

Rhetorical Elements used for Marketing Post on Instagram by Malaysian Local Cosmetic Product: A Study of Multimodal Discourse Analysis

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the rhetorical elements that are used for marketing posts on Instagram by a Malaysian local cosmetic product through multimodal discourse analysis. This study mainly revolves around social media as it deals with various technicalities including images, texts, nonverbal and colors. The three main characteristics of rhetorical elements named logos, ethos, and pathos are studied by analysing posts by the company as an act of persuasion for their audience. This paper adopted Kennedy's (2006) Visual Rhetorical Elements Framework rhetorical elements (logos, ethos, and pathos) as the focal point of the research in analysing Nita Cosmetics' social media page. 30 posts were selected from Nita Cosmetics' Instagram page and these posts were analysed. The rhetorical elements in this study would be logos which shows objective truth and portrays the quality of the source, the element of ethos represents logic and character which conveys the element of "need and wants" and dependability to the consumers, while pathos reflects around emphasis and engagement. From the findings, it shows that all these elements were used by Nita Cosmetics which enabled them to persuade, attract and engage with their consumers to stay relevant in the business.

Keywords: *rhetorical elements, multimodal discourse analysis, marketing posts in Malaysian local cosmetics products*

1.0 Introduction

This paper presents an analytical study of multimodal communication through marketing posts on one of the social media platforms, Instagram by one of the well-known Malaysian cosmetic products. According to Miri (2016), a multimodal discourse is compulsory to be used to analyze any content from social media platforms because it deals with various technicalities such as images, text, nonverbal, colors, and many others. This research establishes the analysis of marketing posts on Instagram by Nita Cosmetics, one of the famous Malaysian cosmetics. The chosen marketing posts are from the official Instagram post on Nita Cosmetic official Instagram Account, which consists of multiple marketing posts such as videos, brand launching posts, behind-the-scenes posts, product posts, sales and promotion posts, and many others. This research is based on rhetorical elements that were identified from the marketing post, and this marketing post was treated as a whole.

Korenich et al. (2014) commented that the existence of social media is a different kind of communication where it involves a direct interaction between people, even though it is not a physical interaction, the connection has become livelier. Social media has been inescapable providing a unique way for people to interact daily. According to Akram and Kumar (2017), social media platforms that were commonly used are known as; Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, and many others, with a survey, made revealed that 94% of adults worldwide apparently own their account for each platform.

The findings from the analysis of the marketing post employed by Nita Cosmetics showed that the brand used all three main characteristics of rhetorical elements (logos, ethos, and pathos) as acts of persuasion for their audience. According to Byman (2016), “whenever there is persuasion, there are rhetoric elements”. In this study, the rhetorical devices that were used to analyze the marketing post on Instagram by Nita Cosmetics would be the focal point of the study. The elements of said rhetorical elements are logos, ethos, and pathos, and these elements act as the theoretical framework of this study. This study seeks to explore how this type of multimodality acts as a mode of communication to send intended messages across, using a mixture of elements between image, text, and color, by using rhetorical devices that were employed in the marketing post.

1.1 Research Questions

The main objective of this study is to identify the use of rhetorical elements which are logos, ethos, and pathos in Nita Cosmetics Instagram postings. The research questions for this study are as followed:

1. How are rhetorical elements employed in marketing posts on Instagram Nita Cosmetics?
2. How is the logo element applied in marketing posts on Nita Cosmetics Instagram?
3. How is the pathos element applied in marketing posts on Nita Cosmetics Instagram?
4. How is the ethos element applied in marketing posts on Nita Cosmetics Instagram?

2.0 Literature Review

Zulkipli and Ariffin (2013) define rhetorical elements as a distinct mode of deviation from the common one, while Chetia (2015) mentioned that rhetorical figures are the art of any available means of persuasion in any given situation. The purpose of rhetorical elements is to add a mixture of literary elements that will help to deepen the intended messages that would help to garner attention.

Logos according to Aristotle's Rhetoric Element means the connection and relationship between a text's logic with rationality (Berlanga-Fernández et al.,2013). Varpio (2018), mentioned that logos can function as one level of rationality, to ensure the integrity and credibility of one's argument. In terms of marketing posts on social media, logos means the organization must know how to incorporate shared language with shared values. Apart from that in logos, the organization needs to know the audience to boost content that will relate to the customer's expectations. In short, according to Siddiqui and Singh (2016), anything to do with showing evidence is a sign of logos, and this evidence must consist of two main elements, which are objective truth and the quality of the source.

