

## Rhetorical Strategies in Arabic Digital Media: A Qualitative Analysis of Aristotle's Appeals in the Podcast *'/ki:f tan.d̤ʒaħ al.ʕa.la:.qa:t/* (How Relationships Succeed)

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Aljawhara Alnasser

*Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, Saudi Arabia*

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**Abstract:** This study examines the rhetorical strategies employed in the most viewed Arabic podcast on YouTube, *'/ki:f tan.d̤ʒaħ al.ʕa.la:.qa:t maʕa: ja:.sir al.hu.zi:.mi:, bud.ka:st fin.d̤ʒa:n/* ("How Relationships Succeed" with Yasser Al-Huzaimi), which has received over 110 million views. The dataset consists of a single episode lasting 3 hours and 3 minutes, professionally transcribed by a native Arabic transcriber to ensure accuracy and preserve linguistic and contextual nuances. The transcript was then imported into NVivo software for systematic qualitative analysis. Using thematic coding based on Aristotle's three rhetorical appeals—logos, ethos, and pathos—the study identified dominant modes of persuasion. Findings indicate that ethos emerged as the primary rhetorical appeal, reflecting cultural values of trust and authority, while pathos effectively engaged listeners emotionally. Logos, though less frequent, provided essential logical grounding. The study highlights the centrality of ethos in Arab discursive culture and contributes to the growing body of research on digital rhetoric in Arabic media, addressing a notable gap in podcast scholarship. Limitations include reliance on a single episode and the absence of quantitative data, pointing to future research that compares rhetorical strategies across multiple podcasts, genres, and cultural contexts.

**Keywords:** Aristotle's rhetoric, ethos, logos, pathos, podcast, YouTube

### 1. Introduction

Podcasts, as a digital media format, have become extremely popular in Saudi society, emerging as a key instrument for information sharing, opinion, and entertainment, and playing an increasingly central role in shaping digital discourse. Platforms such as YouTube, though initially designed for video sharing, have proven to be among the most effective sites for disseminating podcasts to wide audiences, making them accessible and appealing to diverse groups (Albadri 2024: 291).

The origins of podcasting can be traced to the early 21st century, when the term was coined by blending "iPod," Apple's portable music player, with "casting," derived from broadcasting (Guertin 2010: 4–5; Marcus 2019: 80). Since then, podcasts have expanded from downloadable audio files to versatile forms that include interviews, conversations, and narration, often supplemented by video content (Panday 2009: 254; Rezapour et al. 2022: 222; Chenia 2024: 235). This

rapid evolution reflects the adaptability of the medium and its capacity to engage audiences in flexible, on-demand ways.

As the medium has grown, podcasts have developed across a wide range of genres, from comedy and drama to more informational categories such as health, politics, investigative journalism, and self-improvement (Albadri 2024: 291). The popularity of niche content—including pop culture, sports, religion, and personal growth—illustrates the extent to which podcasts now cater to specific lifestyles and communities. In the Arab world, podcasts have become a dominant cultural trend (Albadri 2024; Chenia 2024), creating space for voices often excluded from mainstream media and functioning as agenda setters in social, political, and cultural debates. Their accessibility and resonance with younger, digitally oriented audiences have allowed them to shape attitudes and behaviors in ways traditional media cannot.

Within this expanding landscape, the present study examines the rhetorical strategies employed in the Arabic podcast episode “*ki:f tan.ḍʒaḥ al.ṣa.la:.qa:t maṣa: ja:.sir al.ḥu.zi:.mi:, bud.ka:st fin.ḍʒa:n*” (“How Relationships Succeed” with Yasser Al-Huzaimi, Podcast Finyan). While the episode was chosen in part due to its extraordinary popularity—garnering over 110 million views on YouTube as of September 10, 2024, making it the most viewed podcast globally—the selection was not based on audience numbers alone. The episode is broadly representative of the Finyan series, which frequently addresses relationships, cultural norms, and social life in the Arab world. Al-Huzaimi himself is a recurring figure in discussions of ethos, authority, and social practice, and his contributions resonate with wider Arab discourses on community, religion, and personal development. Thus, the episode provides both a conspicuous case and a thematically rich site for examining how Aristotle’s appeals—logos, ethos, and pathos—are mobilized in Arabic digital rhetoric.

By situating the analysis within this context, the study contributes to filling a gap in existing scholarship, which has rarely addressed Arabic podcasting through a rhetorical lens. It seeks to answer two key questions: (1) What are the predominant rhetorical strategies (logos, ethos, and pathos) used in the podcast “*ki:f tan.ḍʒaḥ al.ṣa.la:.qa:t*” to engage and persuade its audience? and (2) Which of these appeals is most frequently employed, and how does its usage reflect the cultural and social context of the Arab world? Addressing these questions allows this research to advance our understanding of modern Arabic rhetoric and situates podcasting within the broader global field of digital media studies.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1 Theoretical framework

Rhetoric is a skill of persuasion and more than the mere transmission of information (Shakour 2014: 404). The intent of rhetoric is not to merely transmit truth in the open but to persuade an audience to hold the opinion of the speaker, which might be other than the initial one. Persuasion does not lie in the arguments themselves but in how they are framed, so as to make them more appealing to the audience.

Aristotle's three elements of persuasion—logos, ethos, and pathos—are all central to language persuasion analysis (Murthy and Ghosal 2014: 250). Logos is the speaker's logic in his message; a fact-based argument is logical. Ethos concerns how the speaker is perceived by the audience to be believable or not based on his personality, character, and experience. Pathos is to engage the audience emotionally using methods like narration and figures of speech like metaphor and repetition.

