

THE INFLUENCES OF CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT ON CONSUMERS' PURCHASE INTENTION TOWARDS COSMETIC PRODUCTS

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ABSTRACT

Most of the cosmetic product brands use celebrity endorsers that can well-represent on behalf of their brands in order to capture the attention of consumers and to increase their tendency of purchasing the products. Thus, the importance of the influences of celebrity endorsement on consumers' purchase intention in the cosmetic industry needs to be studied. The objective of this qualitative phenomenology study is to identify the influences of celebrity endorsement on consumers' purchase intention towards cosmetic products through the participants' experience, which is the lived experience of consumers who depend on celebrity endorsement to purchase cosmetic products. Semi-structured interviews and the constant comparative analysis technique were used in this study. Three themes were identified which include Types of Information Sources of Celebrity Endorsement, Roles of Celebrities in Consumers' Purchase Intention and Influential Factors of Celebrities on Consumers' Purchase Intention.

Keywords: *Celebrity endorsement, purchase intention, cosmetic products.*

INTRODUCTION

The cosmetic industry has developed into a positive growth trend as compared to the last 20 years. According to Łopaciuk and Łoboda (2013), this industry's market has increased by 4.5% a year on average, within the range from around 3% to 5.5% in annual growth rate and it has shown its strength on constant growth by being resistant in the world economic crisis. After the economic downturn, over 5 billion cosmetic products were sold every year and this shows a strong demand in the market (Barbulova, Colucci & Apone, 2015). In 2015, \$56.2 billion sales was generated by the international cosmetic market in the United States and the category of skin care cosmetic products are expected to achieve \$11 billion by 2018 (Beauty industry analysis 2017- cost & trends, 2017). This is due to the trend of consumers in the 21st century who are converting cosmetic products from indulgent purchases to investments (Anute, Deshmukh & Khandagale, 2015). Hence, there are more cosmetic brands in the market now (Hassali, Tamimi, Dawood, Verma & Saleem, 2015).

As cosmetic products are used to increase the attractiveness of an individual by enhancing his or her appearance, the majority of the cosmetic product brands are using celebrity endorsers that can well-represent on behalf of their brands, in order to capture the attention of consumers and to increase their tendency of purchasing the products. About 82% of women rely on the information or opinion provided by celebrity endorsers (Beauty industry analysis 2017- cost & trend, 2017). According to The face of South Korean's

beauty boom (2016), the revenue of Innisfree has largely increased after Yoona (a Korean celebrity) has endorsed the brand. This indicates celebrity endorsement in the cosmetic industry plays an important role as it is influential on consumers and generate greater returns on brands (Addo, 2016). Therefore, it is crucial to determine the influences of celebrity endorsement towards consumers' purchase intention of cosmetic products.

The objective of this study is to identify the influences of celebrity endorsement on consumers' purchase intention towards cosmetic products. To address this objective, key research questions for this study were developed. The research questions are:

1. What are the sources of consumers' awareness on celebrities' endorsement towards cosmetic products?
2. What roles do celebrities play on consumers' purchase intention of cosmetic products?
3. What are the influential factors of celebrity on consumers' purchase intention of cosmetic products?

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are used to provide a better understanding of some of the terms used in this study.

Celebrity

Friedman and Friedman (1979) cited by Wadhwa and Chawla (2017, p. 111) defined celebrity as "An individual who is known to the public (actor, sports figure, entertainer, etc.) for his or her achievements in areas other than that of the product class endorsed".

Celebrity endorsement

McCracken (1989) cited by Gupta and Kishore (2015, p. 2) defined celebrity endorsement as "Any individual who enjoys public recognition and who uses this recognition on behalf of a consumer good by appearing with it in an advertisement."

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, a review of celebrity endorsement, purchase intention, impact between celebrity endorsement and purchase intention as well as current celebrity endorsement of cosmetic products will be discussed.

Celebrity Endorsement

This section covers several issues related to celebrity endorsement and purchase intentions.