McCormack (2014) mentioned that the integral part of showcasing the ethos element in the content is to ensure that the audience can trust the brand. The argument made by the brand must appear logical and original, which would make it easier for the audience to understand and start to trust the brand. The best way to do this is to deliver promises, be honest, and use the marketing content to solve problems without trying to sell something. According to Kennedy (2006), ethos is another word for being ethical. It is best to appeal to the good side of the consumer by showcasing the content to be fair, open-minded, community-

mindful, moral, and honest. An argument using ethos must state the issue at hand, as a sign of respect towards the consumers. In social media, the content that used Ethos must have written information, pictures, or links to reveal values and preferences.

Pathos deals with emotional communication with the audience. According to Koowuttayakorn (2018), pathos is how the audience reacts to your product or service and it is most related to their feelings. The establishment of a connection between brand and consumer is very important to gain their trust. The content made on social media posts must trigger the audience's feelings thus getting them to hook with the intended message behind the content. Usually, in pathos, elements such as metaphors, hyperbole, visuals, and humor are used to generate a feeling of acceptance and needs. The integral part of doing pathos is to understand that the audience has both feelings and intelligence. Gårdemyr and Kiholm (2017) mentioned that using pathos alone on the post for social media marketing communication is enough to generate old and new customers. The two main elements within pathos would be emphasis and engagement.

2.1 Summary of Nita Cosmetics

Nita Cosmetics is a Malaysian brand that was established in the year 2016 where its main theme would be fun, quirky, and unapologetically upbeat. Nita Cosmetic is perfect for women who want to add more vibrant colors to their life as they celebrate all different types of women. Aznita Azman was the founder and since Nita Cosmetics was launched it has been said that Nita is the character that came from her, where she loves to share her experience as all the product line that was made came from her experienced travel all around the world. Each product brings a unique sense of diversity that represents all the places she visited. Nita Cosmetics also incorporates local customs, traditions, and even cuisine into the name of the packaging of each product and the main plus point is that it carries a wide range of makeup products to suit all skin tones. As for now, Nita Cosmetics has its own social media platform, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube Channel. For this study, we will be focusing on Nita Cosmetic Official Instagram Account.

3.0 Methodology

Varpio (2018) mentioned that a research design consists of collecting, analysing, and interpreting data that has been created to find answers to research questions. This study employed a qualitative study through the semiotic analysis of several social media postings from Nita Cosmetics Instagram page to collect and analyse the data, while rhetorical elements were used as the instrument. As mentioned earlier, semiotic analysis was used in this study to analyse the social media postings which will be looking at the context of the postings and captions, and interpreting the meaning behind the symbols used. Semiotic analysis is a study of understanding visuals, signs, or symbols in interpreting the meaning relating to a social issue, social process, and how it can impact the targeted audience (Miri, 2016). Moreover, this study will adopt Kennedy's (2006) Visual Rhetorical Elements Framework where he used rhetorical elements as the focal point of the research and the three rhetorical are logos, ethos, and pathos. Each element consists of two characteristics respectively that are used to measure and analyze the data. The procedures involve the analysis of the content used by Malaysian local cosmetics brands, and how they deployed their content using rhetorical elements, specifically using ethos, pathos, and logos as seen in Figure 1.