Although these categories remain the foundation, modern rhetorical theory has revised them into digital environments. For instance, logos in online media may appear through citation of statistics, algorithms, or “expert authority,” while ethos can be established through social media presence, number of followers, or credibility of the speaker. Pathos, in turn, is amplified in new media by multimodal cues—tone of voice, visual, and interactivity—that increase affective force (Liu and Jiang 2024: 101419). Importantly, Prianka (2025: 159) applied McGuigan’s (2007) taxonomy of rhetorical devices to a motivational podcast, showing how strategies such as hyperbole and exemplum were employed to engage audiences and translate abstract concepts into relatable narratives. This demonstrates that podcasts require rhetorical analysis frameworks sensitive to oral performance, conversational exchange, and digital mediation, rather than relying solely on classical categories. These adaptations underscore that Aristotle’s formulation is adaptive and capable of transforming to fit the technological affordances and cultural expectations of each era. In this study, Aristotle’s appeals of ethos, pathos, and logos are therefore applied not as abstract categories, but as operationalized tools for examining how credibility, emotion, and logic function within a podcast genre that blends self-help discourse, religious overtones, and digital media performance.

Building on this shift, studies in applied contexts further demonstrate the adaptability of rhetorical theory. For instance, Higgins and Walker (2012: 195) examine persuasion strategies in New Zealand's social and environmental reports. By their research, it is made known how the rhetorical principles are applied in establishing credibility, logical appeal, and emotional appeal. By the application of these strategies, the reports become more socially powerful, making some ideas more authoritative and believable, particularly with regard to sustainable development. This is a demonstration of the influence of language on individuals' ideas and actions, which is relevant as we consider how the podcast applies the same rhetorical strategies to persuade its audience.

In political communication, English et al. (2011: 734) analyze the persuasiveness of different appeals in political YouTube videos during the 2008 U.S. presidential election. In a three-cell post-test-only experiment design, the study tested participants' exposure to videos containing ethos (credibility of the speaker), logos (reason), and pathos (emotional appeal). The results indicated that ethos was the most effective appeal, followed by logos, and then pathos. This suggests that audiences are more influenced by perceived source credibility than rational or emotional appeals in political videos. This finding is very relevant to our second research question, which examines which appeal is most frequently used in the podcast and how it profiles the social and cultural landscape of the Arab world.

The emphasis on ethos in political videos suggests that maybe similar dynamics are at work in Arabic podcasts, where credibility of the speaker is the most critical concern. Interestingly, these argumentative appeals did not show a strong relationship with participants' political information efficacy or cynicism, since the primary role of source credibility in shaping public attitudes comes into play.

Meylakhs et al. (2014: 2) identify some of the AIDS-denialist movements' rhetorical strategies, namely selective scientific evidence undermining mainstream HIV/AIDS science while promoting alternative "hero scientists." They also draw on ideological evidence framing HIV/AIDS as part of a global government-pharmaceutical firm conspiracy. By emphasizing personal experience over scientific fact, these kinds of movements portray mainstream healthcare professionals as money-grabbing, and position themselves as defenders of the truth. This strategy preserves suspicion of antiretroviral therapy as being harmful and useless. These actions trace back to Aristotle's rhetorical appeals: the appeal to *logos* is evident in selective scientific arguments that are logical but reject established findings. *Pathos* is invoked through personal experiences and emotional appeals involving fear and distrust of conventional medicine, and *ethos* is invoked through presenting themselves as selfless truth-seekers against profit-making healthcare providers.

## 2.2 Rhetorical strategies in the Arab world

Rhetorical strategies have long been a necessity in communication, particularly among the Arab community, where language and rhetoric are significant cultural aspects. It is crucial to study how these rhetorical strategies are being utilized in various forms of media since they engage people and influence them. There have been several studies that have analyzed how such persuasive techniques manifest themselves, recording similarities and differences in their application to other regions of the world.

Rabab'ah and Khawaldeh (2016: 308) conducted a study of six TV commercials—three in Arabic and three in English—aimed at the selling of electronics. From their study, they determined that both English and Arabic commercials used emotional and rational appeals, as well as wordplay, in a bid to influence audiences. However, *pathos* was discovered to be the most common appeal, with all but one of the messages conveyed indirectly, reflecting a strong use of emotional connection within these commercials. This realization of the use of emotional appeals in Arabic media informs our knowledge of the rhetorical strategies in “*ki:f tan.ḍzah al.ṣa.la:.qa:t*”, as we analyze how these strategies appeal to the audience.

Similarly, Snoussi et al. (2024: 1433) examined the use of rhetorical devices in Tunisian podcasts, with emphasis on political oratory. From their study, they illuminated how hosts in podcasts use narratives, sarcasm, and humor to criticize political leaders, make public explanations clearer, and promote civic engagement. Inclusive speech and appealing to emotion seem to have an important role in establishing a good connection with the public, thus the persuasive power. Their

conclusions about emotional resonance can help guide our investigation of how the most commonly used rhetorical appeal in the podcast is a mirror of wider cultural values in the Arab world.

