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Rhetorical Persuasion in the Kerinci Tauhid Manuscript: A Pentad Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This study examines how the Kerinci Tauhid Manuscript constructs religious messages as rhetorical acts containing persuasive elements in the context of written da'wah. It also aims to identify the rhetorical purposes embedded in the manuscript, particularly through thanksgiving, confession, praise, and petition, and to examine how the narratives of the prophets contribute to the construction of persuasive religious messages.

Method – This study employs a qualitative approach within a constructivist paradigm and utilizes Kenneth Burke's Pentad Analysis, consisting of act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose. The data comprise 20 textual units consisting of prayers and religious narratives obtained from the transliteration of the Naskah Tauhid Kerinci. The data were analyzed by identifying and categorizing each textual unit according to the five elements of Burke's Pentad, with particular attention to the agency and purpose elements.

Findings – The findings reveal that the Kerinci Tauhid Manuscript constructs persuasive religious messages through ritual practices and religious beliefs. Of the 20 textual units analyzed, rites were more dominant (14 units) than beliefs (6 units). In terms of rhetorical purpose, thanksgiving was the most dominant category (9 units), followed by confession (7 units) and praise (4 units), while petition was not found. The narratives of the prophets consistently exhibit Burke's guilt-purification-redemption pattern, reflected in how the prophets endure suffering or trials, then perform religious rituals as a process of purification, ultimately achieving redemption in the form of salvation or inner peace. Consequently, the manuscript's persuasive resources operate implicitly through religious practices, the exemplary conduct of the prophets, and the reinforcement of religious values; these are rhetorical functions identified from the text, not measured effects on readers.

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Keywords: Pentad Analysis, Kerinci Tauhid Manuscript, Prayer as Rhetoric, Persuasion

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INTRODUCTION

Manuscripts are records created by handwriting or carving on bark, leaves, cloth, metal, paper, or other materials containing a combination of letters, images, symbols, maps, and figures, and possessing scientific, historical, or aesthetic value (Rattan, 2013). Perpusnas's 2019 Grand Design for the Management of Nusantara Manuscripts recorded 121,545 manuscripts, of which 82,158 are held by documentary institutions and private collections in Indonesia and 39,387 by libraries and museums abroad; Perpusnas itself notes that these figures may not reflect the actual total, because manuscripts that were previously unrecorded continue to be inventoried (Perpusnas, 2024). Perpusnas continues to digitize manuscripts to widen access to them (Harahap, 2024; Perpusnas, 2022), and it also publishes transliterations of manuscripts held by communities, including the religious manuscript "Naskah Tauhid Kerinci: Jejak Tradisi Tulis Keagamaan Lokal," which is privately held in Siulak Panjang, Kerinci (Azizah et al., 2025). The manuscript explains the rational basis of knowing God, the twenty obligatory attributes of Allah, and the creed, and it links the five daily prayers to the stories of the prophets, combining sharia, tarekat, and hakikat in one text (Azizah et al., 2025). This combination makes it significant for the study of religious rhetoric and persuasion: within a single text, doctrinal statements, instructions on prayer, and exemplary narratives of the prophets are arranged to shape how readers understand and practice their faith. The manuscript can therefore be examined not only as a record of local Islamic literacy but also as a piece of written religious instruction, or da'wah.

The manuscript is written in the Arabic-Malay (Jawi) script, which indicates that the local community not only received Islamic teachings orally but also preserved them in written form (Azizah et al., 2025). Azizah et al. (2025) also report that many people in Kerinci today, particularly the younger generation, can no longer read Jawi, which limits access to such manuscripts. Access is, however, a separate matter from analysis. Transliteration, such as the editions that Perpusnas has published for a Kerinci customary-law manuscript (Sunliensyar & Azizah, 2024) and for this tauhid manuscript (Azizah et al., 2025), makes a text readable, but readability does not explain how the text works as communication. Previous studies of Kerinci manuscripts have mostly taken philological, historical, or content-based approaches, for example on lamentation texts written in incung script (Syaputra, 2020), on the Sufi values of the Asal Usul Besi Kharsani manuscript (Hanafi & Ma'mun, 2017), on royal letters addressed to Kerinci rulers (Sunliensyar, 2019), and on incung script and the cataloging of incung manuscripts (Syaputra, 2021; Sunliensyar, 2025). Sunliensyar (2025) observes that significant research on incung texts had been almost absent for 84 years after Voorhoeve's work. These studies document and interpret what the texts contain, but, to the author's knowledge, they do not explain how a Kerinci religious manuscript arranges its prayers, rituals, and prophetic narratives rhetorically: what acts are performed, in which scenes, by whom, through which means, and for what purposes. Although Azizah et al. (2025) observe that philological attention in Indonesia has tended to concentrate on Aceh, Minangkabau, and Java, the justification for this study lies in this analytical gap and not in the regional imbalance.