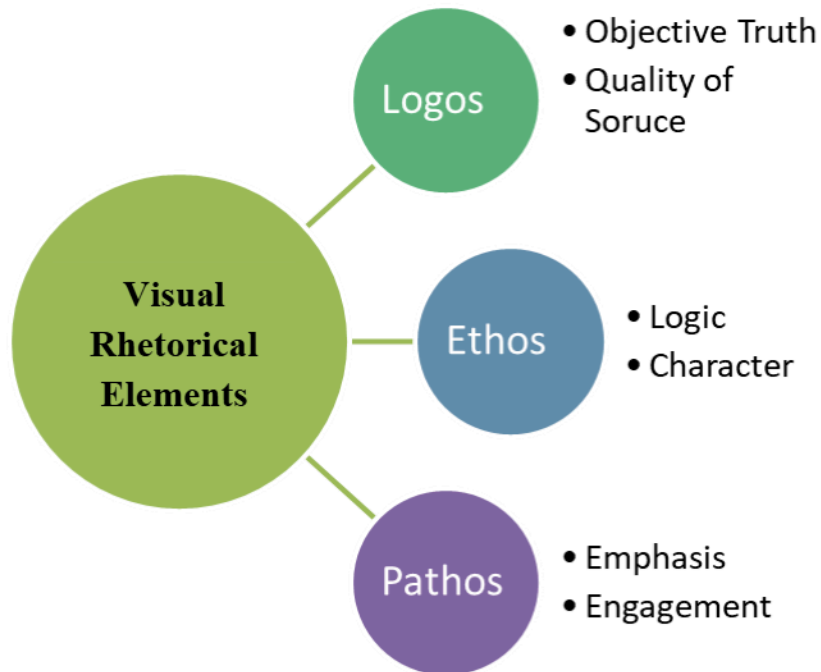


Figure 1: Kennedy (2006) Visual Rhetorical Elements Framework

In addition to that, the sample that was chosen for this study was based on the judgment of the researcher as cited in Ames, et al. (2019), purposive sampling mainly known as judgment sampling in which the sample was chosen based on the fulfillment of certain criteria that would be aligned with the aim of the study. The sample for the present study would be the posting made on Nita Cosmetic official Instagram account, which comprises content or advertising poster that was used for their social media marketing purposes. A total of 30 postings from the Nita Cosmetics Instagram page were analysed by carrying out a semiotic analysis. The type of content varied from each other, as many types of content were being analysed as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: The list of content used for Nita Cosmetic Official Instagram Account

TYPE OF CONTENTS	NUMBER OF POSTERS
Product	3
Application of Product	4
Founder/Influencer	2
Announcement	8
Delivery Notice	3
COVID-19 Issues	2
Specific Online Campaigns	3

Ask a Question	3
Birthday Rewards	2
TOTAL	30

Table 2 below is developed as a sample for the instrument used for the present study. This table helps the researcher in analysing and recording every piece of evidence in the form of visual and textual. The table was divided into two sections; the type of rhetorical elements used, the characteristics of the rhetorical elements, and the type of content while the second box is the evidence from the social media platform. The evidence will be in the form of visual and textual, as the visual will be a screenshot from the actual Instagram account of Nita Cosmetics.

Table 2: The list of instruments used for analysis

TYPE OF RHETORICAL ELEMENTS	CHARACTERISTICS AND TYPE OF CONTENTS	VISUAL EVIDENCE FROM NITA COSMETICS INSTAGRAM
Logos	1. Objective Truth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product • Application of Product 2. Quality of Source <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Founder/Influencer 	
Ethos	1. Logic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announcement 2. Character <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery notice • COVID-19 issues 	
Pathos	1. Emphasis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific Campaign 2. Engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask a question • Birthday rewards 	

