

**ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF FEMALE  
CONSUMERS' ATTITUDE AND LIFESTYLE IN  
FACIAL CARE MARKET**

**By**

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**ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF FEMALE  
CONSUMERS' ATTITUDE AND LIFESTYLE IN FACIAL CARE  
MARKET**

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## ABSTRACT

Evaluation of ethical marketing practices of businesses from a consumer perspective has often been prescribed as an international research direction, more particularly for the developing economies. In accordance with the above, this consumer study based in Malaysia investigated the antecedents and consequences of consumer attitude towards ethical marketing practices of firms depicted by product fairness, price fairness, and fairness aspects of marketing communications and channels of distribution in the facial care sector. Moderating influences of consumer lifestyle and demography were also taken into consideration in order to describe the scenario with enhanced precision and possibilities. The model under study was developed using the proven predictive power of the theory of planned behavior supported with the consumer decision process model. Relying on a survey research design, and following a rigorous multi stage sampling method, 483 female consumers falling within 15 years and above age range were surveyed from different parts of Malaysia. Descriptive analysis was done using SPSS, and inferential analysis using SmartPLS software, a variance based structural equations modeling tool. The findings revealed that product fairness, marketing communications, price fairness, and channels of distribution possess significant positive relationship with consumer attitude which further significantly predicts behavioral intention. Social factors and perceived behavioral control too were seen to predict behavioral intention which was further seen to influence the actual behavior of consumers. Consumer lifestyle as a whole, reflected through self-confidence, health consciousness, family orientation, religiosity, and women role and perception was found to have no moderation effect on the consumer attitude and behavioral intention relationship. The results of multi group analysis revealed that income of consumers exerts no moderation effect whereas education moderates the relationship of marketing communications, price fairness, and channels of distribution taken with consumer attitude. As Malaysian consumers exhibit serious concern towards ethical marketing practices of firms, it is recommended to the managers that they ensure fairness in their offerings, pricing, marketing communications and the way they make the products available to the consumers. Also, the policy makers are suggested to focus on creating awareness regarding the growing significance of ethical aspects, in addition to instituting desirable regulations.

**Keywords:** Ethical Marketing Practices, Consumer Attitude, Lifestyle, Facial Care Sector.

## ABSTRAK

Penilaian amalan etika pemasaran dalam perniagaan dari perspektif pengguna sering ditetapkan sebagai menuju ke arah penyelidikan antarabangsa terutama bagi negara-negara yang membangun. Selaras dengan perkara di atas, kajian ke atas pengguna yang dikendalikan di Malaysia ini telah meneliti latar belakang dan akibat sikap pengguna terhadap amalan etika pemasaran oleh firma berasaskan keadilan produk, keadilan harga, dan aspek keadilan komunikasi pemasaran dan saluran pengedaran di sektor penjagaan wajah. Pengaruh kesederhanaan gaya hidup pengguna dan demografi juga diambil kira dalam usaha untuk menjelaskan senario dengan lebih tepat dan juga senario yang berpotensi. Model yang digunakan dalam kajian ini telah dibangunkan dengan menggunakan kuasa ramalan yang terbukti di bawah teori tingkah laku terancang, disokong dengan model proses keputusan pengguna. Berdasarkan kaedah tinjauan dan kaedah pensampelan pelbagai, sebanyak 483 pengguna wanita daripada pelbagai tempat di Malaysia telah ditinjau termasuk dalam lingkungan umur 15 tahun ke atas. Analisis deskriptif dilakukan dengan menggunakan SPSS, dan analisis inferensi menggunakan perisian SmartPLS, iaitu satu alat varians pemodelan persamaan struktur. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa keadilan produk, komunikasi pemasaran, keadilan harga, dan saluran pengedaran mempunyai hubungan yang signifikan dengan sikap pengguna yang meramalkan niat tingkah laku dengan lebih signifikan. Faktor sosial dan kawalan tingkah laku turut meramalkan niat tingkah laku yang seterusnya mempengaruhi tingkah laku sebenar pengguna. Gaya hidup pengguna secara keseluruhannya digambarkan melalui keyakinan diri, kesedaran kesihatan, orientasi keluarga, keagamaan, dan peranan wanita dan persepsi didapati tidak mempunyai kesan kesederhanaan kepada sikap dan hubungan niat tingkah laku pengguna. Keputusan analisis kepelbagaian kumpulan mendedahkan bahawa pendapatan pengguna tidak mempunyai kesan kesederhanaan manakala pendidikan mempunyai hubungan dengan komunikasi pemasaran, keadilan harga, dan saluran pengedaran dengan sikap pengguna. Oleh kerana pengguna Malaysia menunjukkan kebimbangan serius terhadap amalan etika pemasaran oleh sesebuah syarikat, adalah disyorkan agar pihak pengurusan memastikan keadilan dalam penawaran, harga, komunikasi pemasaran dan cara untuk memastikan pengguna untuk mendapatkan produk. Juga, dicadangkan kepada pembuat dasar untuk memberi tumpuan dalam mewujudkan kesedaran mengenai kepentingan yang semakin meningkat mengenai aspek etika, dan dalam menggubalkan peraturan yang sewajarnya.

**Katakunci:** Amalan Etika Pemasaran, Sikap Pengguna, Gaya Hidup, Sektor Penjagaan Wajah.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AB	Actual Behavior
AVE	Average Variance Extracted
BI	Behavioral Intention
CA	Consumer Attitude
CAP	Consumer Association Penang
CBSEM	Covariance Based Structural Equations Modeling
CD	Channels of Distribution
CDP	Consumer Decision Process
CFA	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
EFA	Exploratory Factor Analysis
FO	Family Orientation
GoF	Goodness of Fit
HC	Health Consciousness
KMO	Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin
MC	Marketing Communications
PBC	Perceived Behavioral Control
PCA	Principal Component Analysis
PF	Product Fairness
PLS	Partial Least Squares
PRF	Price Fairness
RM	Ringgit Malaysia
RY	Religiosity
SC	Self Confidence
SEM	Structural Equations Modeling
SN	Subjective Norms
TPB	Theory of Planned Behavior
UUM	Universiti Utara Malaysia
VBSEM	Variance Based Structural Equations Modeling
WRP	Women Role and Perception

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

These days, people can hardly pick up a local newspaper, read a domestic news magazine or watch news bulletin on TV without coming to take note of something about ethics. Also, it was enunciated that there is an observable ethics gap in the global arena wherein the remaining part of the world seems to greatly lag behind the United States in context of paying attention to ethical standards of behavior and conduct in business (Vogel, 1992). This perspective is in keeping with the recent research which proclaims that ethical yardsticks and standards of behavior and conduct for companies in less-developed economic systems drop behind the dominating moral standards of advanced economies (Shafer, Fukukawa, & Lee, 2007). Though profit is recognized as primary objective of business, still fairness to consumers and maintenance of good marketing practices is fully advocated by the societal marketing concept (Chattananon, 2003; Piacentini, MacFadyen, & Eadie, 2000).

According to Mohamad (1991):

By the year 2020, Malaysia can be a united nation, with a confident Malaysian society, infused by strong moral and ethical values, living in a society that is democratic, liberal and tolerant, caring, economically just and equitable, progressive and prosperous, and in full possession of an economy that is competitive, dynamic, robust and resilient. (p.1)

Instituting a totally moral and ethically sound society with people who are strong in terms of religion as well as spiritual values was set as the fourth challenge as identified in Vision 2020 for Malaysia (Mohamad, 1991). Moreover, in Malaysia, skin diseases are found to be quite common types of health problems (Lauren, n.d.).

As the aforesaid risks already persist, women nowadays are additionally showing greater concern for beauty (Chiang & Yu, 2010; Kyung, 2012). Such propensity is believably influenced by umpteen factors like “social processes, role of advertisements and mass media, local and global trends in the fashion industry, and adoption of foreign cultural practices” (Riji, 2006). In response to all of these, the cosmetics advertisements nowadays seek to highlight that a particular brand’s cosmetic product can produce amazing results wherein some of the text aim to implant in females a serious fear relating to melanin production which can make the body look aged and darkened (Riji, 2006). These fear creating advertisements are ethically questionable. And shedding further light on this issue, Neale and Fullerton (2010) established in their study that ethical judgments, “the extent to which one believes a certain alternative is ethical or not” (Vitell, 2003, p. 34) seem to be ascertained by three things: first, whether the consumers vigorously seek an advantage; second, the act is observed as legal; and third, the amount of harm. Also, as marketers tend to stock only profitable items, what looks a good alternative for the consumer might not be lucrative for a marketer which ultimately creates a gap and limits the alternatives available to consumers (Alsmadi & Alnawas, 2012). Studies suggest that marketing and brand managers usually try to enhance attitude of consumers through various marketing activities (Friestad & Wright, 1994). Moreover, collective trust of

consumers in organizations are suggested to facilitate marketing success of those firms (Audi, 2008; Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012).

In general, already known features of a product and the new features that are made available to the consumers are the two factors which consumers use when they are posed with a purchase decision making situation (Iqbal, Verma, & Baran, 2003; Lynch, Marmorstein, & Weigold, 1988). Besides, perception is traditionally said to play a significant role in consumer buying behavior by influencing the purchase decisions (Viriyavidhayavongs & Yothmontree, 2002). Moreover, as per theory of planned behavior (TPB), attitude seeks to denote an overall negative or positive estimation of performing a certain behavior (Cho & Walton, 2009) and it takes into account the judgments, thoughts or beliefs linked with an object or issue (McGuire, 1969) with simultaneous evaluation of associated risks and benefits. Research conducted internationally shows that companies following commendable ethical practices result in favorable consumer attitudes towards such firms which further leads to increase in sales of such firms' products (Brown & Dacin, 1997; Gupta, Pirsch, & Girard, 2010). There are studies suggesting a positive view of consumers towards socially responsible companies (e.g., Creyer & Ross, 1997; Fernandez-Kranz & Merino-Castello, 2005), however the market share of such companies have been relatively low (Boulstridge & Carrigan, 2000; Cowe & Williams, 2000). It gives rise to a need for an ongoing research pertaining to the attitude-behavior gap prevailing towards marketers following ethical practices (Papaioikonomou, Ryan, & Ginieis, 2011).

It was found in a study that the participants possessed positive attitude because of increased awareness and they claimed that they wouldn't have had their attitude positive

if they had not known properly the transparency of firms (Bhaduri & Ha-Brookshire, 2011). Also, consumers are posed with challenges time and again by the pricing practices of firms which give rise to several issues related to ethics like abusing discounts, dumping practices, price fixing arrangements with competitors, discriminatory pricing, etc. and it is further seen that high quality products can be offered only at higher prices which again discomforts a consumer's affordability aspects (Constantinescu, 2011; Green & Antoine, 2011; Smith, 1995) which leads to formation of their attitude in proportionate pattern. In Malaysia, further research on issues like "product safety, product quality, product adulteration, misbranding practice" etc. was recommended to conduct in a consumer behavioral perspective (Ismail & Panni, 2008). As per another study conducted in Malaysia, advertisements which contain elements capable of offending religious sentiments were found to result in an adverse attitude of consumers towards such firms (De Run, Butt, Fam, & Jong, 2010). From corporate point of view, as consumer loyalty perpetually remains the crucial concern for the organizations, it is suggested that in order to well implement the marketing strategies, firms must be clearly aware of consumer's perceived risks & benefits, needs and responses to what is acceptable to them or not, which also comprises of ethical considerations and fair-trade claims (Akhter, Abbasi, Ali, & Afzal, 2011b; Green & Antoine, 2011; Pharr, 2011).

On the other hand, as pointed out by Neale and Fullerton (2010), there is no sole unanimously recognized definition of ethics, however, the static description by Henderson (1982, p. 38) is expected to be a worthwhile starting point who describes ethics as "a set of principles describing a behavior code that explains what is good and right or bad and wrong", and he confesses this description is static for the reason that it

believes there is accord for ethical doctrines, when in reality there is not. As per a classic glance at ethics, numerous sets of undesirable conducts were acknowledged by business people (Brenner & Molander, 1977). Many changes have come about in the marketplace ever since. On the basis of an extensive literature review on sustainable consumption, the term 'ethical', 'green', 'environmental' and 'sustainable' consumers have been found to have similar broad meanings implying that these consumers give preference to products and services which have least adverse impact on the environment besides supporting forms and ways of social justice (Young, Hwang, McDonald, & Oates, 2010). Generally speaking, ethical marketing practices can include a wide range of different types of marketing messages designed to both promote the ethics of the firm and appeal to the ethics of the consumer (Schlegelmilch & Oberseder, 2010). Furthermore, based on equity theory (Adams, 1963), emergence of equity is said to emerge in the sense that consumers evaluate businesses on the basis of fairness in their performance of business activities which further gives rise to an increase in the consumers' purchase intentions towards such companies (Cheng, Yang, Chen, & Wu, 2011; Huppertz, Arenson, & Evans, 1978). However, what is less clear is the role of ethical marketing practices in influencing consumer attitudes.

In line with the above, it is important to note that ethically controversial areas of the four Ps (Product, Place, Price, & Promotion) have been presented as an international research direction more particularly for the emerging as well as less developed markets (Batra & Klein, 2010), wherein doubtful selling tricks and practices, biased price discrimination, illusive advertising, inappropriate product description, improper presentation of a product's side-effects, completely substandard products, purposefully biased labeling,

confusing packaging, unmeetable promises and encouraging unsafe products are some of the instances, among many, of unethical marketing practices (Alsmadi & Alnawas, 2012). As found in a study in Europe, price was discovered to be the sole major reason of why consumers didn't buy ethical products and it was recommended that researchers should go on testing the abilities of marketer's fair trade assertions to affect brand consciousness, attitudinal changes, buying intentions, etc. (Pharr, 2011). Moreover, marketers have been suggested to take into consideration the broad purview of behavior particularly of the women consumer towards their firm's ethical marketing strategies pertaining to fairness in product, marketing communications, pricing, and distributive aspects (Antoine & Green, 2009).

An investigation found that 91% of Finnish respondents had clearly expressed that they always need very reliable and most accurate information about ethical issues associated with a product or service for making coherent decisions (Uusitalo & Oksanen, 2004). While, another study revealed that there are both different attitudes and personality traits and different understandings and rankings of ethical issues (Jansson, 2011). These evidences suggest that there are some other influencing factors in consumer decisions and ethical issues, and some of these may be lifestyle and demographic aspects of consumers.

It has been pointed out that Malaysia, a multiracial nation comprising of major ethnic groups viz. the Malays, Chinese & Indians, witnesses a harmonious interaction among them in their day-to-day living wherein each of these group still maintains its individual ethnic identity and continues practicing its distinctive cultures, behavior, the communication language, norms, values & beliefs (Rashid & Ho, 2003). Accordingly, the significance of lifestyle and demography has been highlighted by Chiang and Yu (2010),

which can be explained further with the market observations according to which, even if income or education of a consumer is high or low, still he may or may not make purchase decisions in proportionate terms probably because of his lifestyle. Lifestyle, which is a symbolic behavior style, offers comprehensive explanation of consumer's activities and helps in predicting the social tendencies by playing a key role in consumer consumption patterns (Leep, Hyup, & Pansoo, 2012; Liu, Chang, & Lin, 2012). Also, it is seen that lifestyle and comfort go alongside because even when a product is ethical and eco-friendly and it has got a reasonable price and quality as compared to traditional product range, consumers may not purchase it as it will bring a change in their lifestyle or comfort (Manzano, Rivas, & Bonilla, 2012). It would be therefore important for the corporates to get clarity on the extent to which demography and lifestyle have got an influence in the consumer purchase decision making in an ethical context.

Thus, there is no clear indication of which direction the previous research findings point, and no meta-analyses or other extensive reviews could be found specifically in the area mentioned above. Therefore, it is important to pay heed to suggestions made by Alsmadi and Alnawas (2012) who raised a need to address exact actualities of consumerism in consortium with contemporary marketing practices in certain countries, engaging empirical investigation. And as such, it is deemed vital to investigate which ethical marketing issues consumers perceive as significant which might vary from consumer to consumer which further seeks to carry important implications to the businesses.



## 1.2 Problem Statement

On one side, Malaysia remains vulnerable to skin diseases attributed to several possible causes (Lauren, n.d.), and on the other side, Malaysian females, similar to females of other Asian nations, have a penchant for using cosmetics products to enhance their beauties (Chiang & Yu, 2010; Riji, 2006). But, several businesses producing cosmetics products are not perfectly following ethical practices and they lack in general honesty and integrity in performing their marketing activities (*Fake Drugs Big Problem*, 2012) which was also strongly supported by the head of Consumer Association Penang (CAP) in an interview conducted with him by the researcher for understanding exact realities of consumer problems prevailing in Malaysia which is also line with the issues raised in CAP's healthy lifestyle campaign organized to raise health and lifestyle awareness among the Malaysians (*CAP's Healthy Lifestyle Campaign*, 2012). Ethical issues in marketing like consumer perceptions about acceptable as well as not acceptable and unethical corporate practices which include misleading advertising, harmful products, improper attention to consumer rights, etc. have remained a matter of ceaseless debate over the years (Alsmadi & Alnawas, 2012; Bock & Kenhove, 2011; Hanzae & Taghipourian, 2012; Schlegelmilch & Oberseder, 2010). Furthermore, consumers drive firms' profitabilities and also it is found that women have been showing greater ethical concerns as compared to men, as such, understanding their fairness perceptions of marketers' strategies and practices becomes indispensable for the firms in modern times (Green & Antoine, 2011). Therefore, it is significant to address these issues because ethics can be perceived as a means in society for attaining a desired state (Alas, 2006).

Consumers have been frequently seen to be showing intense negative emotions and perceptions, and responding with anger if they come across product defects or service failures or when they possess distrust or insecurity towards any product (Cho & Walton, 2009; Kim, 2012). It is mainly because, concern for potential losses have been a significant aspect in consumers' mind while forming their attitude during purchase decisions and therefore, it is vital for the firms to be aware of consumer's purchase decision behavior, strategies to address consumer's risks/fears, and potential avenues for the fair-trade products (Conchar, Zinkhan, Peters, & Olavarrieta, 2004; Koklic, 2011; Ozcaglar-Toulouse, Shiu, & Shaw, 2006).

A study on consumer purchase behavior assumed that consumers are usually not sure about the average product safety and quality and they learn about it through the signals they receive during use experience and other kind of product harm crisis situations (Zhao, Zhao, & Helsen, 2011). In another study which was conducted in Malaysia, it was opined that there is always a risk in making purchase decisions and which is why consumers seek to depend on product information to minimize such risks (Eze, Tan, & Yeo, 2012). These days, consumers are exposed to several novel and variety of promotional tactics which are widely utilized by the marketers (Freeman & Shapiro, 2014). However, sometimes, promotional deals and firm's marketing communications induce consumers into buying more than what they actually intended to buy, which triggers an ethical concern related to materialism which provokes regret, if not guilt (Mick, Spiller, & Baglioni, 2012). Also, there are several instances when marketers intentionally omit information they believe to be central to an informed purchase which in a way is

deceiving the consumer by leading him to make a buying which he wouldn't have made otherwise (Sher, 2011).

Addressing the issue further, Alsmadi and Alnawas (2012) opined that prices are publicized only in situations when it has the potential of acting favorably in a product purchase, whereas the negative aspects and side-effects are deliberately not always made known to the consumers. Evidently, highlighting the distributive aspects, it is seen that consumers feel upset when they discover that others paid less for the similar or same product in same or another retail place and they form anger due to lack of firm's distributive justice related to final price (Shehryar & Hunt, 2005) which is further reflected in their purchasing intentions towards such firms. Also, the sellers' principles might treat high net worth or other consumers preferentially than the ordinary consumers which give rise to procedural inequalities which further causes a sense of discomfort among the mass consumers (Shehryar & Hunt, 2005). It is also observed that economists and decision scholars have largely unheeded the moral facets of consumer decision making (Mick *et al.*, 2012).

For several years now, some activists have claimed cosmetics as likely health threats to people, adding that the compositions of cosmetics are not tested enough for safety and thus they may be of great risk to the consumers (Ross, 2006). In Malaysia, it was found that majority of cosmetic consumers were not seriously concerned vis-à-vis the consequences of a product's usage to their skin, and instead, they focused more on the short span effects to their skin appearance rather than the long term effects to the whole body (Mansor, Ali, & Yaacob, 2010). Moreover, marketing is the function within commercial organisations which is most often indicted with ethical abuse (Murphy &

Laczniak, 1981, p.251). In concurrence with Vitell, Rallapalli, and Singhapakdi (1993), it was revealed by Schlegelmilch and Oberseder (2010) that consumer studies have to still catch up in marketing in an ethical context which was further supported by the research of Akhter, Abbasi, and Umar (2011a) who studied about controversial products and suggested to adopt an approach in future which is more focused at judging the opinions of consumers regarding various aspects of ethical sides of marketing. Also, an intense need has been identified to make additions in the literature of marketing ethics pertaining to perceptions, attitudes, and sensitivities of consumers towards marketing practices of the firms (Green & Antoine, 2011; Kumar, Mokhtar, & Al-Swidi, 2014), by collectively modeling both demand and supply sides of market in an ethical context (Zhao *et al.*, 2011).

Ethical estimations according to Hunt and Vitell (1986) are antecedent to decision making which further facilitate the development of the term 'value co-creation' which finally suggests an increased interaction between a firm and the consumers (Cova, Dalli, & Zwick, 2011; Williams & Aitken, 2011). For example, Malaysian consumers displayed a high contentment with the aspects of basic needs, nonetheless, they were not satisfied with the honesty of sellers (Paim, Masud, & Haron, 2012). In line with the above, the need for studying ethical behavior of salesmen has been greatly stressed upon (Hazrati, Zohdi, Zohdi, Seyedi, & Dalvand, 2012). Also, a need to study distributive justice, process of selecting and setting appropriate distribution channels, and marketing to the poor has been identified (Murphy, 2010; Ramsey, Marshall, Johnston, & Deeter-Schmelz, 2007; Schlegelmilch & Oberseder, 2010). These are also supported by Schlegelmilch and Oberseder (2010) who revealed that it is a surprising fact that very few

studies on ethical marketing have been related to product, price and distribution management and also highlighted that the majority of attention so far have been given to promotional aspects with extreme focus on advertising ethics. To this end, in this study, embedding most of the issues identified above, ethical marketing practices of firms reflected by product fairness, price fairness, and fairness in marketing communications and channel of distribution as purchase criterion are considered as antecedents of consumer attitude which further motivates them to buy from such firms.

The evidence for whether ethical marketing practices affect consumer behavior is mixed. While some studies do show a positive effect, others do not; for example, it was suggested that simplifying and targeting ethical marketing can increase its effect on consumer decisions by reducing the gap between attitude and behavior or action (Young *et al.*, 2010). However, another study found that this was not necessarily the case; when the product was associated with strength (such as rubbish bags), ethical claims and disclosure could actually be a liability in such case (Luchs, Naylor, Irwin, & Raghunathan, 2010). Contrastingly, consumers are usually found to be supportive of ethical efforts and obligation of firms and they show a willingness to pay upto 10 percent higher for the goods they perceive as ethically produced and marketed (De Pelsmacker, Driesen, & Rayp, 2005). However, even though consumers are seen to be somewhat concerned with the ethicality of the firms, it is not so well evident that they would always pay additional money for the ethically produced and marketed products (Stanforth & Hauck, 2010). While evaluation of marketer's ethical practices by consumers offers some valuable information, nevertheless, it does not uncover the more important aspects pertaining to attitude-behavior gap and a bigger picture of consumer behavior towards

ethical marketing practices wherein a disconnect between intention and behavior, and differences between attitude and behavior have been widely observed and are further identified as future research direction (Neale & Fullerton, 2010; Oberseder, Schlegelmilch, & Gruber, 2011).

Moreover, Kyung (2012) suggested conducting studies on how cosmetic consumers' purchasing intentions can be indicated by their attitude and subjective norms which is the social factor of influence. Also, it might be found that due to prevalence of various kinds of probable difficulties, the consumers find it difficult to buy from the firms following ethical marketing practices even though they possess a favorable attitude towards them due to perceived behavioral control aspects (Chen, 2007).