Religious texts can be understood not merely as historical documents but also as forms of communication that convey specific meanings and purposes. Studies of persuasion in religious discourse have so far concentrated on sermons, hadith, and other genres that address an audience

directly. Adam (2021) examines sentiment as a means of persuasion in Protestant sermons; Alzaidi et al. (2025) found that hadiths on tolerance bridge the gap between speaker and audience in order to guide them toward positive attitudes and behaviors; and Saputra et al. (2024) identified persuasive exhortations and persuasive language forms of advice and prohibition in the Eid sermon (katobba pallappassang) in Gowa Regency. At a broader level, Kusherbayeva and Kurmanaliyeva (2025) note that sacred texts such as the Qur'an, the Bible, and the Vedas shape religious experience, reinforce values, and sustain the unity of religious communities through the reproduction of sacred narratives. Studies of manuscripts have also begun to examine rhetoric through language. Utami et al. (2025) analyze the text structure and language style of an early twentieth-century manuscript by a Nusantara ulama and identify emotional description, hyperbole, and repetition used to express hardship and optimism, and Maulana et al. (2026), in a corpus-based study of Old Acehnese manuscripts in Jawi script, report that the discourse is largely persuasive, instructional, and narrative, with repetitive rhetorical structures that reinforce moral and didactic messages. Research on da'wah rhetoric in Indonesia, meanwhile, has concentrated on contemporary and digital preaching and on audience reception; Simatupang et al. (2025), for example, interviewed young Muslim audiences about digital da'wah and national insight, using Aristotle's ethos, pathos, and logos as a lens. Taken together, these studies show that religious discourse employs persuasive resources, but they share two limitations for the present purpose. First, they identify persuasion at the level of linguistic form, discourse type, or audience response, and do not describe who acts, in which scene, by what means, and for what purpose in the text. Second, none of them concerns a prayer-centered theological manuscript, where persuasion may work less through explicit exhortation than through the arrangement of prayer, ritual instruction, and narrative. This study therefore does not ask whether religious discourse can be persuasive, which these studies have already established, but how a manuscript organizes its religious content rhetorically.

To answer this, the study draws on three complementary frameworks, each with a distinct analytical function. First, Kenneth Burke's dramatism treats language as symbolic action (Biesecker, 2000; Burke, 1966; Griffin et al., 2019), and its pentad of act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose provides the frame for describing what is done in each text unit, in what situation, by whom, by what means, and for what end (Burke, 1969; Hamad, 2018). The pentad has been used to analyze sermons and other religious discourse in homiletic studies (Loscalzo, 1988) and, because it works in both verbal and non-verbal symbolic situations, to analyze liturgy and ritual (Conover, 2003), which makes it suitable for a text that mixes doctrine, ritual instruction, and narrative. Second, within the element of agency, the study follows Durkheim (1995) in distinguishing beliefs, the representations of the sacred, from rites, the prescribed practices through which the sacred is approached. Third, within the element of purpose, the study uses FitzGerald's (2012) account of prayer as rhetoric, which distinguishes four purposes: petition, praise, thanksgiving, and confession. Burke's (1961) account of the guilt-purification-redemption cycle in religious language is used to read the narrative pattern of the prophet stories. Persuasion is accordingly understood here as a rhetorical function inscribed in the text, namely the way the text positions prayer, ritual, and belief as the fitting response to human experience, and not as an effect observed in readers. The study advances existing scholarship by moving the analysis of Islamic manuscripts from philological

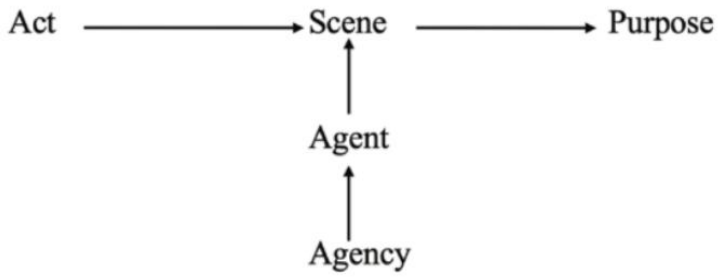
description to rhetorical analysis, and by combining the three frameworks so that what a text asserts (beliefs), what it prescribes (rites), and what it enacts rhetorically (purposes) can be analyzed separately.