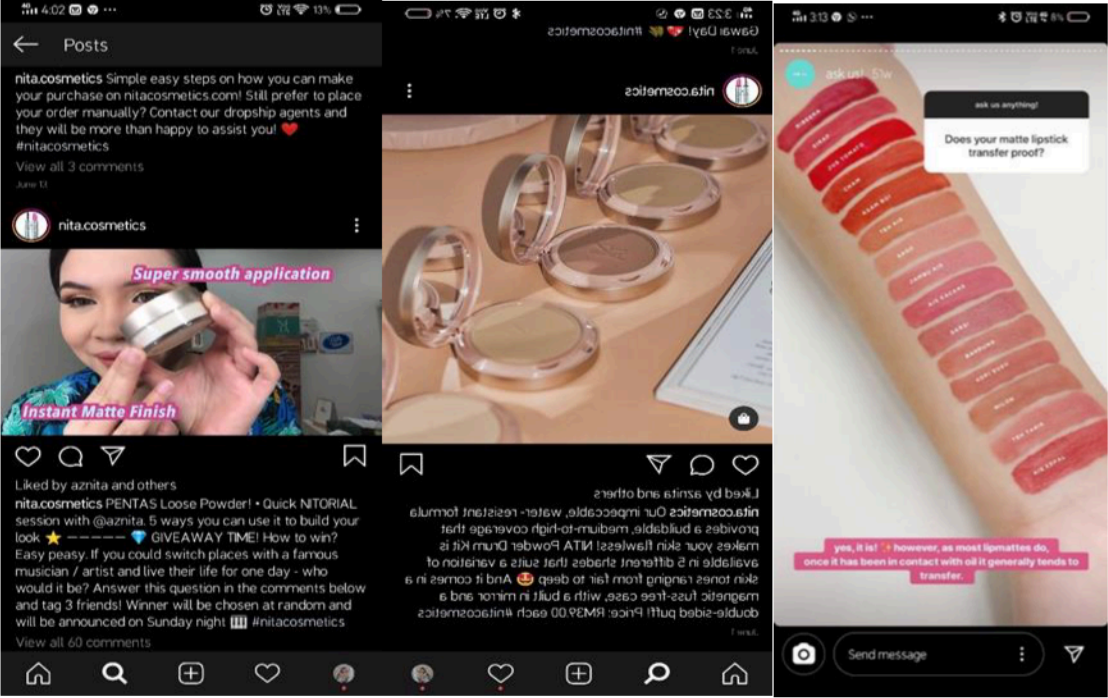
4.0 Findings and Discussions

The findings and discussions will be divided into three parts; the application of logos element, ethos element, and pathos element. The evidence from the visuals and text could be seen in the following table below. Nita cosmetics as a brand has shown evidence related to logos, ethos, and pathos through Instagram postings.

4.1 The Application of Logos on Nita Cosmetic Official Instagram

According to (Kennedy, 2006; McCormack, 2014), logos is an element that showed evidence, and anything about showing proof is a sign of the credibility of the brand. The two main elements embedded within Logos' application would be; objective truth and quality of the source. To appeal to consumers, the brand uses both two main characteristics of Logos as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: The Application of logos on Nita Cosmetic Instagram postings

LOGOS	VISUAL EVDENCE FROM NITA COSMETICS INSTAGRAM POSTINGS
Objective Truth	<p>1. Product</p>  <p>2. Application of product (step-by-step)</p>

<p>Quality of Source</p>	<p>1. Founder/Influencer</p>

According to Taquini (2016), logos is a descriptive example that could describe to the consumer how this product works. It is how the brand construct both the written and visual text to ensure that consumer can trust them. The findings on Nita Cosmetics' official Instagram correlate with the study made by Taquini (2016) where the brand gives ample description and originality to relate to the consumers. The

usage of a step-by-step product application by far is the best way to showcase the features of your product that would give a sense of trust thus creating the feeling of, “I need this product”. This finding correlates with a study made by Siddiqui and Singh (2016) stating the difference between the content of one brand with another is the originality of the product or services, and how the brand captures the audience with the authenticity of the product.

In constructing the element of objective truth, this Instagram account used two types of content, which are; product and application of the product. The first three contents of the product, have their unique characteristics. The first visual showed a product with the owner of Nita Cosmetic with a lengthy caption and a few excerpts of the benefits of the product in the visual. This showed a significant relationship between visual and text, thus giving the viewer a “real truth” on how the product looks on a real face. This application was used in the third visual, the shade of lipstick on someone’s hand shows the real color of the lipstick and the content of the visual is an answer to a question made by the consumers. The consumers asked whether the matte lipstick is “transfer-proof” and the responses made by the brand are to answer the question, truthfully and even provide the real picture of that said lipstick. However, it would be better if the brand were to show the real application whether it is transfer-proof or not. This is because the consumer would need an objective truth to make them trust the product that was being marketed. It is very important to ensure that the brand knows the right strategy to create a sense of “originality” that would make sense for the consumers. This situation can relate to the second type of content used by Nita Cosmetics' official Instagram. The step-by-step product application is a good sample of showcasing the “objectivity truth”. In a very subtle way, the brand promotes how good the product would be in real life, by highlighting the important features of those said products.

Next, is the element of quality of the source. According to Table 3, the usage of this element can be described by how the brand used the founder and influencer as their model. The founder is well-known in Malaysia and the loyal customers of Nita Cosmetics, and apparently, the founder has already established her fan base that would believe every word that she said. Apart from that, the additional usage of influencers showed that the brand uses someone related to the consumer, thus making them believe in the quality of the source. The best thing about using an influencer is that people have already established their own ‘sense of trust’ thus making them loyal followers to their favorite influencer. Brands take advantage of this relationship by hiring those said influencers to try their product and thus leading to a new type of relationship where the consumer would already believe the brand because of the influencer. This is the perfect description to elaborate on the usage of the logos element in this section.

