectful language, objective arguments, responsible claims, and proper source acknowledgment	Thesis manuscripts	Documentation
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2.4. Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through documentation and semi-structured interviews. Documentation was conducted by examining relevant words, sentences, and paragraphs in 114 thesis manuscripts. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 graduates to explore their reasons for using particular language styles and their perceptions of how those styles supported da'wah messages. With the participants' consent, the interviews were recorded and transcribed. The interview findings were then compared with the language found in the thesis manuscripts.

2.5. Data Analysis Techniques

The data were analyzed using Yin's five-phase qualitative analysis cycle [21]:

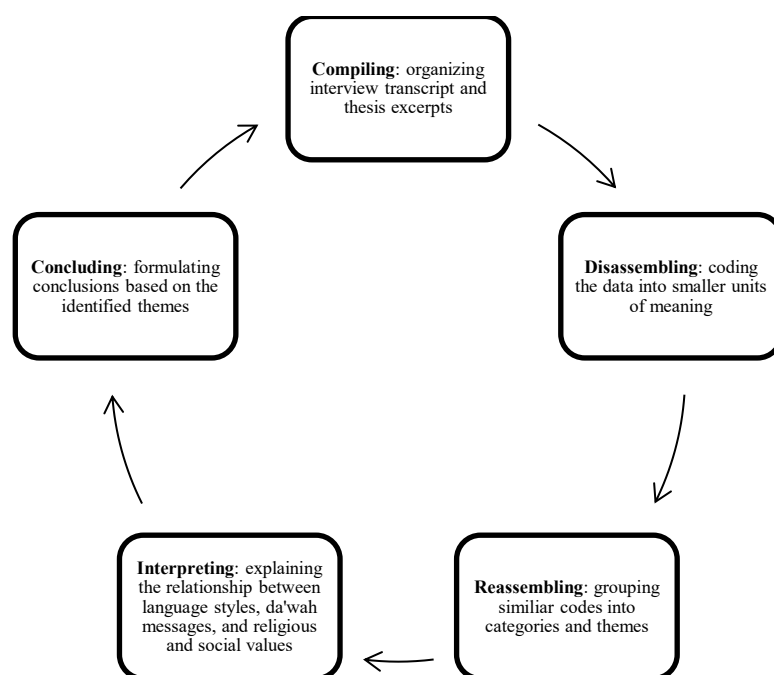


Figure 1. Five-phase qualitative analysis cycle

The trustworthiness of the findings was strengthened through source and technique triangulation by comparing interviews findings with documentary evidence.

2.6. Research Procedures

The research was conducted through the following stages:

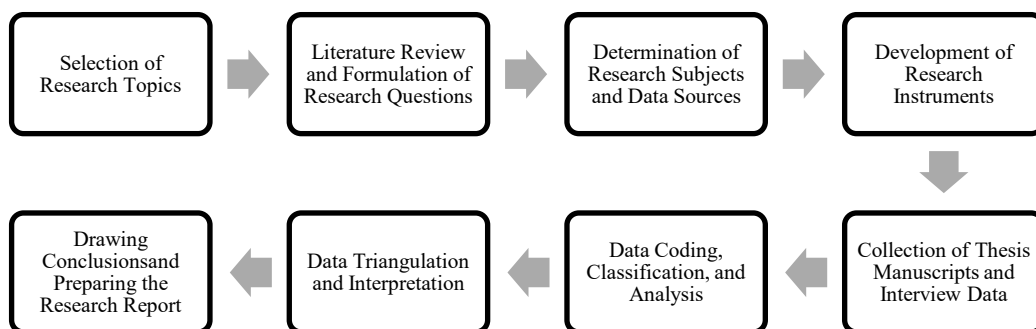


Figure 2. Research Procedures

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A thesis is not merely an academic document designed to fulfill graduation requirements, but also a medium through which students construct knowledge, communicate values, and demonstrate their intellectual and moral identity. The findings of this study indicate that students of the Da'wah Management Study Program do not position language only as a medium for transferring information, but also as an instrument for conveying religious values, ethical orientations, and social meanings.