Additionally, Malaysian consumers assert that they really cherish their basic rights as consumers, possess some level of consumer values, show reasonable knowledge, and embark on good consumer principles, however they categorically hint at a low level of their overall well-being which means that there must be other factors of dissatisfaction that are worth investigating (Paim *et al.*, 2012). Also, there is a strong need to examine consumer attitude in context of ethical marketing practices and counterfeits as a whole with mediating or moderating variables for making rational generalizations (Hanzaee & Taghipourian, 2012). In that regard, it is important to pay heed to the findings that the cultural aspects, self-confidence, lifestyle as well as values seek to play a significant role in formation of people's attitudes towards different brands (Akhter *et al.*, 2011a; Zhao *et al.*, 2011).

As such, as per further suggestions to include moderating influence of lifestyle in consumer studies (Chen, 2011; Chuang, Tsai, Cheng, & Sun, 2009), and due to availability of limited literature on its ability to affect ethical sensitivities, consideration of lifestyle's moderating role in an ethical context on the relationship between consumer attitude and intentions is deemed vital consistent with Chen (2011) and Kim, Park, Ki, and Moon (2001). For a more comprehensive investigation, it is further streamlined in this study that in line with Tai and Tam (1997), lifestyle is reflected by aspects like : *consumer self-confidence*, as consumers tend to avoid chances of humiliation and disappointments by seeking to have a product irrespective of their prices mainly for maintaining a greater sense of self-esteem as well as that of self-confidence (Lim, Ting, Wong, & Khoo, 2012); *family orientation*, arising from the fact that in Malaysia, it was revealed that the consensus in a family decides what and where to buy irrespective of the matter that who is earning money (Yusof & Duasa, 2010), and existence of family support and societal bonds are observed in Malaysian families (Alam, Jani, & Omar, 2011a); *health consciousness*, showing women's attempts to maintain an equilibrium between work and rest, leisureliness and the time reserved for themselves as they visibly understand the significance of stress avoidance in gaining a lifestyle which is healthy as well as balanced (Matuska & Erickson, 2008; Subramaniam & Selvaratnam, 2010); *women's role & perception*, which relates to the overall perceived roles and views of women towards career, homeliness, equalities, etc. (Tai & Tam, 1997); and, *religiosity*, showing women's general religious beliefs (Pharr, 2011) and as per the suggestions made to deliberate religiosity as one of the elements of shopping orientations in the models dealing with consumer behavior (Mokhlis, 2006).

In Malaysia, in addition to making attempts for finding the sources of most influence on consumers' purchase decisions, future research is suggested with consideration of differences in demographic factors and then investigating the perspective of consumers towards corporate's social and ethical practices and responsibilities (Rahim, Jalaludin, & Tajuddin, 2011). Realizing the existence of inadequate studies and some major research gaps in the area of ethical marketing, and in line with the above, Deng (2012), Pharr (2011) and Schlegelmilch and Oberseder (2010) emphasized on the vitality of demographic characteristics like age, employment, income, education, gender, etc. and opined that these must be considered alongwith other consumer influencing factors while implementing diverse ethical marketing strategies. At different income levels, consumers show dissimilar tendencies towards acquiring premium or non-premium products, and with rising education levels, consumers are seen to display an increasingly refined decision making process (Nandamuri & Gowthami, 2012). Accordingly, this study seeks to consider the moderating roles of education and income in influencing the relationship between ethical marketing practices and consumer attitude towards such firms.

As such, to conclude, driven in line with challenge four of Malaysia Vision 2020 evincing an earnest aspiration to make Malaysia a morally and ethically sound society, this study takes into due consideration issues like huge market size and role of cosmetics in attending to the prevalent skin problem issues in Malaysia, the risks experienced by consumers in making purchase decisions (Eze *et al.*, 2012), prevalence of distrust and lack of satisfaction among Malaysian consumers with the honesty of marketers (Paim *et al.*, 2012), need to model the demand as well as supply sides of market taken in an ethical scenario (Zhao *et al.*, 2011), and the factors which might influence consumer



behavior towards beautification or cosmetic items (Kyung, 2012; Parvin & Chowdhury, 2006). Also, in keeping with the further gaps identified for studying consumer intentions towards ethical marketing practices and socially responsible behavior of firms (Rahim *et al.*, 2011) particularly in Malaysia (Kumar *et al.*, 2014; Ismail & Panni, 2008; Rahim *et al.*, 2011), for studying the attitude-behavior gap towards marketers' ethical practices (Neale & Fullerton, 2010; Oberseder *et al.*, 2011), with consideration of ethical aspects of 4Ps (Batra & Klein, 2010; Schlegelmilch & Oberseder, 2010), consistent with the needs to include moderating variables like lifestyle (Chen, 2011; Chuang *et al.*, 2009), and suggestions made for addition of demographic variables in such studies (Deng, 2012; Pharr, 2011), this study is an attempt to unveil the role of ethical marketing practices in impacting consumer attitude which further impacts intentions towards considering ethical aspects while buying facial care products.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The research questions identified for this study are following:

1. What is the extent of relationship between ethical marketing practices (product fairness, marketing communications, price fairness, and channels of distribution) and female consumers' attitude in the Malaysian facial care sector?
2. Do consumer attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control predict behavioral intention of female consumers towards consideration of ethical marketing practices in buying facial care products in Malaysia?
3. What is the influence of perceived behavioral control and behavioral intention on the actual behavior of female consumers towards consideration of ethical marketing practices in the Malaysian facial care sector?

4. What are the mediating roles of female consumers' behavioral intention between their attitude and actual behavior relationship; subjective norms and actual behavior relationship; and perceived behavioral control and actual behavior relationship, in an ethical marketing context in the Malaysian facial care sector?
5. What are the moderating influences of lifestyle and its dimensions (self-confidence, family orientation, health consciousness, women's role and perception, and religiosity) on the relationship between female consumers' attitude and their behavioral intention towards consideration of ethical marketing practices in buying facial care products in Malaysia?
6. What are the moderating influences of education and income on the relationship between ethical marketing practices (product fairness, marketing communications, price fairness, and channels of distribution) and female consumers' attitude in the Malaysian facial care sector?

#### **1.4 Research Objectives**

Stemming from the aforesaid six research questions, the research objectives framed for this study are as follows:

1. To determine the extent of relationship between ethical marketing practices (product fairness, marketing communications, price fairness, and channels of distribution) and female consumers' attitude in the Malaysian facial care sector.
2. To ascertain whether consumer attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control predict behavioral intention of female consumers towards consideration of ethical marketing practices in buying facial care products in Malaysia.

3. To determine the influence of perceived behavioral control and behavioral intention on the actual behavior of female consumers towards consideration of ethical marketing practices in the Malaysian facial care sector.
4. To determine the mediating roles of female consumers' behavioral intention between their attitude and actual behavior relationship; subjective norms and actual behavior relationship; and perceived behavioral control and actual behavior relationship, in an ethical marketing context in the Malaysian facial care sector.
5. To determine the moderating influences of lifestyle and its dimensions (self-confidence, family orientation, health consciousness, women's role and perception, and religiosity) on the relationship between female consumers' attitude and their behavioral intention towards consideration of ethical marketing practices in buying facial care products in Malaysia.
6. To determine the moderating influences of education and income on the relationship between ethical marketing practices (product fairness, marketing communications, price fairness, and channels of distribution) and female consumers' attitude in the Malaysian facial care sector.

### **1.5 Scope of Research**

Business ethics is a comprehensive field of study and every functional area of business is equally responsible for acting ethically. However, this study is confined to ethics in marketing.

Thereafter, in the skin care category, facial care segment is the biggest contributor and the most promising segment, which is why this study has taken into consideration facial care products while designing the survey instrument.

Furthermore, women consumer behavior is largely influenced and enriched by the rapidly shifting social situation and also most of the cosmetics advertisements are aimed at alluring women consumers. Therefore, even though cosmetics products are used by both males and females, this study is confined to only the female consumers of 15 years and above age from Malaysia, as females are the major users of cosmetics products showing adequate fascination towards consuming them (San, Sim, Ling, & Hock, 2012; Twomey, 2011) and considerably, they are expected to provide more appropriate information regarding this industry and their preferences.

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This study seeks to contribute to the marketing ethics literature by demonstrating consumer behavioral issues in an ethical marketing context. More specifically, it expects to offer important contribution to various aspects of ethical sides of marketing as well as to the gap which is often observed between attitude and action of consumers.

Thereafter, this research attempts to uncover the exact realities of consumer's commitment towards consideration of marketer's ethicality which in turn would be useful for the corporate to know as to how in Malaysia, consumers may respond to the firm's ethical approaches and the crises caused by them. As such, organisations will have an opportunity to understand more about their responsibilities and accountabilities towards the society making them ponder more and act dutifully towards their ethical obligations.

Furthermore, this study seeks to assist the practitioners in developing actionable strategies which aptly capitalize on the features of the ethical improvements that can make it greatly pleasing to the consumers. For this study, cosmetics industry has been chosen to understand ethical marketing practices and their influence on consumer purchase behavior due to several reasons: cosmetics can affect a consumer physically, financially and emotionally; it is linked with skin issue which is major health related concern in Malaysia; ethical practices in this industry can be easily recalled by the consumers; marketing and advertising strategies are innovative and widespread for these products; it has become an integral part of female consumer's lifestyle; etc. Moreover, cosmetics are also becoming critical in strategic terms due to rapidly growing market in Malaysia. And thus, this study would benefit the cosmetics industry by gaining a better understanding of consumer expectations from different demographics so as to have it accommodated in their product manufacturing and marketing functions. The study on ethical marketing and consumer behavior is important also from the perspective that companies have been trying from pillar to post to allure customers in recent past through their innovative marketing techniques with a significant focus on ethical aspects.

Also, this study seeks to generate significant information and benefits to the government. Though it is very unfortunate but nonetheless, counterfeiting seems to have emerged as one of the fast growing businesses in the world and it can be seen that some companies in hunt of profit are likely to pay inadequate attention to elementary consumer rights (Alsmadi & Alnawas, 2012). Also, at times, multinational firms as well as global establishments are criticized to have their codes of conduct unimpressive (Grein & Gould, 2007). Therefore, this study intends to bring in valuable contribution and insights

about the current situation prevailing in Malaysia. Policymakers will have a better picture of existing practices and consumer's expectations in this field which will assist them in formulating regulations as well as in taking proactive actions and developing strategies for nation's commitment to have Malaysia as an ethically and morally high society.

### **1.7 Organization of the Thesis**

This section offers a short review of the thesis's structure. Firstly, chapter one sought to introduce the issues pertaining to the topic under study.

Chapter two provides an extensive review of literature related to the variables identified in this study which are following: consumer attitude, behavioral intention, actual behavior, product fairness, marketing communications, price fairness, channels of distribution, subjective norms, perceived behavior control, lifestyle, health consciousness, family orientation, self-confidence, women's role and perception, religiosity, and demography. Also, the underpinning theory and supporting model are explained in this chapter.

Relying on the literature described in chapter two, chapter three discusses the theoretical framework as well as the twenty six hypotheses identified in this study.

Chapter four containing research design presents the various aspects of research methodology and justifies the use of quantitative method and statistical tools. In addition to sampling, data collection and proposed analysis methods, it also includes the description on each aspect of the instrument formation alongwith pilot data analysis.

After completing the process of data collection, chapter five is presented to report the results of data analysis conducted by using the structure equation modeling approach and it contains descriptive as well as inferential statistics. Hypotheses testing results are also presented, summarised and briefly discussed in this chapter.

And finally, chapter six offers the interpretation of results and findings based on the hypotheses testing in an attempt to answer the research questions. Managerial and theoretical implications have been derived from the results presented in chapter five. This chapter also presents the limitations of the study and offers suggestions for future studies. And finally, the conclusions are made emanating from the overall findings of this study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Chapter two presents review of literature pertaining to various nuances of consumer behavior in context of ethical marketing aspects. Malaysian facial care market is also potentially discussed. Also, ethical marketing practices are explained in detail showing their significance to consumers in the modern times. This chapter further describes the various lifestyle and demographic aspects which can influence female consumers in their decision making in ethical scenarios. Finally, this chapter establishes the underpinning theory for the proposed study.

#### **2.2 An Overview of Malaysian Facial Care Market**

Cosmetic refers to “any of several preparations (excluding soap) that are applied to the human body for beautifying, preserving, or altering the appearance or for cleansing, colouring, conditioning, or protecting the skin, hair, nails, lips, eyes, or teeth” (*Cosmetic - Encyclopedia Britannica*, n.d.). The term Cosmetics emanates from Kosmetikos, a Greek word that implies "Skilled at decorating" (Eze *et al.*, 2012). In Malaysia, cosmetic products can be parted into several categories viz: 1. Color cosmetics; 2. Skincare; 3. Perfumes and fragrances; 4. Toiletries; 5. Hair care (*Cosmetics and toiletries in Malaysia*, 2005). Moreover, it has been clearly stated that manufacturing of cosmetics in Malaysia, under the monitoring of Drugs and Cosmetics Regulations 1984, has to fully comply with the ASEAN Guidelines on Good Manufacturing Practice for cosmetic



(*Guidelines for Control of Cosmetic Products in Malaysia*, 2009). Sell and importation of cosmetics also have to comply with the well-defined guidelines and regulatory norms.

The value sales growth of 5% was estimated for skin care in Malaysia with a total value of RM 1.6 billion in 2013 as per illustrated in Table 2.1 which also shows that facial care is the largest segment under skin care category highlighting the fact that several skin care products with anti-ageing features were launched during this period which can be attributed to the following: 1.increase in the number of working women; 2. impact of rising global beauty trends in Malaysia, and; 3.the likeliness that skin care products are nowadays considered as more of necessity as compared to color cosmetics where money is usually tight. As per Table 2.2, the facial care products in Malaysia accounting for 1% market value of the Asia-Pacific market, mainly consists of face mask, anti-agers, toner, night cream, and creams and gels.

Table 2.1

*Sales of Skin Care by Category: Value 2007-2013 (all figures in RM Million)*

	<b>2007</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
<b>Body Care</b>	146.8	159.2	168.7	172.3	178.9	183.5	188.0
<b>Facial Care</b>	938.0	1,021.4	1,105.4	1,184.9	1,271.1	1,345.7	1422.7
<b>Hand Care</b>	14.5	15.2	16.0	16.8	17.8	18.6	19.4
<b>Skin Care</b>	1,099.4	1,195.8	1,290.1	1,374.0	1,467.8	1,547.8	1630.0

Source: Euromonitor International (2013, 2014)

Table 2.2

*Malaysia Facial Care Market Segmentation: % share, by value, 2010*

<b>Category</b>	<b>% Share</b>
<b>Philippines</b>	1.5%
<b>Malaysia</b>	1.0%
<b>New Zealand</b>	0.4%
<b>Thailand</b>	0.4%
<b>Rest of Asia-Pacific</b>	96.8%
<b>Total</b>	100%

Source: Facial Care in Malaysia (2011)

As revealed by Euromonitor International's (2013) report on skin care in Malaysia, premium anti-agers reflected a dynamic performance in 2012, and in general, mass anti-agers under the facial care category was found to be the category of utmost popularity. Like some other Asian cultures, Malaysian women also perceived that having whiter skin makes them look more beautiful which ultimately motivated the marketers in offering skin care products added with ingredients that lighten skin tone or offer increased safety against UV rays. Also it revealed that, reflecting a dominance of international brands, L'Oréal was leading in the market with 12% share in terms of value and after that stood Proctor & Gamble showing clearly that global brands had almost complete dominance in the premium quality segment, however some domestic competitors like Nutox Oxyfusion, Bio-essence and Skinz in the segment for the masstige and Eversoft, Follow Me and Gervenne in the mass segment were found to be popular and doing well and as such, the mass brands emerged as the most popular brands in skin care with 57% value share in 2012.

A glimpse over females' magazines acquaints with the display of numerous advertisements on beauty and style given on several pages. Many of such advertisements attractively claim to make the complexion and charm perfect day by day by uses of their respective brands (Riji, 2006). On similar lines, the mass segment in Malaysia heavily relied on the strategy of offering bundle pack offers and using promotional tools like buy-one-get-one deals or five dissimilar masks at the price tag of RM 20; besides, some of the promotions drawing consumer attention included the following: L'Oréal Youth Code highlighted its patented pro-gen technology developed over 10 years; the Avon Anew Genics range focused on its patented YouthGen technology claiming to help women look

10 years younger; anti-ageing range from Shiseido's Za Early, claimed to smoothen skin and targeted mainly at the younger women (Euromonitor International, 2012).

Economic downturn can be seen to be a potential risk for the Malaysian skin care industry. Nevertheless, as a whole, skin care would withstand any economic contraction in future much better than any other personal or beauty care categories because Malaysian women have been found to be highly prizing these products. And therefore, the forecast period as per Table 2.3 is projected to witness the launches of many more anti-ageing and skin lightening products for different skin types and for various age groups.

Table 2.3

*Forecast Sales of Skin Care by Category: Value 2013-2018 (all figures in RM Million)*

	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>
<b>Body Care</b>	188.0	188.5	189.0	190.2	192.1	194.6
<b>Facial Care</b>	1422.7	1,476.2	1,532.3	1,591.5	1,652.8	1,716.2
<b>Hand Care</b>	19.4	19.9	20.5	21.1	21.7	22.3
<b>Skin Care</b>	1630.0	1,684.6	1,741.8	1,802.8	1,866.6	1,933.1

Source: Euromonitor International (2014)

Furthermore, seeing the vulnerability of skin issues widely evident in Malaysia, this research considered skin care category for its study. Streamlining further, for studying consumer attitude towards ethical marketing practices, facial care segment from the skin care category was chosen because of its current and forecasted retail value and growth rate which is promising and highest in the skin care category (Table 2.1, Table 2.3).

### **2.3 Consumer Attitude: An Ethical Marketing Perspective**

Even though it is evidently known that an ethical trend assists organisations in enhancing internal as well as external reputation , still organizations have been showing mixed

responses wherein some firms have been following ethical practices while some greedy firms haven't been lending attention to it (Jalil, Azam, & Rahman, 2010). As a good association between a firm and the community leads to formation of consumer's favorable attitude and trust, and enhanced consumer acceptability which ultimately assists the firm in strengthening its image and in achieving marketing success (Nurittamont & Ussahawanitchakit, 2010). Attitudes can be explained as summarized assessment of issues or objects on the basis of experiences and information arising from cognitive, affective or behavioral aspects (Gupta *et al.*, 2010; Petty, Unnava, & Strathman, 1991; Petty, Wegener, & Fabrigar, 1997). In here, the cognitive component might include beliefs, judgments or thoughts related to an attitude object, whereas the affective component seeks to include feelings, emotions or drives linked with an attitude object (McGuire, 1969).

Out of several possible options available in markets, consumers through their awareness, knowledge, information, interest, etc. are seen to be practically settling upon with only few brands to make purchases and it is in this set of selected brands that consumers tend to form preferences by assessing the overall value proposition which includes several other features of a product than the basic core offering and obvious benefits (Kotler, Keller, Ang, Leong, & Tan, 2006). It is in line with Arnould, Price, and Zinkhan (2002) who opined that consumers are extremely conscious about price as well as value which lead them to making sophisticated distinctions between various brands on these bases while making their buying decisions.

The consumption-value theory by Sheth, Newman, and Gross (1991) asserts that multi layered consumer decision issue of 'buy or not to buy' consists of several forms of value

which can be classified as functional, social, emotional, epistemic, and conditional wherein functional refers to a products ability to carry out its functional aspects, social refers to the product's ability to maintain its congruity with consumer's social image and surroundings, emotional relates to a product's ability to create a positive or negative feelings in the consumer's mind, epistemic is linked with keenness to acquire knowledge, and conditional reflects the dependence of some market choices on the circumstances encountered by the consumers (Sanchez-Fernandez & Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007).

On the other hand, value theory developed by Hartman (1967, 1973) described the value in an axiological model and expressed in terms of extrinsic, intrinsic and systemic values wherein extrinsic refers to the instrumental use of a service, intrinsic refers to the emotional aspects arising from the consumption and systemic relates to the rational interactions between pertinent concepts like sacrifices and returns. Adapting Hartman's value theory, Mattsson (1991) described it further by referring it as three dimensions viz. emotional, practical and logical. After, these dimensions got wide acceptability in several streams, Huber, Herrmann, and Braunstein (2000) further added a new dimension 'perceived risk' to the aforesaid structure. Thereafter, for consumer decision making, the Blackwell, Miniard, and Engel (2001) model got popularity which mainly stressed on extensive purchase decision making which explains that how consumers pass through different stages while making purchasing decisions. Moreover, according to theory of planned behavior, attitude of consumers are found to be linked with their purchasing intentions (Ajzen, 1991).

Theory of reasoned action and theory of planned behavior are widely established expectancy-value models of attitude. These models have gained popularity due to their

everlasting nature and applicability in different contexts. As per expectancy-value models which assume the possibility of more than one behavior option in a particular situation and an individual's preference to select that option which is expected to deliver him a combination of maximum success and value, it further implies that the behavior is said to be a function of the expectancies possessed by an individual and the value of the goal which he is trying to achieve (*Expectancy Value Model, Theory Clusters*, n.d.).

Consumers while making purchase decisions refer to their prior knowledge, features, risks, sacrifices and benefits from the use of a product (Eze *et al.*, 2012; Iqbal *et al.*, 2003). Furthermore, consumer alternative selection is seen to be largely affected by three kinds of product and market linked information: paucity of consumer's attention, competence profile of consumers, and presence of several markets with complexities, and as the consumer information level is found to be connected to market forces, poorly informed consumers tend to disaffect the demand side and proper functioning of the market as whole (Berg & Gornitzka, 2012).

As price is always considered important by the consumers, they quite often try to look beyond the monetary aspects, and relate it with broader aspects like product features, benefits, risks, etc. (Boom, 2011; Liu & Soman, 2008). Moreover, as promotions have always been under social and ethical scrutiny in the field of marketing, advertising was considered as a negative force in the community, and it was further opined that it aims to act for the advantage of the business houses and configure consumer buying behavior (Lynd, 1934; Tadajewski, 2010). As a whole, there exists a significant relationship between marketing in terms of quality of product, price, channels of distribution, advertising and consumer purchase decisions as it was found in a study conducted for

made-in-Nigeria shoes by Basil, Etuk, and Ebitu (2013). However, the relationship between ethical marketing practices and consumer attitude is yet to be explored, in Malaysian context particularly.

Consumers with higher education were found to have a positive attitude towards ethical and ecological products showing further that they are more likely to buy such products (Ahmad, Ali, Grigore, & Stancu, 2012). Similarly, consumers from high income bracket and from strong family circle getting adequate emotional, financial and practical support were found to buy whatever they wanted following an expensive consumption pattern (Hamilton, 2011) without showing much concern for other aspects like ethicality of marketers. Moreover, as recognized by Jones III, Cole, and Cox (2012), females have been found to possess a more positive attitude towards corporate social responsibility, after taking into consideration the interest of all stakeholders who might be affected by a firm's actions (Lamsa, Vehkaperä, Puttonen, & Pesonen, 2008).

The latest trend in consumer's attitude towards ethical issues is significant to know for the organizations to strengthen their brand positioning (Schlegelmilch & Oberseder, 2010; Wheale & Hinton, 2007). Nowadays, consumers expect companies to follow corporate social responsibility and as such it should be one of the prime corporate goals. As it was pointed out by Uusitalo and Oksanen (2004), and Hanzae and Taghipourian (2012), ethical consumer decisions now are getting significant place in consumer's lifestyles and as such, they assess companies on the basis of their ethicality and social orientations. In that regard, it was identified by Salimi (2012) that advertisements made with nude erotic appeal were observed to possess a negative influence over the attitude towards the brand (Reichert & Lambiase, 2003), however, keeping in mind the variations

in consumer perceptions, it was also suggested that there can be favorable use of sexual appeals if it is wisely and tastefully done (Treise, Weigold, Conna, & Garrison, 1994). Stressing on the importance of ethicality of marketers, it is suggested that marketers have to realize the happiness element of consumers as it is related to their buying propensities and as such, marketers should be showing appropriate ethical conduct towards their consumers through their various kinds of marketing actions (Sara & Surendra, 2010).

