The discourse of digital persuasion: unmasking Aristotelian rhetorical strategies in Harvard's EdX MOOCs

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Abstract

This study looked into how Harvard University's EdX Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) strategically employed the Aristotelian rhetorical aspects of pathos, ethos, and logos to comprehend their digital persuasion methods. It employed content analysis to examine three MOOCs' "about this course" sections: "Rhetoric," "Ancient Masterpieces," and "Pyramids of Giza." After careful examination, the "Rhetoric" MOOC received an impressive high score of 8, indicating a strong dedication to academic rigor in the digital realm. Deliberately incorporating pathos (7) was found to be an effective strategy for emotionally engrossing learners in virtual environments across MOOCs. In addition, Harvard's excellent display of credibility, authority, and ethical appeal in the digital sphere was underlined by consistently high ethos scores (8 for "Rhetoric," 5 for "Ancient," and 6 for "Giza"). The study's findings highlight Harvard's deft application of digital persuasion techniques in EdX MOOCs, demonstrating the university's smooth transition of its prestigious reputation into the digital learning space while adjusting to the changing needs of education, especially in the AI-driven world of today.

Keywords: *Aristotelian Rhetoric; Digital persuasion; Discourse; EdX MOOCs; Online Education.*

Introduction

Aristotelian rhetorical strategies—Logos, Pathos, and Ethos—are essential in EdX MOOCs for developers and students, particularly in today's AI-driven world. Data-centric settings require logical thinking and comprehension, which Logos facilitates by ensuring accurate and well-structured contents (Helman & Switzer, 2016). Through real instances, pathos creates emotional connections Munteanu (2011) that boost motivation and engagement for students worldwide. Ethos creates credibility (Lupton & Sherman, 2023) through reliable sources and knowledgeable instructors, which is essential for reliable knowledge distribution in the face of pervasive disinformation. By encouraging transparency, participation, and credibility, these strategies strengthen MOOCs and continue to be applicable in today's quickly changing world of learning.

The intentional use of pathos, ethos, and logos in a variety of fields has been extensively researched, but there is still a large body of unanswered study, especially when it comes to Harvard University's MOOCs on the EdX platform. The literatures show complex uses of these rhetorical strategies in a variety of contexts, including educational policies (Lowenhaupt et al., 2016; Säntti et al., 2021), misinformation campaigns (Bourdon, 2015), religious texts (Barnhill, 2017; Parry, 2017), histories (Savolainen, 2023), crowdfunding persuasion (Feng et al., 2023), social media (Diaz Ruiz & Nilsson, 2023), consumer cultures (Engdahl & Gelang, 2019), and community building (Davoudi et al., 2020). The strategic use of pathos, ethos, and logos in MOOCs—especially those offered by Harvard on EdX—has received little attention, despite a great deal of research in these domains. Every study that is examined shows how to deliberately employ pathos to arouse feelings, ethos to build trustworthiness, and logos to formulate logical arguments.

The study contributes both practically and theoretically. Its practical contributions for developers come from its ability to improve EdX MOOC learning environments and course production procedures (Wong, 2021) while policy makers are also benefited (Kundu & Bej, 2020). Course developers can also benefit from the research's analysis of the usage of ethos, pathos, and logos in "about this course" sections, as it can help them create more convincing, believable, and engaging course descriptions (O'Dell et al., 2018). This may result in higher enrollment, better retention rates, and eventually better learning results. The study's theoretical contributions include expanding the understanding of digital rhetoric (Mann, 2018; Oh, 2024), multimodal discourse analysis (Kessler & Marino, 2023; Zhong & Liu, 2023), and online education. It also enriches the theoretical discourse on online learning by shedding light on the adaptation of classical rhetorical principles to digital environments. The research contributes to a deeper knowledge of effective communication methods inside online education platforms by identifying patterns and strategies used by course developers.

This study, accordingly, seeks to examine how different EdX MOOCs use pathos, ethos, and logos in their "about this course" parts. The study specifically attempts to identify trends and strategies used by course developers to appeal to learners, improve understanding, and promote a pleasant learning experience by analyzing the material and language used in these parts. In order to improve educational outcomes and guide future course development practices, the ultimate goal of this research is to further our understanding of how Aristotelian rhetorical strategies are incorporated into the layout and delivery of online courses, especially in the context of EdX MOOCs.