Based on the preceding discussion, this study focuses on the textual analysis of the transliterated "Naskah Tauhid Kerinci: Jejak Tradisi Tulis Keagamaan Lokal." "Rhetorical act" is used here in Burke's sense: a text unit is read as a symbolic action performed by an agent in a scene, through certain means and for a purpose. To keep the analysis from remaining a classification of religious expressions, the study distinguishes three kinds of textual content. Theological propositions state what is believed about Allah, the prophets, and the creed, and are coded as beliefs. Normative religious instructions and ritual practices, such as the pillars of prayer and the recitation of the basmalah, are coded as rites. Persuasive strategies are identified through the purpose a unit performs (thanksgiving, confession, praise, or petition) and through the narrative pattern in which prayer follows crisis. The textual features examined are the prophetic narratives and their scenes of crisis, the instructions on prayer, the doctrinal statements, and the opening formulas. The study asks: (1) How are the elements of the pentad (act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose) structured in the text units of the manuscript? (2) Which purposes of prayer dominate, and how do beliefs and rites relate to them? (3) How do the narratives of the prophets arrange crisis, ritual, and relief as a rhetorical pattern? In answering these questions, the study contributes to Islamic manuscript studies by treating a local manuscript as a rhetorical text, and to religious communication by offering a coding frame that separates the theological, ritual, and persuasive dimensions of a written da'wah text.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative design within a constructivist paradigm, which holds that social reality is the result of a construction of meaning formed through experience and context (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The hermeneutic and dialectical process that Guba and Lincoln (1994) associate with this paradigm is operationalized here as an iterative reading of the manuscript. First, each text unit was interpreted in relation to its part and scene, moving between the unit and the whole text (the hermeneutic movement). Second, interpretations of different units were compared, for example the prophetic narratives with the doctrinal passages, and category assignments were revised when the comparison showed inconsistencies (the dialectical movement). Three frameworks are used, each with a separate function. Burke's pentad is the main analytical frame: it describes every text unit as a symbolic act through five elements, namely act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose (Burke, 1969; Hamad, 2018). Because dramatism has itself been debated as an ontology or an epistemology (Brock, 1985; Brock et al., 1985), the pentad is used here as an interpretive heuristic for reading the text and not as a claim about what the text is. The other two frameworks do not replace the pentad but refine two of its elements: Durkheim's concepts of beliefs and rites specify the content of agency, and FitzGerald's (2012) "prayer as rhetoric" categories of praise, confession, thanksgiving, and petition specify the content of purpose. Act, scene, and agent are described qualitatively without further sub-categories.

Figure 1 Pentad Analysis
Source: Hamad (2018)



The data source for this study is the Naskah Tauhid Kerinci: Jejak Tradisi Tulis Keagamaan Lokal, presented in transliterated form (Azizah et al., 2025). The manuscript is a private collection held by a community figure in Siulak Panjang, Kerinci. It is a 70-page twentieth-century notebook written in Jawi script in Malay, Kerinci, and Arabic, and it has no colophon; from the owner's statement and codicological analysis, its editors estimate that it was written in the middle of the twentieth century (Azizah et al., 2025). The editors describe the text as notes taken in teaching assemblies (majelis), which explains why some words and sentences are unclear (Azizah et al., 2025). The transliteration is divided into four parts (Parts I–IV), which explain the rational basis of tauhid, the attributes of Allah, the creed and the prophets, the obligations of prayer, and the meaning of the rak'ahs of the five daily prayers in relation to the stories of the prophets. The units of analysis are text units taken from all four parts: expressions of prayer, religious narratives (such as the stories of the prophets), and statements of belief. A text unit is defined as a quotation, ranging from a phrase to a sentence, that expresses one identifiable act, such as one rak'ah of a prophet's prayer or one doctrinal statement. The 20 units analyzed are distributed as 11 from Part I, 2 from Part II, 2 from Part III, and 5 from Part IV. Units were selected purposively from all four parts when they (a) contain an act performed by an identifiable agent, (b) can be coded for all five pentad elements, and (c) are complete in meaning.

