

Ethos–Pathos–Logos Exercise

Course: MBA (Finance) Semester: II No. of Students: 40

This exercise was designed to introduce students to Aristotle’s classical model of persuasion — the rhetorical triangle of ethos (credibility), pathos (emotional appeal), and logos (logical reasoning) and help them apply it to real-world communication.

Students often focus solely on facts (logos) and neglect the emotional or ethical dimensions. This activity aimed to build their understanding of how great communicators balance credibility, logic, and emotion to move audiences and inspire action.

To make this concept come alive, students were asked to read and analyze Martin Luther King Jr.’s iconic *“I Have a Dream”* speech — a masterclass in the use of rhetorical strategies.

The session began with an explanation of Aristotle’s persuasive model, using contemporary and business examples. Students were introduced to:

- ☐ Ethos: Establishing credibility or authority.
- ☐ Pathos: Appealing to the emotions, values, or beliefs of the audience.
- ☐ Logos: Using logical arguments, facts, and structured reasoning.

After this conceptual grounding, students were provided printed copies of *“I Have a Dream”*. Working individually first then in pairs, they were asked to highlight specific lines or passages that demonstrated ethos, pathos, or logos. Following the highlighting activity, students shared and justified their selections in a guided classroom discussion.

The exercise helped students move from being passive consumers of communication to active analysts, able to dissect and reconstruct persuasive messages. It also expanded their ability to critique financial presentations, marketing pitches, or leadership speeches