Further, Attiya (2022: 59) examined the use of persuasion in TEDx speeches, comparing American English and Egyptian Arabic presentations. The study revealed that English and Arabic TEDx speakers utilized logos, ethos, and pathos to the same degree, but Arabic speeches had more repetition and hyperbole, reflecting cultural variation in rhetorical delivery. This finding is particularly relevant to the analysis in this research, as it suggests that cultural context is important in the use of rhetorical devices in Arabic discourse. More specifically, it informs our examination of how ethos, pathos, and logos are used in the podcast, particularly the use of repetition and emotional appeal, which can potentially enhance audience engagement and persuasion. These cultural sensibilities will also allow us to explore how the speaker's credibility (ethos) and emotional appeal (pathos) operate within the framework of Arabic rhetoric in contemporary media.

In addition, recent scholarship on podcasting contributes even more to the present analysis by demonstrating how rhetorical strategies operate across differing cultural and thematic contexts. Prianka (2025: 159), based on qualitative analysis of Alex Hormozi and Lewis Howes, demonstrates how economic podcasts draw on an immense range of rhetorical devices—ranging from hyperbole and exemplum to metaphor and rhetorical questions—to make intangible economic ideas emotionally accessible and pragmatically usable. Meanwhile, Liu and Jiang (2024: 10), drawing from their examination of 40 *Nature* Podcast episodes, illustrate how science communication is restructured into a conversational genre striking a balance between authority and accessibility through transparent rhetorical strategies and engagement signals to engage listener trust. Taken together, these study endeavors illustrate how podcasts globally transform complicated or expert information into engaging, audience-centered narratives. Gladly, such findings in this present study not only position the Finyan episode within broader trends of podcast rhetoric but also validate that its rhetorical strategies resonate with global trends of rendering specialized knowledge available, credible, and effective.

This literature review highlights the timeliness of Aristotle's rhetorical appeals—logos, ethos, and pathos—in both traditional and emerging media. Ethos is most persuasive in most instances, particularly in political communication, where credibility is a foremost consideration. Emotional appeals (pathos) are most evident in Arabic media, which reflects cultural tendencies toward indirect communication. These conclusions are the foundations for exploring how ethos, pathos, and logos are used in the podcast “*ki:f tan.ḍzah al.ṣa.la:.qa:t*”, particularly in Arab culture.

### **2.3 Gap in the literature**

In spite of the increasing popularity of podcasts in the Arab world, there is a significant lack of academic literature on rhetorical analysis in this medium. Although there has been considerable research on rhetorical strategies used in more conventional media, such as television and social media, the specific dynamics of

podcasts are largely unexamined. This research seeks to fill this gap by employing qualitative content analysis with NVivo software to code and analyze the rhetorical strategies used in the podcast “*ki:f tan.ḍāḥ al.ḡa.la.:qa:t*”

It is crucial to know how rhetoric works in podcasts, as platforms are now necessary in the shaping of public opinions and facilitating debates regarding a variety of social issues. In light of the implementation of rhetorical tactics in this podcast, this research aims to reveal significant details regarding the contribution of such tactics to its popularity and influence. Besides, the anticipated results will extend our understanding of modern Arabic rhetoric and the evolving climate of electronic media in the Middle East, yielding a mature insight into the way language interacts and convinces readers and viewers in contemporary settings.

Collected together, these projects both set the global importance of podcasting as a rhetorical media form and the particular importance of ethos, pathos, and logos to Arabic media culture. But there is quite limited empirical work in which these frameworks are directly applied to worldwide-listened-to Arabic podcasts. In an effort to address this gap, the present project employed qualitative examination of a leading Finyan podcast episode and systematically coded the rhetorical approaches using NVivo.

### 3. Methodology

This study applies qualitative content analysis to investigate the rhetorical methods employed in the most viewed Arabic podcast on YouTube, “*ki:f tan.ḍāḥ al.ḡa.la.:qa:t maḡa: ja:.sir al.ḥu.zi:.mi:, bud.ka:st fin.ḍā:n*” (“How Relationships Succeed” with Yasser Al-Huzaimi, Podcast Finyan). This podcast episode was chosen for study due to its record viewership of 110 million as of September 10, 2024, making it the most viewed podcast on YouTube worldwide. This impressive feat has also been recognized by Guinness World Records, underscoring the significance and effectiveness of the episode as a sample case for the study of rhetorical tactics in online content across the Arab world.

The objective of this study is to investigate how the podcast uses Aristotle's three appeals—logos (logically convincing), ethos (ethically convincing), and pathos (emotionally convincing)—in persuading and engaging its audience. Given the wide scope of the podcast, it presents a good model of how an awareness of the application of rhetorical devices can help achieve the most from communication in the digital age.

As the researcher, I acknowledge my positionality in this research. My Muslim Saudi heritage inevitably shaped how I interpreted gendered and religious references. While I worked analytically conscientiously with systematic coding and reflexive memo-writing, my position is one where the interpretations presented here are located rather than neutral. Knowing this positionality is important to transparency because rhetorical appeals in Arabic religion and culture may assume various meanings that are interpreted differently depending on the analyst's social, linguistic, and cultural background.

### **3.1 Data collection**

The data for this study includes the full audio-visual record of the Arabic podcast episode title "/ki:f tan.ḍʒaħ al.ʕa.la:qa:t maʕa: ja:sir al.hu.zi.mi:, bud.ka:st fin.ḍʒa:n/" ("How Relationships Succeed" with Yasser Al-Huzaimi, Podcast Finyan), retrieved from YouTube. The length of the podcast episode is approximately 3 hours and 3 minutes. To ensure accuracy and completeness of representation of the spoken discourse, the episode was professionally transcribed by an Arabic transcriber. The employment of a professional transcription was also vital in maintaining the fidelity of the data since it ensures that the subtleties in language, tone, and context are maintained. The quality transcription provides a solid and comprehensive basis for the subsequent rhetorical analysis, such as the close examination of logos, ethos, and pathos employed within the podcast. In addition, the transcription allows coding and thematic analysis to be achieved more precisely in later phases of the research.