Data were collected by reading the entire manuscript, marking candidate units, and entering each selected unit into a coding sheet (Table 1) as a quotation together with its five pentad elements. Agency was coded as either beliefs or rites, and purpose was coded as one of the four purposes of prayer, so each unit receives one category under each of these two elements. The categories are defined as follows. Beliefs are units that state a theological proposition, such as Allah's attributes or the creed. Rites are units that describe, instruct, or narrate a ritual practice, such as prayer or the opening of a text with a formula of praise. Thanksgiving is an expression of gratitude for deliverance or blessing; confession is an acknowledgment or affirmation of faith or of Allah's attributes; praise is a formulaic expression of reverence or invocation toward Allah or the Prophet; and petition is a direct request addressed to Allah. Where a unit could fit more than one category, it was coded by its dominant function in context: the agency category follows what the unit does (stating a proposition, or prescribing or narrating a practice), and the purpose category follows the stance the unit takes toward Allah or the reader. For example, the passage on I'tidal describes a ritual (rites)

while affirming the reward of prayer in the afterlife (confession). Coding consistency was not checked by a second coder or by re-coding the units after an interval; the categories were assigned by the author alone, and this is acknowledged as a limitation of the study.

Table 1 Coding Sheet

Source: Author's compilation

Teks	*Act*	*Scene*	*Agent*	*Agency*	*Purpose*
Quote from the text	What happened	Context of the location and conditions of the action	Who performed the action	How was the action carried out (beliefs/rites)	Reasons why the action was performed (Thanksgiving, Praise, Confession , Petition)

Data analysis followed the three stages proposed by Miles et al. (2014; see also Hamzah, 2020, p. 109): data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. In the data reduction stage, the author read the manuscript in full, selected the text units that met the criteria above, and condensed each into a row of the coding sheet with its five pentad elements. In the data display stage, the coded units were arranged in tables by manuscript part and by category (Tables 2–10), which made it possible to compare units across parts and to count the frequency of beliefs and rites and of the four purposes. In the conclusion drawing and verification stage, the author looked for patterns across the tables, namely the dominance of rites over beliefs, the distribution of purposes, and the recurrence of crisis followed by prayer in the prophetic narratives, and checked each pattern by returning to the original quotation and its context in the manuscript.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis of the Kerinci Tauhid Manuscript, a total of 20 texts were identified, consisting of prayers and religious narratives. The analysis was then conducted using Kenneth Burke's Pentad analysis to examine the texts as symbolic acts. Subsequently, regarding the element of agency, the analyzed data units were interpreted through Émile Durkheim's perspective (beliefs and rites), while the element of purpose was interpreted using several elements from FitzGerald (2012) "Prayer as Rhetoric" approach, namely thanksgiving, confession, praise, and petition. Additionally, in the discussion, the data units were also explained through Burke's theory of Dramatism.

The Structure of Symbolic Action in the Kerinci Tauhid Manuscript

The coding results show that the text units in the manuscript can be mapped to the five elements of the Pentad: act, scene, agent, agency, and purpose. In this case, the first element is "act," which describes religious actions such as the affirmation of Allah (tauhid), the performance of prayer, and expressions of gratitude. These actions indicate that the narrative in the manuscript is not merely descriptive but constitutes symbolic actions imbued with meaning. Second, the "scene" element generally takes the form of a crisis situation, such as the Prophet Yunus in the belly of the fish, the Prophet Ibraham being commanded to sacrifice his son, or the Prophet Moses facing Firaun's threats. Third, the "agent" element consists of the prophets or the authors who recorded

the teachings of tauhid. Fourth, the "agency" element indicates the dominance of ritual practices (rites) particularly prayer, over beliefs. Fifth, the "purpose" element, based on the "Prayer as Rhetoric" classification, shows the dominance of thanksgiving, praise, and confession, while the element of petition is not found in the analyzed text units.

The Dominance of Rites and Beliefs in the Kerinci Tawhid Manuscripts

Based on the 20 text units analyzed, the "agency" element was dominated by rites in 14 text units, while beliefs accounted for 6 text units. This indicates that the Kerinci Tawhid manuscripts place greater emphasis on the discussion of ritual worship, particularly prayer, as the primary medium for conveying messages to Allah SWT. The depiction of these rituals can be read as part of a persuasive construct that implicitly underscores the importance of religious practices as a means of embodying religious values

Table 2 Data on Rites and Beliefs in the Agency Element

Total Texts	Agency: Religious Sociology - Émile Durkheim	
	Rites	Beliefs
20	14	6

These rituals can be identified through the text in all four sections: I, II, III, and IV. For example, in Section I "I'tidal provides water from the Ka'sar spring on the Plain of Masyar" the text illustrates that the movements of prayer can be understood as rites that possess sacred meaning and hold benefits for the afterlife. According to Durkheim, the sacred is something protected and safeguarded by prohibitions (Adam, 2021). Therefore, each pillar of prayer can be understood as a symbolic act that bridges this world and the hereafter. Furthermore, the rites found in Parts II and III reflect that the ritual of reciting "Bismillahirrahmanirrahim" before beginning an activity indicates that even actions in daily life are constructed as rituals that connect humans with Allah SWT. Meanwhile, "beliefs" appear 6 times out of the total text units analyzed. The "beliefs" category is found in texts related to the explanation of Allah's attributes, such as in Part I: "innallaha Basirun Bima ta'ma'malun," which, when translated, means "Indeed, Allah sees all that you do." This expression is a religious formulation that refers to the power of Allah SWT as the observer of all human actions. Thus, this expression invites the audience to acknowledge the greatness and power of Allah SWT.