To draw in prospective students, online course designers must use Aristotle's three persuasive techniques: ethos, pathos, and logos. According to

Leonte and, the objectives of this strategic strategy are to guarantee clarity (Logos), elicit emotional engagement (Pathos), and build credibility and trustworthiness (Ethos) (Leonte, 2023). In order to communicate the idea that "This course is intelligently designed and meticulously structured," designers concentrate on logically organizing the course material and provide explanations and reliable data (Helman & Switzer, 2016). Narratives in the 'about the course' section are meant to stimulate curiosity and provide pleasure, much like when an artist says, "This is engaging and entertaining as well as educational." Ethos entails establishing credibility by highlighting the credentials of educators, highlighting the standing of the organization, and guaranteeing openness and justice (Engdahl & Gelang, 2019). It conveys, "Trust us—we are experienced, knowledgeable, and committed to providing a high-quality learning experience." When these components are skillfully combined, an interesting story is produced that ignites passion, builds a connection, and gives hope for the valuable and rewarding nature of the educational route (Padilla Rodriguez et al., 2020; Tao et al., 2022).

Learning the principles of Aristotelian persuasion—Logos, Pathos, and Ethos—becomes essential for students navigating modern society in the quickly evolving AI-driven world. These time-tested persuasive techniques are crucial in today's technologically advanced world (Sneddon et al., 2018). With a focus on logical and reasonable reasoning, Logos gives students the tools they need to communicate ideas clearly even in the face of complicated technological issues (Evans et al., 2016). As the number of human-machine contacts increases, pathos becomes more important, and effective communication requires that learners comprehend emotional resonance (Munteanu, 2011). In the rapidly changing technology context, mastery of pathos helps learners to craft powerful narratives that connect with a variety of audiences. In an AI-shaped society, ethos—which emphasizes ethical appeal and credibility—is essential, stressing responsible innovation and moral issues (Leonte, 2023). Beyond simple communication, learning Aristotelian persuasion equips students to handle the complex issues of an AI-driven society and make morally and responsibly contributions to the changing dynamic between humans and technology (Annaraud & Singh, 2017; Virani et al., 2023).

In the era of rapid technological advancement and the pervasive influence of artificial intelligence (AI), the acquisition of knowledge and skills becomes paramount for individuals navigating the complexities of the contemporary world (Xiong & Zuo, 2019). Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) offered by prestigious institutions such as Harvard University on platforms like EdX have emerged as invaluable resources for learners seeking to thrive in the AI-driven landscape. Harvard's MOOCs on EdX represent a gateway to cutting-edge knowledge curated by experts in diverse fields (Padilla Rodriguez et al., 2020). As AI continues to redefine industries and reshape the employment landscape,

learners equipped with the insights provided by these courses gain a competitive edge in understanding and harnessing the potential of emerging technologies (Sneddon et al., 2018).

Among the wealth studies, as literatures have shown, the presence of this-like study contributes to the debate about ideologically motivated planning legitimised through forms of rhetorical persuasion. It shows how political ideologies become embedded in planning policies and practices through strategies of legitimation aimed at justifying specific ideas, beliefs and values as self-evident and inevitable. These legitimation strategies rely on distinctive rhetorical appeals to steer planning discourses, policies and institutions. Examples of 'ideology in action' from Britain, Denmark and the Netherlands, literatures show that various combinations of rhetorical appeals to logos, ethos, pathos and doxa (logic, character, emotion and identity) are often simultaneously at work to naturalise contested planning reforms (Davoudi et al., 2020). The dynamic and accessible nature of MOOCs Tao et al. (2022) ensures that learners, regardless of geographical location or background, can engage with world-class educational content (Allan, 2016; Annaraud & Singh, 2017; Evans et al., 2016).

Such courses as those by Harvard university on EdX also cover more ground than just technical proficiency. Soft skills like adaptability, problem-solving, and critical thinking are highly valued in an AI-driven world (Hudha et al., 2018; Xiong & Zuo, 2019). Harvard's MOOCs on EdX are crafted to foster a holistic skill set, empowering learners not only with technical expertise but also with the ability to analyze, interpret, and apply knowledge in diverse contexts. The interdisciplinary nature of the courses reflects the multifaceted challenges posed by the intersection of AI and various facets of human life.