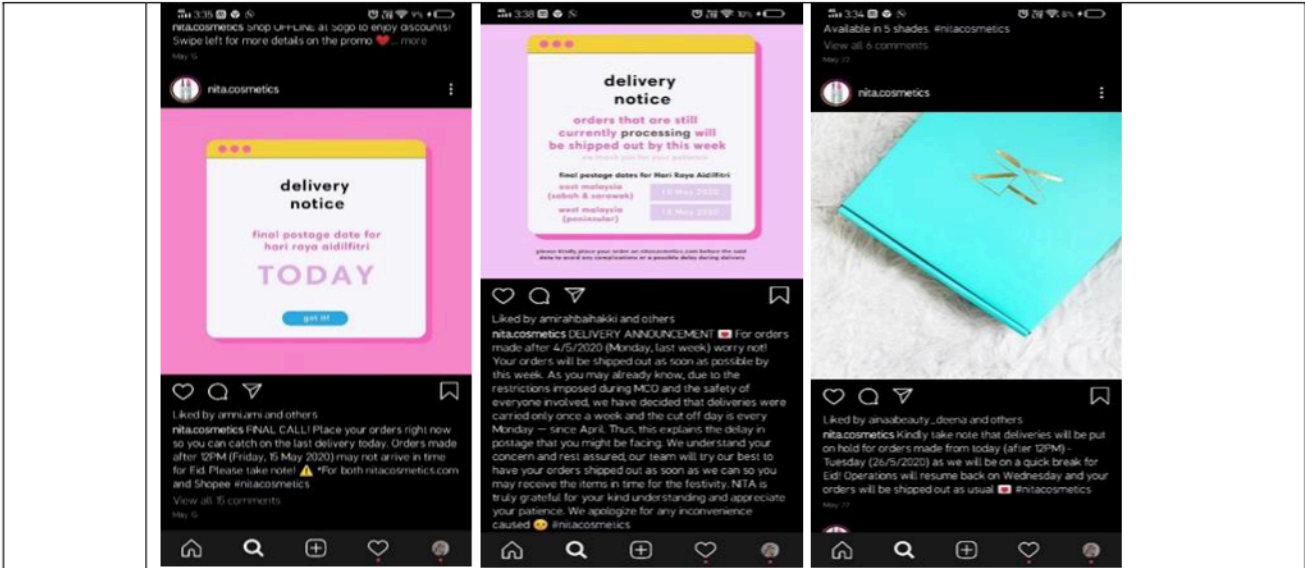
4.1 The Application of Ethos on Nita Cosmetic Official Instagram

Based on several posts, there are instances that showed Nita Cosmetic official Instagram employed the element of Ethos as shown in Table 5.

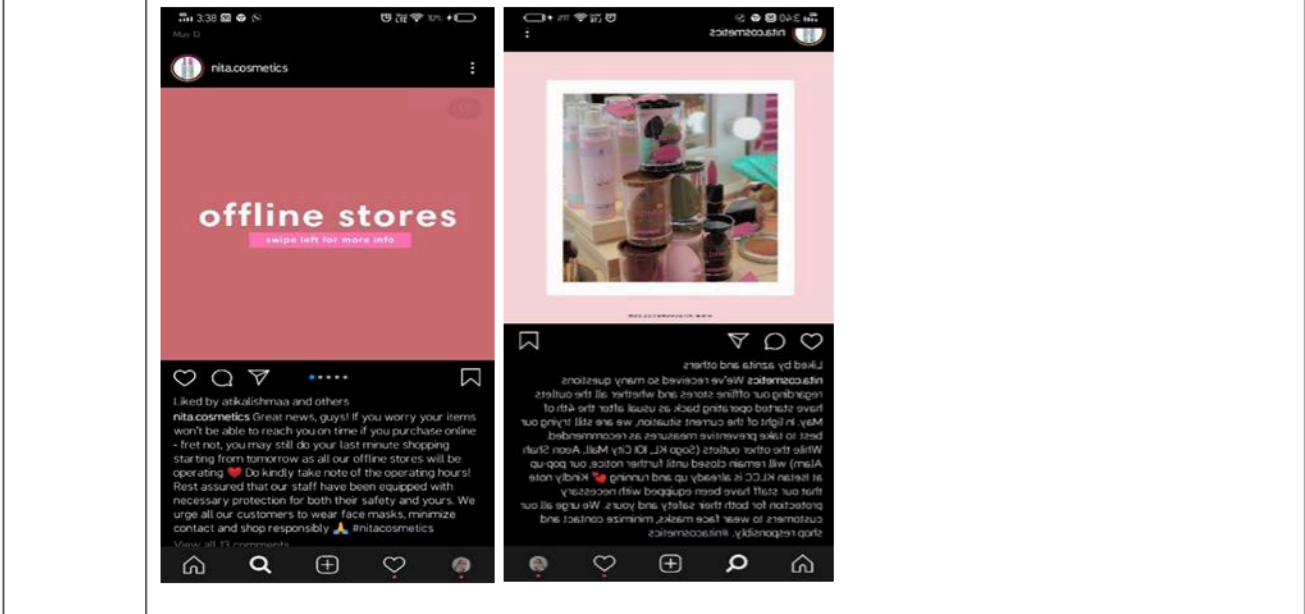
Table 4: The application of ethos on Nita Cosmetic Instagram postings