Table 3 Data Agency (Beliefs) in Manuscript: Part I

Teks	*Act*	*Scene*	*Agent*	*Agency*	*Purpose*
"Allahu ladzi kholaqossamawati wal'ard wama bainahuma"	Acknowledging Allah as the Creator of the heavens and the earth	An Explanation of the Essential Attributes of Allah in the Doctrine of Tawhid	Author	Beliefs: Belief in Allah as the Creator of the universe	Confession: expressing acknowledgment of Allah as the Creator of the universe

Teks	*Act*	*Scene*	*Agent*	*Agency*	*Purpose*
"Inna laha laghaniyyun anil alamin [...]/"	Acknowledgment of God abundance	An Explanation of the Essential Attributes of Allah in the Doctrine of Tawhid	Author	Beliefs: Through the belief in Allah attributes that Allah is the All-Rich and not dependent on His creatures, thereby strengthening the religious faith of the faithful	Confession: represents an acknowledgment of God's attributes

Another example can be seen in Table 3, namely "Allahu ladzi khalaqas-samawati wal-ard wa ma bainahuma," which expresses acknowledgment of Allah SWT as the Creator of the heavens and the earth, as well as "inna Allaha laghaniyyun 'anil 'alamin," which affirms the self-sufficiency of Allah SWT. Both of these quotations refer to Allah's power over the universe. These statements are understood to guide theological awareness as well as an attitude of submission and obedience toward Allah SWT. Thus, this finding aligns with Durkheim's assertion that rites and beliefs are interrelated (Durkheim, 1995). In this context, rites function as concrete practices that shape religious experience through action, while beliefs form the understanding of theological convictions that reinforce the meaning of these rituals.

Persuasion Strategies through Narratives of the Prophets and Religious Texts

FitzGerald (2012) identified that prayer, as a rhetorical act, has four purposes: petition, praise, thanksgiving, and confession. These four categories were used as a framework to understand the purpose in the Kerinci Tauhid texts. Based on the findings of this study, it was determined that the dominant purposes were thanksgiving (9 text units), confession (7 text units), praise (4 text units), and petition (0 text units).

Table 4 Data Purpose

Total Texts	Prayer as Rhetoric - William FitzGerald			
	Thanksgiving	Confession	Praise	Petition
20	9	7	4	0

The concept of "Thanksgiving" in this text encompasses the stories of the prophets who performed prayer as a means of seeking help and expressing gratitude for the blessings bestowed by Allah SWT. From the perspective of "prayer as rhetoric," prayer is understood as a moment that contains both opportunity (kairos) and decision (crisis) (FitzGerald, 2012, p. 13). For example, this is reflected in the story of Prophet Yunus, who at that time was in a crisis, surrounded by his own mistakes, the darkness of night, the darkness of the water, and the darkness inside the fish's belly. After waiting for 40 days, Allah SWT rescued Prophet Yunus from the belly of the fish Nun. Subsequently, Prophet Yunus performed the Asr prayer as an expression of gratitude for his salvation.

