

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 BACKGROUND

Hollywood stars in the roles they depicted were all the things we'd have liked to have been, wearing glamorous clothes and jewels we had no chance to acquiring and doing so many wonderful things we knew we would never have the nerve to do – even given the opportunity.

Norah Turner's statement (cited by Stacey, 2006, p.269)

The statement above apparently captures the concern of a female audience toward Hollywood superstars' identification and their aspiration to become more like such stars. This leads the superstars, as a product endorser, to earn a vast amount of money each year. According to Forbes Asia magazine featuring "*Forbes Celebrity 100*" ranking the income of celebrities in U.S. estimated from June 2007 to June 2008, not only superstars, but talking heads, movie directors, authors, personalities, athletes, and even chefs could be huge earning celebrities. Take the U.S. Open champ Tiger Woods for instance; he is ranked as the world's richest athlete with \$115 million combined from only \$25 million in prize money and, more numerous, \$90 million in endorsements over the last 12 months (Miller, 2008).

The enormous amounts paid for those celebrity endorsers have been expected high profits from consumers' purchases in return. The highly profitable celebrity endorsement can apparently be seen in the case of Oprah Winfrey when she introduces a book in her television program. On September 22, 2005, for instance, Winfrey announced that the next pick for her television book club would be James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces*; afterward, 85,000 copies were sold out within four days and another 615,000 books were rapidly republished (Green, 2005). Other celebrity figures have also appeared in advertising in association with consumer products or services in order to draw consumers' attention, generate high recall rates, create and differentiated product images, and, most importantly, generate sales and profits (Choi, Lee, & Kim, 2005).

Even though celebrity endorsement can drive massive marketing profits, celebrities' notorieties can diminish product images as well. In the case of Nick Lachey, MasterCard hired him as he is a big baseball star with a large enough following to set media attention. However, about a week before the promotion's was kicked off, nude photos of Lachey and his girlfriend were widely distributed, and this damaged MasterCard's campaign (Yingling, 2007).

Another celebrity endorsement survey, conducted by India Market Research Bureau (IMRB) and public relations outfit of Indian Public Affaire Network (IPAN) of over 2,019 respondents across metropolitan and 11 small towns in India, showed the negative attitudes of consumers towards celebrities. 51 percent of respondents feel that celebrities endorse products just for the money and 78 percent of them believe that celebrities use high-end and imported products rather than the products they endorse.

The study *Exploring the Relationship between Celebrity Endorser Effects and Advertising Effectiveness: A Quantitative Synthesis of Effect Size* suggested that not only celebrity attractiveness but also celebrity trustworthiness and celebrity expertise can affect consumers' purchasing intentions, brand attitudes, and attitudes on the advertisements (Amos, Holmes & Strutton, 2008).

In Thailand, there also have been diversified studies in celebrity endorsements. In 1994, Chinnaree Songprayoon conducted research focusing on the type of celebrities in television commercial advertisements that included movie stars, music artists, models, and athletes. Following that, the trend of research topics has varied into the following areas: the means to build up Thai pop singers celebrity status, the process and strategy of celebrity creation by the celebrity management business, and the use of mass media to create celebrity status and make a name in political circles.

Besides the topics of celebrity creation, some studies mainly concentrated on the influence of celebrity appeals in advertising campaigns for high involvement products such as automobiles, computers, mobile phones, and watches and low involvement products such as food, snacks, beverages, and clothing. Some researchers have also been interested in the effectiveness of using celebrity endorsements. Their studies were to measure the effectiveness of celebrities who had endorsed several

kinds of products at the same time. Meanwhile, some products might be advertised by several celebrities as joint endorsers in the same campaign.

Although a variety of research topics focusing on celebrity endorsements have long been conducted, there is scarcely any research pertaining to the degree of celebrity leverage compared to that of non-celebrities including ordinary people and unknown presenters. Apart from the celebrities, non-celebrities could also be hired to endorse products in advertising campaigns. This research will consequently be conducted on the comparison between the influence of celebrity and non-celebrity endorsements on consumers' purchasing intentions.