ETHOS	VISUAL EVDENCE FROM NITA COSMETICS INSTAGRAM POSTINGS
Logic	1. Announcement

<p>Character</p>	<p>1. Delivery notice</p>



2. COVID-19 issues



Ethos can be seen in Nita Cosmetics Instagram postings in dealing with the expectations of the consumers. According to Ting (2018), the most integral part of ethos is to prove the brand’s credibility, expertise, and similarity to the consumers thus leading them to put their trust in the product. If any argument was made, it must appear logical and original. The primary roles that are related to the ethos element would be, logic and character. In constructing the elements of logic, this Instagram used content that is related to an announcement made. For example, the first announcement made was the reward point. The focus of this type of content is to give information to the audience about one of the benefits of perks of having to acquire Nita Cosmetics, which in return the consumer would receive some sort of cashback, but however not all consumer is aware of this kind of benefit that the brand offer. Thus, the brand employed a visual and text formulation to inform the reader about the reward point by explaining what is the reward point and how to

access it. This was employed in 7 visuals with text, and caption to inform the consumer about the content. The other type of announcement made by this brand would be about a dropship, and a few other contents are related to the element of logic. Here, it showcases that the brand knows how to make the connection between what the consumer wants and what it can offer. The reward point is a symbol of appreciation while another type of announcement such as dropship is to help the consumer who might need extra income. This would help to make a connection in terms of why they want to construct that type of content, thus giving the consumers the idea of logical sense that is all related to the relationship between brand and the consumer. Apart from that, the way the brand constructs simple and direct content using one color, one visual that is repetitive, and short text on the visual showed clarity, where the audience could understand the intended message, in short, there is no sense of auspicious. Simple and aesthetic would be the right approach to constructing a sense of clarity and logical understanding.

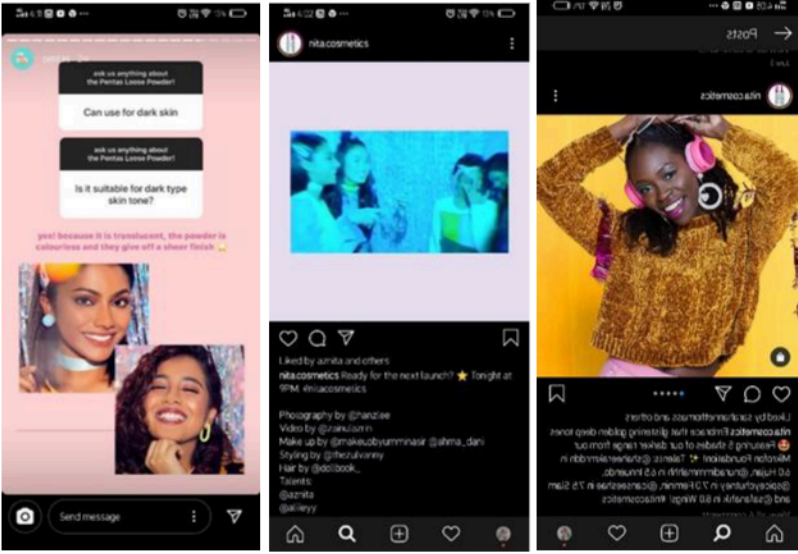
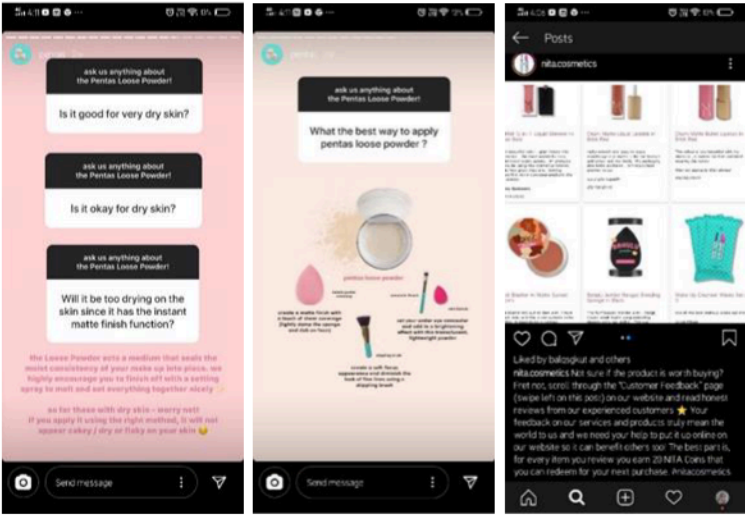
According to a study made by McCormack (2014), in social media marketing content, especially on Instagram, it was advisable to use more visuals and less text. This is because the human brain would connect more to the application of the visual than have to read what's on the caption. This statement was then supported by Kennedy (2006), elaborating that constructing a sense of logical brand must strategize the way to employ the content, with the right amount of information and visuals. This will help the consumer's comprehension and it would not take a lot of time to capture their attention. The thing about doing content on social media is that you need to compress your intended message to multiple forms of creativity are visual, color, visual copy, and many others.

