

Hong Kong underwear brand may drop campaign involving six-year-old Celine Yeung after scandal over picture book

A famous clothing brand may drop an advertising campaign involving a six-year-old model after pictures of the girl in underwear it provided sparked massive controversy at the Hong Kong Book Fair.

Bosses at Hong Kong-based Chicks were left “uncomfortable” by pictures of Celine Yeung – who has starred in its advertising for the past three years – in the picture book *Childhood Times*, which was withdrawn from sale after just two days.

The book attracted more than 130 complaints that some of the 120 images of Celine were sexual in nature. One photograph showed Celine sitting on the floor with her legs open and white underpants exposed. Another showed her raising her buttocks while burying her face in a pillow.

Chicks confirmed it provided clothes Celine wore in some of the controversial pictures, including boxer shorts and vests, but stressed it was not involved in how photographer Ronald Lam composed the shots.

“We saw the photos and felt uncomfortable,” said Fung Wing-sze, marketing manager of Chicks, which has been operating for 80 years. “We have already taken some photos of Celine for our winter ad campaign and are still deciding what to do with them.”

Fung said the company did not pay Celine nor her mother for taking photos of her dressed in Chicks’ underwear.

Dr Jessica Ho, director of NGO Against Child Abuse, questioned whether children should be involved in underwear advertisements. “Underwear is something very private and you wouldn’t be seen in the streets just in it,” Ho said. “Adults can decide for themselves but children cannot – their parents make the decision for them.

“Parents have to be aware of their motive into getting their children involved in commercials, we have to be very clear of the end product, audience, purpose, and message [before making decision].”

Celine’s mother declined repeated requests for an interview. In a message sent on Facebook, she said “I cannot give any comments at this stage after being advised by my lawyer”.

Police are investigating the case of the picture book, though sources close to the investigation said last week that there appeared to be no evidence to support a criminal indecency case.

Reference:

<http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/education-community/article/1844979/hong-kong-underwear-brand-may-drop-campaign>