

Language of Persuasion in Online Marketing of Cosmetic Products: A Glance of Netnography in Pragmatics

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ABSTRACT (10 PT)

Online marketing was extensively chosen as the most efficient option to shop during Covid-19 pandemic. Due to the prompt expansion of digital era, a seller should be creative in using language to persuade buyers. This research aimed to investigate the use of speech acts and persuasion by cosmetics marketers in social commerce to persuade online shoppers. This descriptive research used netnography with pragmatics approach to answer the research questions. Data were collected from Facebook and Instagram by using manual netnography technique which then scraped into excel as the corpus. After that, the data were analysed by using the taxonomy of speech acts and persuasion categories. The results show that the use of directive speech acts dominate the persuasion in online marketing of cosmetic products. However, the various type of speech acts and persuasion were used by the online cosmetic sellers as a strategy to promote their products.

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INTRODUCTION

Technology helps people to communicate easily without worrying the distance between speakers and hearers. Modern language community can never be separated from the use of internet. In this cyber era, Social Networking Sites (SNS) always become the right choice to be used as the communication device in online basis (see Septianasari, 2018; Carlsson, 2017; Al-saleem, 2011; and Crystal, 2004). Face-to-face communication has already been replaced by online communication (Pimentel & Diniz, 2014; Subramanian, 2018). In line with this, some studies have proven that online media played powerful role in changing the communication style from traditional to digital (Alhadlaq, 2016; Greenfield, 2019). During the COVID-19 pandemic, however, online communication became a critical alternative for the society worldwide to deal with physical distancing, lockdown period, health protocol or other difficulties during pandemic (Canale, Marino, Lenzi, & Vieno, 2020). It has been predicted that this pandemic would impact the digital marketing strategy since the advance of information technology has changed customer behaviours (Junusi, 2020). In addition, the language use in persuading targeted customers should be a considerable aspect in digital marketing strategy as how to properly inform the products or services to the customers.

Online functional communication, such as in digital advertisements, electronic shopping, business data, and many others, was developed since 2000 (Crystal, 2004), ever since then, networking sites grew rapidly followed by the growth of e-commerce and advertisement (Rizzi, 2002). The structure of language in advertisements influences the power of persuasion language which is commonly found in printed and visual media (Flergin, 2014). Lists of lexicon used in advertisement are used to persuade the consumers to buy promoted products. Furthermore, Grice had pointed out that based on cooperative principle, the recipients of a social communication may have expectancy that the information which is presented by the speaker is relevant and has acceptable purpose of communication (Wänke & Reutner, 2009). Generally, the purpose of advertisements, both in offline basis and online basis, is to persuade the recipients.

Marketers' speech acts in social commerce frequently could attract targeted buyers towards the products offered by the marketers. Moreover, speech acts can be utilized as a marketing tool in communication to rise market's demands (Simon & Dejica-Cartis, 2015; Hanna & Richards, 2019). Carlsson (2017), in her previous study, investigated the use of persuasive speech acts of fitness influencers in their Instagram promotions. The results of her research showed that the speech acts on the data were frequently used to persuade the customers. In the same way, people frequently used speech act in making advertisement and showing their persuasion in offering their product (Osman, 2018; Simon & Dejica-Cartis, 2015b). Additionally, Wielgosz (2015) argued that indirect commissive speech acts are considered as an influential persuasive resource to get the trust and attention from the recipients. Furthermore, some previous research about speech acts in marketing were focused on diverse categories of speech acts (for further reading see Altikriti, 2016; Obuchi, 2013; Pishghadam, 2011; Hardin, 2010; and Taufik, Tarjana, & Nurkamto, 2014). Discussing about persuasion in marketing, Kenekukwu, Asemah, & Edegoh (2013) identified several techniques to persuade people, such as name calling, plain folk, card stacking, bandwagon, glittering generalities, bait and switch, testimonials, and humour. In more complete identification, McCannon (2007) classified the techniques of language use in persuasion into 23 categories. Those categories are symbols, hyperbole, defensive nationalism, humor, lie (big), maybe (a combination of hype and lie), testimonial, repetition, plain folks, strength, name calling, flattery, bribery, diversion, denial, card stacking, band wagon, simple solutions, scientific evidence, group dynamics, nostalgia, and timing.