Celebrity Endorsement and Purchase Intention

Purchase intention can be explained as the probability of consumers visiting a store providing services or purchasing a product, which is a decision driven by consumers' perceived value and benefits (Chen & Lee, 2015). According to Lin (2011), purchase intention is interpreted as the possibility of future behavioural orientation reflected by a consumer in buying a product presented in an advertisement. Also, Gupta and Kishore (2015) indicated that purchase intention is an effort made by an individual's conscious plan to buy a brand.

Chung, Chen and Lin (2012) claimed that purchase intention can be used to determine the degree of turning consumers to buy a particular product. Then, the purchase decision-making of consumers can also be predicted from their purchase intention. As consumers' actual purchase behaviour is particularly important in the marketing context, hence purchase intention has become a widely researched topic (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2015).

On the other hand, Shaista, Aroobah and Maria (2016), indicated celebrity endorsement as one of the marketing communication tools to serve the purpose of promoting the organisations' offering by using an individual who is recognised by the public for any act or achievement accomplished in any specific area such as TV stars, movie stars, athletes and models. Gupta and Kishore (2015) indicated that McCracken (1989) stated celebrity endorsement has been treated as a common feature in marketing as it able to enhance audience attentiveness, turn the advertisement to become more memorable, credible, desirable, and enhance glamour to the endorsed product. Hence, it able to trigger the purchase intention of their target market. Celebrity endorsement is also explained as the reputation of a celebrity endorser being used as a brand representative by consumers through advertising activities in order to receive messages from advertisement and transform it to purchase intention (Gupta & Kishore, 2015). In other words, celebrity endorsement is actually a method that is increasingly being used by companies for influencing the purchase intention of their target market.

Importance of Celebrity Endorsement

In this 21st century, several companies around the world are committing their resources to celebrity endorsement of their brands as a form of marketing communication because people will love what celebrities love (Kotler & Armstrong, 2014). Therefore, celebrity endorsement has a significant and greater influence towards buying behaviour and purchase intentions of consumers.

Celebrity endorsement is able to influence learning style and memory which is crucial to make marketing communication a success. Thus, marketers utilise the usage of celebrity endorsement in order to retrieve the mind of consumers towards purchase intention

of an endorsed product or services as the brand message failed to convince them (Babu & Latha, 2014).

Besides, effectiveness of an advertisement can be enhanced by the uniqueness that is created from celebrity endorsement because it can improve the communicative ability of an advertisement by reducing additional message. Moreover, celebrities' reputation enable the image of an organisation to be re-established (Babu & Latha, 2014). This also indicates that the celebrity's reputation is very crucial as it can affect the organisation's image.

Furthermore, the sales of companies can be improved due to celebrity endorsement as it can easily capture the attention of the audience (Brajesh & Gouranga, 2011). As an illustration, the presence of personalities and its attractiveness from advertisement by celebrities might create the urge of consumers' purchase intention. Shaista, Aroobah and Maria (2016) stated that the presence of favourite celebrities in advertisement is the primary reason for consumers to purchase a product most of the time.

Challenges of Celebrity Endorsement

On the contrary, there are also some negative influences of celebrity endorsement and purchase intention from previous research. As the current market drives marketers to establish a unique identity of the brand by using different famous personalities, it incurs huge costs. This strategy can be risky for companies as there is no guarantee on generating sales (Rizwan, 2015). According to Syed and Raja (2014), buying behaviour would be impacted by association of a negative event with a celebrity endorser. It indicates that the image or reputation of the celebrity once decreases affects the effectiveness of the endorsement will lead to a negative relation towards purchase intention (White, Goddard & Wilbur, 2013). Based on Syed and Raja (2014)'s opinion, the worthiness and influential power of the celebrity might decrease if the number of brands endorsed are increased. In addition, the endorsed product or service can be less encouraging or appealing to consumers when celebrities engage in negative events, which might decrease the sales of that certain company (White, Goddard & Wilbur, 2013). In conclusion, negative impacts such as low sales might happen if celebrities do not retain their professionalism and reputation. Thus, it can become a threat for organisations too.

Factors for Celebrity Endorsement

This section discusses several factors that lead to celebrity endorsement such as one's credibility, trustworthiness, expertise and physical attributes.