The analysis of students' theses reveals that da'wah language styles appear through several communicative elements, including invitations, advice, religious references, evidence-based arguments, and polite expressions. These findings demonstrate that language in academic writing performs a broader function than linguistic expression. It becomes a medium through which students connect scientific discourse with Islamic values and social responsibility.

Previous studies explain that da'wah communication is not limited to delivering religious messages but also involves ethical considerations regarding the choice of language, the relationship between communicator and audience, and the social impact of communication [7], [9]. Therefore, the use of da'wah language style in scientific writing should not only be interpreted as a rhetorical strategy to improve the effectiveness of Islamic message delivery but also as a process of character formation.

The findings of this research indicate that the three main themes identified: emotional persuasion, strengthening arguments, and credibility, represent more than communication functions. These themes reflect the internalization of character values within students' academic practices. Emotional persuasion represents empathy, compassion, and sensitivity toward others. Strengthening arguments represents intellectual responsibility, academic honesty, and responsible knowledge construction. Meanwhile, credibility reflects integrity, communication ethics, and consistency between knowledge and moral action.

This interpretation is relevant to the concept of character education in higher education, where learning processes are expected not only to develop intellectual competence but also to cultivate ethical awareness, responsibility, and moral character. Character formation occurs through academic experiences, including writing, research, discussion, and scholarly communication [22]. Furthermore, academic integrity is not limited to avoiding plagiarism but also includes honesty, responsibility, fairness, and accountability in producing and communicating knowledge [23], [24].

Therefore, scientific writing among Da'wah Management students can be understood as a process of value internalization. Students do not merely produce academic texts; they practice communicating knowledge based on religious principles, ethical awareness, and social responsibility.

This awareness appears in the statements of participants:

"I want the thesis to be not just an ordinary research report, but also have the value of da'wah."

(Participant 4)

"Even though it's scientific, it's still scientific. Because we are Da'wah Management students."

(Participant 2)

These statements demonstrate that students perceive their theses as representations of their identity. The thesis is not only a requirement for academic completion but also a reflection of their responsibility as students who study and practice da'wah communication.

Furthermore, students recognize that religious references within scientific writing should not function merely as decorative elements. Instead, religious sources become ethical foundations that guide interpretation and argumentation. One participant explained:

"I use this verse not just as a decoration, but to strengthen that what I am researching is guidance in Islam."

(Participant 7)

This statement indicates that students attempt to integrate revelation and scientific reasoning. Such integration reflects the relationship between religious knowledge and rational inquiry, where Islamic principles provide moral direction while academic methods provide analytical frameworks [25].

The findings also demonstrate that da'wah language style functions as a bridge between theological values, scientific reasoning, and social competence. Through the process of writing, students learn to communicate ideas responsibly, respect audiences, and consider the consequences of their statements. These abilities are important components of social competence, including tolerance, respectful communication, cooperation, and responsible participation in society [26].