According to Aslam (2020), approximately 64% of online consumers argued that social media helped them to decide what they would buy in online shops. He added that Facebook had the highest business value among other social media platforms (Aslam, 2020). Wang, Wang, Yao, Li, & Wang (2020), furthermore, implied that the consumers' participation in social media commerce, which combined with adequate emotional and information support and attractive product presentation, affected the engagement between seller and shopper in social commerce. On the contrary, Leong, Hew, Ooi, & Chong (2020) argued that emotional support did not significantly affect trust engagement in social media whereas it would influence the intention to purchase the products. Therefore, reliable information and strong persuasion should be developed to alter this common problem and to dismiss trust issues. However, there are still limited number of research about netnopragsmatics in Indonesian social commerce. Thus, this research sheds

a light on how persuasive language is used at social commerce of beauty products among Indonesian netizen. Furthermore, it can be formulated that the aims of this research are (1) to investigate the speech acts used by the sellers to promote their cosmetic products; and (2) to investigate the language of persuasion used by cosmetics sellers in social commerce to persuade the social media users.

THEORY AND METHOD

There are two fundamental theories which are used to analyze the data. We adopted McCannon's (2007) and Kenechukwu's et al., (2013) theories to analyze the use of persuasive language from cosmetics marketers. The other theory is from Searle (1979) about the taxonomy of speech acts. The following table discussed about the details of their theories!

Table 1. Searle's Speech Acts Taxonomy

Category	Description
Assertive	Commit the speakers to talk about the truth or real event, such as: claiming, stating, suggesting, etc.
Directive	Uttered by the speakers to get the hearers doing something, such as: ordering, recommending, directing, etc.
Expressive	Expressing speaker's feeling and phycological conditions, such as: congratulating, feeling sorry, thanking, etc.
Commisive	Committing the speaker to do an action in the future, such as: promising, threatening, etc.
Declarative	Performing declaration, telling both reality and propotion, such as: declarating, forgiving, cancelling, permitting, etc.

(source: Searle, 1979)

This theory was used to analyze the type of speech acts that commonly were used by the cosmetics marketers in social media. Besides this theory, we also categorized the type of persuasive language in cosmetics social marketing. See the table below for more details.

Table 2. The category of persuasive language

No.	Category	Description
1.	Symbols	It can be words, designs, music, or something else as long as it conveys idea to promote something or to persuade somebody.
2.	Hyperbole	An extraggeration used to impress the hearers.
3.	Fear/Defensive Nationalism	Use fear to threatening and persuade people.
4.	Humor	Use joke to make people laught and then persuade them right away.
5.	Lie	Telling lie to persuade.
6.	Maybe	Combination of lie and hyperbole techniques.
7.	Testimonial	Use other customers' idea or opinion to sell the products.
8.	Repetition	Promoting the products for many times.
9.	Plain Folks	Promoting oneself or products in a humble way.
10.	Strength	Promoting something very bold, firm, and strong.
11.	Name Calling	A combination of several techniques, such as hyperbole, lie, etc.

12.	Flattery	Making the targeted customers to feel good.
13.	Bribery	Give discount or some desirable things to persuade.
14.	Diversion	Seems to solve the target's problem but then goes vice versa.
15.	Denial	Denying to persuade the target.
16.	Card Stacking	Sorting the facts and not telling the whole story.
17.	Band Wagon	Persuading the targets that everyone does what the target doesn't do yet.
18.	Simple Solutions	Increasing simplicities and avoiding complexities.
19.	Scientific Evidence	Using scientific proof to support the persuasion.
20.	Group Dynamics	Imply that the speaker is not alone, she or he has a team or using 'we' instead of 'I'.
21.	Asking Rhetorical Question	Making the target to deal with the persuasion.
22.	Nostalgia	Telling a good memory of the past to persuade.
23.	Timing	Considering and planning the utterance to persuade.

(Source: McCannon (2007) and Kenechukwu et al., (2013))

We used the above categorization as the fundamental theory to categorize the persuasive language we found on social media aimed to promote beauty products.

Data Collecting Technique

This research administered netnography technique with pragmatics approach to collect and analyse the data. Kozinets (2010) pointed out that netnography examines online community basis from a range of interdisciplinary field.

