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Algorithm of Piety: The Pedagogical Structure of Tarbiyah, Ta'lim, and Ta'dib in YouTube Akidah Akhlak Sermons as a Source of Islamic Religious Education Learning

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ABSTRACT: Islamic sermons on YouTube are widely used by Indonesian Generation Z as an informal source of Akidah Akhlak learning, yet their pedagogical structures have rarely been examined through the lens of Islamic educational theory. This study aimed to identify the pedagogical structures of YouTube sermons based on the classical dimensions of tarbiyah, ta'lim, and ta'dib; examine the associations between these structures and indicators of viewers' affective engagement; and explore their implications for Grade X Islamic Religious Education (PAI). A directed qualitative content analysis was conducted on three purposively selected sermons addressing Grade X Akidah Akhlak themes, including one by Buya Yahya and two by Adi Hidayat, using the Sermon Pedagogical Structure Analysis (ASPC) instrument. The findings were compared with indicators derived from 4,689 viewer comments analysed in a previous study using the same corpus. All three sermons followed a consistent pedagogical sequence, progressing from ta'lim to tarbiyah and subsequently to ta'dib, although their relative emphases differed. The sermon with the strongest emphasis on tarbiyah was associated with the highest proportion of positive comments (29.5%) and the greatest average comment length (19.5 words). The two sermons in which ta'dib played a primary role through concrete steps towards repentance or self-control exhibited higher proportions of repentance-related comments (23.7% and 25.0%) than the sermon in which ta'dib served a supporting role (10.3%). These findings indicate associations across three cases rather than causal relationships between sermon structure and changes in viewers' attitudes or behaviours. The ASPC instrument may assist PAI teachers in systematically evaluating digital sermons before recommending them as supplementary learning resources. Further research involving larger sermon corpora and direct learner participation is recommended to validate these patterns and assess their educational implications.

KEYWORDS: Digital da'wah; informal learning; affective engagement; content analysis; Generation Z

1. Introduction

The development of digital platforms has transformed how Indonesia's Generation Z accesses Islamic religious education. YouTube has become one of the primary platforms through which Indonesian Generation Z engages with Islamic learning outside formal educational institutions [1, 2]. This transformation has positioned YouTube sermons not merely as sources of entertainment but also as informal religious learning resources that complement formal education. Generation Z increasingly prefers digital platforms over conventional media for acquiring religious knowledge because of their accessibility, flexibility, and interactive features [3]. Consequently, Islamic preaching (da'wah) has shifted from predominantly traditional approaches towards digital formats that are more concise, contextual, and participatory, reflecting the learning preferences and media consumption patterns of Generation Z [4].

This transformation has important pedagogical implications for formal Islamic Religious Education (PAI). Under the Merdeka Curriculum, Grade X Akidah Akhlak learning outcomes emphasise competencies related to avoiding harmful social behaviours, developing izzah (self-respect and dignity) based on Islamic values, and internalising Islamic teachings concerning the prohibition against approaching adultery [5, 6]. These themes are also frequently addressed in Islamic sermons available on YouTube. Consequently, students may encounter similar religious concepts through both classroom instruction and digital sermons. However, the widespread accessibility of religious content does not necessarily guarantee its pedagogical quality, coherence, or suitability for formal educational objectives. This raises an important educational concern regarding how PAI teachers can systematically evaluate the pedagogical characteristics of digital sermons before recommending them as supplementary learning resources [7].

Previous research has examined various aspects of Islamic preaching and religious engagement on digital platforms. Studies have investigated digital Islamic lectures as emerging forms of religious participation [8], the commodification of da'wah through celebrity preachers [9], and the construction of religious authority through communication styles and algorithmic visibility on YouTube [10]. Research connecting YouTube content with Islamic education has examined the representation of curriculum learning outcomes in individual channels [11], the contribution of religious content to digital religious literacy [12], and the use of YouTube to promote critical thinking in PAI learning [7]. Survey-based studies have also explored associations between YouTube exposure and religiosity among Generation Z [1]. Although these studies provide valuable insights into digital religious communication, educational applications, and audience engagement, their primary emphasis has generally been on content accessibility, religious authority, communication strategies, or learning outcomes rather than the internal pedagogical organisation of sermon content.

The first study within the Algorithm of Piety research programme [13] examined viewer comments associated with the same sermon corpus and identified patterns of pedagogical engagement. These patterns were interpreted through the Digital Islamic Pedagogical Engagement (DIPE) model, which integrates classical Islamic educational theory, affective-domain taxonomy, and the networked-religion framework. The model describes engagement through five levels, ranging from Level 1 (Istima') to Level 5 (Takhalluq), incorporating expressions associated with tarbiyah, ta'lim, and ta'dib. However, this earlier investigation focused primarily on audience responses and did not systematically examine whether the sermons themselves contained corresponding pedagogical dimensions or how those

dimensions were organised within the sermon narratives. Consequently, the relationship between sermon structure and observed patterns of viewer engagement remains insufficiently understood.