Moreover, these MOOCs' value proposition is strengthened by Harvard University's renown and credibility. Learners engaged with the courses given by this acclaimed college acquire not only a superior education but also a credential recognized globally. This is especially important in an AI-driven job market where credentials and verified skills are essential for career progression. All in all, the importance of learning MOOCs on EdX by Harvard University in today's AI-driven world cannot be overstated. These courses serve as catalysts for individual growth, providing a gateway to knowledge that is both comprehensive and adaptable to the evolving landscape of artificial intelligence (Padilla Rodriguez et al., 2020; Tao et al., 2022). By taking advantage of Harvard's MOOCs, students put themselves in a position to influence AI's future effects on society in addition to understanding the technology's complexities.

The deliberate use of pathos, ethos, and logos is a common theme in many academic fields, but research on the subject is noticeably lacking, especially in relation to Harvard University's Massive Open Online Courses

(MOOCs) on the EdX platform. The complex applications of these rhetorical strategies in a variety of research fields, including educational policy, disinformation campaigns, historical comparisons, and community building, are examined in this survey of the literature. It turns out that there is still much to learn about the deliberate use of pathos, ethos, and logos in MOOCs, particularly those that Harvard offers on EdX.

The analysis of planning reforms by Davoudi et al. (2020) highlights the deliberate application of pathos, ethos, and logos to legitimize controversial planning reforms in many nations, offering complex insights into the underlying logic, character justification, and emotional appeals. The consumer culture study by Engdahl and Gelang (2019) skillfully distinguishes between ethos, pathos, and logos. In the study of consumer culture, the writers decipher shifting ideals and expose the evolution of ethos and personae with methodical credibility by employing an analytical approach and sociological theories. Bourdon (2015) of historical analogies in Israeli–Palestinian conflict coverage stresses the efficient employment of logos, ethos, and pathos. The study demonstrates the deliberate use of ethos and contentious comparisons to influence public opinion and emphasize how feelings influence opinions.

The research on the discourse around the COVID-19 immunization Savolainen (2023) examines the rhetorical devices used by proponents and opponents, emphasizing the use of ethos, pathos, and logos. The study draws attention to the over-reliance on emotive and credibility-related tactics, which fuels divisive arguments and generalized mistrust. Parry (2017) demonstrates how to employ pathos, ethos, and logos to convey authenticity wrought by the Spirit. The study provides examples of how to effectively communicate thoughts and engage audiences on both a rational and emotional level by using speaker credibility, emotional expression, and reasoned argument. The study on crowdfunding proposals Feng et al. (2023) highlights the importance of ethos, pathos, and logos in persuading readers. In order to create compelling arguments, pique emotional appeal, and establish credibility and character for a comprehensive persuasive strategy, visual aspects are essential.

Barnhill (2017) investigation of the book of Revelation reveals the interplay of logos, pathos, and ethos through ekphrasis. According to the study, the purpose of using poetic-rhetorical acts is to elicit feelings, detach from Roman imperial ideology, and demonstrate a dedication to Jesus as Lord. In support of autoethnographic stories, Faulkner (2019) emphasizes the application of shame to solve societal concerns (logos), the strategic use of shame (pathos), and shame as an incentive for action (ethos). The study convincingly demonstrates how emotions may shift to propel societal transformation. The study conducted by Lowenhaupt et al. (2016) examines how school leaders' language combines pathos, ethos, and logos in their discussion of high-stakes accountability in education policy. The study demonstrates the nuanced blending of local traditions

and institutional reforms, utilizing emotional, moral, and logical arguments in the conversation surrounding educational policy.

Harlow (2015) uses Michel Meyer's redefinition of ethos, pathos, and logos in the analysis of rhetorical linkages in complicated policy situations. The study emphasizes the strategic application of ethos, pathos, and logos in public policy discourse, underscoring the significance of comprehending social and rhetorical systems. Pathos and ethos are the main topics of Ruiz and Nilsson's study on misinformation on social media. The paper presents a paradigm describing how harmful actors systematically inject deceptions to exacerbate identity-driven disputes, highlighting the emotional and credibility factors in misinformation campaigns. Apostle Paul's discourse in community building is analyzed by Chidume and Agbo with a primary focus on logos and persuasive techniques (Chidume & Agbo, 2022). The study highlights the strategic use of logos in community building and reveals effective communication tactics for leaders using Aristotelian rhetoric and Bitzer's Rhetorical Situation Theory.

Säntti et al. (2021) rhetorical construction of education's future in Finnish policy (highlights the deliberate use of pathos to caution against adhering to the past. The study emphasizes ethos and emotion to show how urgently educational reform is needed. The discourse analysis of white feminism on social media platforms by Borah et al. (2023) makes use of ideas related to framing, rhetoric, and cross-platform activism. The results highlight the deliberate use of logic, reason, and facts, with acknowledgment serving as a typical framing technique.