In the studies pertaining to consumer attitude, a commonly observed approach is to consider perceived risks in terms of consumer perception about uncertainty which seems to be arising from the buying and consumption of a product. This uncertainty may produce anxiety and relate to the perception about adverse consequences of purchasing a product (Bhatnagar & Ghose, 2004). As Koklic (2011) pointed out that perceived risk is considered similar to constructs like uncertainty, involvement, attitude (Mitchell, 1999). In terms of Ueland *et al.* (2012), “unfamiliar, uncertain, unknown, uncontrollable, and severe consequences” are witnessed as some of the aspects linked with perception of risks which can relate to both serious and long lasting outcomes and they further opine that benefits are perceived on the basis of heuristics and experience whereas risks are perceived on the basis of outcomes of consumer’s cognitive information processing. Additionally, a product which is perceived as greatly beneficial corresponds to a perception about it of having little risks which seeks to show the inverse correlation between these two and such inverse relationship between the risks and benefits perception is due to consumer’s dependence on affective evaluations while passing through the process of making judgments about risks and benefits (Alhakami & Slovic, 1994). Furthermore, product and security risks were conceptualised as the two kinds of



risks usually perceived by the consumers according to the model developed by Bhatnagar and Ghose (2004) who conducted a study on the role of risks and benefits perception about online shopping and preferences of consumers.

The personality variables like ability of sensation seeking, patience for ambiguities, sexual category etc. influence a consumer's perception of risk as well as his risk-taking capabilities (Weber, Blais, & Betz, 2002). This finding is in line with Taylor (1974), who opined that demographic features of consumers may influence the amount of risk which consumers perceive in general. Moreover, marketers do understand that, as consumers always find some risk in making any kind of purchase decision, they explore product related information to minimize their risk and as such, brand image as well as knowledge of the product are supposed to play significant role in the evaluation process through which a consumer passes prior to purchasing (Eze *et al.*, 2012; Zeithaml, 1988). It is also in line with Koklic (2011) who opined that consumer's risk perception is impacted by his prior subjective knowledge which means that the more he considers he has knowledge about a product, the less is the risk he perceives from it and this interpretation is in coherence with several other empirical studies like those of Laroche, Bergeron, and Goutaland (2003), and Zhong (2003).

In Malaysia, in order for the consumers to perceive minimal risks from a facial care product, it is imperative for the manufacturers to use high standard raw materials, which also eventually enhances supplier power (*Facial Care in Malaysia*, 2011). Furthermore, for an enhanced consumer attitude and for a reduction in consumer's risk perception, it is significant for the marketers to be fully aware of consumer's buying behavior for developing market oriented strategies.

In buying decision situations, consumers consider multiple attributes which is in fact summation of acquisition utility and transaction utility wherein acquisition utility refers to a comparative appraisal of benefits perceived and actual price of the product, whereas transaction utility refers to a comparative assessment of consumer's internal reference prices and the prices actually charged by the seller (Thaler, 1985). It seeks to indicate price perception as the key determinant of value as estimated by the consumers (Bredahl, 2001; Sanchez-Fernandez & Iniesta-Bonillo, 2007). Furthermore, there were differences found between the ratings of expected benefits by males and females wherein males indicated greater benefit perceptions towards some of the risky activities in the domains pertaining to finance, health/safety, leisure and ethics (Weber *et al.*, 2002). It seeks to advocate that socio-economic profile of consumers have an observable role to play in determination of benefit perception. These are in line with another empirical study which found that consumer's socio-economic profile and their benefits perception emerge as key indicators influencing consumer's attitude which further impacts purchasing intention (Kim, 2012) and as such, it is beneficial to further develop and promote the specifications of consumer benefits (Salehi *et al.*, 2011).

It should be noted that consumers' benefits perception may considerably vary from product to product. In case of yoghurt, it was health benefits, in the case of beer, it was price and environmental benefits which were found to be significantly considerable by the consumers in their decision making (Bredahl, 2001). On these lines, this study proposes that in facial care segment, beautifying and nourishing features might be perceived as key benefits by the consumers.

Even though the significance of attitude as a valid predictor of consumer behavior is well established (Engel, Blackwell, & Miniard, 1995), still a skepticism is observed by the researchers about a valid prediction of behavior by attitude mostly because at several instances, attitudes have been seen getting not translated into proportional action (Sheeran, 2002) which has been called as possible attitude-behavior gap by several researchers (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Neale & Fullerton, 2010; Oberseder *et al.*, 2011; Papoikonomou *et al.*, 2011) who have also sought for a contextual and continuous investigation in this direction in an ethical scenario, as considered in this study.

## **2.4 Consequences of Consumer Attitude towards Ethical Marketing Practices**

In line with the theory of planned behavior, this consumer study being conducted in an ethical context presumes that a stronger attitude towards ethical marketing practices of firms would lead to a greater likelihood of buying from such firms. Alternatively, it can be said that a positive attitude would lead to occurrence of an enhanced behavioral intention which would further strengthen and ascertain the actual behavior towards considering ethicality of marketers while buying. As such, these outcomes of consumer attitude in an ethical marketing scenario are explained below:

### **2.4.1 Behavioral Intention**

Behavioral intention tremendously predicts actual behavior (Halimi, Chavosh, Soheilrad, Esferjani, & Ghajarzadeh, 2010) and it refers to the degree to which a person intends to arrange for performing or not performing a specific behavior (Warshaw & Davis, 1985) in conjunction with the theory of reasoned action and the theory of planned behavior. As consumers are generally seen motivated to maximize benefits and also minimize risks,

their attitude forming from their risk and benefit perceptions play a significant role in predicting the intentions towards buying a product or in other terms, towards performing a certain behavior (Forsythe, Liu, Shannon, & Gardner, 2006) which is consideration of ethicality of marketers while making purchase decisions as perceived in this study.

Marketers always try to lure customers and enhance their attitudes through their marketing activities (Friestad & Wright, 1994). Accordingly, attitude towards a brand and advertisement was found to be impacting purchase intentions in a study conducted by Niazi, Ghani, and Aziz (2012). Moreover, as it is usually anticipated that there should be a positive relationship between the marketer's ethical practices and consumer's intentions towards such marketers, it was found in the study of Whalen, Pitts, and Wong (1991) that a negative relationship existed between seller's unethical behavior and consumer's purchase intentions. It is interesting to note that even if a consumer does not possess purchase intention towards a firm's products, still the distrust and unethical activities of a firm draws consumer's attention leading to more information seeking about the firm (Bell & Main, 2011). Also, as usage of facial care products might involve direct or indirect interaction with other consumers, social factors called as subjective norms in the TPB might play a significant role in explaining consumer's intentions (Woisetschläger, Pieper, & Backhaus, 2013) towards buying from firms following ethical practices in their marketing activities. It was further opined that consumers possessing higher locus of control might be seen to possess less distrust and suspicion about advertising (Matthes & Wonneberger, 2014). As such, in line with TPB, behavioral intention is said to be also predicted by subjective norms and perceived behavioral control in addition to the attitude towards ethicality of marketers.

Furthermore, consumers are seen to expect more concentrated efforts towards enhancing product qualities rather than mere style changes (Barksdale & Darden, 1972). It has also been seen that the unfair practices of firms ultimately damage their reputation and consumers exhibit decreased purchase intentions towards exploring the products/services of such firms (Ozbek, Alniacik, & Koc, 2012).

Consumer's purchase intentions have been found to be significantly related to firms' ethical records and their ability to exceed consumer's expectations (Creyer & Ross, 1997; Ozbek *et al.*, 2012). And these can be the reasons for consumer's willingness to pay comparatively more for the products that are made through ethical means (Auger, Burke, Devinney, & Louviere, 2003). Consumer's varying types of association with firms have different influences on their respective product's evaluation (Berens, Riel, & Bruggen, 2005; Sen & Bhattacharya, 2001) and which is why firms adopt assortment of strategies for presenting their products and associating it with firms' particular image while communicating with consumers for boosting their purchase intentions (Lin, Chen, Chiu, & Lee, 2011).

For successful implementation of new and modern strategies such as consumer oriented marketing actions, not only awareness of what drives consumers is useful, but also it is quite important to understand how the attitude of consumers may impact these and what could be the resulting implications (Frewer, 2003; Kim, 2012). In general, the attitudinal measures relate to consumer feelings pertaining to the brand and their stated intention for instance, likelihood to recommend or to repurchase, etc. (Schiffman & Kanuk, 2004; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978). A deeper understanding of consumer's attitude may lead to reasonably justifying the reasons of why appropriate consideration should be lent to

consumer perceptions while implementing product innovations and commercialization of the same.

It is agreed that there is little research regarding the effects of ethicality of business practices' on consumer perceptions (Viriyavidhayavongs & Yothmontree, 2002). Also, as Malaysia is a developing economy, this study assumes the expectations of consumers to be similar to the results of Gupta *et al.* (2010) who found that consumers in a developing economy also expect the companies to follow reasonable ethics in conducting their businesses and that this aspect had a great say in determining their purchase intentions towards the products of such firms.

#### **2.4.2 Actual Behavior**

In terms of Nandamuri and Gowthami (2012):

Consumer buying behavior is a decision-making process which tends to be influenced by various factors such as personal, social, psychological and cultural. Personal factors comprise consumer demographics, viz., age, occupation, economic status, lifestyle, personality and self-concept. The reality is that consumers vary tremendously in age, income, education, tastes and other factors. Marketers must understand how consumers transform marketing and other inputs into buying responses.

Generally, it is presumed that consumers with greater level of positive attitude towards sales people and businesses would show higher level of interest and receptiveness towards offering of such firms (Singhapakdi, Rawwas, Marta, & Ahmed, 1999). As opined by Lii and Sy (2009), consumers in general can be seen to indicate their

behavioral responses in terms of word of mouth (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1996), complaint (Swan & Oliver, 1989), repurchase willingness (Blodgett & Tax, 1993), and switching behavior (Oliver, 1996). Furthermore, a more positive or favorable judgment leads to intentions which should ideally predict behavior subject to correspondability of intention's measure to the behavioral criteria (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980, p. 50), for instance, as considered in this study, consumer perceptions of firms' ethical marketing practices (Green & Antoine, 2011; Smith, 1995). Also, it has been strongly suggested that attitudinal and behavioral aspects should be taken into consideration simultaneously in order to recognize the true pattern of consumer decision making (Keller, 1993).

Consumers have been complaining about the insufficiency and incompleteness of information on business practices (Papaoikonomou *et al.*, 2011). Simultaneously, problem also arises when they are overloaded with excess information available regarding firms (Shaw & Clarke, 1999) thus doubting towards credibility of such information and their sources (Uusitalo & Oksanen 2004). Though consumers are sophisticated in terms of their knowledge about business ethical marketing information, but this does not necessarily translate into actual behavior and increased purchases from firms that use ethical marketing (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001). A study of French consumers provided some illumination, suggesting that all consumers did not use the same decision basis in response to ethical marketing (Ozcaglar-Toulouse *et al.*, 2006).

It has been seen that consumers with some brand relationships gain embarrassments which further become predictor of their antibrand responses and behavior (Johnson, Matear, & Thomson, 2011). Eckhardt, Belk, and Devinney (2010) relied on an interpretive approach to conduct a study for making sense regarding the disparities

between the consumers' voiced desires to sidestep brands and products that are supposed to be unethical and their actual behavior. Though some studies offer some important insights, however the influence of ethicality of businesses and corporate social responsibility (CSR) on actual behavior hasn't yet been fully captured which has been challenging researchers and practitioners in the sense that when asked, consumers declared their willingness to consider ethicality and CSR, however only few of them actually considered it during real consumption (Devinney, Auger, & Eckhardt, 2010). In the same way, consumers are seen to behave differently from their attitudes and perceptions towards ethicality of firms (Neale & Fullerton, 2010; Uusitalo & Oksanen, 2004). These aspects further necessitate a better understanding of such discrepancies between the reported intentions and actual behavior as to what role actually ethicality of marketers play in influencing purchase decisions (Oberseder *et al.*, 2011).

The fundamental changes continuously taking place in the socio cultural and technological atmospheres are stimulating significant and notice worthy changes in the marketplace (Freeman & Shapiro, 2014). Moreover, socio-demographic factors like income and age have been found to be explaining consumer behavior (Diamantopoulos, Schlegelmilch, Sinkovics, & Bohlen, 2003). Likewise, demographic characteristics and lifestyles were termed as vital by Young *et al.* (2010) for understanding consumer behavior towards ethical consumption. In general, consumer behavior can be explained as "all purchases related activities, thought and influences that occur before, during and after the purchase itself as performance by buyers and consumers of products and services and those who influence the purchase" (Basil *et al.*, 2013).



Consumer behavior was studied in the context of a product harm situation that created uncertainty among the consumers about product qualities and it sought further work on the research which collectively models both demand as well as supply sides of the market (Zhao *et al.*, 2011). Suggestion was also made to conduct studies on cues that may have positive impact on consumer's actual behavior towards beautification items (Parvin & Chowdhury, 2006). Also, it is vital for the companies to stay competitive by conducting regular studies on the consumer's current needs and determinants of their buying behavior as Malaysian cosmetics industry is expected to grow considerably (Eze *et al.*, 2012). Accordingly, as approximation of Malaysian consumer buying behavior is not yet fully explored, this research seeks to investigate the major determinants of consumer's actual behavior towards consideration of ethical marketing aspects while making purchase decisions.

## **2.5 An Overview of Antecedents (Ethical Marketing Practices)**

Ethics was defined as moral rules or principles pertaining to behavior which should direct and advise the professionals in such a way that they always deal with their customers and other professionals fairly as well as honestly (Laczniak, 1990). In a related manner, ethical marketing was previously defined by Hunt and Vitell (1986) as ,“an inquiry into the nature and grounds of moral judgments, standards, and rules of conduct relating to marketing decisions and marketing situations”. They further recognised normative and positive methods for approaching ethical marketing wherein normative methods deal with offering explicit rules to administer ethical decisions, and positive methods pertain to the process of assessing the potential value related to a specific action which was termed as deontological, and also to the potential consequences which might arise from a specific

alternative which was termed as teleological. As such, though, ethical decisions are seen to be impacted by deontological norms as well as by precise marketing-related norms (Hunt & Vitell 1986, 2006; Vitell *et al.*, 1993), it is found difficult to fix a full set of rules for overseeing ethical marketing practices mainly because of prevalence of a possibility of having several scenarios, conflicts, and exceptions arisen (Hunt & Vitell, 2006; Vitell *et al.*, 1993).

According to *Financial Times Lexicon* (n.d.),

Ethical marketing is a process through which companies generate customer interest in products/services, build strong customer interest/relationships, and create value for all stakeholders by incorporating social and environmental considerations in products and promotions. All aspects of marketing are considered, from sales techniques to business communication and business development.

In the modern times, ethical judgments are considered quite important in the field of marketing. In that regard, in ethical marketing, underlining the nature of ethical judgments in line with Schlenker and Forsyth (1977), relativism and idealism were identified as two important dimensions of the moral philosophy stream wherein relativism pertains to the degree of an individual's inclination to discard moral absolutes and idealism relates to his concern for other's welfare as part of ethical decision making (Singhapakdi *et al.*, 1999). Moreover, ethical decisions are called to be situation specific by the ethical theories, for instance, ethical issue or dilemma is specified as an aspect prior to ethical decision making (Ferrell & Gresham, 1995), it is viewed as perceived

ethical problem which catalyses the process of ethical decision making (Hunt & Vitell, 1986), and also it is regarded as issue contingent (Jones, 1991).

Marketing was viewed as exchange facilitator (Bagozzi, 1975) which denotes that it is liable for the 'exchange' term in the areas pertaining to product features, pricing, brand creation, communication and distribution (Falkenberg, 2010; Williams & Aitken, 2011). In congruence with it, the growth of ethical marketing has facilitated the advent of ethical norms pertaining to 4Ps of marketing as identified by McCarthy (1964) which included product, price, place and promotion aspects (Batra & Klein, 2010; Vranceanu, 2007; Constantinescu, 2011). It has further assisted in gaining better understanding of ethical marketing practices by integrating the marketing activities of organizations with the societal expectations for an enhanced level of satisfaction among the consumers. However, for successful implementation of marketing strategies and for having a strong and favorable positioning, it is imperative for the firms to clearly understand the behaviour, needs, and desires of their consumers in context of the firms' offerings and also to gain information on whether these are acceptable or not to the consumers, including ethical considerations (Deng, 2012; Green & Antoine, 2011).

Studies reveal that consumers do not exhibit possession of exact knowledge regarding whether firms are ethical or not and also about the motives of such firms (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001) which may eventually lead them to ending up perceiving it as a marketing gimmick of the firms (Fernandez-Kranz & Merino-Castello 2005). Contrastingly, there is evidence of consumers viewing at ethical products positively, companies might be benefitted by promoting the product's main strengths in addition to their ethicality which can be done by making modifications in the conventional marketing mix elements

comprising information provided in promotions, advertising, and so forth (Luchs *et al.*, 2010), which was also supported by Schlegelmilch and Oberseder (2010) who proposed that this area has a further specialized appeal.

As marketers and consumers always vary in their perception towards ethical marketing practices, it becomes more pertinent for the firms to understand consumer's interests and preferences, and the ethicality of marketing programs prior to their implementation for being able to target diverse groups successfully (Cui & Choudhury, 2003). Moreover, from the practitioner perspective, understanding of ethical marketing can not be completed if firms do not warmly take the opinions of their consumers into consideration in their research activities (Al-Khatib, Stanton, & Rawwas, 2005; Deng, 2012). Even personal characteristics of individuals may affect ethical decisions (Hunt & Vitell, 1986, 2006). Keeping these in mind, this study aims to seek information on how consumers form their attitudes and how do they perceive ethical marketing practices in addition to studying the effects of their personal characteristics. Adding a new insight, McClaren, Adam, and Vocino (2010) posit that, though ethical marketing studies have stressed on describing the effects of norms in the decision making in ethical contexts, they haven't yet assessed the extent of marketing professional's socialization within their respective organizations. However, this study does not take this issue in consideration due to its identified scope.

Furthermore, in Malaysia, in a study conducted by Mansor *et al.* (2010) on cosmetic usage, consumers assumed branding, ingredients and skin issues to be the key determinants for usage of cosmetics. Moreover, for the emerging markets, Green and Antoine (2011), and Schlegelmilch and Oberseder (2010) identify research direction

related to all four components of marketing mix, which is further elaborated by Batra and Klein (2010) who opine that research in these areas can be conceptualized to include aspects like sale of counterfeit products more particularly in the emerging economies, reliance on application of violence and sex in promotional campaigns and advertising directed at susceptible groups like children, uses of least appreciated grey distribution channels, and discrimination in prices. Most of these aspects have been contextually considered in this study and as such, ethical marketing practices in this study is being represented and evaluated by four factors viz. product fairness, marketing communications, price fairness, and channels of distribution.

To conclude, this study through extensive review of literature endeavoured to identify and test four major antecedents of consumer attitude viz. product fairness, price fairness, and fairness in marketing communications and channels of distribution combiningly representing the ethical marketing practices of firms. In general, fairness can be described as a judgment pertaining to an outcome or the related process to reach such outcome perceived as reasonable, acceptable or just (Bolton, Warlop, & Alba, 2003). There seems no doubt that fairness in each of the aforesaid area would ideally lead to a positive consumer attitude in normal circumstances. Also, one of the reasons to consider these as antecedents was to identify which of the four do possess most influence on the attitude of Malaysian consumers. As such, in an ethical marketing context, it is assumed in this study that consumer attitude is influenced by product fairness, marketing communications, price fairness, and channels of distribution, as follows:

### **2.5.1 Product Fairness**

Firms should be exhibiting ethical behavior in all stages while dealing with a product, for example ethicality should be traced in the way a product appears in the market, during its launch, during its introduction to the market, and also when consumers are persuaded to try the product (Constantinescu, 2011). Moreover, attempts made to offer a high product quality is aimed at satisfying consumers by offering them a high degree of overall pleasure or contentment from the product usage as per their perception, expectations, desires, and needs (Chen, 2010; Mai & Ness, 1999; Paulssen & Birk, 2007) mainly because fairness in product has always been an important aspect influencing the attitude of consumers (Shehryar & Hunt, 2005).

Consumers prefer to favor those organisations that follow appropriate code of ethics, or else they tend to switch to organisations which seem to be more ethical (Alrubaiee, 2012; Chowdhuri, 2011; Hanzaae & Taghipourian, 2012). In other words, in addition to aiming to maximize shareholders' wealth, businesses also have to fulfill their social as well as moral responsibilities, and offer products and services which are safe and of superior qualities (Zakaria & Lajis, 2012). Such arguments were also discussed by Balmer, Powell, and Greyser (2011) in their study that stressed on ethical marketing positioning as a precondition for the firms who claim to possess a faithful ethical corporate identity.

At times, individuals while taking a judgment regarding fairness are found to compare the current offer or transaction with reference transactions in order to get an overall idea (Gershoff, Kivetz, & Keinan, 2012). As such, from a firm's perspective, failure to offer and uphold a superior product quality may lead to product performance risk which is

detrimental to the firm's growth and sustenance in the market (Forsythe *et al.*, 2006; Horton, 1976). On the other hand, from a consumer's perspective, the level of risk rests on the intrinsic features of the product, the characteristics of an individual and any kind of effects which emanate externally (Aqueveque, 2006; Conchar *et al.*, 2004; Koklic, 2011). In spite of the seeming benefits from a product, consumer may not consider it if they possess a sense of distrust and insecurity towards it. As such, risks with a facial care product may relate to both short-term and long-term concerns, wherein some of them might have serious effects. Moreover, risk perception for a product is linked with unfavorable consequences from its use and is usually influenced by cognitive treatment of information offered by the third parties and discretion connected with a consumer's own situation and in accordance with these, it is said that, "unfamiliar, uncertain, unknown, uncontrollable, and severe consequences are some of the factors associated with risk perception" (Ueland *et al.*, 2012). Moreover, it can be said that perceived benefits associated with a facial care product can be its ability to protect face skins, as well as its ability to facilitate the enhancement of women's beauties.

The findings of Eze *et al.* (2012) who conducted a study on cosmetics products showed that product image, knowledge about the product, and brand image have got a significant impact on consumer's intention to buy cosmetics. Furthermore, it was revealed that lifestyle patterning of consumers and its implications vary across different product classes and findings of a country may not be easily replicated and applied to another nation (Douglas & Urban, 1977), which was further supported by the study conducted by Tai and Tam (1997). Also, in Malaysia, consumers' lower ranks of education were found

to be reflected in their relatively lower levels of ethical and environmental knowledge (Haron, Paim, & Yahaya, 2005).

Furthermore, firms that follow ethical standards definitely tend to carry an advantage due to rising ethical and social expectations of consumers. However, studies show that in spite of continuous growth in the sale of fair trade products, it still remains as a niche market mostly because these products lack visibility due to budgetary constraints and comparatively lesser focus on branding of these products (Brown & Dacin, 1997; Creyer & Ross, 1997; Ozcaglar-Toulouse *et al.*, 2006). Moreover, a firm's ability to offer high quality products with regard to both their functionality as well as consideration of a high quality raw material for its production, ultimately leads to enhancement in the quality of lives of the consumers (Constantinescu, 2011). As such, in this research, most of the aforesaid aspects pertaining to product fairness have been taken into due consideration for studying their influence on the attitude of consumers.

### **2.5.2 Marketing Communications**

After an extensive analysis of available literature on ethical marketing, it was stated that ethical aspects of promotions with a focus on firms' advertising have dominated the attention of scholars from the field of marketing ethics over last fifty years (Schlegelmilch & Oberseder, 2010). Due to transmission of false information or information which has the potential of affecting diverse groups of consumers psychologically, physically or financially, promotion has been perceived as the most controversial aspect of marketing which is frequently posed with challenges pertaining to ethical issues that are real or sometimes exaggerated and it is usually monitored by



specific legislation in respective countries. Furthermore, advertising at times is linked with manipulation of public views, which raises the issue related to limitations of the promotion technique and the message which can be conveyed and transmitted through it (Constantinescu, 2011). Moreover, consumers have been seen to possess disbelief about fairness in advertising which leads to discouraging them from buying products according to ethical considerations (Memery, Megicks, & Williams, 2005). In addition to advertising, other promotional techniques like sales promotion is also seen with vulnerability in relation to ethicality aspects. Also, research demonstrates that pharmaceutical corporations continue to practice misleading marketing practices in order to have their products promoted (Verschoor, 2011).