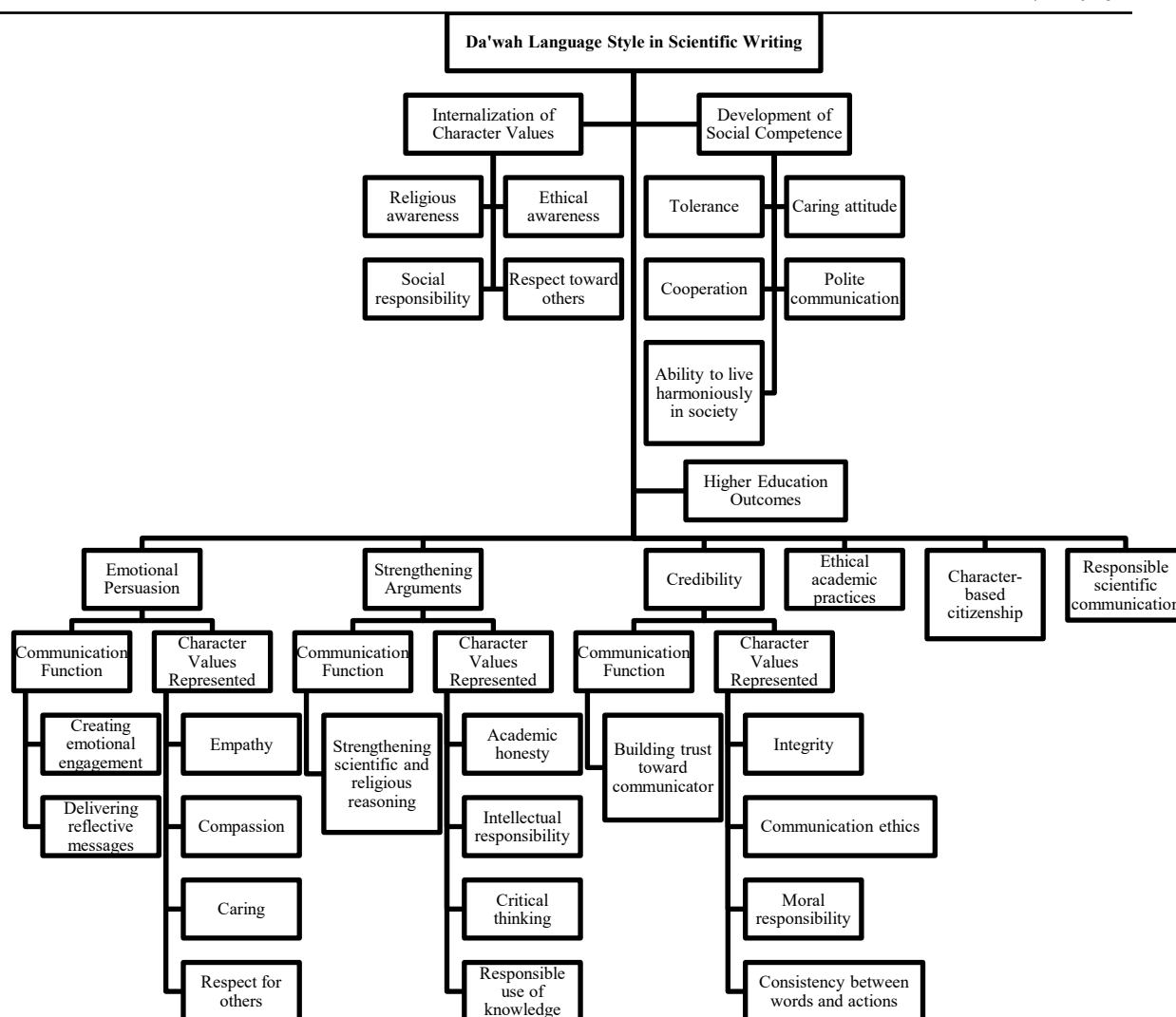


Figure 3. Conceptual Model of Da'wah Language Style, Character Internalization, and Social Competence

3.1. Emotional Persuasion

The first theme identified in this study is emotional persuasion, which refers to the use of language strategies aimed at creating emotional engagement between the writer and the reader. In the context of da'wah communication, emotional persuasion is commonly associated with efforts to touch the audience's feelings, encourage reflection, and deliver religious messages in a meaningful manner. The findings indicate that students employ emotional persuasion through the use of advice, reflective expressions, religious values, and human-oriented narratives. These expressions are not constructed as direct instructions or coercive statements but as communicative approaches that encourage readers to understand and reflect on the message being conveyed.

This finding is consistent with the concept of *mau'idzah hasanah*, which emphasizes the importance of delivering advice through wisdom, kindness, and meaningful communication. Najih explains that *mau'idzah hasanah* represents a method of da'wah that seeks to influence individuals through moral reflection and gentle communication rather than pressure or force [27]. In the context of students' academic writing, the application of *mau'idzah hasanah* demonstrates that students understand communication as a process of building awareness. The purpose is not merely to make readers accept an argument, but also to encourage reflection regarding religious and social values.

One participant explained:

"I don't directly advise, but my language directs so that the reader feels and is touched."
(Participant 3)

This statement indicates that students consciously avoid confrontational communication. Instead, they construct messages that allow readers to interpret and internalize values independently. Such an approach

demonstrates sensitivity toward the audience because students consider not only the content of the message but also the emotional experience of the reader.