The central research problem is the lack of a systematic approach for evaluating the pedagogical structure of YouTube Islamic sermons as potential supplementary resources for formal Islamic education. Although these sermons are widely accessible and address themes relevant to the PAI curriculum, their internal organisation of knowledge transmission, character formation, and behavioural guidance has received limited scholarly attention. More specifically, the research gap lies in the absence of a theory-informed analytical instrument that identifies both the presence and sequence of classical Islamic pedagogical dimensions within digital sermons and enables their comparison with indicators of audience engagement. Without such an approach, educators have limited evidence-based guidance for distinguishing sermons that provide structured educational content from those that primarily emphasise religious communication or emotional appeal.

To address this gap, the present study introduces the Sermon Pedagogical Structure Analysis (ASPC) instrument, grounded in the classical Islamic educational dimensions of ta'lim, tarbiyah, and ta'dib. These dimensions represent interconnected aspects of Islamic education: ta'lim concerns the systematic transmission and understanding of knowledge, tarbiyah emphasises character formation through guidance, exemplarity, and emotional development, and ta'dib focuses on the cultivation of appropriate conduct, moral discipline, and responsible action [14–16]. Together, these concepts provide a theoretical foundation for examining how religious instruction integrates cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions. The instrument adopts a directed qualitative content-analysis approach, in which analytical categories are established from existing theoretical concepts before examining the data [17].

The selection of ta'lim, tarbiyah, and ta'dib is supported by their established significance within Islamic educational scholarship. Although Islamic educational traditions also incorporate related concepts such as tazkiyah, riyadhah, and tahdhib, the three selected dimensions provide a broad conceptual foundation for understanding knowledge acquisition, character formation, and ethical conduct [18–20]. Their conceptual foundations are associated with Islamic teachings concerning the transmission of knowledge, spiritual nurturing, and the cultivation of adab. For example, ta'lim is reflected in the Qur'anic account of Allah teaching Adam the names of things (Al-Baqarah 2:31), while tarbiyah is associated with nurturing and development, and ta'dib emphasises ethical refinement and disciplined conduct [19, 20]. Within the ASPC instrument, expressions related to inner purification and character formation are classified under tarbiyah, whereas statements prescribing concrete moral practices or self-discipline are classified under ta'dib. This operational distinction facilitates consistent coding while recognising that the classical concepts are theoretically interconnected.

The proposed instrument differs from conventional content-analysis approaches in several important respects. First, its analytical categories are derived directly from Islamic educational theory rather than general communication, persuasion, or behavioural frameworks. Second, it examines not only whether the three pedagogical dimensions are present but also their sequence and relative emphasis throughout a sermon. Third, unlike classroom discourse-analysis instruments that focus on interactions between teachers and students [21], ASPC is designed to examine the pedagogical organisation of monologic digital religious instruction. It

also differs from general cognitive, affective, and behavioural models, such as the head, heart, and hands framework [22], by incorporating the normative and ethical meanings embedded within Islamic educational concepts. The principal novelty of this study therefore lies in developing and applying a theory-informed analytical instrument that systematically maps the sequence and emphasis of Islamic pedagogical dimensions within YouTube sermons and compares these structural characteristics with previously identified indicators of viewers' affective engagement.

This approach is particularly relevant to informal learning environments, where learning occurs outside formal educational institutions and is often shaped by individual interests, social interactions, and digital technologies [23, 24]. The concept of networked religion further explains how digital platforms facilitate religious participation, interpersonal connections, and emerging forms of religious authority [25, 26]. In Indonesia, YouTube has become an influential space for religious communication, enabling preachers to reach diverse audiences through accessible and engaging audiovisual content [27]. Nevertheless, audience popularity and digital visibility should not be interpreted as direct indicators of pedagogical effectiveness. Examining sermon structure through established educational concepts may therefore provide a more systematic basis for evaluating its potential relevance to formal Islamic learning.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyse the pedagogical structure of selected YouTube Islamic sermons using the classical dimensions of ta'lim, tarbiyah, and ta'dib, and to examine how variations in their sequence and emphasis correspond with indicators of viewers' affective engagement, with implications for Grade X Akidah Akhlak learning in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). By integrating theory-informed sermon analysis with previously collected audience-response data, the study seeks to contribute to the methodological understanding of digital Islamic pedagogy and provide a preliminary analytical foundation for selecting supplementary religious learning resources. However, the findings are interpreted as exploratory associations rather than evidence of causal relationships or demonstrated improvements in student learning outcomes.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research Approach.