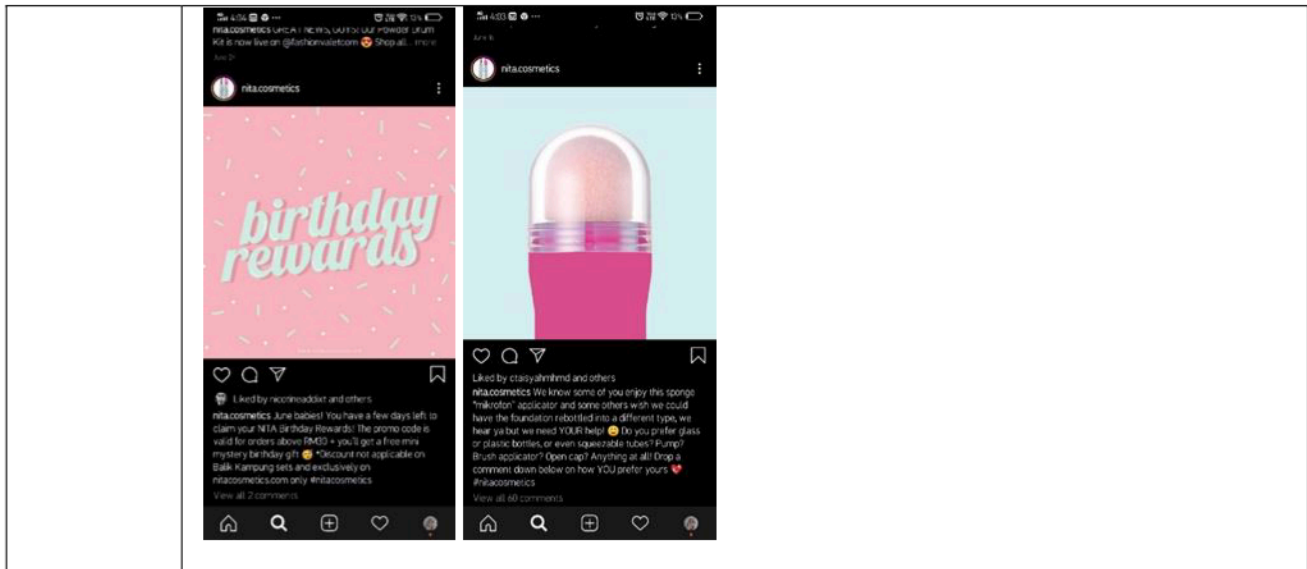
According to table 4, in constructing character, Nita Cosmetic official Instagram used two types of content which are; delivery notices and COVID-19 related issues. Building character means to describe that your brand is sensible and reliable. In this specific Instagram account, the content used to address issues such as delivery notice was employed to build a good character of "we own up to our mistakes and inconsistencies". This does not mean that the brand is a hundred percent credible of those said inconsistencies, but they know it is important to inform the consumer of what's happening behind the door. Explaining will help to ease the consumer's feelings and assure them that they are doing their best to rectify the situation. The visual used for this type of content was repetitively giving the audience a sense of familiarity, for example, they know this type of visual, colors, and text was meant to give notice about the delivery issue. Next to fully enforcing the good character of the brand, Nita Cosmetic joined the bandwagon of creating content that is related to COVID-19. This act showcased a sense of belonging and that Nita Cosmetics embodied this value of "we are in this together".