We collected the data from Facebook and Instagram as the data source since these platforms were frequently used by Indonesian in social commerce (Nabila, 2019; Databoks, 2019). Furthermore, Mayr & Weller (2017) explained that data in social media could be obtained by using data collecting tools, Application Programming Interface (API), or manual collecting process. In this case, the researchers manually scraped the data of cosmetics promotion by doing copy-and-paste procedure on selected textual content of cosmetic social commerce into excel dataset under the following criteria: (1) posted by cosmetic sellers; and (2) contextually containing information or promotion about cosmetic products. The corpus data were mainly written in Bahasa Indonesia.

Data Analysis

To analyse the data, we use taxonomy theory of speech acts which previously has been introduced by Searle (1979). After analysing the corpus that we collected from Facebook and Instagram, we identified the type of persuasion used by cosmetics sellers in social commerce by using the categories of language persuasion from Kenechukwu et al. (2013) and McCannon (2007)

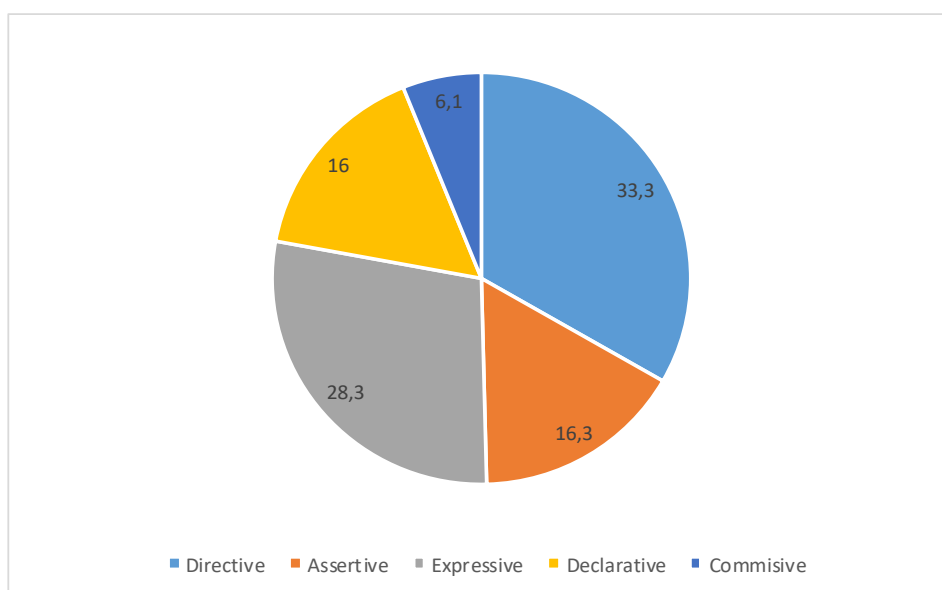
RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The corpus of this research was scraped from numerous Facebook and Instagram users who used their account to sell cosmetic products. We analyzed approximately 258 data in our corpus which all of the context of each datum is to inform, to persuade, or to promote users' beauty products.

The Speech Acts of Cosmetics Sellers in Indonesia Social Commerce

Searle (1979) argued that there are several weaknesses in Austin’s taxonomy, therefore, he designed alternative taxonomy of illocutionary speech acts which consists of assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declaration or declarative. We further applied this taxonomy to investigate type of speech acts used by Facebook and Instagram users in social commerce of beauty products.

After analysing data corpus, we found out those categories of speech acts among the language use of cosmetic products marketing in social commerce. Most sellers in social commerce of cosmetics products post a promotion in their account for at least once a day. Thus, they modified their written utterance so the shoppers would not get bored reading their posts. The pie chart below illustrates the percentage of speech acts of corpus data in this research.



Picture 1. Percentage of Cosmetics Sellers’ Speech Acts in Social Commerce

Based on the percentage of speech act usage in chart 1, cosmetic sellers in Facebook and Instagram mostly used directive speech act in offering their products to social media users, followed by the use of expressive speech act. Nonetheless, they rarely used commissive speech act since promising something to the consumers could potentially rise the trust issue between seller and shopper.

Table 3. Analysis Of Speech Acts Used On Cosmetics Marketing In Social Commerce.