This study employed a qualitative research approach using directed content analysis, in which coding categories are derived from an established theoretical framework and subsequently applied to the research data [17, 28]. This approach was selected because the study focuses on the meanings and pedagogical structures embedded in Islamic sermon content rather than on statistical distributions or hypothesis testing. Classical Islamic educational theory provided the conceptual foundation for developing the analytical categories. Descriptive indicators derived from viewer comments were used exclusively to support comparisons across the selected videos rather than to establish causal relationships or test statistical hypotheses.

2.2. Data Sources.

The research data were obtained from three YouTube sermon videos purposively selected according to three predetermined criteria: (1) thematic relevance to Grade X Akidah Akhlak content in Islamic Religious Education (PAI); (2) relatively high numbers of views and comments, indicating substantial audience engagement; and (3) sermons delivered by

preachers widely recognised among Indonesian Generation Z audiences. The research corpus comprised the sermon content of the three selected videos and their associated viewer comments. Table 1 presents the characteristics of the selected videos, including their titles, preachers, corresponding PAI themes, view counts, comment distributions, and comment collection periods.

Table 1. Research Corpus: Video Characteristics and Comment Dataset (N = 4,689).

No.	Video Title	Channel / Preacher	Grade X PAI Theme	Views	Comments (n)	Comment Period
1	How to Dispel Lewd Thoughts (Pornography)	Al-Bahjah TV / Buya Yahya	Guarding Social Conduct	>500,000	833	2020–2026
2	Is the Sin of Adultery Forgiven?	Adi Hidayat Official / Adi Hidayat	Guarding the Heart and Self-Honour	>300,000	806	2021–2026
3	The Definition of Desire and How to Control It	Adi Hidayat Official / Adi Hidayat	Avoiding Illicit Relationships	>1,200,000	3,050	2019–2026
	Total				4,689	2019–2026

The selected videos constitute the same corpus examined in the initial stage of the Algorithm of Piety research programme [13]. This continuity enabled comparisons between the pedagogical structures identified in the present study and the viewer responses documented in the earlier investigation. The selection of three videos was consistent with the study's objective of conducting an in-depth, segment-by-segment examination of sermon content rather than a broad survey of Islamic sermons on YouTube. In qualitative research, sample adequacy depends on the specificity of the research objectives, the relevance of the selected cases, and the strength of the theoretical framework guiding the analysis [29]. These considerations supported the selection of a small, focused corpus. Nevertheless, purposive sampling imposes limitations on the transferability of the findings. All three videos address closely related themes concerning Islamic sexual ethics, and two were delivered by the same preacher. Consequently, the findings should be interpreted within the context of the selected cases rather than generalised to Islamic sermons on YouTube as a whole [30].

2.3. Research Instrument: Sermon Pedagogical Structure Analysis (ASPC).

The Sermon Pedagogical Structure Analysis (ASPC) instrument was developed through three sequential stages: a literature review of classical Islamic educational theory, the formulation of operational indicators for each pedagogical dimension, and the refinement of these indicators based on their consistency when applied to sermon segments. This development process aligns with established approaches to constructing pedagogical coding instruments, in which operational indicators are progressively refined through repeated application to empirical data [21]. During the refinement stage, the operational indicators were informally reviewed by Tina Wahyuni, an Islamic education practitioner and teacher at TK IT Insan Qur'an. The practitioner assessed the conceptual alignment of the indicators with tarbiyah, ta'lim, and ta'dib and reviewed selected categorisation results. For example, the review considered whether sermon segments presenting religious evidence and explaining Islamic rulings were appropriately classified under ta'lim. The review consisted of informal feedback and discussion rather than a structured assessment using a scored evaluation instrument. Therefore, it should be interpreted as a preliminary assessment of conceptual appropriateness rather than formal instrument validation. The final ASPC instrument comprises three analytical dimensions, each defined by specific operational definitions, indicators, and illustrative markers, as presented in Table 2.

These dimensions provide a systematic framework for identifying the pedagogical functions of individual sermon segments.

Table 2. Sermon Pedagogical Structure Analysis (ASPC) Instrument.