From a practitioner point of view, ethical conduct and values need to be communicated to the market showing that the firm seeks to uphold a balance in its ethical stances across cultures and markets (Donaldson, 1996; Grein & Gould, 2007). It is suggested that marketers of fair-trade alternatives should focus more on the consumers who are more sensitive to justice infringements meted out to their known ones (White, MacDonnell, & Ellard, 2012), which hints at taking special care of complaining consumers. As the study of Luchs *et al.* (2010) showed, firms can always fulfil their ethical and sustainable objectives by embarking on suitable positioning and promotional strategies in order to facilitate their consumers in creating a desirable alignment between their values and consumption behavior. However, it is generally seen that firms dealing with fair trade products struggle to compete with the leader firms due to financial constraints in promoting their products (Brown & Dacin, 1997; Ozcaglar-Toulouse *et al.*, 2006).

In an ethical marketing context, while promoting their products, firms can be resorting to exaggerating product features, or using deceptive tactics, or even selling through techniques of pressure imposition on the consumers who don't need such products (Hanzaee & Nasimi, 2012; Hyman, Tansey, & Clark, 1994; Levy & Dubinsky, 1983; Roman & Ruiz, 2005) raising serious concerns to the consumers towards such firms which further prompts the consumers in showing a disconnect between firms' advertising and their purchase intentions (Obermiller, Spangenberg, & MacLachlan, 2005). In that regard, it is important to note that, surprisingly, the skepticism pertaining to marketing communications can be sometimes so high that only 16.7 percent of the respondents in a study agreed that advertisements are truly reliable and dependable sources of product information (Barksdale & Darden, 1972) which is further worth investigating on an on-going basis. Similarly, even though consumers admit that they would be served better, still they complain that the collection of their private information is aimed at invading their privacy giving them suspicion that whether the firm is really caring for consumers or it is just a way of selling or even cheating the consumers (Siems, Bruton, & Moosmayer, 2010).

Mentioning the significance of promotion, Koklic (2011) in her study revealed that consumers highly valued and relied on promotional activities and that they expected firms to provide adequate amount of information in all situations. As such, it can be seen that a clear communication about different kinds of risks pertaining to a product is highly anticipated from the marketers these days. Adding a new view towards promotions, Neale and Fullerton (2010) reveal that there is a need to broaden the role of promotions and therefore, in addition to fully knowing their consumers, a firm also must know some of

the influential non-purchasers like the politicians, media, financial markets, etc. and pay attention through its promotional strategies towards them who can otherwise play a retarding role by getting involved in negative publicity or in unfavorable word- of-mouth communication for the firm's products.

In Malaysia, advertisements were seen to be playing a major role in defining and promoting beauty through campaigning of products related to cosmetic, skin, and slimming (Riji, 2006), which was further supplemented by the study on cosmetic usage in Malaysia by Mansor *et al.* (2010) who opined that there is a need to further analyze the process and the nitty-gritties of the messages conveyed through promotion media. This study as such, considers gaining an understanding of how Malaysian consumers' views and attitudes are impacted by the fairness in promotional aspects of the firms in alignment with the points discussed above.

### **2.5.3 Price Fairness**

Consumers expect price fairness as an intrinsic component of economic transactions (Shehryar & Hunt, 2005), and a product's price thus has continually been a key driver for consumer decision making and it usually has dominated over most of the other attributes (Alvarez & Galera, 2001; Hoq, Ali, & Alwi, 2010; Ueland *et al.*, 2012). However, the price determination of firm's products is said to exploit and manoeuvre human psychology as it is usually seen that a product's marked retail price is pretty higher than what stores actually charge or want to charge from the consumers (Hassan, Chachi, & AbdulLatiff, 2008). Relating prices with the current global economic conditions, it was opined that these days recessionary forces are compelling the consumers towards taking

more price-sensitive decisions (Smith & Williams, 2011). However, it is argued that consumers also look at the ethicality of firms in manufacturing and marketing of products, in addition to their regular perception about product, service, or prices (Fan, 2005).

Research also shows that although consumers show awareness towards ethically produced products at higher prices, they still don't want to pay more in proportion; instead they want to pay just slightly more for the ethically produced and marketed products throwing a big challenge to the marketers (Stanforth & Hauck, 2010). Nevertheless, firms are suggested to take into account ethicality issues like reasonable pricing, product compliances, empathy of staff, revelation of true information, etc. (Chowdhury, 2011). Similarly, sometimes consumers are also seen to be on vulnerable side of ethicality in the instances like taking information from one shop and buying from another, repeated buying of limited quantity sale products, citing an offering of better price elsewhere, tending to take benefit of a mistakenly priced product by not bringing it into the notice of the seller (Neale & Fullerton, 2010).

As consumers may not have adequate time for making price comparisons, it might tempt marketers in going for price unfairness which is absolutely against the philosophy of long term market sustainabilities (Khandelwal & Bajpai, 2012). It is even said that if seeds of business successes are sowed by product, distribution and promotion aspects, then it is effective pricing that does the harvesting (Nagle & Holden, 2002). Moreover, in some industries, due to increased ethical awareness and excessive competition, firms find difficulty in competing on price and therefore, they prefer to rely mostly on initiating and sustaining enduring relationships with their customers (Alrubaiee, 2012; Lam & Burton,

2006; Liu, Li, Tao, & Wang, 2008). At times, consumers exhibit a tendency of relying on various reference points like past prices, cost of goods sold, and competitor prices when trying to understand the price fairness aspects (Bolton *et al.*, 2003). Also, consumers have been observed to report an understanding that competition ensures fairness in prices, suggesting functioning of free enterprise system in the interests of consumers (Barksdale & Darden, 1972).

Ethical climate in Malaysia was found to be at a critical stage, in which firms mostly were competing on quality, price and ethicality related issues (Zabid & Alsagoff, 1993), which seems to be supplemented by Mansor *et al.* (2010) who revealed that price factor is closely linked with branding for encouraging the cosmetics usage in Malaysia. However, Eze *et al.* (2012) found price promotion as not significant in influencing the consumer's intention to buy cosmetics. At the same time, price fairness is perceived to be an important predictor of consumer's attitude and it is further said that this aspect has not been studied extensively in the modern consumer research (Khandelwal & Bajpai, 2012). Taking the aforesaid issues into consideration, this study thus seeks to understand the significance of various nuances of price fairness from consumers' perspective.

#### **2.5.4 Channels of Distribution**

As ethical marketing also relates to assessing the discriminatory practices in the distribution function of firms (Ozbek *et al.*, 2012), the most widely considered controversial element related to distribution is linked with slotting allowances which refers to the extra money paid to retailers for offering the big sellers with prominent and more selling spaces (Vranceanu, 2007). It further acts as a major hindrance for sellers

who are endowed with lesser power (Constantinescu, 2011) which also hampers the growth of ethical and sustainable products in the markets. This is why it is said that the several reasons accounting for limited success and low market share of ethical products are usually higher pricing or relatively low level of distribution (Luchs *et al.*, 2010). However, though the market share has been low for sustainable products in several product categories like house cleaning, etc., it is seen comparatively higher in the personal care products (Porges, 2007).

“Physical distribution can be viewed as an integrated collection of information, people, equipment, and organization” (Hassan *et al.*, 2008), and it is of immense significance to the marketing department which is seen to play a prominent role in delivering the products and services aimed at meeting consumer’s expectation which is further argued to be done in a morally acceptable manner for determining firms’ successes (Arham, 2010). Also, it can be observed in markets that firm’s decisions based on profit maximization principles are not always in the welfare of the society wherein unethical distribution practices are seen in form of packaging designs ignoring product’s security, or hazardous and toxic products being transported through undesirable routes (Hassan *et al.*, 2008). Moreover, at times, distribution of products are reduced or limited by the firms by constraining the quantity, timing, or channels through which products are made available to the consumers (Brown, 2001).

The marketing process of firms consisting of design, production, distribution and communication may even have unintended harms on the sustainability/ethicality due to lack of understanding (Polonsky, Carlson, & Fry, 2003). Additionally, from the practitioner’s perspective, there is certainly great amount of challenges involved in

understanding and making ethical decisions, and that is why sometimes practitioners who are found to be at fault in ethical terms report that they didn't perceive that their actions would lead to creating any kind of ethical problem (Heydari, Teimouri, & Jamehshooran, 2011; Sheth, Gardner, & Garret, 1988). As such, some supermarkets are said to be not so very directly concerned with fair trade products, however they might still be realizing the significance of ethicality and embarking upon being considerate in terms of caring for the environmental issues in uses of cars, uses of large vehicles for distribution, etc. (Ozcaglar-Toulouse, 2005).

Consumers expect a good society and a decent life from the free market system which further necessitates a fair distribution of products and services (Viriyavidhayavongs & Yothmontree, 2002). It is said that, consumers in order to infer a general idea about a firm's fairness tend to rely on their perceptions pertaining to interactional, procedural and distributive justice meted out by the firm (Ndubisi, Natarajan, & Lai, 2013). As such, achievement of fairness in distribution largely relates to the situation wherein the marketer and consumer both are able to enjoy a win-win situation (Khandelwal & Bajpai, 2012). In that regard, it is useful to note the findings of study conducted by Viriyavidhayavongs and Yothmontree (2002) which suggested that consumers through their purchase decisions tend to reward the firms that maintain an appropriate ethical behavior towards their channel partners and host communities.

In a study conducted in Nigeria on digital home management system, it was inferred that the unevenly distribution and lack of availability of such technology may have severe repercussions as it ceases to offer equal opportunities for the nationals (Salatian, Zivkovic, Ademoh, & Itua, 2012). Suggestions have been made for conducting further

studies on company's general procedures towards fairness in judgments like intentional reduction in product's distribution by limiting the time, quantity, or by controlling the channels (Brown, 2001; Gershoff *et al.*, 2012). This study as such seeks to consider the fairness in distribution aspect for further analysis from a consumer's perspective.

## **2.6 Subjective Norms**

Subjective norms seek to reflect the perception of a person regarding the social pressure exerted on him to execute or not execute the behavior in concern (Cho & Walton, 2009; Ramayah, Nasurdin, Noor, & Sin, 2004). A well-known source may exert more pressure on an individual than a less known source which means, the more an individual thinks a person important, the more he will tend to comply to the wishes of that person in context of performing a behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). As women are usually careful and concerned about their beauty, they do importantly consider the opinions of family and friends particularly of those who have skin or beauty related success or failure stories to share with. As such, the social factor called as subjective norms in the TPB is expected in this study to influence their intention towards buying from the firms resorting to strong ethical practices.

As Ramayah *et al.* (2004) point out in line with the TPB, the subjective norms are contributed by two factors: first, relating to normative beliefs which are based on anticipated reaction of important figures in one's life like peers, family or others; second, the extent to which an individual is motivated and he wishes to comply to the wants of those important figures. That is why even though consumers possess positive attitude towards a cosmetic firm's fairness in conducting marketing activities, it may not translate



into their actual buying due to social influences (Hashim & Musa, 2013). Furthermore, TPB elucidates that subjective norms are an important determinant of intentions and also that subjective norms and behavior relationship is mediated by the behavioral intentions towards performing a behavior (Manning, 2011). Consistent with the above, some respondents in a study conducted by Mohr, Webb, and Harris (2001) expressed interest in ethical issues, but it did not reflect into their actual behavior which raises the possibility of existence of other intervening factors.

Existing literature has shown a positive influence of social norms on the consumers' behavioral intentions (Ajzen, 1991; Goldstein, Cialdini, & Griskevicius, 2008), however, several studies have reported inconsistent results regarding the influence of subjective norms on forming behavioral intentions (Hubner & Kaiser, 2006; Legris, Ingham, & Collette, 2003) wherein it is argued that subjective norms' role is context dependent and that they have been the most problematic of the three antecedents to intentions in terms of empirical replication (Fu, Richards, Hughes, & Jones, 2010). As such, in an ethical context, this study undertakes to investigate the effects of subjective norms on the behavioral intentions of consumers towards firms' ethicality in their marketing activities. Studying subjective norms becomes imperative as it seeks to reveal that whether or not a consumer's perception and intentions towards considering ethical aspects while buying will be accepted or encouraged by her circle of influence (Pavlou & Fygenon, 2006).

## **2.7 Perceived Behavioral Control**

Ajzen (1991) defined Perceived behavioral control (PBC) as the perception of a person regarding how easy or difficult it is to perform a certain behavior. The importance of

perceived behavioral control arises from the general observation that a behavioral intention can result in actual behavior only when it is under volitional control of the consumer, which is not always the case as behavior of consumer also at times depends considerably on non-motivational factors (Ajzen, 1985) which can include money, time, skills, and support of others (Kang, Hahn, Fortin, & Eom, 2006).

In an ethical context, perceived behavioral control (PBC) seeks to refer to the consumers' perceived ease or difficulty (Pavlou & Fygenon, 2006) in considering ethical aspects and acquiring adequate information about the same while buying facial care products. Furthermore, as Chen (2007) points out, several studies have proved that consumers who possessed favorable attitude towards performing certain behavior did not actually do so because of the difficulties involved in achieving that. Intention may not be fully determined by attitude and it is where PBC comes in picture which has a considerable role in determining behavioral intentions according to the much popular TPB. As such consumers' PBC towards understanding, considering and being able to buy products from the firms following ethicality in their marketing activities is assumed significant in determining their behavioral intentions.

It is argued that performance of behavior depends on PBC which reflects to "perceived availability of opportunities and resources to perform the behavior" (Steinmetz, Davidov, & Schmidt, 2011). As this study intends to examine attitude of consumers towards ethicality in marketing practices, the model under study proposes to suggest that consumers' consideration of ethical issues during purchase decisions are contingent upon consumers' perception regarding accessibility and availability of opportunities to consider them rationally.

It has also been suggested by the TPB that PBC exerts direct influence on actual behavior towards something (Kang *et al.*, 2006) which means that likely performance of a behavior is deemed to increase with greater PBC. Moreover, PBC seeks to enhance consumers' intentions to execute a behavior by assisting them in gaining a higher level of confidence in performing the behavior (Elie-Dit-Cosaque, Pallud, & Kalika, 2011) by considering ethicality aspects of a firm's marketing activities in this study.

The role of PBC has been reported to have inconsistency among several conceptualized research models using TPB (e.g., Kidwell & Jewell, 2003; Manstead & Eekelen, 1998) which further necessitates more research (Sparks & Shepherd, 1992) focusing on improvised measurement of this construct considered in several other contextual environments in an attempt to achieve consistent conclusion about its role. Furthermore, an awareness of the role of PBC in influencing behavioral intentions towards ethical marketing practices would provide additional insights to marketers about Malaysian consumers' perceived controllability towards responding to such firms through their purchase intentions and behaviors. As such, in addition to maintaining the parsimony of TPB, this study considers PBC as a determinant of behavioral intention towards buying from the firms following ethics in their marketing activities.

## **2.8 An Overview of Lifestyle Aspects**

Tai and Tam (1997) suggest that one of the ways of studying women's behavior in any setting is by trying to understand how women perceive their lives, their ways of looking at work, and what their general approach is towards several aspects of life which leads to products' and services' consumption. Their study found significant differences in the

lifestyle of women from different age groups and marital status. An open lifestyle can be described as having excessive freedom and a consequential dilemma about the ways of presenting oneself in day to day life (Goffman, 1959). On the other hand, a religious lifestyle may be characterised by high extent of commitment towards one's religion in everyday life (Mokhlis, 2006). Malaysia witnesses a changing lifestyle with increased consumption level due to rapid economic growth and urbanisation process leading to increase in the income level of Malaysians (Haron *et al.*, 2005).

Consumers with a unique lifestyle were found to be using imported brand clothing and were seen to be involved in more frequent shopping (Wang, Siu, & Hui, 2004). In terms of places for shopping, it is important for the marketers to be aware of the fact that a retailing format is said to be desirable when it potentially seeks to align with the lifestyle of consumers, their shopping experience preference, as well as shopping habits (Forsythe *et al.*, 2006). Also, it is significant to notice that lifestyle alongwith health value and personality aspects were termed as possible criteria for segmenting audience pertaining to health-related products/issues (Grier & Bryant, 2005). Sometimes, it has also been seen that consumers presume that prestigious brands offer high quality (Rubio, Oubina, & Villasenor, 2014). Moreover, in a study conducted by Yang (2004), lifestyle clusters were observed to partially predict attitudes of internet users towards online advertisements.

Consumers feel that it is better to lead a life with cognizance of value and budget lifestyle, rather than exploring irrational ways of consumption by overspending (Hamilton, 2011; Henry, 2010). Explaining consumer's lifestyle to deal with challenges like freedom and constraint or entitlement and frugality, credit cards have been called as "lifestyle facilitators" which trigger the self-control and tension management aspects of

consumers putting them in dilemma as to spend or not (Bernthal, Crockett, & Rose, 2005).

As body dissatisfaction is seen to be prevalent like an international phenomenon (Nasser, 1997), it was suggested in a multi-country study that further studies can consider socio-economic aspects for studying such differences instead of focusing on different countries wherein differences are bound to happen due to various evident reasons like westernization influence, etc. (Swami *et al.*, 2010). Furthermore, Malaysian government seeks to bring in positive change in the lifestyle and consumption behavior of Malaysian consumers in alignment with ethical and sustainable consumption concepts (Haron *et al.*, 2005).

In a study conducted by Ko, Lee, Kim, and Burns (2010), it was found that lifestyle moderated the relationship between product quality and purchase intentions. Furthermore, also Kim *et al.* (2001) in their study concluded that lifestyle moderates the relationship between users' attitude towards advertising and the advertising effectiveness measured by their purchase intentions. Thus, this study aims to investigate whether varying degrees of lifestyle of consumers and its dimensions will lead to having a more positive/negative attitude towards ethicality of firms and a greater/lower willingness to buy from such firms in consistency with Chen (2011). To do so, the moderating effects of lifestyle in line with Kim *et al.* (2001) and Chen (2011) along with lifestyle's dimensions as discussed in the subsequent sub-sections, are expected to exist on the relationship between consumer attitude and their behavioral intentions towards ethicality of marketers in the facial care sector of Malaysia.

As such, in order to gain further understanding on the lifestyle context of consumer behavior, this study considers lifestyle for further investigation by considering its various facets like self-confidence, family orientation, women's role and perception, health consciousness (Tai & Tam, 1997), and religiosity (Vitell, Singhapakdi, & Thomas, 2001) as discussed below:

### **2.8.1 Self-confidence**

Success of a person relies on self-confidence, innovativeness and ability to realize one's full potential (Koubaa, Ulvoas, & Chew, 2011). Moreover, perceived importance of work, optimism towards job promotion, no reluctance in working overtime, addiction to work, interest for leisure, pursuit of individual interests etc. were termed as factors reflecting self-confidence of women in a study conducted with females from China, Taiwan and Hong Kong with variability across these three nations in the features stated above (Tai & Tam, 1997). These features can be expected to be present among Malaysian women also as Malaysia has constantly been a progressive economy. As it was found that women having a rewarding work experienced greater amount of self-esteem as well as self-confidence which further armoured them psychologically to cope with the stress related to managing children (Barnett, Marshall, & Singer, 1992). Moreover, women are consumers also and as such, their self-confidence in general might have impact on their consumption patterns and decisions.

Women at times have been seen using other's opinions to help them take their own decisions and also they are keen to know why other women formed particular choices (Baker, Magnini, & Perdue, 2012). Also, self-confidence of consumers about a store

helps them to select venues for shopping which is useful to be understood by the marketers (Tinggi, Jakpar, & Padang, 2012). It is further observed that marketers explore their consumers by making several interactions with them and thereafter they attempt to reflect on the needs of consumers for building and enhancing consumer's confidence towards these sellers (Lin & Lu, 2010). As such, this study takes into consideration self-confidence under the lifestyle category and seeks to describe it further for gaining a better understanding of its role in consumer decisions.

### **2.8.2 Family Orientation**

The importance of family, listening to the advices of elders, pride in having a close-knit family, willingness to work hard for family's benefits, sacrificing for children's education, overall sense of family responsibility etc. were some of the issues explaining family orientation of women wherein some of the women with modern attitude exhibited inclination towards own accommodation, possessed their own reservations about marriage and family, and a little amount of influence from western culture was observed (Tai & Tam, 1997). Also, family values are said to be composed of "love, care and concern, mutual respect, filial responsibility, commitment and communication" which enable a person to gain a sense of appreciation and fulfilment (Kau, Jung, Tambyah , & Tan, 2004, p. 18).

Kraft and Weber (2012) stress on the fact that these days women are very different, and gone are the days when men used to make buying decisions and women just used to go out to buy them and bring home the products. The significance of families is rising in Malaysia to the extent that some organisations nowadays are implementing several

family friendly policies for the benefits of their employees (Subramaniam & Selvaratnam, 2010).

It is suggested that the marketers must properly recognize the groups of women and strategize accordingly, for instance, women belonging to baby boomer generation do not want to be alienated from the younger generation, whereas post-menopausal women are found to be more assertive as well as quite demanding as customers (Kraft & Weber, 2012). Studies support that women seek to connect their objectives more closely to their aspired personal goals in such a way that further leads to maintaining a balance between work and life (Buttner & Moore, 1997; Lerner, Brush, & Hisrich, 1997; Ruiz-Arroyo, Fuentes-Fuentes, Bojica, & Rodríguez-Ariza, 2012).

Furthermore, family dynamics and generational dissimilarities continue to affect the changing marketplace considerably necessitating the marketers to formulate relevant marketing strategies (Kraft & Weber, 2012). In that regard, as Malaysia moves towards further advancements and witnesses shift in its demographics and the role enacted by females in particular, it is important to study the role of family orientation aspect of Malaysian women in their buying decisions.

### **2.8.3 Health Consciousness**

Hassan (2011) in her study conducted in Malaysia asserts that health has been given to all humans as the most prominent gift from the creator and she further opines that healthy living has always been a significant part of Islam. Same way, other religions prevalent in Malaysia like Christianity, Hinduism, etc. also are expected to have their own pre-conceived notions towards leading a healthy lifestyle. Moreover, psychological



advantages linked with health, beauty and recreation are seen as intangible in nature which come added with tangible things like cosmetic products or tickets for concerts (Stafford, Spears, & Hsu, 2003). As Malaysia falls into the category of upper-middle income nations, it can be seen that Malaysian marketers are not left behind in responding appropriately to the needs of consumers in ethical and environmental terms (Shahnaei, 2012). An across the board concern is witnessed in Malaysia towards promoting and adopting a healthy lifestyle behavior which can be evidenced by frequent media coverage and escalating government expenditures towards maintaining public health care and for raising public awareness, performed through the co-participation of government and not-for profit organisations (Omar, 2002; Yap & Othman, 2010).

Yusof and Duasa (2010) revealed that Malaysian women spend more on clothing, personal care and health products as compared to their male counterparts. The concerns for health and well-being are on rise more particularly among the urbanite and people from higher social class (Shariff & Khor, 2005). These emerging trends towards adaptation of an improved and health oriented lifestyle give rise to creation of new sort of demands for products that are good for an individual's health and overall wellbeing. However, contrastingly, marketers are also challenged with situations wherein consumers are seen to be having an unhealthy lifestyle evidenced through several instances of obesities or less reliance on exercising, etc. (Yap & Othman, 2010).

Also, due to marketer's ongoing efforts towards aggressive advertising which further leads to overloading consumers with excess promotional and attractive information, not every consumer might show readiness to adopt a lifestyle towards a better skin health which accordingly influences her purchase intentions. As such, in line with Chen

(2011), it is of great importance and interest to examine whether or not the consumers spread all over Malaysia with varying lifestyle and differing extent of health consciousness will have different attitudes towards ethical marketing practices of cosmetic firms and also whether they will vary in their willingness to buy products from such firms.

As the demand side for health related products is immensely driven by the health consciousness of consumers (Divine & Lepisto, 2005), and also because this concern potentially has further influence on firm's marketing decisions, a comprehensive awareness of what pushes consumers in embracing a healthy lifestyle is significant (Shahnaei, 2012; Yap & Othman, 2010; Ye, Ashley-Cotleur, & Gaumer, 2012). As such, keeping all of the above points in mind, this study takes into account health consciousness as a part of lifestyle and seeks to describe it further with consumer decision making in an ethical context.