Data Number	Type of Speech Acts	Data	
		Source Language (Bahasa Indonesia)	Translation
(1)	Directive	... <i>Gunakan Advanced Dynamics Soothing Night Moisture sebelum tidur untuk membantu meregenerasi, mengembalikan kelembaban, serta membantu menyamarkan kemerahan pada kulit selagi Anda tidur.</i>	... Use Advanced Dynamics Soothing Night Moisture before sleeping to help regenerating, moisturizing, disguising redness on skin while you are sleeping.

(2)	Assertive (Representative)	<i>...pH (potential Hydrogen) adalah ukuran yang digunakan untuk mengukur kadar keasaman. Lapisan pelindung pada permukaan kulit idealnya memiliki kadar pH 5,5. Asam dikenal sebagai pelindung dari polusi, bakteri, kotoran, dan racun. Kulit yang kadar pH-nya terlalu basa bisa menjadi terlalu kering dan sensitive. Sedangkan jika kadar pH kulit terlalu asam (di bawah 4), kulit bias meradang serta timbul banyak jerawat. Seimbangkan pH kulit Anda dengan menggunakan Advanced Dynamics Soothing Toner setelah membersihkan wajah untuk menyempurnakan penampilan wajah Anda...</i>	...pH (potential Hydrogen) is a parameter used to measure the acidity. The ideal pH for Epidermis is 5,5. Acid is well-known as the protector from pollution, bacteria, dirt, and poison. Skin with high pH tends to be dry and sensitive. Meanwhile skin with low pH tends to be easily irritated and pimples. Balancing your skin pH by using Advanced Dynamics Soothing Toner after cleaning your face to perfect your look...
(3)	Expressive	<i>Parfum ini wanginya enak banget dan tahan lama. Paris et moi, I love it.</i>	The smell of this perfume is very fragrant and long-lasting. Paris et moi, I love it.
(4)	Declarative	<i>JAFRA sudah mendapatkan sertifikat halal dari IFANCA, Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America. Saat ini focus terlebih dahulu untuk produk TOP 20 dan secara bertahap akan menyeluruh ke semua produk JAFRA...</i>	JAFRA has received halal certificate from IFANCA, Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America. Nowadays (we) focus on TOP 20 products and gradually (we) will focus on all products.
(5)	Commissive	<i>Make up by JAFRA. Bikin wajah makin cantik, cerah, dan sehat...</i>	Make up by JAFRA. Make your face to be more beautiful, brighter, and healthier...

(Source: <https://www.facebook.com/> and <https://www.instagram.com/>)

Datum (1) shows that the cosmetics seller gave stimuli to the audience by giving them order to use their beauty product at night before sleeping. This direct instruction shows that the communicator used directive speech act to persuade the audience. The direct speech act like in datum (1) was used to develop engagement with the consumers or shoppers.

On the other hand, assertive speech act in datum (2) reflects the commitment of communicator in giving truthful utterance. The first sentence of this datum informs the consumers about the pH condition of the skin which are being strengthened by the next sentences about how skin pH would influence the condition of their face. In datum (2), the seller commits the shoppers with the explanation and conclusion about the case of pH for the skin. This assertive speech act was used to persuade the consumers relating to the importance of choosing skincare that suits their skin condition. However, this type of speech act could be used in cosmetics marketing in order to get the consumers well-informed of what their products have and to fill the information gap between what the consumers need and what their products can give to fulfil the needs.

Moreover, datum (3) was categorized to expressive speech act since the speaker showed the positive expression towards the beauty product offered to the consumers. The

speaker showed the positive feeling after using the product and convinced the customers that the product was loveable. Meanwhile in datum (4), the sellers declared that their cosmetic products has received halal certificate from the authorized institution. This declarative speech act was used in social commerce to engage the trust of consumers, however, halal certified cosmetics are always demanded in Indonesia. Thus, declarative speech act as in datum (4) could boost trust of the buyers towards the cosmetic products offered by sellers. Since the majority of Indonesia citizen are Muslim, declaring that the cosmetic products are health and halal may become an attractive marketing strategy to persuade the shoppers. In addition, commissive speech acts could also be useful for the marketing of cosmetic products in social commerce like what has been used in datum (5). Here, the sellers tried to convince other social media users by uttering such promise that their products could make the consumers become more beautiful by having brighter and healthier skin. Confidently, the sellers guaranteed that the consumers would possibly benefit their beauty products by applying their beauty products. This strategy, however, could trigger consumers' curiosity to try their cosmetic products.