No.	Dimension	Operational Definition	Operational Indicators	Example Markers
1	Ta'lim (Knowledge Transmission)	Sermon segments that systematically convey religious knowledge through explanations of Islamic teachings, evidence, rulings, and concepts.	Presentation of Qur'anic or hadith evidence; explanation of Islamic legal rulings; definition of Islamic concepts; theological explanations of cause-and-effect relationships.	Reciting Qur'anic verses, explaining fiqh rulings, and quoting Prophetic hadith.
2	Tarbiyah (Character Formation)	Sermon segments that promote character formation through moral exemplarity, emotional engagement, and the development of self-awareness and motivation.	Motivational narratives; exemplary stories; encouragement of self-awareness; reinforcement of positive emotions; invitations to muhasabah (self-reflection).	Describing the consequences of illicit relationships, encouraging personal reflection, and strengthening motivation for behavioural improvement.
3	Ta'dib (Action Orientation)	Sermon segments that encourage ethical self-discipline and provide practical guidance for actions consistent with Islamic adab.	Calls for concrete action; practical behavioural guidance; communal prayer; commitment to personal improvement; specific behavioural steps.	Encouraging prayer, providing practical strategies for avoiding sinful behaviour, and recommending actions such as marriage or increased religious observance.

2.4. Analysis Procedure.

The research procedure consisted of two complementary analytical strands. As illustrated in Figure 1, Strand A represents the qualitative analysis of sermon content conducted in the present study, whereas Strand B represents the viewer-comment dataset obtained from the earlier stage of the Algorithm of Piety research programme. The two strands were subsequently compared to identify potential associations between sermon pedagogical structures and indicators of viewers' affective engagement.

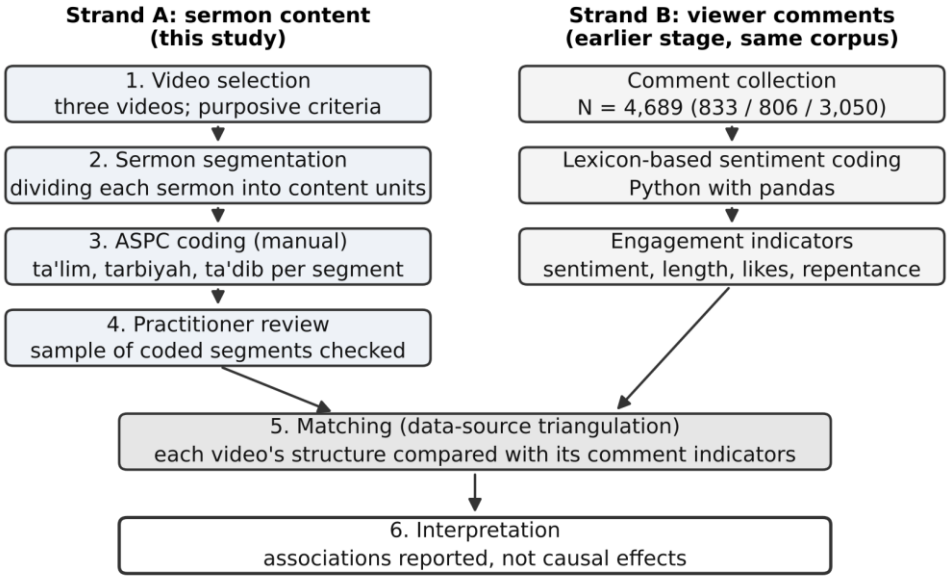


Figure 1. Research Procedure.

The analysis of sermon content was conducted in four steps. In the first step, the researcher watched all three videos thoroughly and noted the outline of the sermon content. In

the second step, each sermon was divided into content units, and each unit was manually categorised into the *ta'lim*, *tarbiyah*, or *ta'dib* dimension by listening to and reading its content and assigning a dimension based on the ASPC operational definitions, without the aid of automatic analysis software; one segment could carry more than one dimension. In the third step, the order of the dimensions and their relative emphasis in each video were identified. Emphasis was judged qualitatively from the depth and extent of the segments; segment counts and durations were not computed. In the fourth step, the findings were linked to the Grade X PAI learning outcomes (Phase E) based on the Decree of the Head of BSKAP Number 033/H/KR/2022, particularly the outcome in the Qur'an and Hadith element, namely that learners are able to analyse verses and hadith on the prohibition of illicit relationships and adultery, and the outcome in the Akhlak element, namely that learners are able to understand the benefit of avoiding diseases of the heart. These outcomes are relevant to the themes of the three videos, namely guarding social conduct, guarding the heart and self-honour, and controlling desire.

The comment indicators used for matching come from the earlier analysis of the same corpus [13] and are treated as supporting data. That analysis covered 4,689 comments, comprising 833 comments on Video 1, 806 comments on Video 2, and 3,050 comments on Video 3. The sentiment of each comment was coded as positive, negative, mixed, or neutral with a lexicon-based procedure [31] built from 20 positive and 18 negative words adapted to Islamic-Indonesian religious expression, and counts and percentages were computed in Python with the pandas library. Applying coding schemes to large sets of informal online comments is an established practice, although the choice of scheme affects the results [32]. Repentance-related comments are those coded in the category 'repentance and commitment to stay away from sin' of the Islamic Pedagogical Engagement (IPE) lexicon, a 147-word lexicon whose category coding was checked by two independent coders on 200 randomly selected comments (Cohen's kappa = 0.81) [13]. The average comment length was computed by dividing the total word count of all comments in a video by the number of comments in that video, and mean likes were computed in the same way. Because the videos differ greatly in comment volume, sentiment and repentance-related comments are reported as percentages of each video's comments.