### **3.2 Data analysis**

The coding was conducted via the NVivo computer program, a qualitative data analysis tool for systematic classification and organization of text data. The professionally transcribed podcast was transferred to NVivo and coded against three a priori categories deductively taken from Aristotle's appeals of rhetoric:

1. Logos (Logical Appeal): Identification and analysis of sections in which logical arguments, facts, and data are employed to support the speaker's claims.
2. Ethos (Ethical Appeal): Analysis of ways in which Yasser Al-Huzaimi establishes credibility and authority through character, experience, and delivery.
3. Pathos (Emotional Appeal): Analysis of emotional strategies like narration, metaphor, and repetition to elicit audience response.

Sub-codes were allowed to inductively arise from the data within these categories (e.g., under logos, "cause-and-effect logic" and "use of analogy" arose), which provided scope for flexibility and responsiveness to the text. To enhance reliability, a preliminary pilot round of coding was conducted on a subset of the transcript to limit and try out the codebook and promote consistency of application of the categories. Although the coding was undertaken by one researcher, reflexive memo-writing and re-coding iteratively were employed to reduce possible bias. The data were analyzed thematically to identify common rhetorical strategies and through frequency counts to measure their prevalence in the podcast. Using both provided a deeper insight into the rhetorical makeup of the episode and the causes behind its persuasive impact and popularity.

#### 4. Analysis

In the podcast with Dr. Yasser Al-Huzaimi, there is a brilliant balance of ethos (credibility), pathos (emotional appeal), and logos (logical reasoning). Dr. Al-Huzaimi uses these rhetorical devices to convey his knowledge about relationships and personal growth in an effective manner. By reaching out to his audience on a personal, intellectual, and emotional level, he weaves a powerful narrative that strikes a deep chord with listeners.

##### 4.1 Ethos (credibility and authority)

Ethos is the credibility or moral appeal used to create the authority and credibility of the speaker. Dr. Al-Huzaimi builds a solid credibility base with multiple layers, including professional expertise, personal experience, religious quotations, and agreement with respected scholars. His ability to incorporate all these components reflects comprehensive knowledge of creating trust with the audience.

###### 4.1.1 Professional expertise

Dr. Al-Huzaimi's professional experience is one of the cornerstones of his ethos. He consistently references his vast experience in consumer behavior and relationships, offering insights backed by years of research and practice. This gives him an authoritative voice on the subject matter. For example, he asserts:

" /bi.s<sup>ʕ</sup>i.fa.ti: ʃax.s<sup>ʕ</sup>an da.ras sa.lu:k al.mus.tah.lik liʔak.t<sup>ʕ</sup>ar min ʃifri:n ʃa:man, ra.ʔaj.tu bi.nafs<sup>ʕ</sup>i: kaj.fa ja.ta.t<sup>ʕ</sup>aw.war θa.qa:.fa al.mus.tah.lik/"

"As someone who has been studying consumer behavior for over 20 years, I've seen first-hand how consumer culture evolves".

This statement not only highlights his long-standing involvement in the field but also subtly implies that his insights are based on first-hand knowledge rather than mere theoretical understanding. This expertise encourages the audience to view him as a reliable source of information on personal and social development.

Adding to his ethos, he quotes statistics from his social media impacts research, showing evidence of his interest in current issues:

"/xl.la:l maf.ru:ʃi: al.baḥ.θi: al.ʔa.xi:r haw.la taʔθi:ra:t wa.sa:ʔil at<sup>ʕ</sup>.t<sup>ʕ</sup>a.wa:.s<sup>ʕ</sup>ul al.ʒtima:ʃi:, wa.ḍʒad.tu ʔan sit<sup>ʕ</sup>.t<sup>ʕ</sup>i:n fi: al.mi:ʔah min al.mus.tah.di.mi:n jaf.ʃu.ru:n bi.d<sup>ʕ</sup>.d<sup>ʕ</sup>ay.t<sup>ʕ</sup>i li.taḥ.di:θ ʔadʒ.hi.za.ti.him bis.ti.mra:r".

"During my recent project on social media impacts, I found that 60 percent of users feel pressured to constantly upgrade their devices."

This appeal to evidence-based data adds additional power to his ethos, suggesting that his observations are backed by the authority of empirical study, and not anecdotal experience.

###### 4.1.2 Religious and scholarly references

The use of religious citations by Dr. Al-Huzaimi greatly strengthens his ethos, at least among a readership that is knowledgeable about Islamic doctrine. By basing

his arguments on the Quran, he identifies his thoughts with divine wisdom, giving authority to his message and the moral and ethical aspects of the problems under consideration. For example, he says:

“/ʔal.la:h qa:l 'litasku.nu: ʔi.laj.ha: ma: qa:l litasku.nu: maʕa.ha:/...”  
“God said, {‘So that you may find tranquility in her’}, He did not say ‘to dwell with her...’”.

This subtle distinction not only demonstrates his deep understanding of Quranic interpretation but also adds to his credibility by demonstrating his ability to make religious scripture applicable to modern relationships. To a religious audience, this appeal to religious ethos is particularly powerful.