Credibility

Credibility is interpreted as an offer of unbiased judgement by having a significant knowledge or experience (Freeman & Chen, 2015). According to Ohanian (1991) cited by Gupta and Kishore (2015), consumers' attitudes, values, opinions and behaviours could be influenced through 'internalization' if the consumers found that the information is from a credible source.

Trustworthiness

Lester and McDonald (2015) cited Ohanian (1990) and explained trustworthiness as honesty, integrity and the believability of a source while Ali, Farhan and Omer (2012) stated that Shimp (2007) pointed out that trust by target audience can be generated by revealing the life of celebrity endorsers who live professionally and personally to public through mass media. According to Freeman and Chen (2015), source trustworthiness is an essential attribute underlying source credibility that basically influences attitudinal change in consumers. Nevertheless, Shimp (2007) cited by Ali, Farhan and Omer (2014) indicated if the endorser is motivated purely for personal reasons as someone is nothing to gain by endorsing the brand or product, the degree of trustworthiness will be less or decreased.

Expertise

Syed and Raja (2014) indicated that Erdogan (1999) defined expertise as knowledge, experience and the skills possessed by an endorser with regard to the advertisement brand. Besides, celebrity endorsers are considered as experts when they are able to popularise their endorsed product related to their expertise area (Shaista, Aroobah & Maria, 2016). For instance, when it comes to endorsing sport-related products, athletes are considered to be experts. According to Shimp (2007) cited by Ali, Farhan and Omer (2012), if the endorser is perceived as an expert on a given subject, it will be more convinced in transforming audience opinion about his or her areas of expertise than an endorser who is not perceived as having the same characteristic. However, Shimp (2007) cited by Ali, Farhan and Omer (2012) then argued how the target audience perceives the endorser is the most important thing instead of the expertise of endorser.

Physical Attractiveness

According to Shaista, Aroobah and Maria (2016, p.3), "Physical attractiveness is an informational idea which involves effects that are indirect, prevalent and certain; produces a definite pattern of valid differences; and best culture in its effects" while referring to Ohanian (1991, p.5) cited by Syed and Raja (2014), "Beauty is a greater judgment than any recommendation." This is due to the fact that physical attractiveness of the celebrity endorser has strong social recognition and acceptability. Thus, it can capture the attention of the audience in both electronic and print media. According to Ohanian (1991) cited by Shaista, Aroobah and Maria (2016), physical attractiveness has greater influence on consumer's behaviour toward product and service than those who are unattractive.

Additionally, physical attraction can be defined as influencing people by their appearance and style to affect buying behaviour (Shaista, Aroobah & Maria, 2016). Products that are associated with a person's physical attractiveness like beauty products, apparel, personal care products strongly rely on the physical attractiveness of the celebrity. For example, Yoona, who is a member of the famous South Korean girl group Girls' Generation has been appointed to become a worldwide celebrity ambassador of Korean naturalism brand- Innisfree, to spread natural beauty across Asia. According to the Ireporter team (2014), Yoona was recognised as one of the most highly-ranked attractive natural beauties by Asian consumers and the most popular among Korean beautiful celebrities. This implies that the physical attractiveness of a celebrity is important for endorsing a brand.

Impact of Celebrity Endorsement on Purchase Intention

In order to emphasize the influence of celebrity endorsement towards purchase intention, several studies will be discussed. According to Shaista, Aroobah and Maria (2016), the attractiveness of an advertisement is not about where it has been shot, made or captured, but it depends on the poses of celebrities based on the requirement of the products or services. Rizwan (2015) highlighted famous celebrities endorser managed to convert meaning to the brand effectively as compared to non-endorsed celebrities, which cause a huge impact on advertisements and purchase intention. Moreover, luxurious products that are endorsed by expert celebrities rather than typical customers, tend to have higher purchase intention among consumers (Babu & Latha, 2014). According to Lafferty and Goldsmith (1999) cited by Babu and Latha (2014) also emphasized that the higher the perception of corporate credibility is, the higher the purchase intention of consumers, and that credibility might come from celebrity endorsers. Similarly, Gupta and Kishore (2015) also highlighted greater purchase intention will be produced by celebrity endorsers as it creates a more positive attitude towards advertising. Chan, Ng and Luk (2013) also pointed out that celebrity endorsement can enhance purchase confidence due to the attributes of celebrities.