In MOOCs, especially those from famous universities like Harvard, the strategic use of pathos, ethos, and logos has received little attention despite the substantial research in numerous disciplines. This knowledge gap grows more significant in the AI-driven world of today. More research is necessary to understand how MOOC creators—especially those connected to prestigious universities—purposefully use these persuasive elements to draw in and persuade international students in virtual learning environments as the educational landscape changes. In the current digitally connected environment, knowing these strategies is crucial to maximizing the efficacy of online learning.

Methods

This study examines the deliberate use of ethos, pathos, and logos in Harvard University's EdX Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), using a qualitative research approach. With a focus on "Pyramids of Giza: Ancient Egyptian Art and Archaeology" (Giza), "Ancient Masterpieces of World Literature" (Ancient), and "Rhetoric: The Art of Persuasive Writing and Public Speaking" (Rhetoric), documentation serves as the main means of data collecting for this study. The dataset includes thorough course descriptions that were obtained straight from the EdX website. Through the use of content analysis, the study

investigates the presence and application of ethos, pathos, and logos in the "about this course" section. To assure credibility, audit trail, thick description, consistency, and reflexivity were made use. The analysis that follows explores the subtle qualitative facets of the persuasive components found in MOOC presentations. This study provides a solid basis for understanding Harvard's purposeful application of persuasive tactics in the context of online education by using rigorous methodologies and assuring reliability.

Findings and Discussion
Findings

This study explores the persuasive techniques used in Harvard University's Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) on the EdX platform. The study explores the strategic use of Logos, Pathos, and Ethos in course descriptions and content through a qualitative approach and content analysis. Chart 1 presents a comparative review of the various techniques each MOOC takes in implementing these rhetorical aspects. This summary offers insightful information for learners and course authors who are navigating the intricacies of online education in the AI-driven era.
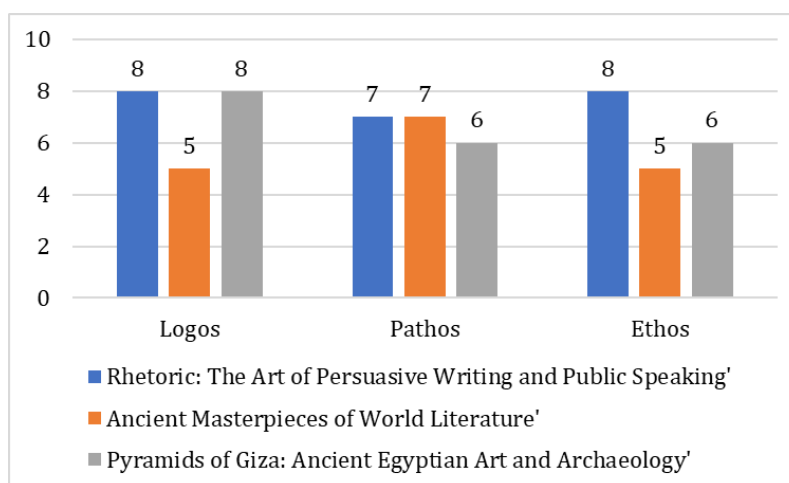
Chart 1: comparative summary of the three different MOOCs' use of the rhetorical devices

of pathos, ethos, and logos.

As can be seen, bar Chart 1 offers a comparative summary of the three different MOOCs' use of the rhetorical devices of pathos, ethos, and logos. With a score of 8, logos dominates the "Rhetoric" MOOC. This is due to a strong use of rational persuasion, which is tempered by the presence of pathos and ethos. The "Ancient" course consistently features pathos (7) and ethos (5), but places comparatively less emphasis on logos (5). The "Giza" MOOC, on the other hand, makes strong use of both pathos (6) and logos (8), indicating a well-balanced mix

of emotional appeal and logical argumentation, along with a moderate emphasis on ethos (6). This table provides insights into the different ways that each course handles persuasiveness by highlighting differences in the way that rhetorical elements are strategically included.

In its "About this course" section, the "Rhetoric" MOOC uses a judicious combination of compelling arguments, demonstrating a considered strategy to draw in potential students. Starting with Logos, the course addresses the modern social environment and builds a logical basis by highlighting the significance of developing persuasive argumentation skills. The course ties compelling arguments to enacting social change and having polite conversations, rationalizing the cause-and-effect relationship between heated times and the necessity for effective reasoning. Incorporating tangible rewards strengthens the rational argument and links effective persuasive communication skills to tangible benefits in one's personal, public, and professional spheres.