Dr. Al-Huzaimi also enhances his credibility by referring to renowned Islamic scholars and personalities. For instance, he invokes Aisha (ra.di.ja Ḥa:hu Ṣan.ha:):

“‘qa:.lat Ṣa:.i.ja.tun (ra.di.ja Ḥa:hu Ṣan.ha:) 'lil:a:hi 'durru tʕ.tʕaq.wa: ... 'mam:a: ju.Ṣaz:izu misʕ.dʕa:qi:ja.ta.hu: min χi.la:li mu.Ḥa:ḏa:na.ti nafsihi: maʕa ʃʃax.sʕi:ja:ti lʔis.la:mi:ja:ti lmuḥ.tar:a.ma.ti”  
“Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) said, 'May God reward righteousness'...”.

This identification with historical personages roots his authority in religious and cultural tradition, portraying him as one who is not only learned but also well-grounded in tradition.

#### **4.1.3 Personal anecdotes**

Personal anecdotes are perhaps the most significant tool which Dr. Al-Huzaimi uses to make his observations accessible and to create his ethos. By sharing home-close experiences, he demonstrates to us that his knowledge is not just theoretical but also experiential. For example, he recounts the following exchange with his mother:

“/mar.ra da.xalt Ṣa.la: ʔum.mi wa.ʔa.na: al.mu.dar.rib ja:sir wa.qul.tu la.ha: ʔis.maʕi: ja: ʔum.mi/...”  
“Once I went to my mother as Coach Yasser and started telling her, ‘Listen, Mom...’”.

This story is significant in building ethos because it makes Dr. Al-Huzaimi more human. It establishes that even though he is an expert, he also engages in the same family scenarios as his readers. This makes him more relatable and down-to-earth, which gives him more credibility to offer advice. He is no longer a remote authority, but he practices what he preaches.

#### **4.1.4 Philosophical and academic insights**

Dr. Al-Huzaimi adds to his ethos by making philosophical and academic references. These demonstrate his intellectual range as well as the ability to deal with high-level concepts. For instance, when discussing modern human identity, he cites Foucault:

“ja.qu:l fu:ku: al.ʔin.sa:n al.laḏi: wu.li.da fi: al.qarn al.Ḥa:mi:n Ṣafr lam ju:.dʒad baʕd”

“Foucault says, ‘The person born in the eighteenth century does not yet exist’”.

This reference to Foucault's philosophy lends an academic flavor to the argument, informing the readers that Dr. Al-Huzaimi is educated and can engage with critical theories in Western philosophy. This lends validity to his arguments not only within an Islamic framework but also within broader intellectual traditions, making him unavoidable for a diverse audience.

## 4.2 Pathos (emotional appeal)

Dr. Al-Huzaimi employs pathos skillfully and on many levels. He effectively resonates with the emotions of his audience by referring to individual struggle, spiritual test, and humanity's universal need for human contact. Appealing to positive emotions such as hope and negative ones such as fear, he amplifies the effectiveness of his message.

### 4.2.1 Personal struggles and empathy

One of the most powerful methods through which Dr. Al-Huzaimi uses pathos is by acknowledging the emotional challenges people face in relationships. He discusses the pain and vulnerability that may accompany romantic relationships, particularly once they become dysfunctional:

“fi: ʕa.la:.qa al.ʕa:.ʕiq wal.maʕ.ʕu:q ʔiða: θa.qo.lat biji:k huna:  
jan.kasʕir ka.θi:r min al.mu.ta.ʕa.fi:n”

“In a romantic relationship, if it becomes heavy, many who are recovering will be broken...”.

By sharing these common emotional experiences, Dr. Al-Huzaimi elicits sympathy from his audience. The majority of listeners have likely experienced the same issues in their own relationships, and by identifying with this shared struggle, he creates a solid emotional connection. This instills trust and rapport and opens the audience to his advice.

### 4.2.2 Spiritual and emotional accountability

Dr. Al-Huzaimi also appeals to the emotions by invoking the religious consequences of human actions. He emphasizes how one's behavior towards others is governed by the awareness of God's presence:

“ʔis.tiʕ.ʕa:r wu.ḍʕu:d ar.ra.qi:b jaʕ.ʕal.ni: ʔat.ʕa:.mil maʕak bi.tʕa.ri:.qa  
muḥ.ti.li.fa”

“The awareness of God as a watcher makes me deal with you differently”.

This statement invokes a sense of religious dread and accountability, with the listeners being reminded that they are ever under the scrutiny of God in their interactions with people. This evocation of religious sentiment, fear of God's judgment, acts as a potent motivation for ethical action, more so for listeners with strong religious beliefs.

Dr. Al-Huzaimi also issues a message of optimism and comfort to those who strive to live morally upright lives:

“ʔal.la:h qa:l wa.ʔin.na as.sa:ʕa.ta la.ʔa:ti.ja.tun sa:miḥ al.li:  
qud.da:mak”

“When the Quran says the hour is coming... forgive the one in front of you...”.

This appeal instructs listeners to set aside grudges and act with compassion and forgiveness, inducing a mood of emotional release and spiritual contentment.

#### **4.2.3 Human isolation and connection**

Dr. Al-Huzaimi effectively uses metaphors and emotional imagery to establish a feeling of human isolation and yearning for contact. For example, when describing Western materialism, he uses a metaphor to describe the emotional emptiness it creates:

“ʕin.da.ma: ma:t al.ʔin.sa:n ʔux.lij al.ʕarf wa.ʔas.baḥat al.maw.dʕa  
hi.ja al.ḥa:ki.ma”

“When man died, the throne was vacated, and fashion took the throne”.