This finding supports previous studies emphasizing that persuasive da'wah communication requires appropriate language selection and consideration of audience characteristics. Effective da'wah does not depend solely on the strength of the message but also on the communicator's ability to build meaningful relationships with the audience through ethical communication strategies [28], [29]. Furthermore, research on persuasive strategies in da'wah communication demonstrates that emotional aspects play an important role in strengthening understanding and acceptance of religious messages. Persuasion becomes more meaningful when it combines emotional engagement with contextual interpretation and communication ethics [30].

However, this study expands previous findings by demonstrating that emotional persuasion in academic writing is not only related to communication effectiveness. Within the context of higher education, emotional persuasion reflects students' character development because the ability to communicate empathetically represents an important social value. Through the practice of writing reflective and considerate messages, students develop awareness that scientific communication involves relationships between individuals. The writer is not only responsible for delivering information but also responsible for considering how the information influences readers.

This process reflects the development of empathy, which is an essential component of character formation. Arthur explains that education plays an important role in developing character through practices that encourage moral awareness, responsibility, and consideration of others [22]. Therefore, emotional persuasion in students' theses can be understood as a form of character internalization through academic communication. The emotional dimension is also reflected in students' efforts to incorporate religious values into the interpretation of research findings. Students do not only present empirical results but attempt to connect these findings with broader moral implications.

One participant stated:

"If I write the closing of the discussion, I try to have nuances of advice, so that the thesis remains da'wah."

(Participant 5)

This statement shows that students perceive academic writing as more than a scientific reporting activity. The conclusion section becomes an opportunity to communicate ethical reflections and social meanings derived from research findings. The use of emotional persuasion also demonstrates the relationship between religious values and social values. Although rooted in Islamic principles, the messages conveyed through students' writing contain universal values such as caring, respect, responsibility, and concern for others. These values contribute to the development of students' moral character and social awareness [26].

In addition, emotional persuasion reflects the humanistic dimension of da'wah communication. Shihab emphasizes that contemporary da'wah requires approaches that consider humanity, inclusiveness, and social harmony rather than focusing only on delivering normative messages [24]. Therefore, emotional persuasion in da'wah-oriented scientific writing should not be interpreted merely as a rhetorical technique equivalent to emotional appeal. Instead, it represents a communicative practice through which students develop empathy, ethical awareness, and responsibility toward others.

The findings suggest that emotional persuasion functions as a bridge between religious knowledge and social interaction. Through empathetic language practices, students learn that scientific communication is not separated from moral responsibility. Academic writing becomes a medium where students practice expressing knowledge with sensitivity, respect, and concern for society.

3.2. Strengthening Arguments

The second theme identified in this study is strengthening arguments, which refers to students' efforts to construct convincing academic discussions through the integration of theoretical perspectives, empirical evidence, and Islamic references. In the context of da'wah-oriented academic writing, strengthening arguments is not only related to the ability to persuade readers but also reflects the responsibility of students in producing knowledge based on ethical and intellectual foundations. The findings indicate that students use religious references, particularly Qur'anic verses and Islamic concepts, as supporting foundations for their arguments. However, these references are not positioned merely as complementary elements or symbolic expressions. Instead, students attempt to connect religious values with scientific analysis so that the arguments presented have both academic and spiritual relevance.

One participant explained:

"I use this verse not just as a decoration, but to strengthen that what I am researching is guidance in Islam."

(Participant 7)

This statement demonstrates that students understand religious references as sources of meaning and ethical orientation. The use of verses is not intended only to increase the persuasive effect of the writing, but also to provide a moral framework for interpreting research findings.

Another participant stated:

"I choose a postulate that is in accordance with the context of the discussion, so that the reader does not think that it is just a stick, but really becomes a reinforcement."

(Participant 2)

This statement highlights students' awareness that religious arguments must be selected and interpreted contextually. Students recognize that inappropriate use of religious references may weaken academic credibility. Therefore, they attempt to ensure that religious arguments are relevant to the research topic and connected with scientific discussions. This finding supports previous studies on da'wah communication, which explain that effective Islamic communication requires not only message delivery but also appropriate argument construction. Da'wah messages become more meaningful when communicators consider logical reasoning, contextual understanding, and ethical communication principles [28], [29].