Making a seamless transition to Pathos, the emotional appeal is expertly integrated by leveraging the elevated emotions connected to the present historical moment. Words like "fundamental disagreements" and "contentious time in history" create empathy and a sense of urgency, connecting with students' aspirations to make a meaningful contribution to society. Referencing speeches by historical people adds an emotional resonance and helps students relate to the influence of influential addresses. Emotional language strengthens the connection between the course material and personal development.

The ethical appeal, or ethos, is carefully constructed to establish credibility and trust. By recognizing the divisive times, the course creators position themselves as perceptive educators knowledgeable of current issues. When a course is aligned with social advantages and implies a commitment to creating beneficial effect, ethical authority is strengthened. Membership in eminent historical organizations reinforces the ethical foundation even more, implying a link between moral leadership and effective communication. The course's affiliation with Harvard Professor James Engell and his on-campus course serves to reinforce its positioning as a trustworthy, moral source of persuasive instruction.

1. Rhetoric MOOC

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To sum up, the "Rhetoric" MOOC skillfully combines Logos, Pathos, and Ethos appeals to communicate the ethical underpinnings, emotional significance, and necessity of honing persuasive communication skills. The course proves to be a thorough and trustworthy tool for students looking to improve their argumentative abilities.

2. Ancient MOOC

The "About this course" part of the MOOC "Ancient Masterpieces of World Literature" deliberately includes persuasive aspects. Starting with Logos, the course presents a coherent case for its significance by highlighting the logical relationship between ancient writing and its continuing impact on contemporary comprehension. The careful organization of the course material investigates the ways in which literature influences civilizations and cultures over time, establishing a logical connection between literary expression and cultural identity. The course promises to investigate the long-term effects of language, writing, and literary genres in historical contexts while constructing a cogent framework and demonstrating the relevance of the material.

Moving on to pathos, the MOOC purposefully arouses feelings in order to promote a feeling of unity and cultural pride. Literature that describes civilizations defining themselves makes one feel nostalgic and a part of the culture. By bridging personal and cultural histories through oral storytelling and writing technology, the story highlights the emotional power of storytelling traditions. The promise that literary masterpieces would travel and find new audiences, together

with heroic tales, evoke emotions about the universality of human experience and the ability of storytelling to transcend cultural boundaries. The MOOC is framed as an emotionally engaging investigation of ancient world literature because of the way that the chronological journey through myths and histories forges an expressive connection to the past.

Finally, the "About this course" section skillfully blends pathos and logos appeals, eliciting strong feelings from students and offering a rational defense of the course's significance. The MOOC presents itself as an emotionally and intellectually captivating journey through the continuing influence and logical progression of ancient global literature.

3. Giza MOOC

In its "About this course" section, the MOOC "Pyramids of Giza: Ancient Egyptian Art and Archaeology" skillfully uses persuasive techniques. When it comes to Logos, the MOOC offers a logical framework by discussing important issues with the Giza site, the Pyramids, and the nearby graves. Viewers are encouraged to approach the history and archaeology of ancient Egypt carefully by this well-organized presentation. The course positions itself as a trustworthy and up-to-date source of information by citing well-known excursions and making use of cutting-edge technologies like 3D modeling.

Going on to pathos, the MOOC purposefully includes sentimental components to enthrall potential students. The opening questions pique interest in deciphering the mysteries of ancient Egypt by arousing wonder and curiosity. Words that evoke strong feelings, like "majestic Pyramids" and "stirring examples of ancient Egyptian architecture and culture," are descriptive and help the reader form a clear mental picture. Phrases like "Join us on this online journey" and promises of discovery are purposefully included in the course design to emotionally draw students into the fascinating investigation of Giza's archeological treasures.

The "About this course" section purposefully incorporates ethos to build credibility and authority. The course's commitment to imparting essential knowledge is emphasized in the opening questions, which strengthens the course's reputation as a trustworthy information source. For students looking for a thorough analysis of ancient Egyptian art and archaeology, the course is positioned as a reliable and authoritative resource because of its use of emotive language, historical expedition references, and dedication to contemporary technologies like 3D modeling. For individuals starting an academic investigation into the rich cultural history of Giza, the MOOC is an attractive and dependable choice because of its clever use of Logos, Pathos, and Ethos.