This powerful imagery of void addresses the unease the audience feels toward materialism compared to peace brought about by religious connection. By addressing these contrasting emotional reactions, Dr. Al-Huzaimi incites his audience to place greater emphasis on necessary relations over the surface level.

### **4.3 Logos (logical appeal)**

Dr. Al-Huzaimi’s use of logos is critical to his rhetorical strategy. He relies on structured arguments, logical reasoning, and empirical evidence to persuade his audience. By clearly explaining the rationale behind his ideas, he provides listeners with a solid intellectual framework for understanding and applying his insights.

#### **4.3.1 Structured argumentation**

One of the key strengths of Dr. Al-Huzaimi’s approach is the way he structures his arguments. He organizes his thoughts in a way that is easy for the audience to follow. For instance, he breaks down relationships into distinct categories, explaining the dynamics of each:

“tʕaj.jib fi: ʕi.la:qa:t ra.qam ʔar.baʕa al.ʕi.la:qa:t al.ma:jj.ta  
ʕi.la:qa:t ḥajṯu la: ju.tʕa:lib ʔaj: tʕar.af al.ʔa:xar bi.wa:dʕi.ba:tih”

“Okay, number four, dead relationships are those where neither party demands their duties from the other”.

This structured analysis educates the reader on the nuances of different types of relationships, providing them with a brief guide for analyzing their own interactions. By structuring his ideas in this manner, Dr. Al-Huzaimi makes his message more logically sound.

#### **4.3.2 Analogies and logical comparisons**

Dr. Al-Huzaimi frequently uses analogies to make abstract ideas more concrete. For instance, when he talks about relationships requiring ongoing effort, he compares them to riding a bicycle:

"/fuft il.ʕi.la:qa:t miθil si.wa:qat is.si.kil ʔinta al.ʔa:n ʕa.ʕa:n tim.ʕi:  
qud.da:m tim.ʕi: il.ʕi.la:qa fu: tis.saw.wiʔ inhi.ra:.fa:t b<sup>ʕ</sup>a.si:.t<sup>ʕ</sup>a ʔil.ja:n tiru.ħ/..."

("Think of relationships like riding a bicycle. To move forward, the relationship needs to be maintained with minor adjustments; otherwise, it will fall.")

This analogy is a concrete and familiar way to grasp relationship maintenance, which bolsters the argument that small measures can prevent more significant issues. Rational analogies like this enable his arguments to be better understood, especially for a broad audience.

#### 4.3.3 Use of empirical evidence

Dr. Al-Huzaimi tend to back his arguments with facts, which then make them more logically sound. For instance, while discussing boundaries in human relations, he alludes to Dunbar's number to explain the reason why individuals can only hold a certain amount of close relations:

"nað.a.'ri:jat dun.bar ta.qu:l ʔin kul ʔin.sa:n la: jas.t<sup>ʕ</sup>a:.t<sup>ʕ</sup>iʕ ʔan ja.ku:n  
la.hu: qa:.ʔi.mat t<sup>ʕ</sup>a.'ʕa:.t<sup>ʕ</sup>uf ʔakθar min ʔiθ.na: ʕaʕar"

"Dunbar's theory states that each person can only maintain a list of close relationships of up to 12".

By substantiating his argument on a scientific principle, Dr. Al-Huzaimi employs the reasoning ability of the audience. Such a fact-based step is not only making his message intellectually robust but also allowing people to grasp the natural limits of human social exchanges.

#### 4.3.4 Cause-and-effect logic in relationships

Dr. Al-Huzaimi uses cause-and-effect logic to explain the dynamics of relationships. For example, he documents the reciprocal nature of relationships, pointing to how the exchange of things generates closer relationships:

"al.ʔa:n ha:ðihi: al.mu.na:wa:ra:t s<sup>ʕ</sup>a:r fi: is.ti.dʒa:.bah min.k wa  
mu.ba:.da.lah s<sup>ʕ</sup>a:r tawas.su.ʕat al.ʕa.la:.qah"

"Now, when these maneuvers result in a response from you and mutual exchange, the relationship expands".

This logical progression helps the audience realize how small, intentional actions can have significant effects on the quality and depth of their relationships. This cause-and-effect logic provides practical advice that listeners can easily apply to their own life.

#### 4.3.5 Syllogistic and enthymematic reasoning

Another significant aspect of Al-Huzaimi's *logos* is his reliance on syllogistic and enthymematic reasoning. For instance, he describes the self as a "commodity in the social market," where people are drawn to those who possess strength, skills, and confidence:

"ʔiða: ba.naj.t naf.sak wa s<sup>ʕ</sup>irt<sup>ʕ</sup> qa.wi: fi: as.su:q al.ʔidʒ.ti.ma:ʕi: al.na:s  
bij.baħ.tsu:n ʕan.k wa ju.qaj.mu:.nak"

"If you build yourself and become strong in the social market, people will seek you out and value you".

### 4.3.6 Logical fallacies and overgeneralizations

Although Al-Huzaimi often relies on logic to make his arguments, he occasionally resorts to logical fallacies, too—namely overgeneralization. For example, he contends that Western models reduce relationships to tactics and strategies for attaining material objectives:

“al.ʕa:.la:.qa:t fi: al.yarb mu.dʒar.rad tak.ti:ka:t kaj.fa tak.sib al.qu.lu:b  
ʕa.ʕa:n tʕif.dʕi: al.dʒu.ju:b”

“Relationships in the West are nothing more than tactics: how to win hearts in order to empty pockets”.