Table 5 Text in Manuscript: Part I

Kutipan Teks	*Act*	*Scene*	*Agent*	*Agency*	*Purpose*
"[...] Seketiko waktu asar sembahyang la hiya Yunus empat rekaat/ [...]/ syukurlah iya nabi Yunus kepada Allah Ta'ala/"	Prophet Yunus's performance of the Asr prayer as an expression of gratitude to Allah	The story of Prophet Yunus after emerging from the belly fish	Prophet Yunus	Rites: Through the Asr as an expression of gratitude	Thanksgiving: Expressing gratitude for the safety Prophet Yunus
"sembahyang Maghrib itulah nabi Isa Alaihissalam tatkala dikeluarkan Allah Ta'ala dari dalam qaumnya"	Prophet Isa performance of the Maghrib prayer as an expression of gratitude to Allah	The story of Prophet Isa who was saved by Allah from his people	Prophet Isa	Rites: Through the Maghrib Prayer as a response of salvation	Thanksgiving: Thanksgiving: Expressing gratitude for salvation Prophet Isa
"Rokaat yang kedua syukurlah iya sebab menafikan dukacita ibunya dan tuduhan kaumnya/"	Expression of gratitude for being free from sorrow and accusation	Explanatio n of the meaning of the Maghrib prayer rak'ahs of Prophet Isa	Prophet Isa	Rites: the rakaat of prayer as a unit of ritual structure in worship that expresses the relationship between humans and Allah.	Thanksgiving: expressing gratitude for the loss of grief
"[...] Pertama syukurlah iya sebab menafikan duka cita seterunya fir'aun/ yang ketiga syukurlah iya sebab menafikan dukacita saudaranya Harun Kakak yang ke empat syukurlah [...] sebab menafikan duka cita [...]"	Depicting Prophet Moses' gratitude	The story of Prophet Moses in the Isha prayer	Prophet Moses	Rites: gratitude in the form of worship	Thanksgiving: expressing gratitude for deliverance from the enemy
"Rokaat yang pertama syukurlah iya sebab kelepasan daripada kelam malam/ Rokaat yang kedua sukuna iya sebab Kembali daripada siang hari"	Depicting Prophet Adam's gratitude for emerging from darkness into light	The story of Prophet Adam in the Fajr prayer	Prophet Adam	Rites: Performing the first and second rak'ahs as an expression of Prophet Adam's gratitude	Thanksgiving: Expressing gratitude for the change in circumstances

Table 6 Text in Manuscript: Part IV

Kutipan Teks	*Act*	*Scene*	*Agent*	*Agency*	*Purpose*
"[...] pertama syukur lah ia nabi Ibrahim sebab menafikan duka cita anaknya"	Prophet Ibrahim performed the Zuhr prayer	The trial of Prophet Ibrahim (the command to sacrifice Ishmael)	Prophet Ibrahim	*Rites*: Prayer (four units) as a religious practice that connects humans with the sacred in response to God's trials	Thanksgiving: Expressing gratitude for the loss of a child's grief

Kutipan Teks	*Act*	*Scene*	*Agent*	*Agency*	*Purpose*
"Rokaat yang kedua sukur lah ia sebab menafikkan duka cita istrinya[...]"	Prophet Ibrahim performed the second rak'ah	The Healer of Sorrow	Prophet Ibrahim	Rites: Prayer as an expression of gratitude in one's relationship with Allah SWT	Thanksgiving: Cultivating a sense of gratitude
"ketiga sukur lah ia sebab Maryam penebusan lah anaknya [...]"	Prophet Ibrahim performed the third rak'ah	The event of the son's redemption	Prophet Ibrahim	Rites: Prayer as a rite of thanksgiving and atonement	Thanksgiving: Cultivating a sense of gratitude
"Rakaat empat syukur lah ia sebab/ dirinya niamah/dari allah ta ala sebab dirinya penebusan yang amat besar [...]"	Prophet Ibrahim performed the fourth raka'ah	Awareness of Allah blessings	Prophet Ibrahim	Rites: Prayer as a practice of communication with the sacred	Thanksgiving: Expressing gratitude for God blessings

Experiences of crisis situations followed by prayer as an act of thanksgiving were also experienced by other prophets, such as Prophet Isa (Maghrib prayer), Prophet Moses (Isha prayer), Prophet Adam (Fajr prayer), and Prophet Ibraham (Dhuhr prayer), which collectively establish the five daily prayers as acts of gratitude for the safety and blessings from Allah SWT. This narrative illustrates that gratitude is expressed not only through verbal communication but also through the practice of prayer. Furthermore, prayer is not merely an obligation for the religious community (Muslims), more than that, it can also foster human awareness of their dependence on Allah SWT.

The narratives of the prophets reflect Burke's (1961) "guilt-purification-redemption" pattern, evident in how the prophets endure suffering or trials, then perform religious rituals as a process of purification, ultimately achieving redemption in the form of salvation or inner peace. This suggests that thanksgiving is the primary persuasive resource in the text, while also affirming that religious practice is positioned as the primary means for humans to draw closer to Allah SWT. In this regard, prayer is a practice that refers to the communal ritual of Islam that connects the servant to Allah SWT. The pattern is clearest in the narrative of Prophet Yunus, where the text refers to the prophet's own mistakes before his deliverance. In the narratives of Prophets Isa, Moses, Adam, and Ibrahim, the stage corresponding to guilt is represented by ordeal, such as accusation, threat, darkness, or a divine command, rather than by explicit sin, so the pattern is an analytical reading of the narratives and not an explicit statement of the manuscript.