2.5. Trustworthiness of the Analysis.

The study employed three procedures to enhance the credibility of the analysis. First, all ASPC dimensions and operational indicators were derived from classical Islamic educational theory, providing the instrument with a clear conceptual foundation [14–16]. Second, selected categorisation results were reviewed by the Islamic education practitioner described in Section 2.3. Third, the identified pedagogical structures were compared with viewer-comment data from the same corpus to support data-source triangulation [33]. The comment categories used in the earlier research stage were evaluated by two independent coders, yielding a Cohen's kappa coefficient of 0.81 [13]. In contrast, the ASPC coding of sermon content was conducted by a single researcher, and no inter-coder reliability coefficient was calculated. Although inter-coder reliability is an established approach to assessing coding consistency, methodological rigour in qualitative research can also be supported through transparent and systematically documented analytical procedures [30, 34]. Accordingly, the operational definitions and indicators are presented in Table 2, while the coding procedures are illustrated in Figure 1.

Nevertheless, the absence of a second coder remains a methodological limitation. Therefore, the categorisation results should be interpreted as theoretically informed assessments conducted by the researcher and partially reviewed by an education practitioner, rather than as independently validated or reliability-tested measurements.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Pedagogical Structure of Video 1: Guarding Social Conduct (Buya Yahya).

Buya Yahya's sermon, entitled "How to Dispel Lewd Thoughts (Pornography)," primarily emphasises ta'lim and tarbiyah, with ta'dib serving as a supporting dimension that provides practical guidance towards the end of the sermon. The ta'lim dimension dominates the opening section, where Buya Yahya explains the origins of inappropriate thoughts from an Islamic perspective, emphasising that such thoughts may arise from exposure to inappropriate visual content. This explanation aligns with the Islamic principles of guarding one's gaze and purifying the soul (tazkiyah al-nafs), which emphasise sensory control as an essential component of moral development [35]. This structured, evidence-based explanation reflects the function of ta'lim as systematic knowledge transmission [15]. The tarbiyah dimension emerges when Buya Yahya demonstrates empathy by acknowledging that experiencing inappropriate thoughts is part of human vulnerability while encouraging viewers to remain committed to personal improvement. This empathetic and motivational approach reflects the function of tarbiyah in promoting character formation through emotional engagement and moral guidance [14]. The ta'dib dimension appears towards the conclusion, where Buya Yahya provides practical recommendations, including gradually reducing exposure to inappropriate content, actively resisting undesirable thoughts, and considering marriage as a long-term solution. These recommendations reflect the function of ta'dib in translating religious knowledge into ethical conduct and practical action [16].

3.2. Pedagogical Structure of Video 2: Guarding the Heart and Self-Honour (Adi Hidayat).

Adi Hidayat's sermon, entitled "Is the Sin of Adultery Forgiven?", demonstrates a pedagogical structure that begins with evidence-based ta'lim, progresses through tarbiyah emphasising hope, and concludes with ta'dib through practical guidance on repentance. The sermon primarily emphasises ta'lim and ta'dib. The ta'lim dimension is prominent in the opening section, where Adi Hidayat refers to Surah Az-Zumar (39:53), which emphasises Allah's mercy and discourages believers from despairing of divine forgiveness [36]. This direct presentation of Qur'anic evidence reflects the function of ta'lim as knowledge transmission grounded in Islamic revelation [15]. The tarbiyah dimension emerges as the sermon shifts from theological explanation to emotional encouragement and spiritual motivation. Adi Hidayat emphasises that opportunities for repentance remain available throughout a person's lifetime, encouraging viewers to maintain hope and seek forgiveness. This message reflects the function of tarbiyah in developing moral awareness and motivation for personal improvement [14]. The ta'dib dimension appears through structured guidance on repentance, including acknowledging wrongdoing, expressing remorse, committing to avoiding repeated transgressions, seeking forgiveness from those who have been wronged, and consistently performing righteous deeds. These practical steps reflect the function of ta'dib in cultivating ethical conduct and disciplined behaviour in accordance with Islamic teachings [16].