More broadly, the analysis illustrates how Al-Huzaimi summons ethos, pathos, and logos complementary to each other—albeit with ethos and pathos more central, logos remains required in undergirding his reasoning. Such findings form the basis of the discussion to follow, situating the findings in terms of current scholarship and mapping out the extent to which they reflect broader cultural and rhetorical forces in the Arab world.

## 5. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to analyze the rhetorical strategies used in the most subscribed Arabic podcast on YouTube,

“ki:f tan.dʒaḥ al.ʕa.la:.qa:t maʕa: ja:.sir al.ḥu.zi:.mi:, bud.ka:st fin.dʒa:n”

“How Relationships Succeed with Yasser Al-Huzaimi, Podcast Finjan” and relate them to Aristotle’s appeals—logos, ethos, and pathos.

By looking at how these tactics engage with Arab listeners and assist in making the podcast so successful, this research contributes to greater understanding of digital rhetoric as it is used within the Arab world.

### 5.1 Addressing research question 1: Predominant rhetorical strategies (logos, ethos, and pathos) in the Podcast

The findings suggest that ethos (authoritativeness and credibility) was the strongest rhetorical strategy used in the podcast, then pathos (emotional appeal), followed by logos (rational appeal). This sequence makes sense given the cultural emphasis on trust, religious sentiments, and the authority of the speaker in Arab cultures.

Ethos was the bedrock of Dr. Al-Huzaimi’s rhetorical style, particularly through his professional expertise, religious references, and personal experiences. Such an ethos-centered strategy is in harmony with Attiya (2022: 71) research on TEDx talks wherein ethos was the common thread, specifically among Arabic-speaking communities. By grounding his arguments on religious principles and famous historical figures, Dr. Al-Huzaimi built his credibility, which is consistent with Shakour (2014: 411) and Murthy and Ghosal (2014: 253), who argue that ethos is a vital persuasive device when the audience holds the speaker’s integrity and reliability in high esteem.

Besides, the use of pathos was effective in emotionally appealing to the audience. Dr. Al-Huzaimi’s references to personal suffering and religious

responsibility evoked sympathy and emotional identification. This is comparable to Rabab'ah and Khawaldeh (2016: 319), who found that Arabic media like advertisements were likely to use a lot of emotional appeal in an attempt to connect with the audience. In the podcast, Dr. Al-Huzaimi's ability to stir both positive and negative emotions, especially through references to religious and cultural values, mirrored findings from Snoussi et al. (2024: 1445), who explored how Tunisian podcasts use emotional strategies to critique political figures and engage listeners.

Logos was less frequently employed but remained an essential component of Dr. Al-Huzaimi's rhetorical framework. By using structured arguments and empirical evidence, such as Dunbar's theory, the speaker demonstrated logical reasoning, which complemented his ethos and pathos. This use of logos, though less dominant, was crucial in reinforcing the rational foundations of his arguments. Studies like Meylakhs et al. (2014: 8) that analyzed selective scientific arguments utilized in argumentative speeches also show the manner logos can be utilized in supporting emotive and ethical appeals, being a middle ground of emotion and rationale in communication.

Crucially, the persuasive strength of Al-Huzaimi's rhetoric lies in the triangulated interaction of the appeals. Logos supports ethos by giving rational support to the credibility of Al-Huzaimi; his assertions to authority are not merely reputation-based but are underpinned by cause-and-effect rationales and empirical data. Similarly, logos anchors pathos by making sure that emotional appeals are not seen as manipulative or unfounded, but instead follow cause-and-effect rationality. For example, his contention that belief in God creates forgiveness is at once an emotional promise, cultural validation of ethos, and causal (logos-based) assertion. This triangulated dynamic illustrates how the rhetoric of Al-Huzaimi achieves its goal by combining reason, credibility, and emotion into a cohesive persuasive methodology.

## **5.2 Addressing research question 2: The most frequently employed rhetorical appeal and its reflection of the Arab cultural context**

As the analysis indicates, ethos was the most frequently employed rhetorical appeal in the podcast, which is most representative of the Arab world's social and cultural context. Throughout much of the Arab world, trust in the speaker, namely their religious and moral authority, is the utmost concern in credibility and persuasion. The focus on ethos in the podcast is echoed in the work of English et al. (2011: 36), which demonstrated the importance of source credibility in shaping audience attitudes in political YouTube videos. Similarly, in the Arab world, Al-Saggaf and Simmons (2015: 13) emphasize the relevance of personal reputation and religious affiliation in online media, where credibility is based on common religious and cultural values.

In Arab societies, where collectivism and respect for tradition are deeply embedded, ethos plays a particularly persuasive role. Dr. Al-Huzaimi's reliance on religious references, such as Quranic verses, and his alignment with Islamic scholars, established him as a trusted authority. This cultural emphasis on ethos

aligns with the findings of Rabab'ah and Khawaldeh (2016: 319), who identified ethos as a dominant strategy in Arabic advertisements. The same is true here in this podcast, as ethos supports the speaker's connection with an audience interested in religious and social authority.