All in all, Searle's speech acts taxonomy is used by the cosmetics sellers in Indonesia social commerce to give persuasive stimuli to the shoppers. They applied various speech acts as marketing strategy to develop consumer's trust and engagement. Those speech acts have similar presupposition as to persuade consumers to buy their cosmetic products. Additionally, directive speech act can strengthen the illocutionary act of persuasion in JAFRA marketing strategy and it is also supported by the other speech acts. Persuasive stimuli posted in the sellers' account, therefore, can properly inform the quality of their products and significantly develop emotional engagement.

Language Use of Persuasion in Social Commerce of Cosmetic Products

At this stage, we observed the use of persuasion in the corpus that we collected from social commerce. We figured out that the cosmetics sellers in Facebook and Instagram frequently used 12 types of persuasion to offer their products in their personal accounts. We implemented the taxonomy theories from Kenechukwu et al. (2013) and McCannon (2007) to dig the categories of persuasion in Indonesian social commerce of cosmetic products. As the results, 3 categories were identified based on the taxonomy of Kenechukwu et al. (2013), which can be found in data (2), (3), and (5). Additionally, data (1), (4), (6), (7), (8), (9) and (10) were identified based on the taxonomy of McCannon (2007). Nevertheless, we also identified 2 other categories of persuasion in social commerce cosmetics selling which can be found in data (11) and (12), namely Personal Branding and Giving Tips. The details are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 4. Categories Of Persuasion In Social Commerce Of Cosmetic Products

Data No.	Category	Data	Translation
(1)	Hyperbole	<i>Masker yang punya sejuta manfaat. Best seller di 11 negara loh....</i>	A facial mask with a million benefits. This is the best-selling product in 11 countries.
(2)	Testimonial	<i>Testimoni untuk pemakaian Royal Jelly Body Complex Jafra.</i>	A testimony from the usage of Royal Jelly Body Complex Jafra
(3)	Name Calling	<i>Blemish, si kecil mungil pengusir jerawat.....</i>	Blemish, the little pimple repellent...

(4)	Flattery	Kamu itu cantik. Tapi sayangnya wajahmu jerawat dan komedoan. Di-jafra-in deh. Pasti cantikmu semakin terpancar.	You are beautiful. But, poorly, you have acne and blackhead on your face. Just use Jafra. Absolutely, your beauty will glow brighter.
(5)	Bandwagon	Semua orang cinta Mud Mask....	Everybody loves Mud Mask....
(6)	Simple Solutions	<i>Memiliki khasiat mengontrol minyak di wajah, dan mengobati jerawat, Tea Tree Leaf Oil yang asli cukup sulit didapat. Solusi mudahnya, Anda bisa menggunakan Advanced Dynamics Mattifying Night Moisture dengan manfaat yang sama....</i>	Having the property of controlling oil on the face, and treating acne, real Tea Tree Leaf Oil is quite difficult to come by. As the easiest solution, you can use Advanced Dynamics Mattifying Night Moisture to get the same benefits....
(7)	Scientific Evidence	<i>Halo, JAFRA Lovers! Alhamdulillah, JAFRA sudah mendapatkan sertifikat halal dari IFANCA, Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America.</i>	Halo, JAFRA Lovers! Praise to the God, JAFRA has been certified by IFANCA, Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America.
(8)	Group Dynamics	<i>Punya segudang pertanyaan yang masih belum terjawab mengenai produk-produk juga bisnisnya, Jafra lovers? Saatnya #JAFRAIndonesia menjawabnya untuk anda...</i>	Do you have hundreds of unanswered questions about our products and business, Jafra Lovers? It's time for #JAFRAIndonesia to answer your questions.
(9)	Bribery	Hi, pemburu gratisan. Ada kabar bahagia nih dari Jafra. Beli 1 set skincare, kamu bisa dapat gratis toner.	Hi, discount hunters. Jafra has a good news for you. Buy one set of Jafra skincare, you can get one toner for free.
(10)	Timing	Sudah malam nih, Jafra Lovers. Waktunya menggunakan Royal Jelly rangkaian perawatan malam...	(it's) already evening, Jafra lovers. Time to use a set of Royal Jelly night skincare.
(11)	Personal Branding*)	Foundation Royal Jelly. Tanya Jafra/konsultasi/order: Yanti Amalia WA 08572270****	Royal Jelly foundation. To ask/consult/order: Yanti Amalia WA 08572270****
(12)	Giving Tips *)	<i>...#JAFRATips kali ini akan membantu Anda memilih pelembab wajah yang benar....</i>	For this time, #JAFRATips will help you to choose moisturizer correctly...