3.3. Pedagogical Structure of Video 3: Avoiding Illicit Relationships (Adi Hidayat).

Adi Hidayat's sermon, entitled "The Definition of Desire and How to Control It," demonstrates a relatively balanced emphasis on ta'lim, tarbiyah, and ta'dib, making it the most balanced of the three sermons in terms of pedagogical structure. The ta'lim dimension appears in the explanation of desire from an Islamic perspective. Adi Hidayat systematically defines desire, distinguishes its different manifestations, and explains its relationship to the human soul within Islamic teachings. This explanation aligns with the classical classification of the nafs, including nafs al-ammarah, nafs al-lawwamah, and nafs al-mutma'innah, which provides a framework for understanding moral and spiritual development [37, 38]. This structured theological explanation reflects the function of ta'lim as systematic knowledge transmission [15]. The tarbiyah dimension emerges through the explanation that desire should not be entirely rejected but appropriately regulated according to Islamic guidance. This approach encourages self-awareness and a constructive attitude towards personal challenges, reflecting the function of tarbiyah in promoting character formation and moral development [14]. The ta'dib dimension is demonstrated through practical recommendations for controlling desire, including increasing religious observance, guarding one's gaze, selecting supportive social environments, and developing relationships consistent with Islamic teachings. These recommendations reflect the function of ta'dib in translating religious understanding into disciplined behaviour and practical ethical action [16].

3.4. Cross-Sermon Pattern and Correspondence with Viewer Comments.

Figure 2 illustrates the pedagogical sequence and relative emphasis of ta'lim, tarbiyah, and ta'dib across the three sermons. All three followed a consistent sequence, beginning with ta'lim through knowledge transmission, progressing to tarbiyah through emotional and motivational engagement, and concluding with ta'dib through practical behavioural guidance. However, the relative emphasis of each dimension varied across the sermons.

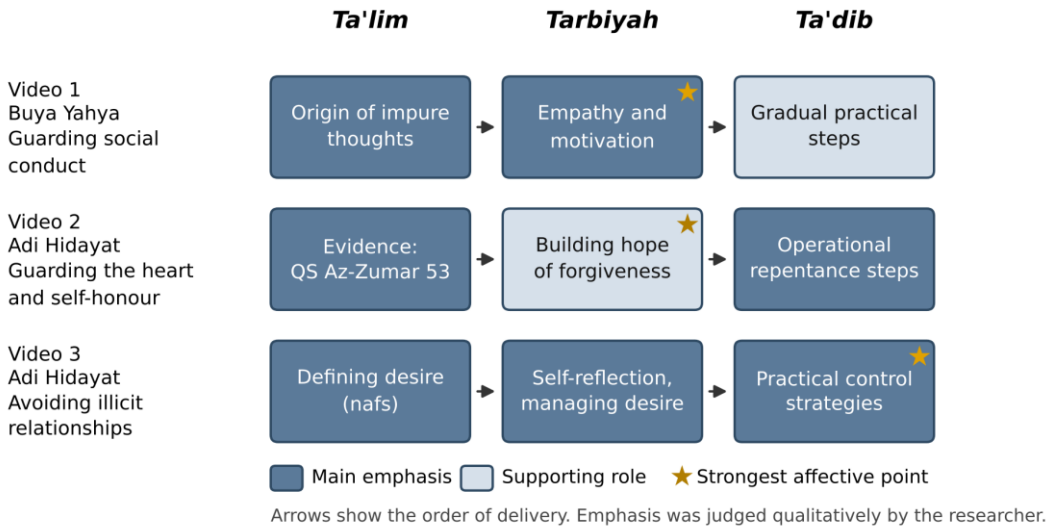


Figure 2. Pedagogical Structure of the Three Sermons: Order and Relative Emphasis of *Ta'lim*, *Tarbiyah*, and *Ta'dib*

Table 3 summarises the differences in pedagogical emphasis, delivery approaches, and affective components across the three sermons. Video 1 primarily emphasised ta'lim and

tarbiyah, with ta'dib serving as a brief practical conclusion. Video 2 emphasised ta'lim and ta'dib, while tarbiyah functioned as an emotional bridge through hope and encouragement towards repentance. Video 3 demonstrated a relatively balanced integration of all three dimensions, with ta'dib providing the strongest affective emphasis through practical guidance.

Table 3. Pedagogical Structure Patterns of the Three Sermon Videos.