For marketing industry, target-group segmentation has been strategically prioritized for ultimate profits. Adolescents are the potential target groups as selective customers with somewhat purchasing power and influential members on family purchases. The research on the influence of product-endorser matched to consumers' purchasing intentions pointed out that a star athlete, such as the world tennis player Maria Sharapova, can influence college students' purchasing intention, even for a non-sport product. 52 percent of 400 participants in this research revealed their purchasing intentions after viewing an advertisement with Sharapova endorsing a Canon PowerShot digital camera (Braunstein, 2006).

In the case of Singaporeans, the effect of three credibility dimensions including attractiveness, trustworthiness, and expertise of celebrities positively relates to Singaporean undergraduate students' purchasing intentions (Pornpitakpan, 2003). For the reason of perceived image and consumption, the survey of 299 university students aged between 18 and 24 in Beijing disclosed that the motivation of viewing advertisements is positively related to imitation of celebrity models (Chan & Zhang, 2007).

In addition to compare the influence of celebrity and non-celebrity endorsers on general customers, this research will thus focus on female adolescent consumers and their purchasing intentions of the products pertaining to personal appearance, as one of the most aspiring products for this sort of target group to elaborate or retain themselves. Facial whitening cream is chosen as a case study due to the trend of Thai beauty that female adolescents generally prefer the product that is believed to enhance their facial skin to look fair and white.

## **1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of this study are as follows:

### **1.2.1 Main objective**

To compare the influence of celebrity endorsers and non-celebrity endorsers on female adolescent consumers' purchasing intentions of facial whitening cream.

### **1.2.2 Sub-objectives**

1. To describe the attitude of female adolescent consumers towards celebrity and non-celebrity endorsers' characteristics.

2. To describe the attitude of female adolescent consumers towards the attributes of facial whitening cream.

## **1.3 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

The definition of terms of this study is as follows:

1.3.1 Celebrities refer to entertainers such as actors, actresses, singers, the hosts of television programs, and athletes whose names are attention-getting and interest-riveting and have profit-generating value.

1.3.2 Non-celebrities refer to an ordinary person and unknown presenter endorsing a product or service in an advertising campaign.

1.3.3 The influence of endorsers refers the acceptance for endorsers' image related to the products, the impact of endorsers to create brand awareness, the impact of endorsers to make the products look high quality, and the impact of endorsers to make consumers to have an intention to purchase.

1.3.4 Adolescent consumers refer to undergraduate students aged between 18 and 26 who are studying at Dhurakij Pundit University.

1.3.5 Purchasing intention refers to desire of customers to buy a product.

1.3.6 Endorsers' characteristics refer to quality or feature of celebrities or non-celebrities that are considered on the dimensions of trustworthiness, expertise, familiarity, likeability, and physical attractiveness.

1.3.7 Product attribute refers to quality or feature of products that could be measured by the following indicators: being important, interesting, relevant, meaningful, priceless, and necessary.

#### **1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

This study will be mainly conducted within the following scope:

1.4.1 This study is limited to female adolescent consumers aged between 18 and 26 and studying at undergraduate level at Dhurakij Pundit University.

1.4.2 It also focuses only on consumers' purchasing intentions of facial whitening cream.

#### **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study is to investigate the influence of celebrity and non-celebrity endorsers on female adolescent consumers' purchasing intentions of facial whitening cream. The result of the study is significant in several respects.

1.5.1 The result will be beneficial for the advertising and marketing professionals in the cosmetic industry to be aware of the perception of female adolescent consumers toward celebrities and non-celebrities' characteristics that can be influential on their purchasing intentions.

1.5.2 The advertising and marketing professionals can apply the result of the study into their marketing plans or advertising campaigns.

1.5.3 Academics can use the result of the study as the sample of celebrity and non-celebrity leverage in any subjects such as marketing and advertising.