The depiction of prayer in the manuscript can be understood as a form of construction indicating that every life experience should ideally be responded to through the practice of worship (prayer). In addition to thanksgiving, there are also 7 text units categorized as "confession," which generally relate to the expression of human faith in the attributes of Allah SWT. This theme is evident throughout all sections of the manuscript: I, II, III, and IV.

Table 7 Text in Manuscript: Part I

Teks	*Act*	*Scene*	*Agent*	*Agency*	*Purpose*
"Allahu ladzi kholaqossamawati wal'ard wama bainahuma"	Recognizing Allah as the Creator of the heavens and the earth	Explanation the essential attributes of Allah in the doctrine of tawhid	Author	Beliefs: Belief in Allah as the Creator	Confession: expressing acknowledgment of the Oneness of Allah as the Creator of the the universe
"Inna laha laghaniyyun anil alamin artinyo/ bahwa sungguhnyo Allah ta'ala yang amat kayo daripada sekalian alam ini"	Acknowledgment of the perfection and the wealth of Allah	Explanation the essential attributes of Allah in the doctrine of tawhid	Author	Belief: Through belief in the nature of Allah that Allah is All-Rich and does not depend on creatures.	Confession: represents the affirmation of God's attributes
"innallaha Basirun Bima ta'ma'malun artinya bahwa sungguh Allah ta'ala yang/amat melihat sama' ada berupa atau tiada berupa sifat"	The recognition that Allah is All-Seeing of all human actions	Explanation of the nature of Allah in the teachings of monotheism and prayer	Author	Beliefs: Through the belief that Allah is All-Watching over human actions	Confession: shows recognition of the nature of God
"Apa sebabnya I'tidal itu boleh dijadikan rukun Karena I'tidal itu memberi air telago kausar di padang masyar di dalam kuburnya [...] Karena tertib itu bertemu dengan laun Tuhannya di dalam surga dan di dalam kubur"	Explains the meaning of the pillars of prayer and their rewards in the afterlife	Explanation of the pillars of prayer	Author	Rites: Constructing prayer as a ritual that has spiritual meaning	Confession: Demonstrates a confession of faith in the truth of the afterlife and the rewards of the pillars of prayer, which rhetorically constructs the importance of perfecting the practice of worship.

Table 8 Text in Manuscript: Part II

Teks	*Act*	*Scene*	*Agent*	*Agency*	*Purpose*
" la Ilaha Illallah Muhammada Rasulullah"	Declaration of tawhid	Context of Religious Education	Author	Beliefs: Through the belief in the oneness of Allah and the prophethood of Muhammad as the foundation of the system religion that unites religious communities..	Confession: Acknowledging one's faith and conveying the teachings of tawhid

Table 9 Text in Manuscript: Part III

Teks	*Act*	*Scene*	*Agent*	*Agency*	*Purpose*
"[...] Rizki dari pado allah"	Recognizing Allah as the Provider of sustenance	Teachings on God in daily life	Author	Beliefs: Through awareness and acknowledgment that provision comes from Allah	Confession: represents a declaration of faith

Table 10 Text in Manuscript: Part IV

Teks	*Act*	*Scene*	*Agent*	*Agency*	*Purpose*
"insolatanha anilfahsya walmunkar"	The Affirmation of Prayer to Avoid Evil	An explanation of the function of prayer in Islamic teachings as a moral guide for humanity	Author	Beliefs: Through the belief that prayer as a practice of connection with the sacred to uphold morality and steer clear of immorality	Confession: Shows a confession of faith in the function and objective promise of prayer, which rhetorically constructs the importance of maintaining prayer and morality in life.

For example, in Part II, "La Ilaha Illallah Muhammada Rasulullah" is the Islamic creed. When translated, it means "There is no god but Allah, and the Prophet Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah." In terms of purpose, this text can be categorized as a confession, that is, an acknowledgment of faith in Allah SWT and the Prophet Muhammad SAW as His Messenger. Thus, the confession serves as the text's means of affirming the fundamental tenets of Islam to the reader. This aligns with the theory of Religious Sociology, which views religion as serving to unite its adherents into a single moral community (Durkheim, 1912; Durkheim, 1995, p. 34).

Furthermore, it was found that the "praise" category comprised 4 text units consistently appearing at the beginning of Parts I, II, and III through the phrase "Bismillahirrahmanirrahim" or invocations of blessings upon the Prophet Muhammad SAW. FitzGerald (2012) views this practice as part of an attitude of "reverence and gracious subordination" a form of respect that reflects human awareness of one's position before God (Littlejohn et al., 2017, p. 205). In this context, these four text units refer to the invocation of the divine, with the purpose of offering praise.