#### **2.8.4 Women's Role and Perception**

Sharing of housework between wives and husbands, combined decisions on major purchases, women's place and role at home, their traditional roles as mothers and wives, gain in education, career orientation, being treated equally at work, achievement of considerable economic power, more financial independence, blending western culture with local one, etc. are some of the concerns which women have been possessing in general in terms of their overall role and perception towards family, society and themselves (Tai & Tam, 1997). This overall view emanated from a comparative study

conducted on the lifestyle of women in China, Hong Kong and Taiwan and it can be practically found prevalent in other Asian nations also including Malaysia in particular.

From the practitioner's view, it was found in a study that adult female consumers tend to possess more awareness as well as interest in the clothing sense as compared to men (Bakewell, Mitchell, & Rothwell, 2006). It is further supported by the finding that appearance consciousness is found to be influencing women to a great extent (Borchert & Heinberg, 1996; Rathnayake, 2011). In line with the above, women have been confirmed to be more involved in fashion (O'Cass, 2000; Zaichowsky, 1985) and also they are better at deciphering the communicative language of fashion and trends statements (McCracken & Roth, 1989). Although, it is not under purview of this study to conduct such gender based comparisons, instead, these findings are presented to describe the overall and distinguishable perceptions of women in today's emerging societies.

Working women are always stuck up between job and family issues (Mustapha, Ahmad, Uli, & Idris, 2010). In homely terms, it can be seen that women show more inclination towards preparing grocery list (Blaylock & Smallwood, 1987), and more specifically, housewives are found to be using product's list more than the working women (Polegato & Zaichowsky, 1999). As such, Tinggi *et al.* (2012) opine that these kinds of behavior may be a deciding factor in determining the places where these women would prefer to go for shopping.

Diversity in cultural values described in terms of both national values as well as traditional values were found to be impacting the attitude of female consumers towards their beauty, skin, as well as enthusiasm to buy cosmetic products (Koubaa *et al.*, 2011).

Moreover, cosmetic products are applied by women for looking more beautiful which might involve interests for cleaning body parts, modifying tones and colors of skins, etc. which might make them feel good about themselves. In a study conducted in Malaysia, it was stated that cosmetics firms always focus on targeting women as their major consumers and nowadays they are passing through fierce competition to attract younger female audiences (Ahmad, Juhdij, Jasin, & Saidon, 2009). As such, it is of immense significance to have a more elaborated understanding of current role and perceptions of Malaysian females in this context.

### **2.8.5 Religiosity**

Religion is said to be an aspect of culture which has got substantial impact on the values, conducts and attitudes of people, and it also considerably affects lifestyle which further influences the decision behavior of consumers (Delener, 1990; Sheth, 1974). Accordingly, religiosity can be termed as “the degree to which belief in specific values and ideals are held, practiced and become badge of identity” (Mokhlis, 2006) or alternatively, it can be termed as an extent of commitment to one’s own religion. For the people possessing strong religious values, religion acts as one of the most significant parts of their lives guiding them in daily activities (Bindah & Othman, 2012). It further seeks to have a sizable impact on the perception and behavior of consumers (Mutsikiwa & Basera, 2012) which is in line with the observations that various facets of buying decisions of different people are influenced by religiosity to a great extent through the rules and taboos encouraged by it (Terpstra & David, 1991).

Though, religion is widely seen to be acting as an important force in many people's lives, still its clear role in influencing consumer decisions was found unclear by Delener (1994) which seems to have been responded by several studies ever since. In Malaysia, in a study conducted by Alam, Mohd, and Hisham (2011b), it was found that those who possess high degree of religious sentiments and values, usually behave in a more mature and disciplined manner probably because they have a sense of belongingness to their respective societies and thus they want to be within the acceptable norms of this society. They also opined that this situation further seeks to create more awareness about brands and fashion and therefore it is recommended to conduct further studies for understanding the influence of different religions on branded and fashion related items in the Malaysian context.

From the perspective of consumer behavior studies, religiosity has been recognized as a key variable influencing purchase decisions, promotion appeals and usage of media in general terms (Emslie, Bent, & Seaman, 2007; El-Bassiouny, 2014). Accordingly, a large scale study conducted on people belonging to four different religious groups viz. Buddhism, Islam, Christianity and some from the group of non-believers found that they possessed totally different attitude towards advertising of four different product groups wherein people from Islam religion were stricter in ethical evaluation of these advertisements than the other groups (Fam, Waller, & Erdogan, 2004). However, contrarily, a Malaysian study reported that religiosity did not play a determining role in the ethical beliefs of the young consumers (Ramly, Chai, & Lung, 2008). Additionally, Bindah and Othman (2012) opine that religiosity may have considerable implications even at home in maintaining the general communication patterns in terms of religious and

materialistic orientation. Also, quality consciousness, impulsiveness in shopping, and price consciousness were found to be constantly linked with religiosity in Malaysia and as such, it was revealed that religiosity should be deliberated as one of the elements of shopping orientations in the models dealing with consumer behavior (Mokhlis, 2006). Furthermore, for the Malaysian Muslim consumers, religiosity was seen to be playing a full mediating role between the contextual variables and their purchase behavior (Alam *et al.*, 2011b). As such, in an overall sense, considering religiosity aspect would be useful (Pan & Sparks, 2012) to extend this understanding to the whole gamut of religions including mainly Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and others in relation with their buying behavior generalised in the modern Malaysian context.

## **2.9 Demography**

Schlegelmilch and Oberseder (2010) highlight that there are very less conceptual studies available on the impact of socio-demographic factors on consumer's ability to handle ethical considerations. Socio-economic status in this study refers to people's background in terms of age, income, education and ethnicity. As it is generally observed, people show more seriousness towards ethics as they mature and studies show a positive link between age and firmness of ethical judgments (Chiu, 2003; Vitell & Paolillo, 2003). On the other hand, some studies reflect that younger people are more concerned for ethical judgments than people of older age (Ede, Panigrahi, Stuart, & Calcich, 2000; Vitell, Singh, & Paolillo, 2007) whereas some studies show no noteworthy relationship between these two (Barnett & Valentine, 2004; Fatoki, 2012; Schepers, 2003). Though these conflicting evidences exist, according to Pan and Sparks (2012), theoretical unanimity seems to be in

line with the proposition that, as age grows, one's ability rises to be able to understand and practice higher ethical standards.

Similarly, education also seems to be offering conflicting information regarding its relationship with ethical understanding. As some studies found these two as negatively related (Chiu, 2003; Fullerton, Kerch, & Dodge, 1996), some other studies found no link between these two at all (Fatoki, 2012; Serwinek, 1992; Swaidan, Vitell, & Rawwas, 2003). Furthermore, income and ethical judgments also offer inconsistent results as the study of Muncy and Vitell (1992) show that people with lesser incomes exhibit less inclination for ethical standards, whereas, other studies suggest the opposite (Ang, Cheng, Lim, & Tambyah, 2001; Pratt, 1991), and a study by Vitell and Paolillo (2003) even reports no relationship between these two. Additionally, Fatoki (2012) discovers that there is no visible dissimilarity in the mean scores of gender aspects, age groups, and level of education with respect to ethical variables. However, showing the inconsistency, it was found in the study of Donoho, Heinze, and Kondo (2012) that female consumers are more serious evaluator of ethical situations supporting the argument of Bernardi, Shepherd, and Woodworth (2011) who opined that gender plays a significant role in ascertaining the level of ethical sensitivities.

Furthermore, the differences in the ethnicities which can be recognised by body and skin features, occurs due to differences in the ways of assimilating practices, attitudes and ambience (Campelo, Aitken, & Gnoth, 2010). These differences further potentially seek to affect the ways consumers make decisions in the markets. As Jafari and Suerdem (2012) point out, Islam has developed as a culture as per the prevailing life conditions and socio-cultural conducts and traditions of the societies in diverse localities. On the

similar grounds, other cultures also prosper which have due impact on their day to day decisions and approaches towards buying behavior. These are in line with the practitioners' belief that consumers from similar socio-economic upbringing show similarity in their ethical expectations from the organisations (Gupta *et al.*, 2010). Also for example, from practitioner perspective towards varying advertisement configurations, it is said that there is a possibility of its differential impact on different kind of users (Edelman & Gilchrist, 2012; Goldfarb & Tucker, 2011).

All of the above denote that there exists some influence of demographic factors like age, income, education, ethnicity, etc. on the relationship between the ethical marketing aspects and consumer decisions. It can be to the extent that even selection of markets can also be seen to be affected by the social profiling and constraints. As according to Berg and Gornitzka (2012), people of different demographics are likely to target different segments of the markets. It is seen to be of prominent importance to practice corporate social responsibility (CSR) including ethics in marketing which can lead to an organisation having different kinds of non-monetary outcomes like enhanced demographic diversities, improved product qualities, better management practices etc. (Aguinis & Glavas, 2012). As such, seeing the importance, inconsistencies, and need of further explanation, demography is considered in this study for understanding its moderating influences on the ethical marketing practices and consumer attitude relationship.



## **2.10 Underpinning Theory: Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)**

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) depicts an attitude-behavior relationship which primarily aims to provide an elucidation of behavior by linking it in a fixed causal sequence with attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control and intentions (Ajzen, 1985). TPB is an extension of originally developed Theory of Reasoned Action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) by adding perceived behavioral control (PBC) as an additional predictor of intention which seeks to take into account the behaviors which appear to be not under total control of an individual. According to TPB, attitude towards performance of a behavior in a certain way is determined by an individual's beliefs and the way they evaluate them. Thereafter, subjective norms are said to be acknowledged as an individual's beliefs and his motivation to comply with other's expectations/thinking regarding whether the individual in question should perform a behavior in particular fashion or not. Furthermore, perceived behavioral control pertains to control beliefs regarding difficulties in performing a behavior in a certain way. Also, according to TPB, intention is said to be a function of these three variables viz. attitude, subjective norms and PBC. And consequently, behavior is further considered as a direct function of an individual's intention to perform the behavior. It should be noted that, along with intention, PBC is also supposed to act as a co-determinant of behavior in the TPB. Moreover, attitude is said to influence behavior through a mediation effect of intention under the TPB.

According to Francis *et al.* (2004), TPB has been found to be a theoretical basis for around 610 studies available in the PsycINFO database and around 222 studies available in the Medline database, in a period starting from 1985 to Jan. 2004. Moreover, several

consumer studies focusing on ethical issues have also resorted to using TPB for developing their models addressing different scenarios e.g. *study on consumer attitude towards fashion counterfeits (Kim & Karpova, 2010)*, *ethical mindedness of consumers (Carrington, Neville, & Whitwell, 2010)*, *illegal duplication of copyrighted software (Goles et al., 2008)*, *consumer intention to buy fair trade grocery items (Ozcaglar-Toulouse et al., 2006)*, *behavioral intentions while relying on IT uses and ways to promote ethical behavior (Riemenschneider, Leonard, & Manly, 2011)*, *modeling ethical consumer decision making (Shaw & Shiu, 2003)*, *attitude of individuals towards digital piracy (Yoon, 2011)*. In all of the aforesaid example studies, the context totally differed from one another and even though the use of TPB and its variables was done, they substantially varied in meaning and interpretation in proportionate terms with the context wherein the actual aim was to harness the predictive power of the TPB and its variables. Furthermore, with regard to consumer studies under ethical marketing scenarios, a fragmented knowledge base is discovered and as such, this study using TPB systematizes the overall concept and considers variables adequate to explain the phenomenon under study with a holistic view. This study uses attitude towards performing a behavior by considering ethical marketing aspects while buying, and it does not use attitude towards objects like fair trade or counterfeit products as the former is perceived to be superior predictors of behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975; Penz & Stottinger, 2005).

As a broad model, TPB is tailored to explain most human behaviors (Ajzen, 1991) and as such, it is realistic to assume that a TPB based model would be effective in explaining consumer behavior towards ethical marketing practices (Pavlou & Fygenson, 2006). Accordingly, the purpose of this study was to develop an integrated model in order to

have an enhanced understanding of consumer attitude and subsequent behavioral intention towards ethical marketing practices. Also, TPB advocates that behavioral intention is the most prominent predictor of behavior which is taken into consideration in this study in an ethical context. Furthermore, in order to capture various persuasive facets of the social environment, a scientometric analysis conducted on subjective norms by Eckhardt (2009) was referred to, which stated that meta-analyses (Schepers & Wetzels, 2007) and previous literature (Lewis, Agarwal, & Sambamurthy, 2003; Lee, Lee, & Lee, 2006; Kim, Jahng, & Lee, 2007) have shown that subjective norms are synonymous to related terms/issues like “social influence, social norm, social pressure, peer group pressure, peer group norm, superiors influence, superior’s pressure” etc. Thus, this study also relies on using subjective norms as a predictor of behavioral intention towards considering ethicality of marketers while planning to buy facial products. Thereafter, it has been asserted that there are no absolutes in the estimation of social behaviors, however, it is categorically advisable to consider PBC’s influence on behavior under optimal or suboptimal conditions (Armitage & Conner, 2001) in order to get the real picture of overall predictability of contextual behavioral aspects. Accordingly, PBC is considered because it explains behavior and intention considerably as per its historical establishment through several TPB based ethics studies. As such, this consumer behavior study prefers to rely majorly on using TPB as its underpinning theory.

### **2.11 Supporting Model: Consumer Decision Process (CDP) Model**

The central point of Consumer Decision Process (CDP) Model (Blackwell *et al.*, 2001) revolves around seven stages of decision process. The first stage is need recognition wherein a consumer after recognizing a need, starts to rely on his memory which actually

comes in conjunction with his previous experiences which can also be due to the impact of marketing and other stimuli and their interaction with the environmental influences and individual differences. These combiningly get processed in the mind of consumer in this stage. The second stage involves information search wherein a consumer makes attempt to find information through internal as well as external searches. Internal search implies to exploring information through his own memory and experiences whereas external search could relate to outside stimuli which can be marketer or non-marketer dominated. The information search is also said to pass through five steps viz: “exposure, attention, comprehension, acceptance and retention” (Blackwell *et al.*, 2001). The model further asserts that, in products requiring low involvement, consumers mostly rely on just internal search, whereas in case of high involvement products, consumers also prefer to explore external search for gaining appropriate information for making buying decisions. The third stage explains the ways in which consumers evaluate various alternatives available to them by processing their beliefs, attitudes and purchase intentions. Intention is assumed to be the antecedent of purchase in this model. And consumer evaluation of alternatives are also said to be influenced by the environmental and individual aspects. The fourth stage is purchase which is again influenced by the environmental and individual aspects. The fifth stage is consumption followed by post-consumption evaluation in the sixth stage. The post- consumption evaluation may lead to a consumer having left with satisfaction or dissatisfaction which further becomes a basis for future external searches for that particular consumer when he makes buying decision the next time. The seventh stage which is also the last is divestment, which says that consumers after post-consumption stage, dispose of a product at some point of time.

In this study, demography and lifestyle variables are proposed to play moderating roles. It is inferred from the CDP model that demography has got considerable impact on various stages faced by the consumers right from need recognition leading to using the memory arising from various marketing and non-marketing stimuli, information search to formation of beliefs to alternatives' evaluation. As such, this study proposes that the relationship between ethical marketing practices and consumer attitude is moderated by demographic factors viz. education and income. And, in line with wide ranging influence of individual differences on various stages confronted by consumers as stated in the model, and in consistency with the studies conducted by Chen (2011) and Ko *et al.*, (2010), lifestyle in this study is postulated to moderate the relationship between consumer attitude and their behavioral intentions.

## **2.12 Marketing Ethics Continuum: A Brief Overview**

Marketing ethics continuum (Smith, 1995) identifying ethical issues in consumer marketing exhibits a swing in the society's expectations from the marketers and offers a practicable direction to the marketers for assessing their practices as well as perspectives. There are five positions in the marketing ethics continuum viz. caveat emptor, industry practice, ethics codes, consumer sovereignty and caveat venditor, which explain that firms have different views about their obligations at different positions in the continuum. This continuum reflects that how it is possible for the marketers to get along with the transition from caveat emptor (let the buyer beware) to caveat venditor (let the seller beware) situation. In the caveat emptor situation, marketers' interests are more favored and profit maximization is the ultimate objective as well as the basis for appraising marketing practice. It is to the extent that marketers believe that it is the responsibility of

consumers to assess and have their discretion applied while buying the products. The second position in the continuum is industry practice which shows that firms in general are at this position as it is argued that very rarely firms are found at the caveat emptor position. And business norms are the usual method of assessing marketing practices at this position. The third position relates to ethics codes against which businesses can conduct their evaluation. Beyond this position and prior to caveat venditor is consumer sovereignty which says that determination of marketing ethics can be done by three benchmarks : “consumer capability, information and choice” (Smith, 1995). Consumer capability refers to the actual potential of consumers, information implies the necessary facts consumers need for making decisions and choice refers to a situation wherein consumers have more than one option available. The fifth and last position in the continuum is caveat venditor situation wherein consumers’ interests are given prime importance and as such, customer satisfaction becomes a basis for evaluating marketing practice.

As this study focuses on the ethical sides of marketing and intends to evaluate the marketing practices of firms from a consumer point of view, it was realized useful to discuss the marketing ethics scenario from a consumer perspective. And marketing ethics continuum highlighting the ethical aspects of a firm’s marketing practices caters to this need to a great extent as it offers benchmarks for assessing the ethical dimensions of consumer oriented marketing practices (Batra & Klein, 2010).

### **2.13 Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter sought to explain the boundaries of this thesis by elaborating the constructs which are to be empirically tested through the proposed model as deliberated in chapter three. The model of this study proposes to incorporate constructs of product fairness, marketing communications, price fairness, channels of distribution, consumer attitude, behavioral intentions, actual behavior, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, lifestyle (self-confidence, family orientation, health consciousness, women's role and perception, religiosity) and demographic aspects (income and education).

Afterwards, the underpinning theory identified for this study was explained alongwith the supporting model. Theory of planned behavior (TPB) has been taken as the underpinning theory, whereas consumer decision process model of Blackwell *et al.* (2001) has been deliberated as the supporting model in this study.

While reviewing literature, it was taken into consideration that the aforesaid constructs have not been presented previously in a single model which is further argued in chapter three. Similarly, very few studies have resorted to using a holistic and overall view of marketing in an ethical context considered in relation to consumer behavioral aspects, and this study therefore has embarked on considering it, which is being studied this way for the first time, more particularly in Malaysia, according to the limited knowledge of the researcher. Moreover, in order to deliberate the relations further with enhanced precision, consideration of moderating effects of lifestyle with its dimensions and demography aim at offering a universal view of the overall model under study. It is understood that there might be possibilities of adding some other construct/s, however,

this study resorts to choosing the constructs which are most necessary to answer the research questions identified in chapter one.

As a whole, relevant literature pertaining to consumer behavioral aspects, ethical marketing practices, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, lifestyle, and demography and their respective dimensions (wherever applicable) have been presented in this chapter which were perceived necessary for establishing the model as proposed in chapter three which discusses the theoretical framework and hypothesised relationships.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, all the variables identified for this study are linked to fully explain the proposed theoretical framework of this research. This study identifies following constructs: product fairness, marketing communications, price fairness, channels of distribution, consumer attitude, behavioral intention, actual behavior, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, lifestyle, and demographic aspects. As such, all the intended relationships among these constructs are explained, hypothesised and presented coherently.

#### **3.2 The Research Model**

Studies show that consumers are found to be responsive towards ethical or unethical practices followed by marketers (Eckhardt *et al.*, 2010; Eze & Lee, 2012; Sher, 2011; Uusitalo & Oksanen, 2004). Moreover, ethical marketing practices are relatively emergent phenomenon especially in a Malaysian context. Also, the results so far have been largely inconclusive as discussed in previous chapters. As such, further knowledge about its nature, dimensions and characteristics that are yet to be explored is considered worth studying.

Moreover, evidences show that firms that offer fair and ethical products tend to succeed in creating favourable attitude among the consumers (Lamsa *et al.*, 2008; Oberseder *et al.*, 2011). However, Malaysian consumers' possible risk experiences in purchasing (Eze *et al.*, 2012) and their distrust towards marketers' honesty (Paim *et al.*, 2012)

necessitate further investigation in this area. Also, in order to enrich the marketing ethics knowledge with enhanced precision, it is further suggested to focus on the ethical sides of 4 Ps of marketing (Batra & Klein, 2010; Schlegelmilch & Oberseder, 2010) by attempting to reveal the perceptions, attitude, and sensitivities of consumers towards them (Akhter *et al.*, 2011a; Green & Antoine, 2011; Kumar *et al.*, 2014, Rahim *et al.*, 2011). Moreover, it is also significant to divulge the current reality that whether or not perceptions of Malaysian consumers actually get translated into action in context of considering ethicality of marketers, which in form of an attitude-behavior gap (Neale & Fullerton, 2010; Oberseder *et al.*, 2011) has always been a concern of researchers. Also, it is understood that ethical perceptions of consumers might potentially get influenced by their lifestyle (Zhao *et al.*, 2011) and demographic aspects (Deng, 2012). As such, in order for the marketers to possess adequate motivation for following ethical marketing practices, it is imperative for them to understand the attitude and intentions of consumers and the other factors which in turn can facilitate increased acceptance of such practices.

Furthermore, several ethics based consumer studies (e.g. Carrington *et al.*, 2010; Kim & Karpova, 2010; Riemenschneider *et al.*, 2011; Yoon, 2011) have resorted to relying on using TPB Which is said to be a well-studied model and it has been found hugely successful in describing and predicting behavior across various domains (Lin, Hsu, Kuo, & Sun, 1999; Yoon, 2011), and Ajzen (1991) himself suggested that the model is “in principle, open to the inclusion of additional predictors if it can be shown that they capture a significant proportion of the variance in intention or behavior after the theory’s current variables have been taken into account”.

Taking into due consideration the aforesaid arguments, this research seeks to investigate antecedents and consequences of consumer attitude towards various aspects of ethical marketing practices which according to Green and Antoine (2011), and Smith (1995) may include major ethical issues related to product fairness, marketing communications, price fairness and channels of distribution which seek to depict overall ethical issues in marketing which will further support marketers in framing sound marketing strategies and in assembling comprehensive “integrated marketing programs to create, communicate, and deliver value for consumers” (Kotler *et al.*, 2006) by addressing ethicality issues. As a whole, after conducting a comprehensive literature review as presented in chapter two towards addressing the research objectives of this study, and the identified concepts and variables guided by existing theoretical knowledge led to formulation of the proposed theoretical framework as shown in Figure 3.1.

In the theoretical framework (Figure 3.1) of this study, underpinned with the theory of planned behavior, the first four independent variables product fairness, marketing communications, price fairness, and channels of distribution are proposed to influence the attitude of female consumers towards buying facial care products from the firms following ethical marketing practices. Furthermore, consumer attitude, the first dependent variable in this study is shown to further influence behavioral intention, the second dependent variable denoting the motivational factors further seeking to capture how sincerely consumers are trying to consider ethicality of marketers while planning to buy. Thereafter, behavioral intention is shown to influence actual behavior, the third dependent variable with a rationale that finally consumers will do what they intend to do in context of considering ethicality of marketers.