However, there are also some studies that highlighted celebrity endorsement does not have any impact on purchase intention. Hakimi, Abedniya and Zaeim (2011) claimed that credibility of celebrities is not the reason in enhancing consumers' intention to buy a product. Then, Gupta and Kishore (2015) argued that celebrity and non-celebrity endorsement perform similar attitudes towards advertising, brand and purchase intention on endorsed brand. This is because the researchers believe that the education level of the individual is more significant in influencing purchase intention than celebrity endorsement (Babu & Latha, 2014). Also, the researchers highlighted that education provides better analytical skill and this skill helps individuals to make a better purchase intention by preventing them to buy a product based only on one source of information.

Current Celebrity Endorsements in Cosmetic Products

As this research is focused on celebrity endorsement in cosmetic products, the following discussion will list some present cosmetic products that are endorsed by celebrities.

L'Oreal a French cosmetic company which spends over \$1.7 billion US annually on advertising in order to retain their image and popularity by paying celebrities to endorse their products. Celebrities like Eva Longoria, Beyonce, Cheryl Cole and Jennifer Lopez are some of their brand ambassadors and this indeed helped to increase the sales of L'Oreal (Mehmood, 2014).

As part of the L'Oreal luxury product division, Lancôme, there were also several past endorsers such as Kate Winslet, Isabella Rossellini, Julia Roberts, Anne Hathaway and Kylie Minogue. However, Taylor Hill who is a 20-year-old model has become the latest endorser. "She is a very inspiring young woman for her generation: she is immensely curious, open-minded and has a positive outlook on life", said Françoise Lehmann, Lancôme's International General Manager (Greenberg, 2016, p. 2).

Moreover, Belle Hadid was also appointed as the latest Dior beauty endorser while Jennifer Lawrence, Sasha Luss, Natalie Portman and Kate Moss have also posed for other makeup divisions of the Dior cosmetic (Fernandez, 2016).

Additionally, the latest ambassador for Chanel is Willow Smith with the ranks of Kristen Stewart, Lily Rose Depp and Blake Lively. Willow Smith, was born in 2000, is known as the youngest Chanel ambassador (McCall, 2016). Her innovation in fashion has made her a fashion icon for the younger generation and Chanel intended to diversify their cosmetic and fashion pack with her in order to maintain their brand value. Furthermore, Chanel also announced G-Dragon, a Korean pop star to become one of their brand endorser as South Korea has become the most influential country in Asia because of its energy and creativity by youth culture and the pop music as well as TV celebrities (TFL, 2016).

Therefore, celebrity endorsement has become one of the most significant methods for the majority of the brands in this era, in order to maintain their brand image, reputation brand value or even enhance the sales of the business.

METHODOLOGY

The research methodology is discussed in this section and it includes characteristics of qualitative research, the research design, the background of the study, sample, data collection and data analysis procedures.

Characteristics of Qualitative Research

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), there are four characteristics in the nature of qualitative research: Focus on Meaning and Understanding, Researcher as the Primary Instrument, An Inductive Process and Richly Descriptive. The first characteristic is to know the way people interpret their experience, how they build their worlds and what meaning can be constructed by their experiences. Secondly, the researcher as the primary instrument connotes that the researcher is the main tool to collect and analyse the data. Thirdly, qualitative research is an inductive process because researchers have to collect data from the general meaning from the information obtained from the participants and then construct it to become concepts, hypotheses or theories instead of deductively testing the hypotheses. Lastly, a richly descriptive text which might include descriptions of the context, the participants involved and the activities of interest is described as this is what the researchers has learned about the phenomenon studied.