To summarise, Chart 1 is an effective tool for comparing three MOOCs and assessing how well they employ the rhetorical devices of pathos, ethos, and logos. The "Rhetoric" MOOC stands out because it places a strong emphasis on

logos, which denotes a strong dedication to logical argumentation while carefully balancing pathos and ethos. On the other hand, the "Ancient" course constantly emphasizes ethos (5) and pathos (7) while placing a somewhat muted emphasis on logos (5). With a score of 6 in pathos, 8 in logos, and 6 in ethos, the "Giza" MOOC stands out for striking a harmonious balance and demonstrating the deft integration of logical arguments, measured ethical focus, and emotional appeal. This comparative analysis highlights the unique strategies that each course use in the area of persuasiveness and offers insightful information about the intentional incorporation of rhetorical devices in forming their respective stories.

Discussion

The qualitative study on Harvard's EdX MOOCs has produced informative results. The study used content analysis to examine digital persuasion using Aristotelian components. According to the findings, the "Rhetoric" MOOC demonstrated careful digital persuasion and received an outstanding logos score of 8, demonstrating a strong dedication to academic rigor in the digital sphere. The intentional use of pathos in MOOCs denotes a digital pedagogy that emotionally engages students in the online learning environment. Furthermore, the consistently high ethos scores obtained from MOOCs show how skillfully Harvard has embodied ethos in the digital sphere, establishing authority, credibility, and ethical appeals. This study clearly shows Harvard's dedication to integrating its prestigious reputation and unwavering academic standards into the digital learning environment. Harvard's emphasis on ethos, pathos, and logos in digital persuasion is confirmed in this study.

By examining how rhetorical persuasion legitimizes change, Davoudi et al. (2020) contribution to the debate on ideologically motivated planning changes, in contrast, reveals unique patterns. This study explores the rhetorical methods influencing planning discourses, in contrast to this study's emphasis on digital pedagogy. It demonstrates the complex ways in which logos, ethos, and pathos are used to justify controversial innovations. Based on the results, the research indicates that several combinations of rhetorical appeals are frequently operating simultaneously to legitimize contentious planning reforms, which is consistent with Harvard's emphasis on multidimensional persuasion as it is found in this study. Although there are differences in the study's application and context of ethos, pathos, and logos, these components are consistent with Harvard's dedication to persuasion tactics.

Liu and Zhang (2021) study provides valuable insights into the use of metadiscursive techniques in corporate press releases and their role in persuasive discourse. The analysis of corporate press releases indicates trends in the distribution of metadiscourse resources, which contribute to persuasive appeals like ethos, pathos, and logos a contrast to Harvard's emphasis on digital education. These findings support Harvard's focus on the contribution of ethos,

pathos, and logos to persuasiveness, but they also demonstrate how flexible these components are in a variety of genres. Although the study contradicts in the particular setting of corporate press releases, it is in line with Harvard's ethos, pathos, and logos paradigm as can be seen in this study.

The investigation of shop-window mannequin visual rhetoric by (Engdahl & Gelang, 2019) offers a distinctive perspective on nonverbal persuasion. The research of shop-window mannequins and Harvard's digital pedagogy differed in that the latter used visual rhetoric to decode shifting ethos. Nonetheless, parallels were observed in the focus on ethos as a vital component in creating nonverbal cues in consumer society. In terms of nonverbal persuasion through visual rhetoric, the study conflicts with Harvard's ethos framework in this study, but it agrees with it otherwise.

Harvard's emphasis on Aristotelian components in this study is consistent with Bourdon (2015) analysis of analogies in Israeli-Palestinian conflict media, although several notable differences are observed. Bourdon deconstructs the reasoning structure of conflicts, stressing the authority and character of authors as well as the emotional impact, often ignoring the factual validity of the parallel. It contrasts with Harvard's emphasis on ethos, pathos, and logos in digital persuasion. While the study accords with the Harvard ethos, pathos, and logos paradigm, it differs when it comes to media coverage parallels.

Savolainen's analysis of the COVID-19 vaccination disputes shows parallels with Harvard's tripartite Aristotelian rhetorical theory shown in this study (Savolainen, 2023). The data exhibits patterns that highlight rhetorical methods connected to pathos and ethos. These strategies are consistent with Harvard's focus on building trust and eliciting emotional engagement. Savolainen addresses a hotly debated subject in online forums, whereas Harvard concentrates on digital education. While the study conforms with the Harvard ethos, pathos, and logos paradigm, it differs in the particular setting of online debates on a hotly debated subject.