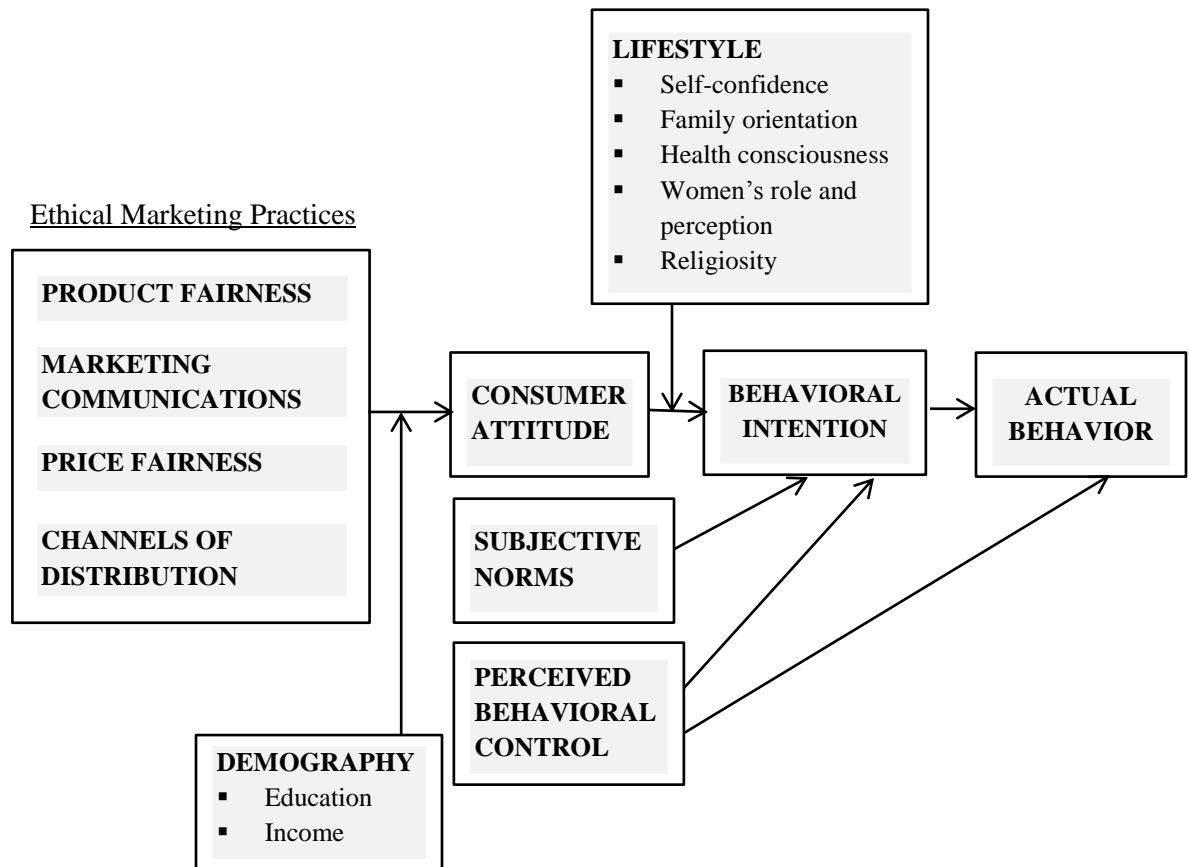


Figure 3.1

*Theoretical Framework*

Afterwards, subjective norms, the fifth independent variable in the framework influence behavioral intention proposing to investigate whether a consumer's circle of influence has a say in determining her intended behavior towards perusing fairness of marketers while thinking to buy. Subsequently, perceived behavioral control, the sixth independent variable in this study denoting perception of difficulties, challenges, and conveniences in considering ethical aspects seeks to influence behavioral intention and also it influences actual behavior. Also, in further consistency with the TPB, behavioral intention towards considering ethical marketing practices is considered to mediate the relationships

between consumer attitude and actual behavior; subjective norms and actual behavior; and PBC and actual behavior.

Furthermore, seeing the prominence of environmental influences and individual differences as deliberated in the CDP model, this study takes into consideration demography and lifestyle factors. The framework in this study considers the moderating effects of demography on the relationship between the four independent variables pertaining to ethical marketing practices and the attitude of consumers because the consumers of different demographic profile may form different levels of attitude towards ethicality aspects. And, lifestyle is proposed to exert a moderating effect on the relationship between attitude and behavioral intention in line with the studies conducted by Chen (2011) and Ko *et al.* (2010) with an aim to highlight that people with varying lifestyle will have dissimilar levels of interests towards considering ethicality of marketers. In this study, lifestyle is measured through five dimensions: self-confidence, family orientation, health consciousness, women's role and perception, and religiosity.

Also, aiming to follow the structural equation modeling approach wherein all variables are conventionally classified into two types: exogenous and endogenous, in line with Baron and Kenny (1986), the hypothesised relationships pertaining to the independent and dependent variables, mediating and moderating effects were explicitly presented as the model of this study as exhibited in Figure 3.2. It should be noted that product fairness, marketing communications, price fairness, channels of distribution, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control are the independent variables and lifestyle is the moderating variable which have all been treated in this study as exogenous variables (Figure 3.2) which means that they are not influenced by other variables. Whereas, the dependent

variables viz. consumer attitude, behavioral intention, and actual behavior are considered as endogenous variables (Figure 3.2) which means that they are influenced by other variables. It is opined that endogenous variables can simultaneously influence other variables also (Muhamad, 2008). As such, the mediating and direct influence of behavioral intention can be justified by the argument that the mediating variables can swing roles from effects to causes contingent on the focus of research, as opined by Baron and Kenny (1986).

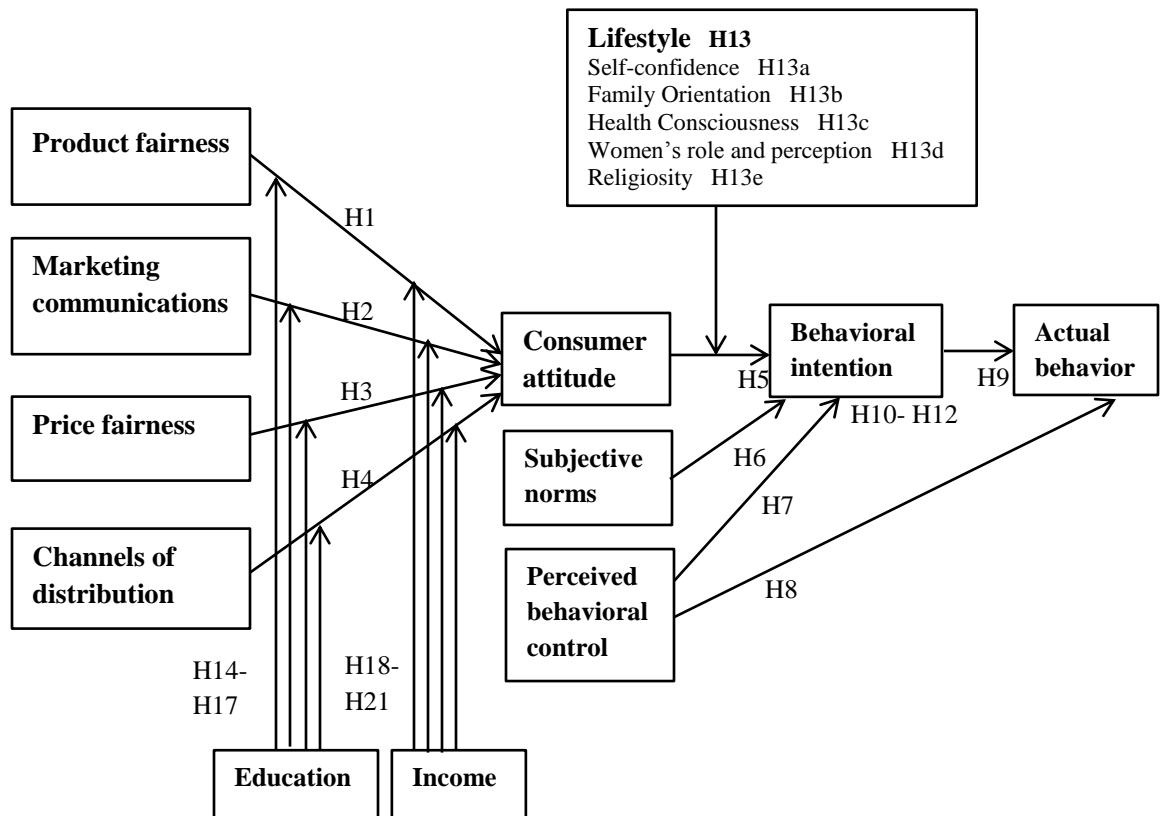


Figure 3.2  
*Model of the Study*

Each of these relationships is explained in the subsequent section.

### 3.3 Hypothesis Development

Though, conflicts generally arise when organisations try to maintain a balance between their interests and society's interests in the context of product or advertisement decisions (Hunt, Chonko, & Wilcox, 1984). In that regard, as the market size and consumer demand continues to grow, cosmetics firms need to regularly evolve newer methods and they must learn to properly diagnose the consumers' needs and determinants of their attitude so as to enhance their level of satisfaction from the firm's products (Eze *et al.*, 2012). In Malaysia, it was suggested that cosmetics firms should be stimulated to disclose the initiatives taken by them towards product safety measures in order to educate the consumers, build trust with them as well as for reducing their anxiety (Ross, 2006), which is further supported by Deng (2012) who opines that it is everyone's obligation to follow ethical decisions with regard to consumption. As such, it is essential for businesses to follow honesty, integrity and trustworthiness (Hunt *et al.*, 1984; Shafer *et al.*, 2007), and in due accordance with the above, product fairness, price fairness, and fairness in marketing communications and channels of distribution are identified as major ethical issues which can be used to evaluate the influence of current marketing practices of firms on the attitude of consumers (Green & Antoine, 2011; Smith, 1995).

For promoting a desired image in the consumer's mind, companies greatly stress on understanding recent consumer behavior as well as how they perceive towards overall ethical issues (Uusitalo & Oksanen, 2004; Wheale & Hinton, 2007). A study conducted

by Bhaduri and Ha-Brookshire (2011) revealed that the attitude of consumers was seen to be affected by their distrust on the business' efforts, price and quality of the products.

In general, consumers are observed to form a positive attitude towards products of companies following ethicality in their marketing practices (Oberseder *et al.*, 2011), more particularly in the case of females (Jones III *et al.*, 2012). There is more contrasting information coming from the study of Luchs *et al.* (2010) who opine that at times, less sustainable products may be perceived as more sophisticated and sexy as compared to sustainable products which have positive societal or/and environmental influences and they largely stress on the fact that little is known about how consumer preferences are influenced by product sustainability or ethicality.

Furthermore, consumers were seen to be discouraged from buying due to disbelief in advertising fairness of firms (Memery *et al.*, 2005), which was further supported by the revelation that promotional activities are highly valued by the consumers and they expect adequate amount of fairness in the marketing communications of the firms (Koklic, 2011).

Ideally, firms through marketing communications are expected to provide sufficient information to the female consumers for forming favourable attitudes and subsequent intentions. However, in reality, issues related to marketing deception have been revolving primarily around two aspects: first are the situations of compromised intelligence and second are the cases of withholding vital information and making intentional falsehoods, all aimed at leading the consumer towards making decisions beneficial to the marketers (Wible, 2012). As such, it would be significant to investigate the appropriateness of



approaches followed by organizations which they use to transfer information related to ethicality to their consumers which further influences their attitudes and buying decisions (Deng, 2012).

Thereafter, price fairness has been found to be a significant issue considered by the consumers (Uusitalo & Oksanen, 2004), and it has been further reported that consumer attitude gets positively influenced by the price fairness aspects necessitating marketer's attention towards understanding the consumer's expectations in that regard in different markets (Khandelwal & Bajpai, 2012).

Highlighting further the importance of pricing issues, it was found that people are too poverty-stricken to ponder about ethical aspects, and they are more concerned with the pricing issue as per the findings of a study conducted in Turkey which further revealed that people just want a cheap and familiar soap which simply cleans (Eckhardt *et al.*, 2010), and thus an inconclusiveness can be felt about consumer's attitude towards considering price fairness aspects.

Similarly, consumers' purchase decisions are greatly ascertained by their perceptions of a company's ethics towards its channels of distribution (Viriyavidhayavongs & Yothmontree, 2002), which was also reiterated in the study of Salatian *et al.* (2012) whose findings revealed that lack of fairness in distribution aspects of firms leads to consumer's unfavorable perceptions towards such firms. Also, challenges in gaining product information, difficulties in product availability, and soaring prices were found as visibly most important hindrances to consumer purchase decisions for ethical products (Uusitalo & Oksanen, 2004), showing the shortcomings of a firm's practices pertaining to

product, price, channels of distribution and promotional aspects. Moreover, in the area of marketing ethics, after an analysis of extensive literature, Schlegelmilch and Oberseder (2010) opined that very few studies have given due attention to the product, pricing and distribution aspects in an ethical context.

Some studies have shown that a favorable ethical and corporate social responsibility record have got positive impact on product evaluation in overall terms, whereas some studies have also shown negative impact (Luchs *et al.*, 2010). In Malaysian context, it was therefore expected useful to study the relation between ethical marketing practices and consumer attitude for understanding the current realities. As such, by retaining the focus on female consumers and by basing on the above arguments, following hypotheses were proposed:

**H1:** There is a positive relationship between product fairness and consumer attitude in the Malaysian facial care sector.

**H2:** There is a positive relationship between fairness in marketing communications and consumer attitude in the Malaysian facial care sector.

**H3:** There is a positive relationship between price fairness and consumer attitude in the Malaysian facial care sector.

**H4:** There is a positive relationship between fairness in channels of distribution and consumer attitude in the Malaysian facial care sector.

Ethics of a company is perceived as an important consideration while making purchase decisions which implies that a consumer is more likely to buy from a firm which is more ethical than another firm which consumer perceives as less ethical (Creyer & Ross, 1997). Thereafter, as Cheng *et al.* (2011) identify that a composite measure in such

studies should integrate both attitudinal and behavioral aspects because a truly loyal consumer must possess both favorable attitude towards an issue and the repeat purchase behavior as well (Keller, 1993). Furthermore, consumers are seen to possess higher intentions towards buying from the marketers whom they perceive to be ethical (Shehryar & Hunt, 2005) and also the intentions of consumers influence the performance of their actual behavior when the firms' ethical issues are perused (Penz & Stöttinger, 2005). In line with the above, and as per the attitude-behavior hypothesis according to which purchase intentions are said to be influenced by attitudes, it is expected in this study that consumers' attitude towards ethicality in firms' marketing practices positively influences the purchase intention towards buying from such firms wherein purchase intent is considered as a manifestation of the attitude towards ethical marketing practices of such firms (Gupta *et al.*, 2010).

It is also observed that consumers may behave in a different way than their attitudes which is a matter of continuous investigation in different scenarios and context (Nealle & Fullerton, 2010). Previous research has mostly focused either on relationship and disparity between ethical purchase intentions and actual behavior (Carrington *et al.*, 2010) or between attitude and intention. Moreover, Some studies have estimated ethical behavioral intention in place of actual behavior as a proxy (Ruiz-Palomino & Martínez-Cañas, 2011). Regarding the consumers' perception pertaining to marketing strategies and ethical considerations for the same (Green & Antoine, 2011; Smith, 1995), with an aim to acquire and furnish an in-depth understanding of consumers' attitude and intention towards ethicality and honesty of businesses (Bhaduri & Ha-Brookshire, 2011), it is expected in this study that a favorable judgment of consumers towards ethical marketing

practices of cosmetics firms will lead to a stronger intention which will further predict the behavior in concern in line with Ajzen (1991).

Additionally, women consumer behavior is largely influenced and enriched by the rapidly shifting social situation and also most of the cosmetics advertisements are aimed at alluring women consumers. Consideration of ethicality of marketers in making purchase decisions is now taking significant place in consumer's lifestyles and as such, they assess companies on the basis of their fairness and social orientations (Hanzaee & Taghipourian, 2012; Uusitalo & Oksanen, 2004). As such, the perceived social pressure formed that way in the minds of consumers necessitates consideration of subjective norms as a predictor of behavioral intention in line with the TPB.

As Ajzen (2006) pointed out, several behaviors may not get easily executed due to the difficulties involved which might restrict volitional control, and therefore it is pertinent to take into consideration the PBC alongwith intention as a relevant predictor of behavior. Signifying the role of PBC in this research, as consumer attitude towards ethical marketing practices is investigated under this study, it proposes that the consideration of ethical aspects while buying depends on whether or not the opportunities to consider them are perceived by the consumers as available and accessible in realistic and feasible terms. Also, researchers have found inconsistency in the role of perceived behavioral control (Manstead & Eekelen, 1998) from what was explained by the TPB and a need has been raised for conducting future studies attempting to explain the role of PBC to gain further clarities (Kidwell & Jewell, 2003) which has been given due attention in this study. Furthermore, TPB postulates that behavioral intention mediates the relationship between attitude and behavior, subjective norms and behavior, perceived behavioral

control and behavior which when investigated in an ethical context will be a significant contribution to the marketing ethics literature. Taking the aforesaid issues into consideration in a female consumer behavior context, following hypotheses were developed:

**H5:** Consumer attitude positively influences behavioral intention of consumers towards consideration of ethical marketing practices in buying facial care products in Malaysia.

**H6:** Subjective norms positively influence behavioral intention of consumers towards consideration of ethical marketing practices in buying facial care products in Malaysia.

**H7:** Perceived behavioral control positively influences behavioral intention of consumers towards consideration of ethical marketing practices in buying facial care products in Malaysia.

**H8:** Perceived behavioral control positively influences the actual behavior of consumers towards consideration of ethical marketing practices in the Malaysian facial care sector.

**H9:** Consumers' behavioral intention positively influences the actual behavior towards consideration of ethical marketing practices in the Malaysian facial care sector.

**H10:** Behavioral intention of consumers mediates the relationship between consumer attitude and performance of actual behavior towards considering ethical marketing practices while buying facial care products in Malaysia.

**H11:** Behavioral intention of consumers mediates the relationship between subjective norms and performance of actual behavior towards considering ethical marketing practices while buying facial care products in Malaysia.

**H12:** Behavioral intention of consumers mediates the relationship between perceived behavioral control and performance of actual behavior towards considering ethical marketing practices while buying facial care products in Malaysia.

Consumers nowadays expect social responsibility from the firms and as such, consideration of ethical aspects in the consumer decision making is becoming a part of consumer lifestyles (Hanzaee & Taghipourian, 2012; Uusitalo & Oksanen, 2004). A research on loyal ethical shoppers revealed that psychographic variable like lifestyle may possess exceptional importance in highlighting the reasons of why people buy ethical products (Pharr, 2011). Adding further, Young *et al.* (2010) revealed that whenever consumers begin to adopt ethically oriented lifestyles, they progressively pass through a process of complex decision making.

As ethical knowledge of consumers may be influenced by socio-economic as well as other factors (Haron *et al.*, 2005), it was pointed out by Neale and Fullerton (2010) that it is not expected that all consumers from a continent will have similarity in their ethical perceptions probably due to their lifestyles and they stressed on the need of further investigation on intra-continental dissimilarities on a nation-by-nation basis. However, even in the same region, a housewife or a lady in her 40s is likely to differ in her lifestyle features and consumption styles than a lady in her 20s or a career oriented woman (Tai & Tam, 1997) which shows that there is an influence of consumer's lifestyle on the

consumer buying behavior. Moreover, it can be inferred that even if a consumer possesses high degree of income, age or education, still she may not exhibit a proportionate purchase decision, which is possibly because of her lifestyle characteristics. Pharr (2011) and Schlegelmilch and Oberseder (2010) expressed the need of conducting further research on influence of socio-economic and lifestyle aspects on the consumers' decision making process towards ethical products.

Information on health consciousness, lifestyle as well as value, could well support cosmetics industry in formulation of future marketing strategies (Chiang & Yu, 2010). Besides, Malaysians have been found to be responding better to situations if they realize benefits ensuing to their families, society and nation as a whole (Rashid & Ho, 2003). Therefore, raising the need of understanding consumers' family orientation and their different roles and perception, the literature according to Berg and Gornitzka (2012) is still away from explaining what mechanisms are into operation when consumers who are also residents, fathers & mothers, employees, holidaymakers, and spouses, encounter a series of consumer decision situations in real life.

Lifestyle behavior of female consumers can be reflected by various influencing factors like family situations (Eguchi *et al.*, 2012), religiosity (Jafari & Suerdem, 2012), health consciousness (Valkeneers & Vanhoomissen, 2012), self-confidence and women's role and perception (Tai & Tam, 1997) and subsequently, consumers' orientation towards consumption practices and lifestyle widely vary according to these factors . Also, it is pointed out from the marketing perspective that the encouragement to ethical products is of fewer use unless consumers get prepared to adopt these ethical products with an improved lifestyle (Jansson, 2011). To promote an ethical lifestyle among the

Malaysians, it was suggested that creating awareness and educating consumers would be indubitably useful (Haron *et al.*, 2005) as previous studies report that there is a positive influence of consumer lifestyle on the purchase intention which is why it offers a valuable knowledge base to marketers in formulating appropriate marketing strategies using lifestyle segmentation (Liu *et al.*, 2012). Most of these studies indicate at the indirect role of lifestyle factors which affect the consumer buying decisions in an ethical context. In line with it, on the internet advertising and consumer attitude relationship, lifestyle was discovered to have a moderating effect in the study conducted by Kim *et al.* (2001).

Lifestyle, as studied in Greater China showed differences among female consumers majorly in areas like- “women’s role and perception, family orientation, brand consciousness, self-confidence and health consciousness” and they were discovered to have a combination of modern as well as traditional values (Tai & Tam, 1997). Moreover, Jafari and Suerdem (2012) reveal that consumers’ decision making practices and their lifestyles contrast in accordance with their mode of religiosity. Past studies show that lifestyle influences consumer decisions (Akhter *et al.*, 2011a; Zhao *et al.*, 2011), and also there is a need to investigate consumer’s sensitivity towards ethical marketing practices with moderating variables for reaching out to more explicit conclusions (Hanzaee & Taghipourian, 2012). However, the attitude-intention link has always been a debatable issue in marketing literature and it is said that attitude alone may not be adequate in explaining intentions and behavior (Diamantopoulos *et al.*, 2003) and as such, addition of moderating variables like lifestyle can help in gaining better and more accurate prediction of consumer’s behavior towards ethicality of firms.



This study therefore, in keeping with Chen (2011), Chuang *et al.* (2009), and Kim *et al.* (2001) assumed that women's lifestyle plays a moderating role on the relationship between their attitude and intentions towards considering ethical marketing practices when contemplating to buy facial care products, and as such, following hypotheses were proposed in this regard:

**H13:** Lifestyle moderates the relationship between consumer attitude and behavioral intention towards consideration of ethical marketing practices in buying facial care products in Malaysia.

**H13a:** Self-confidence moderates the relationship between consumer attitude and behavioral intention towards consideration of ethical marketing practices in buying facial care products in Malaysia.

**H13b:** Family orientation moderates the relationship between consumer attitude and behavioral intention towards consideration of ethical marketing practices in buying facial care products in Malaysia.

**H13c:** Health consciousness moderates the relationship between consumer attitude and behavioral intention towards consideration of ethical marketing practices in buying facial care products in Malaysia.

**H13d:** Women's role and perception moderates the relationship between consumer attitude and behavioral intention towards consideration of ethical marketing practices in buying facial care products in Malaysia.

**H13e:** Religiosity moderates the relationship between consumer attitude and behavioral intention towards consideration of ethical marketing practices in buying facial care products in Malaysia.

It is believed by most of the academicians and practitioners that demographic, societal, economic, racial, psychological and other individual factors, which are greatly beyond the marketer's control, have a significant effect on the consumer buying behavior (Constantinides, 2004; Hanzaee & Taghipourian, 2012). Women and older respondents and those possessing higher level of education were found to be more skeptical in general towards advertising (Matthes & Wonneberger, 2014). However, on the basis of age and gender, Neale and Fullerton (2010) opined that female consumers and older consumers appear to be more ethically persuaded which was further supported by Jansson (2011) who opines that age, income and education may have significant influence on consumer buying behavior with an attempt to explain the exact reasons of consumers' differing preferences.

The diversity and background of consumers have important role to play in ascertaining their buying behavior and in order to implement the marketing strategies successfully, sales managers must make attempts to understand the peculiarities of these diverse consumer segments (Kim, 2012; Ramsey *et al.*, 2007). Several studies have revealed that demographic characteristics have a noticeable influence on determining the ethical sensitivity of consumers (Nill & Schibrowsky, 2007; Shah *et al.*, 2012; Young *et al.*, 2010). However, showing the inconsistencies in results, for instance, and contrary to the traditional belief, income was seen to have produced no significant effects on the behavior of consumers towards ethicality and environment friendliness aspects of products in a study conducted by Newman and Bartels (2010). Moreover, Tai and Tam (1997) opined that consumer preferences change significantly due to increasing income

and changing demographics in the markets which comprises of heterogeneous submarkets with a divergent spending pattern. Also, early adopters may have higher income and education and they may be younger as compared to late adopters, however conflicting evidences also persist (Jansson, 2011), indicating its moderating role in the consumer decision making.