Research Design

In this study, the focus was on identifying the influences of celebrity endorsement on consumers' purchase intention towards cosmetic products. Therefore, the phenomenology approach was used in conducting this study as Merriam and Tisdell (2016) states that the well suited approach to study intense human experiences is phenomenology. Van Manen (2014, p. 28) explains phenomenology as "The way of access to the worlds as we experience it pre-reflectively. Pre-reflectively experience is the ordinary experience that we live in and that we live through for most, if not all, of our day-to-day existence." As consumers who

have bought cosmetic products because of celebrity endorsement is the purpose of this study, their lived experience is crucial for this study. Therefore, the phenomenological approach is used. In addition, interviews were conducted to collect the data by using semi-structured interviews. This is because a qualitative investigation required it to be more open-ended and less structured as the participants might define the world in a unique way (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Context of study

This study was conducted in a private higher institution located at the centre of the Klang Valley, Malaysia. There were a total of two participants who were interviewed separately in Selangor and in Kuala Lumpur. The participants are a female and a male. Both are Malaysian Chinese who are 23 years old. They are also the consumers who depend on celebrity endorsement to purchase cosmetic products.

Sample

In this study, purposeful sampling was chosen as the sampling method. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016, p. 96), purposeful sampling is used for the researchers who intended to “discover, understand, and gain insights and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned.” Then the authors also highlighted that purposeful sampling is suitable to be used for individual interviews as the experienced interviewee is the person who knows the best about the topic. As the focus of this study is to identify the influences of celebrity endorsement on consumers’ purchase intention of cosmetic products, two of the participants were selected because they have met the criterion of the sample in this study. They are the consumers who depend on celebrity endorsement to purchase cosmetic products.

Data Collection Procedures

After the confirmation of interview questions from the project supervisor of this study, the participants were invited for the interview through e-mail communication. Then, the details of the study and confirmation of the interview date and time were scheduled. Before the individual interview started, participants completed a consent form by signing their name to indicate that they are agreed to be interviewed. Also, the permission for recording the interview was obtained and confidentiality was also assured in that there will be no disclosure of the identity of participants in this study. In order to ensure internal validity or credibility of the data collected, member checking was completed by sending the transcripts to participants after the interview as Maxwell (2013, p. 126-127) states this strategy as “the single most important way of ruling out the possibility of misinterpreting the meaning of what participants say and do and the perspective they have on what is going on, as well as being an important way of identifying your own biases and misunderstanding of what you observed.”

Data Analysis Procedures

To organise the information provided by participants during the interviews, each interview was transcribed from the audio file to text document. The transcript for each participant was about four to seven pages long. The first interview was transcribed and analysed immediately before proceeding to the second interview. During analysing, the data reduction method was used as to divide the identified codes into sub-themes, then grouped the sub-themes into themes. Besides, the comparative method was used to analyse the data so as to determine the similarities and differences of the data collected from each participant (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

There are three major themes with sub-themes that were developed after analysing the data from the interviews as presented in Table 1.

Table 2: Themes and Sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes
1. Types of Information Sources of Celebrity Endorsement	a) Online Social Media b) Popular Dramas c) Printed Materials/ Advertisements d) Recommendations from family and friends
2. Roles of Celebrities in Consumers' Purchase Intention	a) Power of Celebrities b) Confidence in Endorsed Products
3. Influential Factors of Celebrities on Consumers' Purchase Intention	a) Reputation Factor b) Physical Factor c) Popularity Factor

Theme 1: Types of Information Sources of Celebrity Endorsements

Theme one highlights several sources of information that consumers are aware about celebrities' endorsement towards cosmetic products that can be accessed easily in their daily life. This theme is supported by four sub-themes, which are online social media, popular dramas, printed materials or advertisement and recommendations from family and friends.

Online Social Media

With the rapid growth of online social media, finding out a celebrity's endorsement of the cosmetic products is not a complicated task anymore as consumers can immediately be aware of real-world events (Zhang, Zhao & Xu, 2015). According to a participant, "...I find out the celebrity endorsement on cosmetic products through Facebook, blogs, YouTube and

posted videos from the celebrities themselves” (P1). While for Participant 2, “I saw people keep on sharing post about the celebrity endorser in Facebook.” Hence, online social media is strongly affecting the information obtained by consumers. Additionally, both of the participants also highlighted that Facebook is the most influential source for them. As mentioned by Participant 1, “Facebook is the most influential source because I always use it.” Whereas for Participant 2, “I would say is Facebook because I use Facebook everyday.” Therefore, the regular usage of Facebook is the reason for Facebook being the most influential information source. Moreover, Participant 1 also expressed her interest in posted videos from the celebrities, “...I can see what are the brands of cosmetic products that are used by them to make-up.” It indicates that online social media can actually help to increase the awareness of celebrity endorsement.