(Scraped from <https://www.facebook.com/> and <https://www.instagram.com/>)

In datum (1), the seller wanted to impress the consumers by giving emphasis that the facial mask had a million of benefits. This utterance was obviously hyperbole because a products normally offered only several benefits or less than hundreds. On the other hand, in datum (2), the seller used testimonial technique to promote the cosmetic products. It was aimed to ensure the consumers that the products were well-trusted. This persuasive technique was used to eliminate trust issue among the consumers. Additionally, the seller in datum (3) used Name Calling technique to develop emotional engagement of the consumers. The similar technique was also used in datum (4) where the seller tried to flatter the consumers to strengthen emotional engagement. The promotion was started with praising and telling the consumers that they are beautiful. That was a good start to approach emotional engagement with the consumers.

The next strategy that was found in corpus is bandwagon as listed in datum (5). Kenechukwu et al., (2013) defined bandwagon as one of persuasive strategy to make

people believe or follow the trend because something is popular or common. In datum (5), the sellers told the consumers that everyone loved their product or their mask. This utterance implied that the other social media users should try or use their product since everybody did love that product. Meanwhile in datum (6), the persuasive technique that was used is simple solutions. The sellers offered the consumers of how their products could give solutions for typical problems. In addition, scientific evidence, as shown in datum (7), was used to develop customers' trust and strengthen the persuasion. It can be seen from the datum (8) that the noun phrase "JAFRA Indonesia" was used by the seller to replace singular pronoun "I". It is used to strengthen the group power in persuading the target as mentioned by McCannon (2007) that the use of plural pronoun in media is stronger than the use of singular pronoun. Continuously, the use of bribery like in datum (9) would frequently attract the consumers to buy the cosmetic products. In datum (9), the seller persuades consumers by offering a free item for the shoppers under particular terms and conditions. This persuasive technique is quite effective to engage the consumers. Moreover, in datum (10), the sellers used timing technique to persuade the consumers to buy their cosmetic products. The seller chose the right timing to offer the products in accordance with the correct time instruction for applying the products.

Beside those categories, we identified two categories of persuasive strategy which have been used by the cosmetics sellers in social commerce. These categories were found from the corpus we gathered from Facebook and Instagram. The first category is Personal Branding. In this persuasive strategy, the sellers framed their personal brandings to build the trust of the consumers. The sample of this category can be seen in datum (11) where the sellers put their personal name and phone number so the consumers could contact them to get the details of their products. This strategy is suitable to increase emotional engagement and trust. The next category is Giving Tips as shown in datum (12). This type of persuasive strategy was aimed to help the consumers get well-informed about the cosmetics or beauty products that suit their skins.

CONCLUSION

Advertisement, promotion, or endorsement is fulfilled with persuasive illocutionary acts to attract the consumers' interest. However, speech acts and language of persuasion are useful to manage marketing strategy in social commerce. Beside the picture of cosmetic products, language becomes a key to develop engagement and trust of the consumers. In addition, the correct use of persuasive language and speech acts would help to transfer the products' information to the consumers and it might provoke them to shop. Based on our corpus of social commerce in cosmetic products, we found out that the sellers managed to use 5 types of speech acts to promote their products. They used various speech acts to avoid monotonous language use in their product promotion. Other than that, 12 categories of persuasion were used by cosmetics sellers in social commerce. However, it is important for the sellers to build strong emotional engagement and to strengthen consumers' trust towards their cosmetics products so that the consumers will get attracted to buy and faithfully consume their products. In the growth of digital era, the linguistic skill of sellers in using persuasion might help them to advance digital marketing since it is easier to get engaged with the online consumers.

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