The four praise units are distributed across the first three parts of the manuscript. Part I opens with "Dengan namo Allah … Bismillah" (act: mentioning the name of Allah) and, immediately after, with "Assholatu wassalamu 'alla Sayyidina Muhammadin" (act: invoking blessings and peace upon the Prophet Muhammad); Parts II and III each open again with "Bismillahirrahmanirrahim." In all four units the scene is the opening of a religious text, the agent is the author, the agency is rites, since opening a text with these formulas is a practice that reminds the writer and the reader of their relation to Allah, and the purpose is praise. The transliteration of Part IV contains no opening formula and moves directly to the meaning of the rak'ahs of the prayers. The formula also follows a convention found in other Kerinci manuscripts: Syaputra (2020) reports that nearly all lamentation (ratap tangis) manuscripts begin with bismillah, which he reads

as a sign of the Islamic period. The praise units therefore show both a rhetorical function and a regional writing convention.

Thus, the opening of the narrative with "Bismillahirrahmanirrahim" and blessings upon the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) can be understood as a rhetorical construction that places Allah and the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) at the center of religious orientation. This establishes a religious context and positions reverence for the Divine as an integral part of the message's delivery. Consequently, praise can be understood as one of the text's indirect persuasive strategies, operating through reverence and religious orientation rather than through explicit commands or appeals.

On the other hand, in the "purpose" category, the analyzed data units did not contain any instances of "petition." In this context, "petition" is understood as a direct appeal to God. The analysis results show that the persuasive structure in this text does not rely on direct requests. Instead, persuasion operates implicitly through the affirmation of religious values, such as praising and acknowledging the oneness of Allah SWT, as well as through stories of the prophets' struggles, exemplary conduct, and gratitude. The absence of petition can be linked to the structure of the narratives themselves. In the units coded as thanksgiving (Tables 5 and 6), the prophets perform the prayer after the crisis has been resolved, for example after Prophet Yunus emerges from the fish or after Prophet Isa is delivered from his people, so the prayer responds to deliverance that has already occurred and does not ask for it. In the coding frame used here, such prayers fall under thanksgiving and not petition. Because the analysis covers 20 selected units, the absence of petition describes this set of units and should not be generalized to the whole manuscript.

CONCLUSION

This study read the Naskah Tauhid Kerinci as a rhetorical act by combining Burke's pentad, Durkheim's beliefs and rites, and FitzGerald's prayer as rhetoric. Among the analyzed units, the manuscript carries its message less through doctrinal assertion than through ritual practice presented in narrative form: rites outnumber beliefs, and the prophetic narratives present prayer as the fitting response to crisis and deliverance. Thanksgiving, confession, and praise are the purposes enacted, while petition does not appear.

Three contributions follow. First, for the study of written da'wah, the manuscript shows a form of persuasion that works through exemplification and positioning rather than through explicit exhortation or request: the reader is not told to pray but is shown prophets who pray, and the narrative links hardship, ritual, and relief. Second, for the study of religious rhetoric, layering the pentad with Durkheim's and FitzGerald's categories makes it possible to separate what a text asserts (beliefs), what it prescribes or narrates as practice (rites), and what it enacts rhetorically (purposes), so that a manuscript can be analyzed beyond a list of persuasive expressions. Third, for Islamic manuscript studies, the findings show that a local manuscript can be treated as a communicative text and not only as a philological or historical source.

These contributions concern the rhetorical functions that can be identified in the text. They do not establish that the manuscript persuaded its readers: identifying rites and beliefs shows what the text makes available as persuasive resources, not their effect, and effects cannot be established

without data on audience reception. Two interpretations call for the same caution. The guilt-purification-redemption pattern is clearest in the narrative of Prophet Yunus and is an analytical reading in the other narratives, where hardship is shown through ordeal and not explicit sin. The absence of petition is tied to the narratives in which prayer follows deliverance (Tables 5 and 6), and it describes the analyzed units, not necessarily the entire manuscript.

The limitations follow from the scope of the study: it analyzes one manuscript, covers a selected set of 20 text units, was coded by a single coder without an independent check of coding consistency, and does not examine how readers receive and interpret the manuscript. It also treats the writer as the agent although the editors describe the text as notes taken in teaching assemblies (Azizah et al., 2025), so the voice of the teacher cannot be separated from that of the note-taker. Future research could therefore analyze all text units of the manuscript or use a second coder to test the consistency of the coding, compare religious manuscripts from other regions in Indonesia such as Java, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Papua, and involve readers, for example community members who still read Jawi, through interviews or group discussions to examine how the persuasive resources identified here are received and interpreted.

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