While stressing a nuanced viewpoint, Parry's investigation of the persuasive techniques used by Puritan writers is in line with this study highlighting Harvard's focus on Aristotelian aspects (Parry, 2017). According to the research, Puritan language employs ethos, pathos, and logos in an effort to make sincerity produced by the Spirit evident. These findings support Harvard's dedication to academic honesty, but they also highlight a unique use in religious debate. While the research coincides with the Harvard ethos, pathos, and logos framework, it differs in the particular setting of early modern English religious speech.

The multimodal genre analysis of crowdfunding proposals by Feng et al. (2023) finds interesting trends. The study contrasts this study where Harvard's digital pedagogy with the way rhetorical appeals and visual pictures support persuasion. It is, however, in line with Harvard's focus on ethos, logos, and

pathos, but it also emphasizes composition, which promotes coherence both inside and between moves. Although the study disagrees in the particular setting of crowdfunding projects, it is in line with Harvard's ethos, pathos, and logos paradigm.

While it stresses a rhetorical device, Barnhill's examination of Revelation's descriptions through ekphrasis is consistent with Harvard's emphasis on Aristotelian principles found in this study (Barnhill, 2017). The findings suggest that effective ekphrasis makes a connection between the spoken word and the image, enabling listeners to make their own conclusions. Given that Harvard focuses on digital pedagogy while Barnhill examines the poetic-rhetorical acts in religious discourse, it is clear how flexible ethos, pathos, and logos are. The study disagrees in the particular setting of religious speech through ekphrasis, but it is in line with Harvard's ethos, pathos, and logos paradigm in this study.

The strength of autoethnographic stories is argued by Faulkner (2019), in opposition to Harvard's digital pedagogy in this study. Faulkner's study stresses ethos, pathos, and logos; yet, given the findings, it also emphasizes how autoethnography can be used to further social activism. This is consistent with Harvard's dedication to persuasion, but it shows a different use in promoting social change. The study differs in the particular context of autoethnographic stories for social engagement, but it accords with this study regarding Harvard's ethos, pathos, and logos framework.

Harvard's emphasis on ethos, pathos, and logos is in line with Lowenhaupt et al. (2016) case study on accountability speak in education policy. The study's findings demonstrate the merging of emotional and moral arguments with logical arguments. Harvard focuses on digital pedagogy, but Lowenhaupt et al. show how rhetorical aspects can be used in a variety of ways by examining how larger institutional changes and local labor practices are coupled. The study contradicts in the particular context of accountability discussion in education policy, but it is consistent with Harvard's ethos, pathos, and logos paradigm in this study.

Harvard's digital pedagogy and Harlow's research on competence and knowledge gaps (Harlow, 2015) are in opposition. Both studies use Michel Meyer's redefinition of ethos, pathos, and logos in light of this study's findings, with Harlow emphasizing the negotiation of rhetorical relationships between experts and non-experts. Harvard provides an example of digital persuasion, showcasing the various ways in which ethos, pathos, and logos might be applied. Although the study conforms with the Harvard ethos, pathos, and logos paradigm, it differs in the particular context of knowledge gaps and expertise.

Misinformation on social media is consistent with Harvard's emphasis on Aristotelian components highlighted in this study. Considering the findings, both research employ ethos, pathos, and logos; however, Diaz Ruiz and Nilsson investigate how identity-driven debates are used to spread misinformation. Harvard focuses on digital teaching, demonstrating the adaptability of rhetorical

components in many settings. While this study coincides with the Harvard ethos, pathos, and logos paradigm, it differs in the particular situation of social media misinformation.

Harvard's digital pedagogy contrasts with Chidume and Agbo (2022) investigation of discourse-rhetorical methods in First Thessalonians. Based on their findings, Chidume and Agbo analyze discourse-rhetorical methods in religious texts, emphasizing ethos, logos, and pathos in community development. Both works employ Aristotelian Rhetoric and Bitzer's Rhetorical Situation Theory. Harvard provides an example of digital persuasion, showing how rhetorical devices can be applied to a wide range of topics. In the particular setting of discourse-rhetorical tactics in religious texts, the study disagrees with the Harvard ethos, pathos, and logos framework, but otherwise agrees with it.