As Malaysia witnesses a rising consumer demand, and still possesses a noticeable difference among the three major ethnicities in terms of cultural uniqueness, behavior & beliefs and consumer spending patterns (Rashid & Ho, 2003), it is pertinent to conduct further studies for supplying demographic information and its relationship with consumer buying decisions for ethical products (Pharr, 2011). Hanzae and Taghipourian (2012) revealed the need of conducting studies for understanding consumer attitude towards ethical marketing with moderating variables for more sound generalities. Moreover, it was advocated that the thought process of consumers must be compared with their socio-economic status for the marketers to be able to market their goods effectively (Reddy & Reddy, 2010). Adding further to it, and showing paucity of studies, Deng (2012) as well as Schlegelmilch and Oberseder (2010) stressed on conducting further studies and using demographic factors like age, income, employment, education, gender etc. alongwith other factors influencing consumer purchase decisions in an ethical context. On the basis of above, it was considered in this study that there exist moderating influences of demographic factors education and income on the relationship between ethical marketing practices and female consumers' attitude towards such practices, and as such, following hypotheses were proposed:

**H14:** Consumer's education level positively moderates the relationship between product fairness and consumer attitude in the Malaysian facial care sector.

**H15:** Consumer's education level positively moderates the relationship between fairness in marketing communications and consumer attitude in the Malaysian facial care sector.

**H16:** Consumer's education level positively moderates the relationship between price fairness and consumer attitude in the Malaysian facial care sector.

**H17:** Consumer's education level positively moderates the relationship between fairness in channels of distribution and consumer attitude in the Malaysian facial care sector.

**H18:** Consumer's income level moderates the relationship between product fairness and consumer attitude in the Malaysian facial care sector.

**H19:** Consumer's income level moderates the relationship between fairness in marketing communications and consumer attitude in the Malaysian facial care sector.

**H20:** Consumer's income level moderates the relationship between price fairness and consumer attitude in the Malaysian facial care sector.

**H21:** Consumer's income level moderates the relationship between fairness in channels of distribution and consumer attitude in the Malaysian facial care sector.

Thus, the aforesaid hypotheses identified for this study were based on the relationships between variables as established in the theoretical framework (Figure 3.1) of this study.

### **3.4 Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter established the theoretical framework and the research model that are to be empirically tested in this study. A critical argument was deliberated towards necessity to consider antecedents and consequences of female consumers' attitude towards firms' ethical marketing practices. The model of study was explained from various perspectives leading to ascertainment of direct, mediating and moderating hypotheses. The next chapter seeks to describe the research methodology to be followed in this study.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the applicable research techniques followed by this study are expounded. As such, the sections under this chapter seek to explain the research design, variables' operationalization, population and sampling issues, instrumentation aspects, sources and methods of data collection, analysis methods, reasons to rely on structural equation modelling, and the pilot test and its analysis.

#### **4.2 Research Design**

This research relied on descriptive as well as hypothesis testing method for understanding the consumer attitude towards ethical marketing practices in Malaysia. It is descriptive in the sense that this study was conducted to determine and describe the features of variables viz. consumer attitude, behavioral intention, actual behavior, product fairness, marketing communications, price fairness, channels of distribution, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, lifestyle, health consciousness, self-confidence, family orientation, women's role and perception, religiosity, and demography considered for this particular study in order to pronounce the whole phenomenon in an improved way for an enhanced understanding of the main issue. And it followed hypothesis testing design because this study aimed to describe the nature of identified relationships among the variables by estimating the variance in the dependent variables emanating from the influence of independent, moderating and mediating variables. Moreover, the type of investigation under this study was correlational as it envisaged studying the crucial

factors related to ethical marketing in a non-contrived setting which have impacts on the consumer behavior aspects, the focus of this study. The researcher's interference has been warranted to be minimal or almost negligent in the normal functioning of the whole system. As a whole, this research was conducted by means of a quantitative design by following a survey based experiment and by using adaptations and modifications of existing scales. There was a use of a questionnaire (survey) structure, which is said to be appropriate for testing the hypotheses posed in the research (Zikmund & Babin, 2010, p.270) and also that this method is comparatively faster, economical, efficient and can easily be administered to a reasonably large sample (Churchill, 1995; McClelland, 1994; Sekaran, 2003). The questionnaire (Appendix A) was constructed from existing instruments in alignment with a scenario-based approach in which various theoretical or real examples of ethical marketing at various levels were presented to consumers seeking their opinions on the questionnaire's items.

#### **4.3 Population of the Study**

“Population refers to the entire group of people, events, or things of interest that the researcher wishes to investigate” (Sekaran, 2003, p.265). This study intended to investigate the attitude of Malaysian female consumers in context of ethical aspects of marketing. Malaysia consists of 13 states and this study selected 4 regions namely Kuala Lumpur, Johor, Penang and Kedah which is in line with Singhapakdi *et al.* (1999) who had selected four areas viz. Kuala Lumpur, the Klang Valley, Johor Bahru, and Penang from Malaysia for conducting a comparative study between USA and Malaysia trying to find out the major differences between consumer perceptions of these two countries. The four chosen areas in this study combiningly sought to represent all major ethnicities like

the Malay, Chinese, Indians, to some extent Indonesians, and others. Furthermore, it can be widely seen that Malaysian cities potentially offer manifold buying options to consumers through numerous boutiques, malls, specialized stores, health clinics, etc. selling cosmetic products of local as well as that of international brands, further witnessing prevalence of marketers' abundant efforts and heavy advertisements through print as well as electronic media. As such, as the objectives of this study related to ethical marketing, it was expected that individuals residing in cities would have got ample opportunities to understand ethicality related aspects due to exposure to such competitive environment facing vast range of marketers' actions. Therefore, this study resorted to choosing the capital cities of the aforesaid 4 selected regions and hence, the cities where the study was conducted were: Kuala Lumpur, Johor Bahru, Alor Setar and George Town. As such, the sample was drawn from the female population of these four cities for the survey which was structured to be conducted at major shopping centers.

#### **4.4 Sample Size and Sampling Design**

Sampling refers to the process of picking up appropriate number of elements from the given population frame, so that the explanation of sample's properties would facilitate generalizing such characteristics for the whole population (Sekaran, 2003). Following a probability sampling approach, this study resorted to using multi stage sampling for the purpose of maximum representation of the whole population. Moreover, as the study aimed to understand consumer behavior issues towards ethical marketing practices, it was expected that female in the age group of 0-14 years would not be amply exposed to such issues. Furthermore, in Malaysia, the working age population has been termed to be from 15 to 64 years (*Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2011*) which is also in line with



Lappalainen, Kearney, and Gibney (1998) who considered the age of 15 years upwards as nationally representing adult samples in their study. Therefore, only the females of 15 years and above age were considered for this study who were presumed to be mature enough to contemplate and respond on ethical issues.

Table 4.1

*Female Population of Malaysia*

<b>State</b>	<b>Female population (age group of 15 years and above)</b>
Johor	1104382
Kedah	669330
Penang	587602
W.P. Kuala Lumpur	609677
Total	2970991

Source: Department of Statistics, Malaysia (2013)

Malaysia from the four representative states viz. Johor, Kedah, Penang, and Kuala Lumpur consists of a female population of around 2.97 million for the females of 15 years and above age (Table 4.1). The selection of these four states seek to represent whole Malaysia, closely on lines of Singhapakdi *et al.* (1999), and also because Johor and Kedah are dominated by Malay ethnic group, Penang is dominated by Chinese population, Kuala Lumpur is highly international and cosmopolitan in nature with high concentration of Malay and Chinese ethnic groups, and a smaller Indian population is found across these four states (*Department of Statistics Malaysia*, 2013). Moreover, urbanization leads to enhancement of education, income, standard of living, and overall development of individuals and the economy. In that regard, Malaysia reports an average urbanization rate of 71% in 2010 across all states and these four chosen states tend to contain representativeness with some containing urbanization rate below this average while some above. Kedah shows an urbanization rate of 64.6%, Johor 71.9%, Penang

90.8% and Kuala Lumpur 100% (*Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2011*). Furthermore, ethical issues are potentially easier to be understood by the consumers staying in city limits due to heavy prevalence of marketers' concentration in these areas towards advertisements alongwith an urge to achieve high sales volume. Also, in the capital cities, people of diverse backgrounds (income, education, household size, etc.) are found to be staying. Keeping these issues in mind in addition to resource limitations in conducting a large area survey, this study further streamlined four capital cities of these respective states viz. Johor Bahru, Alor Setar, George Town, and Kuala Lumpur.

Thereafter, Krejcie and Morgan (1970) suggest in their sample size table to select a sample size of 384 for the population of 1 million. Moreover, Hair, Black, Babin, and Anderson (2010) ideally suggest a sample size range of 100 to 400 for using structural equation modeling. Also, it is explained that a sample size of over 500 could be prone to Type II errors which means we might discover the hypotheses getting accepted whereas they should have been rejected mainly due to the fact that with larger sample size than this, there are chances that even weak relationships reach to significance levels (Sekaran, 2003, p.295). Moreover, by considering the complexity of the model which implies taking into consideration every free parameter to be estimated, the suggested minimum ratio for sample size to items is 5:1 (Bentler & Chou, 1987; Worthington & Whittaker, 2006), however, some scholars also further opine it to be 10:1 (Kline, 2005; Worthington & Whittaker, 2006). As such, keeping all of the aforesaid issues in mind regarding sample size and the limitations in conducting consumer surveys spread over wide geographical areas, this study consisting of an instrument with 65 scale items (4 additional items for demography) decided to select 450 as its sample size (with a rounded

off ratio of 7:1) which was also provisioned large enough to accommodate problems related to sample error, missing data, etc. And therefore, the sample size of 450 in this study was bifurcated proportionately for these four cities in the following manner:

Table 4.2

*City wise Sample Size*

<b>City</b>	<b>Calculation</b>	<b>Proportionate sample</b>
Johor Bahru	$(1104382 / 2970991) * 450$	167.2 rounded off to 168
Alor Setar	$(669330 / 2970991) * 450$	101.3 rounded off to 101
George Town	$(587602 / 2970991) * 450$	89
Kuala Lumpur	$(609677 / 2970991) * 450$	92.3 rounded off to 92

In the next stage, from the listing of shopping centers, and after interviewing some residents from these four cities, following major shopping centers were selected on the basis of high customer turnout, geographical coverage of the city and popularity aspects:

Table 4.3

*Shopping Centers within City Limits*

<b>Group</b>	<b>City</b>	<b>Shopping centers</b>	<b>Criteria for selection</b>
1	Johor Bahru	City Square, Plaza Pelangi, Danga City Mall, KSL City Mall	Geographical coverage; High customer turnout; popularity
2	Alor Setar	Tesco, Alor Star Mall, City Plaza	
3	George Town	Queensbay Mall, Prangin Mall, Gurney Plaza	
4	Kuala Lumpur	Bukit Bintang Plaza , Suriya KLCC, Mid Valley Megamall	

Thereafter, one shopping center for each of the cities was randomly selected from the aforesaid list which can be seen in Table 4.4. It was not possible to obtain the exact number of visitors to these shopping centers. Moreover, to minimize bias, this research required number of visitors in the first half (10am-3pm) as well as second half (3pm-

8pm) of the day for the purpose of time sampling as suggested by Sudman (1980). On weekends, the number of visitors varies considerably, and as such, this aspect was also needed to be addressed. Also, entrance sampling was needed to be done to minimize bias because the gate which is closer to public transportation brings consumers of different profile than the gate which is closer to car parking which generally witnesses consumers of comparatively better income group. However, through observation, it was found that, almost similar numbers of people enter through these two gates, but still these two gates were sampled in order to have visitors of different profile covered. It should be noted that, there can be several gates in a shopping center, however it was not possible to sample all gates, which is why this study considered two gates for entry on the aforesaid criterion. Moreover, through observation, the hourly number of visitors led to estimation of total number of visitors in the two halves of a day on working days as well as on the weekends which led to the development of sampling frame (Table 4.4) that further became basis for calculating nth visitor for sampling:

Table 4.4

*Sampling Frame*

<b>Shopping Center / City</b>	<b>Observed number of visitors on Gate 1 and 2 on a working day</b>		<b>Observed number of visitors on Gate 1 and 2 on a weekend</b>	
	10am-3pm	3pm-8pm	10am-3pm	3pm-8pm
City Square /Johor Bahru	700	900	800	1000
Alor Star Mall /Alor Setar	400	700	500	800
Prangin Mall /George Town	400	750	600	900
Bukit Bintang Plaza /Kuala Lumpur	900	1300	1200	1500

On the basis of these tentatively observed numbers of visitors, the sample size of the four respective cities as given in Table 4.2 was further bifurcated according to the timing of the day and nature of the day depending upon whether it's a working day or a weekend. The calculation was done in following manner:

**Proportionate sample size for the two gates =**

$$\frac{\text{Proportionate sample for a city (from Table 4.2)}}{\text{Total number of observed visitors in the first and second halves of a working day and that of a weekend from the respective city (from Table 4.4)}} \times \text{Observed number of visitors in the first/second half of a working day/weekend in the respective city (from Table 4.4)}$$

For example, for City Square, Johor Bahru, the proportionate sample size was calculated for Gate 1 and 2 combiningly by dividing 168 (proportionate sample for Johor as in Table 4.2) by sum of 700, 900, 800 and 1000 (observed number of visitors on a working day and that on a weekend in the first as well as the second half of a day in Johor Bahru as in Table 4.4) and then multiplying it by 700. This procedure was followed for all slots and thus Table 4.5 was obtained reflecting proportionate sample for this study for each of the selected four sampling units ultimately aimed at minimizing bias and covering visitors of different profiles in different timings.

Table 4.5

*Proportionate Sampling— day wise, time wise, entrance wise*

Shopping Center / City	Proportionate sample size for Gate 1 and 2 (on a working day)		Proportionate sample size for Gate 1 and 2 (on a weekend)	
	10am-3pm	3pm-8pm	10am-3pm	3pm-8pm
City Square /Johor Bahru	35	44	40	49
Alor Star Mall /Alor Setar	17	29	21	34
Prangin Mall /George Town	14	25	20	30
Bukit Bintang Plaza /Kuala Lumpur	17	24	23	28

Subsequently, on the basis of these, a systematic sampling was envisaged for calculating the nth visitor expected to be surveyed in the different time slots on different days on Gate 1 and 2. It should be noted that Gate 1 and 2 is the coding done in this study and it is not the same numbering as present in the shopping center. Table 4.6 shows the nth visitor for all of the considered slots in this study. This table was obtained by dividing the sampling frame (Table 4.4) by the proportionate samples as estimated in Table 4.5 for the respective slots. The calculation was done in following way:

**Nth element=**

Sampling frame for a city in the first/second half  
of a working day/weekend (from Table 4.4)

---

Respective proportionate sample (from Table 4.5)

For example, for City Square, Johor Bahru, nth was found to be 20 for the 10am-3pm slot on a working day which was calculated by dividing 700 (sampling frame value for Johor during 10am-3pm on a working day as in Table 4.4) by 35 (proportionate sample size for

Johor in this slot as in Table 4.5). This calculation was done for all of the slots and that is how Table 4.6 was generated showing nth element for all of the slots considered for this study.

Table 4.6

*Systematic Sampling (for drawing nth element)*

Shopping Center / City	nth for a working day		nth for weekend	
	10am-3pm	3pm-8pm	10am-3pm	3pm-8pm
City Square /Johor Bahru	20	20	20	20
Alor Star Mall /Alor Setar	24	24	24	24
Prangin Mall /George Town	29	30	30	30
Bukit Bintang Plaza /Kuala Lumpur	53	54	52	54

As Table 4.5 represented total number of samples for Gate 1 and 2 combiningly, it was further equally bifurcated between the two entrances so as to cover both gates without any bias. As such, also by including the nth for respective slots from Table 4.6, this study presented Table 4.7 showing the overall summarized time, day and entrance sampling designed for this study which also sought to act as the sampling plan during actual data collection. It should be noted that, according to Sudman (1980) , and Sudman and Blair (1999), this kind of shopping center sampling is similar to cluster sampling method as these slots tend to act as different clusters.

It can be seen from the Table 4.7 that, in City Square, Johor Bahru, a total of 18 visitors were supposed to be contacted for the survey on Gate 1 on the working days between 10am to 3pm. Every 20<sup>th</sup> visitor was considered during this slot (Table 4.7). Same way, the whole survey was conducted covering each of the identified slots as shown in the Table 4.7.

Table 4.7

*Summarized Time, Day and Entrance Sampling*

Shopping center	Sample size	Days	Gate 1 (Close to public transportation)				Gate 2 (Close to car parking)			
			10 am-3pm		3 pm- 8pm		10 am-3pm		3 pm- 8pm	
			Proportionate Sample size	nth	Proportionate Sample size	nth	Proportionate Sample size	nth	Proportionate Sample size	nth
City Square	168	Mon-Fri	18	20	22	20	17	20	22	20
/Johor Bahru		Sat-Sun	20	20	24	20	20	20	25	20
Alor Star Mall	101	Sun-Thu	8	24	15	24	9	24	14	24
/Alor Setar		Fri-Sat	11	24	17	24	10	24	17	24
Prangin Mall	89	Mon-Fri	7	29	13	30	7	29	12	30
/George Town		Sat-Sun	10	30	15	30	10	30	15	30
Bukit Bintang	92	Mon-Fri	9	53	12	54	8	53	12	54
Plaza /Kuala Lumpur		Sat-Sun	11	52	14	54	12	52	14	54

That is how the sampling design in this study passed through a rigorous multi stage sampling process for shopping centers and for the visitors in line with the shopping center sampling methods explained by Sudman (1980) and the sampling methods in general explained by Sekaran (2003), and Agresti and Finlay (2009), in order to minimize any kind of possible bias and to ensure the randomness which is required for results' generalization.

#### 4.4.1 Unit of Analysis

As the problem statement of this study focused on understanding consumer attitude towards ethical marketing practices in the facial care segment, there arose a need to collect responses individually from the Malaysian female consumers as they are the mass users of this category. Moreover, in this product category, as most of the promotional



activities are designed and aimed at alluring women (Euromonitor International, 2012), this research chose to conduct study with women participants from Malaysia taken as unit of analysis. As such, responses of each such individual were considered to act as an individual data source in this study.

#### 4.5 Operationalization and Measurement of Variables under Study

In this section, all variables under study were operationalized and attempts were made to find out appropriate validated and suggested measures from the past literature for each of them. The dependent, independent, moderating, and mediating variables were estimated through reflective measures which were adopted/adapted from past studies and a total of 65 scale items (4 additional items for demography) were thus used to fully measure the constructs under study. A summary of the scale items are given below:

Table 4.8

*Total of Scale Items used in this Thesis*

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Number of items</b>	<b>Sources</b>
Consumer attitude	12 items	Barksdale and Darden (1972); Forsythe <i>et al.</i> (2006); and Kim (2012)
Behavioral intention	5 items	Kim, Lee, and Hur (2012); Lin (2006); and Ozbek <i>et al.</i> (2012)
Actual behavior	4 items	Blodgett and Tax (1993); Lii and Sy (2009); Swan and Oliver (1989); and Zeithaml <i>et al.</i> (1996)
Product fairness	4 items	Green and Antoine (2011); Paul, Roy, and Mukhopadhyay (2006); and Vitell <i>et al.</i> (1993)

Table 4.8 (Continued)

Constructs	Number of items	Sources
Marketing communications	7 items	Green and Antoine (2011); Hanzaee and Nasimi (2012); Paul <i>et al.</i> (2006); and Vitell <i>et al.</i> (1993)
Price fairness	5 items	Green and Antoine (2011); Hanzaee and Nasimi (2012); Kaura (2012); Paul <i>et al.</i> (2006); and Vitell <i>et al.</i> (1993)
Channels of distribution	5 items	Gaski and Etzel (1986); Green and Antoine (2011); Ndubisi <i>et al.</i> (2013); Paul <i>et al.</i> (2006); and Vitell <i>et al.</i> (1993)
Subjective norms	3 items	Hanzaee and Taghipourian (2012); Lee and Ngoc (2010); and Lin (2006)
Perceived behavioral control	3 items	Kidwell and Jewell (2003); Lee and Ngoc (2010); and Lin (2006)
Self-confidence	3 items	Tai and Tam (1997)
Family orientation	4 items	Tai and Tam (1997)
Health consciousness	3 items	Tai and Tam (1997)
Women's role and perception	4 items	Tai and Tam (1997)
Religiosity	3 items	Vitell <i>et al.</i> (2001)
Demography	4 items	Halimi <i>et al.</i> (2010); Kim (2012); and Yang (2004)

The operationalization of aforesaid variables is explained in the subsequent sections.

#### 4.5.1 Consumer Attitude

Consumer Attitude in this study is considered as the summary evaluations of ethical marketing practices based on cognitive information in line with Gupta *et al.* (2010), and Petty *et al.* (1997). In other words, in line with the TPB, attitude in this study refers to an overall negative or positive estimation (Cho & Walton, 2009) of firms' ethical marketing practices in the facial care sector of Malaysia. As such, consumer attitude was measured by following items in this study:

Table 4.9

*Consumer Attitude Measures (12 items)*

---

<b>Adopted/adapted items</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ I prefer to buy a facial care product which claims to improve health and skin.</li><li>○ I am afraid that I might be overcharged while buying a facial care product.</li><li>○ I can't examine the actual facial care product prior to buying it.</li><li>○ I prefer to buy a facial care product which seems to contain less harmful contents.</li><li>○ Over the past several years, the quality of most cosmetics products has not improved.</li><li>○ It is exciting to receive a package offer for a facial care brand.</li><li>○ I like to try new experience while buying facial care products.</li><li>○ I hesitate to buy a facial care product if there is limited or little information available about it.</li><li>○ In general, the cosmetics products required by the average family are easily available at convenient places.</li><li>○ Most of the cosmetics products' advertisements are believable.</li><li>○ I may not get what I want.</li><li>○ Most of the cosmetics companies are more interested in profits than in serving consumers.</li></ul>

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Sources: Barksdale and Darden (1972), Forsythe *et al.* (2006), and Kim (2012)

#### **4.5.2 Behavioral Intention**

Behavioral intentions can be termed as the factors of motivation which seek to capture how hard consumers are willing to try to consider ethicality of marketers while planning to buy facial care products in line with Ajzen (1991) who also opined that it is the most prominent predictor of behavior. It reflects the degree to which a consumer would

intentionally consider or not consider (Halimi *et al.*, 2010) ethical marketing practices of firms. Accordingly, behavioral intention in this study was measured by following items:

Table 4.10

*Behavioral Intention Measures (5 items)*

<b>Adopted/adapted items</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ I would love to buy facial care products of the brands which follow fairness in their marketing practices.</li><li>○ I plan to buy such products in future.</li><li>○ I would be willing to recommend such products to other people.</li><li>○ I would be willing to buy such products for family and friends.</li><li>○ I would be willing to defend such products when others speak poorly about them.</li></ul>

Sources: Kim *et al.* (2012), Lin (2006), and Ozbek *et al.* (2012)

### **4.5.3 Actual Behavior**

Behavioral measures are said to denote the static outcomes resulted from a dynamic decision process (Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978). In line with Ajzen (1991), Fu *et al.* (2010), and Mansour (2012), performance of actual behavior by consumers towards considering ethical marketing practices in this study is expected to be determined by the behavioral intention of consumers which broadly reflects the extent of effort consumers are willing to exert on consideration of ethicality of marketers. It is observed that when consumers perceive a firm to be following ethics in their marketing strategies, they are seen to be more inclined to associate themselves with the firm and continue to purchase from them. As such, actual behavior was measured by following items in this study:

Table 4.11

*Actual Behavior Measures (4 items)*

---

<b>Adopted/adapted items</b>
○ I say positive things about facial care brands which follow fairness in their marketing practices.
○ I recommend such brands to someone who seeks my advice.
○ I complain to the seller whenever I experience a problem with my facial care product.
○ If a problem occurs again by using a facial care product, I would not buy from that seller in future.