From the perspective of language and rhetoric, strengthening arguments is related to the function of language style in creating clarity, emphasis, and persuasive power. Keraf explains that language style contributes to the effectiveness of communication because it helps writers organize ideas and strengthen the meaning of messages conveyed [31]. However, the findings of this study extend this understanding by demonstrating that argumentative strength in academic da'wah writing also reflects students' moral responsibility. In this research context, strengthening arguments represents three important character dimensions.

First, it represents intellectual responsibility. Students are required to construct arguments based on appropriate theories, evidence, and relevant religious interpretations. They cannot rely solely on personal opinions or unsupported claims because academic writing requires systematic reasoning. Second, it represents academic honesty. The process of selecting references, interpreting religious texts, and presenting arguments requires accuracy and responsibility. Students demonstrate awareness that knowledge production must be conducted honestly and transparently. Academic integrity involves not only avoiding plagiarism but also ensuring that knowledge is communicated accurately and responsibly [23], [24]. Third, strengthening arguments represents ethical reasoning. Students attempt to balance rational analysis with religious values. Scientific arguments are not separated from moral considerations because knowledge is understood as having social consequences.

This finding is consistent with Rokibullah's argument that contemporary da'wah strategies require integration between classical rhetorical principles and Qur'anic communication values. Effective da'wah requires arguments that are intellectually convincing while maintaining ethical and spiritual foundations [32]. Furthermore, Salikin et al. demonstrate that persuasive da'wah strategies require adaptation to audience conditions and the ability of communicators to construct messages based on social realities [33]. This supports the finding that students do not simply quote religious sources but attempt to contextualize them within academic discussions.

The integration between reason and revelation is also reflected in students' writing practices. Bhat and Bisati explain that Islamic education encourages a relationship between rational inquiry and revelation, where reasoning functions together with spiritual guidance in developing comprehensive understanding [25]. Similarly, students in this study attempt to combine scientific analysis and Islamic principles rather than treating them as separate domains. The triangulation between interview data and thesis documents further demonstrates that students consciously attempt to maintain academic and religious balance. They recognize that strong arguments require both scientific validity and ethical justification.

Therefore, strengthening arguments in da'wah-oriented academic writing should not be interpreted merely as a rhetorical strategy to convince readers. It represents a process of character formation in which students practice responsibility, honesty, critical thinking, and ethical use of knowledge. Through this process, scientific writing becomes a learning environment where students develop not only academic competence but also moral awareness. The ability to construct arguments responsibly prepares students to participate in broader social contexts where knowledge must be communicated with integrity and accountability.

3.3. Credibility

The third theme identified in this study is credibility, which refers to the ability of students to establish trust through their academic writing. In the context of communication studies, credibility is commonly associated with the concept of *ethos*, where the trustworthiness of a communicator influences the acceptance of messages by the audience. However, the findings of this study indicate that credibility in da'wah-oriented scientific writing extends beyond rhetorical effectiveness. It represents the manifestation of students' character values, particularly integrity, communication ethics, moral responsibility, and consistency between knowledge and action.

The analysis of thesis manuscripts demonstrates that students construct credibility through several strategies, including the use of reliable references, responsible argumentation, respectful language choices, and consistency between the values conveyed and the communication approach applied. These practices indicate that students understand academic writing not only as a process of delivering information but also as a representation of personal and moral identity. In da'wah communication, credibility is closely related to the moral quality of the communicator. A message is not only evaluated based on its content but also based on the character and ethical position of the person delivering it. Hakim explains that Islamic da'wah communication requires harmony between the message, the communication method, and the moral responsibility of the communicator [34]. Therefore, credibility cannot be separated from ethical awareness.

This finding is also consistent with research on da'wah language styles, which shows that effective da'wah communication is characterized by appropriate diction, politeness, and communicative strategies that respect the audience [35]. In this study, these characteristics appear in students' academic writing through their efforts to avoid excessive claims, present arguments carefully, and maintain respectful expressions.

One participant explained:

"I want the reader to know that the author is also trying to be a part of the da'wah itself, not just writing about other people preaching."