The finding of this study that highlights Harvard's emphasis on ethos, pathos, and logos is in line with Säntti et al. (2021) rhetorical study of future visions in Finnish education policy. Given the findings, both studies investigate the ways in which language shapes future visions: Harvard examines the rhetoric around digital education, while Säntti et al. examine the rhetoric surrounding the modernization of the Finnish educational system. Although the study conforms with the Harvard ethos, pathos, and logos framework, it differs in the particular context of Finnish education policy's future goals.

The study comparing Harvard's digital pedagogy with the rhetoric around white feminism in social media (Borah et al., 2023), indicates that both studies employ computational text analysis and content analysis, highlighting logic, reason, and facts in light of our findings. Harvard focuses on digital persuasion, whereas Borah et al. investigate platform variations in discourse surrounding white feminism, highlighting voices marginalized by the feminist movement. The study conflicts with the particular context of the conversation around white feminism on social media, but it is in line with Harvard's ethos, pathos, and logos framework as found in this study.

To put in brief, these studies' comparisons and contrasts, as well as the unique analytical frameworks for analyzing data, interpreting findings, and elucidating patterns and trends, demonstrate how flexible ethos, pathos, and logos are in a variety of settings, including digital pedagogy and other communicative domains. While the findings in the litertaures support Harvard's focus on certain rhetorical devices in this study, they also highlight subtle variations in their use and efficiency.

Conclusion

Three main questions are addressed in this research. First, it looks at the deliberate use of Logos by Harvard's EdX MOOCs to communicate legitimacy and reasoned argumentation in their course descriptions and

materials. Second, the study investigates how much pathos is incorporated into these MOOCs to emotionally engage students and promote a deeper comprehension of the material. Finally, the study explores how Harvard University's ethos is reflected in the course material and delivery of EdX MOOCs, building learners' confidence and moral attractiveness.

The examination of Harvard's EdX MOOCs, as can be seen from Bar Chart 1, highlights a methodical and deliberate application of digital persuasion, particularly the use of Aristotelian components—ethos, pathos, and logos—to improve the overall effectiveness of course descriptions and content in the digital sphere. With an exceptional logos score of 8, the "Rhetoric" MOOC highlights the institution's dedication to upholding academic rigor in the digital realm by demonstrating a deliberate emphasis on credibility and rational persuasion. Aiming to emotionally engage learners and help them develop a better connection and knowledge of the subject matter in the virtual learning environment, MOOCs purposefully incorporate pathos (7) into their curriculum. Moreover, the consistently high scores for ethos in all courses—for example, 8 in "Rhetoric," 5 in "Ancient," and 6 in "Giza"—confirm the skillful digital representation of Harvard University's ethos. To ensure a smooth transition of its prestigious reputation and academic integrity into the digital learning landscape, this highlights the institution's dedication to building trust, authority, and ethical appeal to learners. In short, Harvard's digital persuasion techniques in EdX MOOCs successfully take advantage of the special advantages of online learning to provide memorable and captivating educational experiences. For educational institutions looking to improve the legitimacy and persuasiveness of their online courses, these findings have real-world applications.

The work makes a theoretical contribution by highlighting the careful incorporation of Aristotelian rhetorical elements in the digital sphere. It expands on the understanding of the deliberate use of ethos, pathos, and logos to improve the efficacy of virtual learning environments. The digital sphere poses distinct obstacles and prospects for persuasion; this study illuminates the ways in which these traditional rhetorical components might be modified to craft captivating digital narratives. The results add to the growing body of knowledge on digital communication strategies, especially in the context of education, by illuminating the complex interactions between ethos, pathos, and logos that affect online learner engagement. This study has limitations despite its contributions. The research's qualitative methodology, which depends on content analysis of just three carefully chosen MOOCs from Harvard University available on the EdX platform, might restrict how broadly applicable the conclusions can be. The conclusions' wider relevance is limited by the study's narrow focus and small sample size. Furthermore, the dynamic character of virtual learning settings makes it difficult to capture how digital persuasion is changing.

This study could be expanded upon in the future by involving a broader and more varied sample of MOOCs from different institutions. Comparative studies across various academic institutions and fields of study may offer a thorough grasp of how ethos, pathos, and logos are used in various online learning environments. Furthermore, longitudinal research might investigate how MOOCs' digital persuasion practices are changing as a result of technological improvements and shifting pedagogical paradigms. Lastly, examining how students see and react to these rhetorical devices may provide important new light on how successful digital persuasion is in online learning.

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