Popular Dramas

Both participants were also aware about celebrity endorsement in popular dramas. Participant 1 mentioned, “After I have watched the Descendents of the Sun, then I saw the main actress in the poster of Laneige.” The participant believed that popular dramas indeed influenced her on discovering the celebrity endorsement of cosmetic products. According to Participant 2, “I found out this celebrity endorsement because of the drama that he acted in.” The participant also provided the details of the drama he mentioned, “Is called Descendents of the Sun and the celebrity name is Song Joong Ki, he is the main actor in the drama” (P2). As the Korean wave in Malaysia is getting strong and stronger, both of the participants were watched the same popular Korean drama- Descendants of the Sun and then found out about the celebrities’ endorsements.

Printed Materials or Advertisements

As for printed materials or advertisements, Participant 1 stated that, “I saw many posters in shopping malls regard to the celebrity endorsement of cosmetic products.” The examples provided by the participant are, “Shopping malls like One Utama, Pavilion and Sunway Pyramid are having many cosmetic shops with big posters such as Etude House, Laneige and Nature Republic” (P1). Furthermore, brochures or flyers are also given to the participant sometimes at shopping malls, “Sometimes, there are some promoters give me the brochures or free sample while I am passing by their shop” (P1). Participant 2 also agreed that printed materials or advertisements enable him to be aware of celebrity endorsements of cosmetic products. He said, “I remember my first awareness of celebrity endorsement is from a brochure that given by a sales assistant in roadshow” (P2). Therefore, printed materials or advertisement might be an important information source for consumers.

Recommendations from Family and Friends

A participant indicated that be word of mouth from her family and friends has a significant influence on her as her friends would be obsessed with the make-up of those pretty actresses from the dramas that they have recently watched. She said, “I asked my friends about where to get the cosmetic products, and then only I know that there is a new trend of make-up style or products” (P1). Whereas for participant 2, he mentioned, “I will sometimes seek information from my friends because I do not have much knowledge in this field” (P2). In

short, recommendations from family and friends may have a significant impact on consumers for receiving information about celebrity endorsement.

Theme 2: Roles of Celebrities in Consumers' Purchase Intention

As celebrities have a positive influence purchase intention on consumers (Lester & McDonald, 2015), it is important to know the roles of celebrities in consumers' purchase intention. The roles consist of power of celebrities and confidence in endorsed product, which are the sub-themes that support theme two.

Power of Celebrities

The power of celebrities includes the tendency to imitate the celebrity and this influences the public and consumers to brand switch. Both participants expressed their tendency to imitate the celebrity they like. According to Participant 1, "...tend to imitate her and also want myself to look as beautiful as her". Then, "I feel like if I buy and use the cosmetic product brand that he endorsed, I can become as handsome as him" (P2). Furthermore, the participants also agreed with the fact that celebrities can influence the public and consumers. As mentioned by Participant 1, "Because I like the celebrity, then subconsciously want to become like her." She then described, "What the celebrity is wearing or using will influence my decision on how I want to become" (P1). Similarly, participant 2 indicated, "I think is kind of true because we do not have the attractiveness of celebrity, so we try to become as similar as the celebrity by using the products that celebrities are using." Lastly, the participants agreed that celebrities have the power to switch the brand of consumers. According to Participant 2, "I will change the cosmetic brands by referring to the celebrity I like..." while Participant 1 also stated, "I sometimes just follow what my favourite celebrity love, I will follow the brands she is endorsing." As a conclusion, the power of celebrities is like a "directory" of consumers in the market as it gives direction to the mind of consumers.