Furthermore, Dr. Al-Huzaimi's use of personal anecdotes and references to Islamic teachings builds a bridge between the speaker and the audience, making the message not only relatable but also trustworthy. In a culture where religious and social authority are highly respected, the speaker's ability to connect with his audience on these levels is critical. This appeal to ethos was particularly effective in this podcast because it mirrored the culture of the Arab world, where religious and familial relationships have a tendency to be the central theme of communication and persuasion.

Pathos usage also is responsible for Arab cultural context in which trust-building and credibility rest on emotional linkage as well as empathetic familiarity. As Snoussi et al. (2024: 1445) find through their study on podcasts in Tunisia, emotional congruence forms a key strategy in gaining commitment from listeners, particularly under such relaxed settings like podcasts. In this research, Dr. Al-Huzaimi was able to appeal to the emotions of the audience by touching on universal personal and spiritual challenges, thus making the emotional effect of his message stronger. The success of the podcast in connecting with listeners can be explained by the speaker's effective use of both ethos and pathos, building a complex mode of persuasion that appeals to the cultural values of the Arab region.

Engaging comparatively with global scholarship also reveals both convergence and divergence. Prianika (2025: 162) showed how hyperbole and exemplum make abstract economic concepts relatable in motivational podcasts, while Liu and Jiang (2024: 1014) demonstrated how science podcasts balance authority and accessibility through structured rhetorical moves. Similarly, Al-Huzaimi's podcast transforms specialized religious and cultural discourse into accessible narratives. However, in contrast to the satirical or ironic pathos found in Tunisian podcasts (Snoussi et al. 2024: 1444), his rhetoric is based on ethical authority and moral seriousness. These differences indicate that though ethos and pathos are widespread in podcasts worldwide, their cultural foundations differ greatly.

While Aristotle's three-part model was useful, its limitations in digital environments must be acknowledged. The podcast under consideration is not just spoken speech but also a multimodal YouTube performance—where sight (gestures, visual brand), hearing (oral speech), and algorithmic visibility have roles in persuasion. These digital affordances were beyond Aristotle's original model but are central to contemporary digital rhetoric (Liu and Jiang 2024: 101419). Subsequent studies might then expand the model by incorporating concepts such as multimodality, interactivity, and algorithmic credibility.

## 6. Conclusion

This study highlights the significance of ethos as the dominant rhetorical strategy in the podcast “*ki:f tan.ḍzah al.ṣa.la:.qa:r*” with Yasser Al-Huzaimi. The analysis demonstrated that ethos, supported by religious references, personal life, and professional practice, plays a crucial role in establishing the credibility of the speaker and persuading the audience. Pathos was also a dominant strategy, engaging listeners emotionally through storytelling, metaphors, and spiritual appeals, while logos provided the necessary logical foundation to the overall discourse. Collectively, these findings illustrate the nuanced balance of Aristotle’s appeals in Arabic digital rhetoric and show how they contribute to the podcast’s persuasive power.

This research makes an important contribution to the literature by providing new insights into the rhetorical strategies used in Arabic digital media, an area that remains relatively underexplored compared to studies of traditional media such as television and advertising. By applying Aristotle’s appeals to the most-viewed Arabic podcast, the study offers valuable information on the cultural significance of ethos in the Arab world, where religious and personal credibility remain central to effective persuasion. It also demonstrates how rhetorical tools are integral to the popularity and success of Arabic podcasts, thereby contributing to broader discussions in Arabic rhetoric and digital media studies.

Nevertheless, the study has several limitations. Although it was carried out on a single episode of the podcast, this episode was intentionally chosen not only for its exceptional popularity but also because it aligns thematically with the larger Finyan discourse. Yasser Al-Huzaimi is a recurring guest who consistently addresses issues of relationships and cultural expectations, making the episode representative of broader themes within the series. Even so, the findings cannot be generalized to the Arab world as a whole and should instead be seen as a snapshot of universal problems articulated within a specific local and cultural narrative. The cultural specificity of the Arab setting—with its strong religious and social foundations—further restricts the transferability of conclusions to other contexts. Additionally, certain rhetorical nuances such as tone, inflection, and stress are vulnerable to being lost in transcription, which may have affected precision of interpretation.

These constraints open the door to several important recommendations for future research. Expanding the scope to include multiple episodes or contrasting different podcasts would provide greater clarity on how rhetorical strategies vary across subject matter and speakers. Employing quantitative methods could generate statistical evidence on the frequency and efficacy of logos, ethos, and pathos, offering stronger empirical grounding. Cross-cultural studies could compare rhetorical strategies across different regions to highlight how persuasion shifts according to cultural contexts, while audience reception studies could explore how various demographic groups interpret and respond to rhetorical appeals. Future research could also engage more explicitly with genre theory, since the podcast analyzed here belongs to the religiously-inflected self-help genre, which may explain the prominence of ethos and pathos. Attention to genre as a structuring

framework—whether motivational discourse, digital sermonizing, or hybrids thereof—may reveal how convention informs rhetorical practice. Finally, because the podcast is hosted on YouTube, multimodal rhetoric deserves further investigation; visual elements such as gestures, posture, and branding likely reinforce verbal appeals in shaping audience response.

Examining rhetorical strategies in activist or political podcasts, combined with multimodal analysis, would further enrich understanding of how podcasts integrate voice, image, and genre conventions to influence audiences.

Aljawhara Alnasser- Corresponding Author

Affiliation: Imam Mohammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, Saudi Arabia

ORCID Number: 0009-0001-9983-5889

Email: aalnasser@imamu.edu.sa

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