Aspect	Video 1 (Buya Yahya)	Video 2 (Adi Hidayat)	Video 3 (Adi Hidayat)
Main emphasis	Tarbiyah and ta'lim	Ta'lim and ta'dib	Balanced emphasis on all three dimensions
Sequence pattern	Ta'lim → tarbiyah → ta'dib	Ta'lim → tarbiyah → ta'dib	Ta'lim → tarbiyah → ta'dib
Delivery approach	Empathetic, personal, and gentle	Theological, evidence-based, hopeful, and action-oriented	Definitional, reflective, and practical
Strongest affective component	Tarbiyah, through empathy and motivation	Tarbiyah, through hope and encouragement towards repentance	Ta'dib, through encouragement towards concrete action

All three sermons followed the same sequence. Ta'lim introduced each sermon through knowledge and evidence, tarbiyah followed with emotional and motivational content, and ta'dib concluded with guidance for concrete action. However, the sermons differed in their emphasis. In Video 1, ta'lim and tarbiyah were the dominant dimensions, while ta'dib provided a brief practical conclusion. In Video 2, ta'lim and ta'dib received the greatest emphasis, whereas tarbiyah served as a transitional element while representing the strongest affective component. In Video 3, all three dimensions received relatively equal emphasis, with the practical ta'dib section representing the strongest affective component.

Several differences in the comment indicators corresponded to these structural variations (Table 4). Video 1, which placed the greatest emphasis on tarbiyah, recorded the highest proportion of positive comments (29.5%), the lowest proportion of negative comments (5.4%), the longest average comment length (19.5 words), and the highest mean number of likes per comment (15.71). Video 2 recorded the highest proportions of negative (18.6%) and mixed (10.5%) comments, many of which expressed both remorse and hope. Repentance-related comments accounted for 23.7% of comments on Video 2 and 25.0% on Video 3, where ta'dib played a major role, compared with 10.3% on Video 1. Both higher proportions exceeded the 15% threshold established in the earlier analysis for a significant repentance response, whereas the proportion for Video 1 remained below this threshold [13]. Across all three videos, neutral comments, primarily consisting of prayers and dhikr, constituted the largest category (43.9–62.7%). Video 3 generated the highest number of comments (3,050) and received the highest number of likes on a single comment (6,756). However, these findings represent descriptive comparisons across three videos and do not establish a causal relationship between sermon structure and audience responses.

Table 4. Indicators of Viewer Affective Engagement in the Three Videos.

Indicator	Video 1 (Buya Yahya)	Video 2 (Adi Hidayat)	Video 3 (Adi Hidayat)
Comments analysed (N)	833	806	3,050
Positive sentiment (%)	29.5	26.9	22.8
Negative sentiment (%)	5.4	18.6	11.9
Mixed sentiment (%)	2.4	10.5	5.4
Neutral sentiment (%)	62.7	43.9	59.9
Mean comment length (words)	19.5	15.5	14.9
Mean likes per comment	15.71	3.48	13.18
Likes on the most-liked comment	3,172	577	6,756
Repentance and commitment comments, n (%)	86 (10.3)	191 (23.7)	764 (25.0)

3.5. Discussion.

The consistent sequence of ta'lim, tarbiyah, and ta'dib across the three sermons aligns with the classical view that these concepts constitute an interconnected educational process in which knowledge, personal development, and adab mutually reinforce one another [15, 16, 19]. This sequence also parallels the head, heart, and hands framework proposed for transformative learning in other educational contexts [22]. The present findings extend this literature by demonstrating how this sequence operates within an informal, platform-based religious communication context rather than within formal curriculum design or classroom practices. However, this interpretation requires caution. Because the conceptual framework already associates the three dimensions with a progression from knowledge acquisition to practical action, the observed sequence may partly reflect the researcher's coding expectations. Nevertheless, the differences in emphasis across the sermons are less likely to result directly from the conceptual framework and therefore represent a more informative finding.

The association between stronger tarbiyah emphasis and the higher proportion of positive comments, lower proportion of negative comments, and greater average comment length in Video 1 is consistent with research on narrative persuasion, which suggests that audiences immersed in a narrative are more likely to accept its message with less counterargument [39]. This finding also aligns with studies of Indonesian digital preachers demonstrating that emotionally resonant and healing-oriented narratives can strengthen relationships between preachers and their audiences [10]. Similarly, a cross-religious study of YouTube found that religious videos predominantly employ lecture formats incorporating salvation narratives, with content characteristics significantly associated with viewer engagement [40]. Longer comments may suggest that viewers felt personally addressed and responded by sharing their experiences, although the present study did not specifically examine self-disclosure in comment content. These findings extend previous research by identifying tarbiyah as a distinct pedagogical dimension through which emotional engagement can emerge within otherwise knowledge-oriented sermons.