Confidence in an Endorsed Product

According to the participants, celebrities enable the confidence of the endorsed products to increase. This is because celebrities are well-presented on the endorsed product. When celebrities endorse a product it may help to increase professional make-up knowledge and skills of consumers. Both of the participants believed celebrities able to well-presented on the endorsed product, Participant 1 stated, "...it's really make them so beautiful and I feel more convincing on the cosmetic products." According to participant 2, "...it makes him look very refreshing and make me want to use the product that he is endorsing." Besides that, Participant 2 also emphasised that celebrities are the indication of results for an endorsed product. He said, "I believe that his flawless face is due to the effectiveness of the product he endorsed." Moreover, there are some professional make-up knowledge and skills shared by the celebrity endorsers and this enhanced the consumers' confidence towards the endorsed products. According to Participant 1, "She suggested the right cosmetics on different skin tone, then I will follow her suggestions to buy the products she endorsed."

Theme 3: Influential Factors of Celebrities on Consumers' Purchase Intention

In order to increase the purchase intention of the cosmetic product by using celebrity endorsement, there are some important factors to be considered. Therefore, three sub-themes were categorised and they are the reputation factor, the physical factor and the popularity factor.

Reputation Factor

It is found that the celebrities' reputation would influence the purchase decision of consumers. Under reputation factor, it is found that credibility and trustworthiness are the two elements that would affect the celebrities' reputation. The difference between credibility and trustworthiness is that a celebrity can be trustable, but it does not mean that the celebrity has credibility. However, if the celebrity has credibility, he or she is trustworthy. According to Participant 2, "Another important thing is she or he must not do something bad, it can be said that the minimum standard would be have a good reputation and image." Participant 2 actually indicated that the celebrity endorser should have a good reputation and image in order to maintain his or her credibility.

Additionally, Participant 2 also mentioned "I think after the drama it would be his honest and clean image that affected me to buy the cosmetic product". This means that the celebrity's honesty would affect his or her credibility as well. Besides credibility, trustworthiness of the celebrity will be decreased if he or she is found to be cheating the public by saying the cosmetic is good but in reality he or she did not use the product at all. According to Participant 1, she provided an example of the case where she said "If she personally post a video that introduce the product to every people and said that 'oh this product is really good' but she didn't use it then for me she is not trustable because she is like cheating".

Physical Factor

Physical factor is an important factor for endorsing a cosmetic product because participants believe most of people judge others by his or her appearance. According to Participant 1, "The endorser does not even look beautiful after using the product, then why should I buy it..." whereas Participant 2 mentioned, "...put a celebrity that is not that good looking to endorse the product, I don't think that people will buy it, because they will think that after they will buy it, they will become not as good looking like the endorser." Furthermore, the participants also agreed that physical attractiveness is the most influential factor of celebrities on consumers' purchase intention towards cosmetic products. "Physical attractiveness of the celebrities is the most important thing for endorsing cosmetic products because their face is the first thing that will capture my attention" (P1) and "The most influential factor for me is physical attractiveness because it is more convincing" (P2). Especially for cosmetic products, it is a product to enhance individual's appearance, so it is important to use celebrities that have higher physical attractiveness as they have strong social recognition and acceptability (Syed & Raja, 2014).

Popularity Factor

The stronger the popularity of the celebrity the stronger the purchase intention of the consumers. Participant 1 stated that “The higher the popularity of the celebrity, the higher influential for me in buying product.” The participant indicated that the popularity of the celebrity can actually increase the influencing power of the celebrity.

Implications and Recommendations

Despite celebrity endorsement is fast becoming a strategic marketing tool in almost every industry (Grigaliūnaitė & Pilelienė, 2015), however, there are still some considerations of choosing a celebrity endorser especially for the cosmetic industry. In order to ensure the effectiveness of celebrity endorsement, cosmetic companies may consider on the influential factors of potential celebrity endorsers, for instance the factors of reputation, physical and popularity. Therefore, cosmetic companies can create an effective marketing strategy to trigger consumers’ purchase intention towards their products.

CONCLUSION

The effectiveness of celebrity endorsement advertisement is crucial for companies as they are investing a huge amount in this marketing strategy. Thus, the criterion for selecting a celebrity endorser is important, especially for the cosmetic industry. Reputation, physical attractiveness, and the popularity of an endorser are the critical elements of maximising the effectiveness of an advertisement and increasing consumers’ purchase intention.

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