4.3 The Application of Pathos on Nita Cosmetic Official Instagram

As pathos is heavily related to communication and emotion with the audience, according to Eemeren (2017), pathos mostly deals with how the brand communicates and engages with consumers, thus triggering their emotions so they would rely heavily on the brand. The most important part of doing pathos is to always keep in mind that the audience is high with emotion, but they are intelligent in deciding which product works best for them. To appeal to the consumer, the brand uses two main characteristics of pathos; emphasis, and engagement, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: The application of pathos on Nita Cosmetic Instagram postings

PATHOS	VISUAL EVIDENCE FROM NITA COSMETICS INSTAGRAM POSTINGS
<p>Emphasis</p>	<p>1. Specific campaign</p> 
<p>Engagement</p>	<p>1. Ask a question</p>  <p>2. Birthday rewards</p>



In constructing, emphasis, this Instagram account used one type of content, which is a specific campaign. The emphasis on content for social media means that you need to generate things that will be highly associated with consumers. For Nita Cosmetics, the usage of specific campaign content means that they employed specific types of content to give awareness about their campaign. An example given would be the “skin color campaign” where they promote and celebrate the different colors of skin tone. In addition to that the usage of the correct word in the caption emphasizing the black color skin is accurate, “Embrace the glistening golden deep tones”. This type of campaign showed that as a brand, they are aware of current issues and they want to give something back to the community to subtly show which source they support. The combination of using a black model and the Nita Cosmetic and the vibrant color on the visual representation that the brand celebrates all colors and there is no limitation. It is a wise move from Nita Cosmetics to incorporate such visuals and art that combines meaning with artistic features. The second campaign is their new product where they made a behind the scene and a teaser video. This is a different type from a color skin campaign as this one is focused more on the product. But the art behind this type of content is that it emphasized and creates a sense of “what is next?” among the consumer thus making them wait for the big reveal.

This finding corroborates a study made by Gårdemyr and Kiholm (2017), which implied that consumers are more attracted to a brand that supports the right movement. The issue of the tone of skin color is such a huge controversy that called up the birth of cosmetics such as the infamous Fenty Beauty which celebrates all skin colors. Nita Cosmetic good deeds paid off as people are commonly referring to Nita Cosmetics because of its variety of cosmetics shades. According to Tran (2016), the notion of creating a sense of, “I want to know what happened next”, is a sense of urgency that would pique the consumer’s interest. The integral part of doing product launching is to understand the notion of what makes your product better than the next one.

In constructing engagement, Nita Cosmetic provided a lot of engagement posts. Since Instagram are currently full of interesting features that would help the brand to connect more with the consumers, Nita Cosmetics is not too far behind. Most of the engagement posts made by Nita Cosmetics are ranging from asking a question, answering queries, giving makeup tips, and many others. This showed that Nita Cosmetic Instagram is not flooded with only product-based content. A fun and interactive engagement post like voting and asking a question on Instagram Story features are important to garner enough activities on the account so it won’t appear too dull. Playing with the emotional feeling of the consumer is very important in the

Pathos element, thus Nita Cosmetics showed a tremendous effort in connecting and inflicting various emotions on the consumers.

The findings are similar to a study made by Nummila (2015), social media content for the brand is not restricted to only product-based, but it must comprise interesting features that help to communicate with the consumers. The idea behind the creation of social media is to communicate, and if the marketer flooded the account with only product information, the consumer will lose interest. This statement was further elaborated by Moore (2020) mentioning Instagram visual art must comprise interesting and authentic photographs and copywriting that would make the branding. For Nita Cosmetics, the usage of pastel colors of pink, brown, yellow shades and only incorporate with this brand, thus if any consumer sees this color, they will immediately be associated with this brand.

5.0 Conclusion

As for the conclusion, it shows that Nita Cosmetics Official Instagram adhered to all three rhetorical elements, which are Logos, Ethos, and Pathos. These persuasive elements were used to ensure its brand is still relevant and stays on top of its game in terms of marketing strategy and content as there are numerous competitors in the same market. In this modern era with the advance in technology, these persuasive elements were used on various platforms especially in social media as it is used to attract consumers. Nita Cosmetic employed the right type of content as it showed credibility and motivated the consumers to trust the product. This is the main element of Logos in which it is objective truth and portrays the quality of the source as it conveys the effectiveness of the product, and it is safe to use. Moreover, the element of Ethos represents logic and character which conveys the element of “need and wants” and dependability to the consumers. Nita Cosmetics adhered to both elements as they employed the type of content which spoke high value of the character where they always put the consumers at ease and able to find the connection of the consumers’ expectations to their product. As for Pathos, the main elements are emphasis and engagement. It is the relationship between the consumer and brand. The findings show that Nita Cosmetics can maintain a healthy relationship with their consumers as they managed to post visual content daily with user-friendly texts. All of these elements were used by Nita Cosmetics which enabled them to persuade, attract and engage with their consumers to stay relevant in the business.

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