(Participant 5)

This statement demonstrates that students perceive credibility as a reflection of personal involvement and moral commitment. They do not position themselves merely as observers who analyze da'wah phenomena, but as individuals who are also responsible for representing the values they discuss. Therefore, credibility functions as a form of ethical modeling. Students demonstrate that knowledge should be accompanied by responsibility and that communication practices reflect the values held by the communicator. This process is important in higher education because students are expected to develop not only academic competence but also moral awareness and responsible behavior [22].

The interview data further reveal that students associate credibility with the responsibility to present knowledge accurately. One participant stated:

"I don't want this article to be too subjective, so I support every opinion with data and theory, so that readers believe that I am not just an opinion."

(Participant 3)

This statement indicates students' awareness that credibility requires evidence-based reasoning. They understand that academic trust cannot be built merely through persuasive language but must be supported by valid sources, systematic analysis, and responsible interpretation. This finding relates strongly to the concept of academic integrity. Academic integrity involves more than avoiding plagiarism; it includes honesty in presenting ideas, responsibility in using references, transparency in argument construction, and accountability for the knowledge produced [23]. Similarly, integrity among university students reflects personal responsibility and commitment to ethical academic practices [24]. In this context, credibility represents the connection between academic practice and character development. Students who carefully select references, construct arguments responsibly, and communicate respectfully are simultaneously practicing integrity and ethical responsibility.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research emphasizing that da'wah communication is not only concerned with delivering religious messages but also involves ethical considerations, contextual understanding, and appropriate communication strategies. The concept of *mau'idzah hasanah* highlights that da'wah messages should be conveyed through wisdom, kindness, and reflective approaches that encourage moral awareness [27]. Previous studies also demonstrate that persuasive da'wah communication requires effective language strategies, contextual arguments, and communicator credibility to create meaningful interactions with audiences [29], [30], [33]. This study extends these findings by demonstrating that such communication dimensions also function as mechanisms for character internalization within academic writing.

The contribution of this research to social science education lies in demonstrating that scientific writing is not merely a cognitive activity but also a social and ethical practice. The use of da'wah language styles in undergraduate theses encourages students to develop character values such as empathy, integrity, responsibility, academic honesty, and ethical communication. These values contribute to the development of students as individuals who are able to communicate knowledge responsibly and participate constructively in society. In this perspective, academic writing becomes a medium for character education because students learn to integrate knowledge, values, and social responsibility through communication practices [22], [26].

This research has practical implications for higher education, particularly in Islamic higher education institutions and Da'wah Management programs. The findings suggest that thesis writing guidance should not only focus on methodological accuracy and academic quality but also encourage ethical communication, responsible

use of knowledge, and awareness of the social implications of scientific writing. Through this approach, academic culture can support the development of graduates who possess both intellectual competence and moral responsibility [23], [26].

However, this study has several limitations. First, the research was conducted within one academic program and institutional context; therefore, the findings may not fully represent students from different disciplines or educational backgrounds. Second, the qualitative approach provides an in-depth understanding of students' perspectives and writing practices but does not quantitatively measure the relationship between da'wah language styles, character development, and social competence. Future research may expand the participants and employ mixed-method approaches to further examine how academic communication practices contribute to students' character formation and social development.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the use of da'wah language styles in undergraduate theses of Da'wah Management students serves purposes beyond rhetorical effectiveness in delivering Islamic messages. The identified language styles, including persuasive, empathetic, religious, contextual, and ethical expressions, function to strengthen academic arguments, convey da'wah values, build author credibility, and construct meaningful relationships between scientific writing and Islamic principles. Furthermore, this study demonstrates that da'wah language styles in academic writing represent a process of character value internalization. Through emotional persuasion, strengthening arguments, and credibility building, students reflect values of integrity, responsibility, empathy, social awareness, and ethical communication. Therefore, undergraduate theses can function not only as academic products but also as a medium for developing religious and social values within higher education. This study contributes to da'wah communication research by expanding its scope from oral and digital communication into scientific writing. It highlights that academic writing can integrate scientific reasoning, da'wah communication, social values, and student character development through responsible and ethical language practices. However, further research involving broader educational contexts and different disciplines is needed to explore the relationship between da'wah language styles, character development, and students' social competence.

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