The repentance-related indicator revealed a different pattern. Videos 2 and 3, which placed greater emphasis on ta'dib through practical steps toward repentance and strategies for controlling personal desires, recorded proportions of repentance-related comments more than twice that of Video 1, where ta'dib appeared primarily as a brief concluding component. This pattern suggests that practical guidance, rather than emotional appeal alone, may be associated with viewers' expressed intentions to change their behaviour. The finding is consistent with the classical understanding of ta'dib as the process through which knowledge is translated into disciplined action [16, 18]. However, it differs from much of the existing digital da'wah literature, which emphasizes preacher charisma, personal branding, and emotional communication styles as major influences on audience responses [9, 10]. Given that the analysis included only three videos, two of which featured the same preacher, these differences may also reflect variations in preaching style or sermon topics. Further investigation involving a larger and more diverse sample is therefore necessary to determine whether this pattern is consistent across different preachers and religious themes.

Video 3 generated the highest number of comments and received the greatest number of likes on an individual comment. However, these indicators provide limited evidence of pedagogical effectiveness. Comment volume can be influenced by view counts, the length of time a video has been available online, and algorithmic visibility [10]. Video 3 also had the

highest view count and had been available online for the longest period. Furthermore, online engagement may be influenced by the emotional arousal generated by a message, independently of its educational value [41]. Notably, Video 1 recorded a higher average number of likes per comment. Therefore, Video 3 is more appropriately characterized as generating the broadest audience participation rather than demonstrating the deepest engagement. This distinction is particularly important in Islamic Religious Education (PAI), where popularity on YouTube does not necessarily indicate pedagogical quality, as also highlighted in previous studies examining YouTube as a medium for da'wah and religious learning [27, 42].

In the context of PAI, the findings extend previous studies that evaluated YouTube content against educational learning outcomes [11] or explored its potential to develop students' critical thinking skills [7]. The ASPC framework provides an additional approach for evaluating whether religious sermons integrate knowledge acquisition, personal development, and practical action. This framework may assist teachers in selecting appropriate YouTube sermons for Grade X Akidah Akhlak lessons. Teachers may also adopt the sequence as a practical framework for designing affective learning activities that connect religious knowledge with attitudes and behaviour. Nevertheless, teacher guidance remains essential because adolescents' digital information-seeking practices can influence their religious behaviour [43], while online religious content circulates within interconnected digital communities beyond direct classroom supervision [25]. Religious learning through online sermons also represents only one of several influences on individual religious development. Previous research among young adults has indicated that family influences religious behaviour more strongly than social media sources [44]. Therefore, although ASPC offers potential educational applications, its effectiveness in improving classroom learning outcomes has not yet been empirically established.

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting these findings. First, the study examined a relatively small and thematically narrow corpus, with two of the three videos featuring the same preacher, which limits the generalizability of the results. Second, the coding process was conducted by a single researcher and supported by an informal practitioner review, without formal intercoder reliability testing. Third, the sentiment analysis relied on a limited lexicon of 38 words, potentially leading to misclassification of comments expressing religious emotions indirectly or through context-dependent language [31]. Finally, the demographic characteristics of commenters, including their ages and educational levels, were unknown. Consequently, the comments cannot be assumed to represent Generation Z or Grade X students, and written expressions of repentance or emotional engagement should not be interpreted as direct evidence of learning outcomes or actual behavioural change.

4. Conclusions

The analysis of three YouTube sermons identified consistent patterns in the integration of ta'lim, tarbiyah, and ta'dib. Although all three dimensions appeared in the same sequence, their relative emphasis differed across the sermons. These structural variations corresponded with differences in audience comment indicators. The sermon emphasizing tarbiyah generated the highest proportion of positive comments and the longest average comments, whereas sermons placing greater emphasis on ta'dib recorded higher proportions of repentance-related comments. These associations suggest that emotionally engaging tarbiyah content may encourage more positive and personally expressive responses, while practical ta'dib guidance

may be associated with viewers' expressed intentions to change their behaviour. However, these interpretations remain tentative because differences in preacher characteristics, sermon topics, and platform-related factors may also explain the observed patterns. The findings therefore demonstrate associations rather than causal relationships between sermon structure and audience responses. From an educational perspective, the ASPC framework offers PAI teachers a practical approach for evaluating whether online sermons integrate knowledge acquisition, personal development, and behavioural guidance before recommending them for Grade X Akidah Akhlak learning. The framework may also support the design of affective learning activities that connect religious understanding with practical application. Future research should examine a larger and more diverse collection of sermons, involve at least two independent coders to establish intercoder reliability, report comprehensive sentiment distributions, and conduct learner-based assessments to determine whether different sermon structures produce measurable differences in knowledge, attitudes, and behavioural outcomes.

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Author Contribution

Rika Azizah contributed to conceptualisation, methodology, data collection, data analysis, and manuscript writing. Merri Sri Hartati and Lety Febriana contributed to supervision and manuscript review. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no financial, personal, or professional relationships that could influence or be perceived to influence the research.

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