---

Sources: Blodgett and Tax (1993), Lii and Sy (2009), Swan and Oliver (1989), and Zeithaml *et al.* (1996)

#### **4.5.4 Ethical Marketing Practices**

Ethical marketing is a subclass of business ethics which elucidates the moral and ethical issues confronted by the marketing professionals and organisations (Murphy, 2002). A long lexicon of topics fall under purview of ethical marketing which are related mostly to 4Ps of marketing perceived in an ethical context. Furthermore, as Schlegelmich (2001) opined that, taking statistical terminology in consideration, ethics would be regarded as a latent construct, which means it can't be measured directly, however it can be measured through other variables. As such and relatedly, taking into consideration the measurement aspects from Green and Antoine (2011), Paul *et al.* (2006), Smith (1995) and Vitell *et al.* (1993), ethical marketing practices in this study was represented and evaluated by four aspects viz. product fairness, fairness in marketing communications, price fairness, and fairness in channels of distribution, which are explained subsequently:

#### 4.5.4.1 Product Fairness

As product fairness is an attribute which influences overall attitude of consumers (Shehryar & Hunt, 2005), it can be further said in the context of ethical issues in consumer marketing that product fairness relates to ensuring safety of the products, avoidance of deceptive packaging or manipulation in quality specifications, prevention of planned obsolescence, non-adoption of arbitrary product elimination, and strict adherence to superior class service product delivery (Smith, 1995). These are the areas which are highlighted in the product claims, orientations and policies of the organizations for creating a strong reputation among the consumers. As such, in this study, product fairness was measured by following items:

Table 4.12

*Product Fairness Measures (4 items)*

<b>Adopted/adapted items</b>
○ The facial care products should be safe and fit for their intended uses.
○ Information regarding all substantial risks associated with the facial care product should be disclosed.
○ I prefer to buy a facial care product from a store where sales staff treat me respectfully.
○ Any product component substitution that might materially change the product or impact on the buyer's purchase decision should be disclosed.

Sources: Green and Antoine (2011), Paul *et al.* (2006), and Vitell *et al.* (1993)

#### 4.5.4.2 Marketing Communications

Marketing communications, which is actually the promotion aspect of 4Ps, are the messages aimed at communicating with the market and the consumers. In ethical context,

the contents of marketing communications are largely linked with issues of misleading messages or high manipulations in selling activities. Furthermore, marketing communications in ethical marketing relate to adherence to highly valued practices in the area of personal selling, advertising, sales promotion and direct marketing (Green & Antoine, 2011; Smith, 1995). Accordingly, following were the items used in this study for measuring the fairness aspects of marketing communications:

Table 4.13

*Marketing Communications Measures (7 items)*

<b>Adopted/adapted items</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ High-pressure manipulations or misleading sales tactics should be avoided by the sellers of facial care products.</li> <li>○ Advertisements of facial care products should not be false and misleading.</li> <li>○ Marketers of facial care products should not create false and untruthful needs.</li> <li>○ Misleading advertisements of facial care products should not be sent to me through direct mail.</li> <li>○ Companies should not share my personal contact information for marketing purposes.</li> <li>○ Sales promotions of facial care products that use deception or manipulation should be avoided.</li> <li>○ Communications about facial care products should not be deceptive.</li> </ul>

Sources: Green and Antoine (2011), Hanzaee and Nasimi (2012), Paul *et al.* (2006), and Vitell *et al.* (1993)

#### **4.5.4.3 Price Fairness**

One of the most prevalent concerns in ethical marketing has always been the issue of fairness in pricing. Price fairness is expected by the consumers in terms of a seller's price being rational, acceptable or justifiable which helps the firms in winning customer

confidence creating a favorable attitude towards the firm's products (Hanif, Hafeez, & Riaz, 2010; Xia, Monroe, & Cox, 2004). As such, in ethical marketing, price fairness seeks to avoid deceptive, misleading and as a whole unfair practices in pricing which can vary from non-unit pricing, retailer 'high-low' pricing, price discrimination to price fixing (Green & Antoine, 2011; Smith, 1995). As such, in this study, following five items were used to measure price fairness:

Table 4.14

*Price Fairness Measures (5 items)*

<b>Adopted/adapted items</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ All extra costs and added features should be identified clearly in a facial care product.</li> <li>○ Pricings of facial care products should not be unfair.</li> <li>○ Actual prices of facial care products must be shown in the price advertisements.</li> <li>○ A facial care product should offer me full value that I expect from using it.</li> <li>○ The full price associated with any purchase of facial care products should be disclosed.</li> </ul>

Sources: Green and Antoine (2011), Hanzaee and Nasimi (2012), Kaura (2012), Paul *et al.* (2006), and Vitell *et al.* (1993)

#### **4.5.4.4 Channels of Distribution**

In ethical marketing, signifying distributive justice, channel of distribution refers to ethical considerations in making a product available to the consumers either through direct sources or through channel partners. As recognized in this study, aimed at serving the consumers in an appropriate and satisfactory manner, channel of distribution relate to avoidance of any kind of discrimination like redlining or selective direct marketing and averting practices like artificial supply shortages or restricted availability of a product



(Green & Antoine, 2011; Smith, 1995). This study as such used following items to measure the fairness aspect of channels of distribution:

Table 4.15

*Channels of Distribution Measures (5 items)*

<b>Adopted/adapted items</b>
○ Availability of facial care products should not be manipulated by the marketers.
○ Companies selling through direct marketing should not be selective in choosing consumers.
○ Marketers should not exert undue influence over the resellers' choice to handle a facial care product.
○ Sellers of facial care products should avoid discrimination by making products only for certain segments like, the rich.
○ Retail stores selling facial care products should serve their customers well.

Sources: Gaski and Etzel (1986), Green and Antoine (2011), Ndubisi *et al.* (2013), Paul *et al.* (2006), and Vitell *et al.* (1993)

#### **4.5.5 Subjective Norms**

In line with Lutz (1991), and Pavlou and Fygenson (2006), it is observed that the consumers possessing positive attitude towards ethical marketing practices still might or might not have assurance to buy from such firms as their decision making is seen to be prejudiced by subjective norms i.e. social influence coming from the family, peers, or other important persons in her environment. As such, subjective norms can be said to be based on consumers' perception of whether their consideration of ethical aspects while buying will be approved by the important people in their life or not, in consistency with Cho and Walton (2009). Accordingly, following items were used to measure subjective norms in this study:

Table 4.16

*Subjective Norms Measures (3 items)*

---

<b>Adopted/adapted items</b>
○ People who influence my behavior would encourage me to buy facial care products of the brands which follow fairness in their marketing practices.
○ People who are important to me would approve my decision to buy such products.
○ My relatives and friends think that I should buy such products.

---

Sources: Hanzaee and Taghipourian (2012), Lee and Ngoc (2010), and Lin (2006)

#### **4.5.6 Perceived Behavioral Control**

In this study, perceived behavioral control signifying a subjective degree of control is explained as consumer's "perception of how easy or difficult it would be to" (Ajzen 1991) consider ethicality aspects and obtain adequate information about them during consumer decision making for facial care products, in consistency with Pavlou and Fygenon (2006). As such, the measures used for perceived behavioral control in this study were following:

Table 4.17

*Perceived Behavioral Control Measures (3 items)*

---

<b>Adopted/adapted items</b>
○ I would be able to buy facial care products of the brands which follow fairness in their marketing practices.
○ Whether or not I buy such products is entirely up to me.
○ I believe I have the ability to buy such products.

---

Sources: Kidwell and Jewell (2003), Lee and Ngoc (2010), and Lin (2006)

#### 4.5.7 Lifestyle

As Tai and Tam (1997) explain, “Lifestyle research is a quantitative research procedure to determine how people spend time and money, in terms of activities, interests, and opinions”. In general, the information related to lifestyle can be extremely vital for the purposes of segmenting markets as well as for product positioning, which ultimately assists the multinational organisations in understanding consumers hailing from different cultures. As such, substantially in line with Tai and Tam (1997), this study measured lifestyle reflectively with five dimensions based on following three criteria: “relevance to women, value to marketers, and measurability”. Lifestyle was also measured as a second order construct in this study with following five dimensions in the first order:

##### 4.5.7.1 Self-confidence

Women’s self-confidence may be referred to a situation wherein women of this age generally tend to have a forward and positive way of looking at things on different occasions. Self-confidence makes them possess an optimistic approach and they strongly believe in their capabilities, talents and carry a feeling that they can manage their lives and jobs extremely well (Koubaa *et al.*, 2011; Tai & Tam, 1997). As such, following items were considered for measuring self-confidence in this study:

Table 4.18

*Self-confidence Measures (3 items)*

<b>Adopted/adapted items</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ I think I have more self-confidence than most people of my age.</li><li>○ I will probably get a promotion in my job or studies in the near future.</li><li>○ When I set my mind to achieve something, I usually can achieve it.</li></ul>

Source: Tai and Tam (1997)

#### 4.5.7.2 Family Orientation

Family orientation of women refers to their belief towards existence, establishment and maintenance of a sound and amicable relationship in their respective families (Tai & Tam, 1997). It is important for marketers to be aware of this aspect in an economy for having a better understanding of family's role in consumer decision making (Kraft & Weber, 2012). Accordingly, following were the items used for measuring family orientation in this study:

Table 4.19

*Family Orientation Measures (4 items)*

<b>Adopted/adapted items</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ I think my family is the most important thing to me.</li><li>○ Youngsters should have more respect for the elders.</li><li>○ I like to listen to the advice of elders.</li><li>○ I am always proud to have a strong and supportive family.</li></ul>

Source: Tai and Tam (1997)

#### 4.5.7.3 Health Consciousness

Health consciousness among women relate to their attentiveness towards eating a healthy food, conducting regular work outs, inclination towards buying healthy products, and an overall alertness towards having a healthy lifestyle (Tai & Tam, 1997). Marketers need to have an understanding of this aspect so that they can design and implement more consumer-oriented product strategies in today's competitive and boundaryless markets (Yap & Othman, 2010). As such, this dimension was measured by following items in this study:

Table 4.20

*Health Consciousness Measures (3 items)*

---

<b>Adopted/adapted items</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ I am more health conscious than most of my friends.</li><li>○ I prefer to use facial care products regularly for maintaining a healthy and glowing face.</li><li>○ I frequently purchase “health improving cosmetics products” / “natural or green cosmetics products”.</li></ul>

---

Source: Tai and Tam (1997)

#### **4.5.7.4 Women’s Role and Perception**

The women’s role and perception that can be significant for the marketers to understand in general may relate to the belief towards sharing the housework, equality at work, a progressive career orientation, extent of homeliness, possession of traditionalist or modern views about the women’s role than their counterparts, concentration towards achieving more economic power or gaining financial independence, tendency to maintain a balance between being a mother and a wife, influence of western culture on their attitude, etc. (Tai & Tam, 1997). As such, this study measured women’s role and perception with the following items:

Table 4.21

*Women’s Role and Perception Measures (4 items)*

---

<b>Adopted/adapted items</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Husband and wife should both share the housework.</li><li>○ Men and women should be treated equally at work.</li><li>○ Women should seek their own careers.</li><li>○ On any major purchase, the husband and wife should decide together what to buy.</li></ul>

---

Source: Tai and Tam (1997)

#### 4.5.7.5 Religiosity

Consumer lifestyle can be largely associated with their extent of religiosity i.e. their general religious beliefs towards adherence to religious practices, inclination to spiritual values, etc. In this study, religiosity is expected to reflect consumer lifestyle (Pharr, 2011). Accordingly, it was measured with following items:

Table 4.22

*Religiosity Measures (3 items)*

<b>Adopted/adapted items</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ I like to go for prayer regularly.</li><li>○ Spiritual values are more important than material things.</li><li>○ If Malaysians were more religious, this would be a better country.</li></ul>

Source: Vitell *et al.* (2001)

#### 4.5.8 Demography

Demographic or socio-economic status represents an individual's status in terms of economic indicators like income, employment, etc. and social position in terms of education, age, marital status, region of stay, ethnicity, household size, etc. As per model of this study, demography was measured by two indicators viz. education and income, however, for the descriptive analysis part, age and ethnicity were also included in the instrument. Moreover, as per model under this study, household size, employment, age, ethnicity, marital status, and region of stay were considered as controlled variables. As such, demography was measured in following manner in this study:

Table 4.23

*Demography Measures (4 items)*

---

<b>Adopted/adapted items</b>
○ Education (Which of the following best describes your education level? No formal education; Senior secondary school; Bachelors; Masters and above)
○ Income in RM (Which of the following options best describe your income level? 0-3000 RM; 3001-6000 RM; 6001-9000 RM; Above 9000 RM)
○ Age (Which of the following best defines your age group? 15-25 Years; 26-35 Years; 36-45 Years; 46-55 Years; above 55 years)
○ Ethnicity (Which of the following represents your Ethnicity? Malay; Chinese; Indian; Others)

---

Sources: Halimi *et al.* (2010), Kim (2012), and Yang (2004)

#### **4.6 Instrumentation**

This study utilized a multi-items scale for each construct in order to offer a comprehensive evaluation of the constructs and the model as a whole in line with suggestions made by Churchill (1979), and Peter (1979). The items were modified according to nature of this study and as such they were validated through different measures during the pilot study and main study as well. Moreover, the operationalization of constructs was done using a 7-point interval scale in accordance with the recommendations made by Krosnick and Fabrigar (1997), which ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), with only demography construct as an exception which was measured through categorical variables. The selection of interval scale was done on the recommendations of Zikmund and Babin (2010) who opine that it is possible to perform powerful statistical calculations like standard deviation, variance, etc. when the scale used for an instrument is interval or of higher order and which is why they stress on

the use of these kinds of scales in marketing research. As such, this study used a 7-point interval scale for measuring the constructs as presented in the model. The questionnaire originally developed in English was also translated (Appendix B) into Melayu Language, which was subsequently put through back to back translation process ensuring that such translation also made proper sense confirming finally that the Melayu language translation done in the beginning was appropriate.

#### **4.7 Control for Measurement Error**

In terms of Hair *et al.* (2010), measurement error can be termed as “degree to which the variables we can measure do not perfectly describe the latent construct(s) of interest”. Measurement error can arise from many sources like errors in simple data entry to definition and operationalization of constructs. Sometimes, it might arise even from the respondent’s answers. For example, some respondent answers that he would act in a certain manner. However, when he actually goes for buying, he behaves in a different manner than what he stated in the questionnaire. This kind of situation may also lead to measurement errors. Moreover, scaling techniques can also lead to measurement error. As such, in this study, it was attempted to keep the measurement error at its absolute minimum by using interval scales for the items and by conducting different kind of validity and reliability tests for both pilot test as well as for the main study. Face and content validity were conducted during instrument development stage whereas convergent and discriminant validity were conducted for the main study showing that the measures determined for this study are doing their job properly. Moreover, use of structural equation modeling (SEM) also takes into account the measurement error in making the estimates of relationships among the various constructs (Hair *et al.*, 2010).



This study employed variance based SEM using Smart PLS 2.0 (Beta) software developed by Ringle, Wende, and Will (2005) which seeks to ensure that measurement errors are minimized and duly accounted for, right from the beginning of drawing the measurement model.

#### **4.8 Data Collection Procedure**

This study employed a consumer survey (Appendix A) conducted in the shopping centers across four Malaysian states. As such, the questionnaire was administered personally by the researcher and the enumerators. As targeted initially, 450 respondents were surveyed personally by the researcher and the trained enumerators using a structured questionnaire. However, attempts were also made to conduct the survey with some extra respondents. Enumerators have been used in several consumer behavior studies conducted at post graduate level like that of Engel (2008), Kiria (2010), and Utami (2004). As the research design of this study resorted to using a very rigorous sampling plan as shown in Table 4.7, which is usually rare to see in consumer studies, the researcher opted to select two enumerators who were master degree students of UUM and who had got previous experience in data collection. It was done in order to conduct the survey in strict adherence with the sampling plan done for the day, time and gate sampling. A comprehensive training (Appendix C) was given to the enumerators prior to taking them to the field. The training offered to them broadly included following contents with an open discussion session at the end: *what kind of survey it is; purpose of this survey; what is to be done; about the survey instrument; who are the respondents; location of survey; general guidelines to be explained to the respondents; the response options; sampling schedule; do's and don'ts*. Furthermore, all four places viz. Johor Bahru, Kuala Lumpur,

Penang, and Alor Setar were covered by the researcher and the enumerators for conducting the survey spread over a month from the last week of November, 2013 to end of December, 2013. The researcher always kept a small paper to note down number of respondents surveyed in a particular period of a day. Finally, respondents showed mixed responses as some were ready while some were not ready to take the survey which is considered practically normal in consumer studies particularly when the respondents are all females from a mixed cultural setting like Malaysia.

#### **4.9 Data Analysis Strategy**

Data analysis was done by employing a combination of descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive analysis was done using SPSS 20 which sought to explain the general understanding about the profiling, demography, etc. by summarising the data and by offering various kinds of tabular presentations, and also it attempted to describe the data by showing the frequency of occurrence of various outcomes (Agresti & Finlay, 2009). Moreover, in descriptive statistics, the center of the data as well as the variability of the data set was presented and discussed to bring in more understanding of the issues. On the other hand, for making predictions from the data, inferential analysis was conducted using SEM because of more than one reason as follows: 1. It studies all equations simultaneously and then tries to detect the extent and direction of relationships among the variables; 2. It takes into account the measurement errors; 3. It can facilitate the modeling of complex models; 4. It can differentiate and estimate with precision the reflective and formative measures; 5. It is in line with the modern trend as it is categorically required by the highly indexed journals and also Hair *et al.* (2010) support the use of it for highest precision as on date. As such, this study resorted to conducting

inferential analysis using variance based SEM through Smart PLS 2.0 (Beta) software (Ringle *et al.*, 2005). This SEM software has its own strengths as it can easily analyze different kind of measures and it is free of any assumption. The use of SEM is explained in detail in the subsequent section.

#### **4.9.1 Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)**

The basic goal of SEM is to describe the configuration of a chain of inter linked dependence interactions concurrently among latent or unobserved variables wherein each of them is measured by observed variables (Hair *et al.*, 2010; Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). “Structural equation modeling (SEM) uses various types of models to depict relationships among observed variables, with the same basic goal of providing a quantitative test of a theoretical model hypothesized by the researcher” (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010, p.2). Usually, SEM is regarded as confirmatory instead of an exploratory technique. In addition to analyzing latent constructs, SEM also seeks to facilitate other kinds of investigations like variance and covariance estimation, linear regression, hypothesis testing, and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1996). For every construct, SEM is capable of measuring unidimensionality in addition to measuring the reliability and validity for the same (Hair *et al.*, 2010; Kline, 2005). Moreover, it offers an overall assessment of the model’s fitness and simultaneous testing of the individual parameters, and that is how seeks to offer the most appropriate model fit for the data collected for the study. This study as such, relied on SEM with the uses of CFA. Moreover, there are two approaches to structural equation modeling: covariance based SEM (CBSEM) and variance based SEM (VBSEM) (Chin, 1998).

Table 4.24

*Comparison of PLS and Covariance Based Analysis*

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>PLS (Variance based SEM)</b>	<b>Covariance based SEM</b>
Objective	Prediction oriented	Parameter oriented
Approach	Variance	Covariance
Assumption	Nonparametric	Parametric
Implication	Optimal for prediction	Optimal for parameter estimation
Parameter estimates	Explicitly estimated	Indeterminate
Model complexity	Large complexity	Small to moderate complexity
Sample size	Minimum of 20-100	200-800

Sources: Chin and Newsted (1998), Hulland, Ryan, and Rayner (2010)

It can be seen from Table 4.24 that these two SEM types widely vary in different aspects like objectives, approach, etc. Moreover, CBSEM firstly measures the model parameters, and then estimates the case values (Dijkstra, 1983), whereas PLS using VBSEM begins with calculation of case values (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2004). Also, PLS is said to have a proven potential to deal with extremely complex models with considerably high number of relationships, constructs, or indicators (Barclay, Higgings, & Thompson, 1995; Garthwaite, 1994). This study opted to use PLS because of its ability to deal with model complexity and due to its predictive orientation. As such, Smart PLS software (Ringle *et al.*, 2005) was considered for this study as it is said to be one of the most powerful SEM tools available as of now (Chin, 1998). In this study, the interrelationships among the variables have been presented and estimated through a path diagram to exhibit and analyze the hypothesized interactions. Furthermore, as it is widely accepted in marketing research (Hair *et al.*, 2010), this study has followed a two-stage approach (Anderson & Gerbing, 1982) for the SEM which suggests that firstly, measurement model should be

estimated and fixed, and secondly, structural model should be assessed and taken forward for hypothesis testing and other analyses.

It should be further noted that unidimensionality is a feature of scales which shows that each of their measurement items relate to and explain them individually and respectively in the best way as compared to others. And traditionally, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) has been widely accepted for measuring unidimensionality. However, with the development of modern SEM tool like PLS, it is argued that an instrument should be treated more holistically (MacCallum & Austin, 2000; Straub, Boudreau, & Gefen, 2004). Moreover, as unidimensionality can't be estimated in PLS, it is supposed to be there a priori (Gerbing & Anderson, 1988). In contrast to EFA, PLS performs the CFA, under which, convergent validity and discriminant validity are estimated to see that how well the measurement items relate to their respective constructs under study (Gefen & Straub, 2005). These two validities were calculated for the measures of this study. Finally, the model was tested for its goodness of fit and subsequently, moderating as well as mediating effects were estimated. To explain the moderating effects better, this study also performed multi-group analysis in order to ascertain how well the model behaves across different groups which are presented in detail in the next chapter.

#### **4.10 Content and Face Validity**

Content validity is conducted to ensure that the dimensions and items under a construct are doing their job perfectly which means they measure the construct with utmost adequacy and representativeness. The researcher of this study conducting a pre-test consulted five experts from UUM College of Business and sought their opinions about

the measures' appropriateness and representativeness in line with suggestions made by Hair *et al.* (2010) and Sekaran (2003). They were also requested to check whether there is any repetition, or there is any over or under representation of measures. Some of the expert's remarks included focusing on wording the items in a reflective manner instead of formative. As such, the remarks offered by these experts, in alignment with the theoretical considerations were considered for improvising the instrument.

Furthermore, Sekaran (2003) had asserted, "face validity indicates that the items that are intended to measure a concept, do on the face of it look like they measure the concept". Ideally, to conduct face validity, the instrument is shown to some target respondents and their opinions are sought. This study approached six potential respondents for this purpose and ask for their suggestions about appropriateness of item statements and their wordings, instructions, general formatting, understandability of scales leading to any kind of possible difficulty in answering (as interval scales do not contain labeling throughout) and overall completeness of the instrument. Their suggestions were taken into consideration for finalizing the questionnaire for conducting the pilot test.

#### **4.11 Pilot Study**

In this study, a pilot test was conducted mainly to assess the validity and reliability of the instrument. Also, it was aimed to get a déjà vu of the potential problems that are usually faced during the main study. A pilot study basically suggests going for a small scale study for the trial purpose before conducting the full-fledged study (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2006). The sample size for pilot studies are suggested to be comparatively smaller which could range from 15-30 respondents (Malhotra, 2008), however the bigger

the sample size, the stronger is the results. Moreover, this study had aimed for a stronger overall predictability, and therefore, 111 respondents were surveyed for the pilot study and their responses were used for measuring internal consistency for each of the measures.

It should be noted that this study consists of reflective measures for all dimensions. Internal consistency is regarded to be important for reflective measures and as such reliability coefficient like Cronbach's alpha or other statistical measures for the reliability must be calculated for these constructs (Petter, Straub, & Rai, 2007) which basically seeks to show that all the respective items are consistent and measuring the same phenomenon (Jarvis, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2003). Moreover, it is said that the major criteria for adopting past instruments is their internal consistencies on individual basis attained through acceptable Cronbach's alpha values (Hair *et al.*, 2010). As such, the Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients were calculated for all measures. In overall terms, the pilot test attempted to ensure that the instrument to be used remains valid and reliable and also that it remains free of any measurement error.

#### **4.11.1 Reliability Test**

Reliability refers to evaluating the level of consistency among several measurements ascertained for a construct (Hair *et al.*, 2010). It basically leads to implying that similar results would be obtained if the measures are used repetitively. As such, in line with the suggestions made by Sekaran (2003) and Davis (2000), Cronbach's alpha method was used in this study which actually has been a dominant reliability testing technique particularly among the social science researchers. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient

primarily tends to reflect the items' consistency and as such, higher Cronbach's alpha values indicate higher consistencies which further reflect a higher tendency to measure the intended construct.

Table 4.25

*Reliability Analysis of Pilot Study*

<b>Construct</b>	<b>No. of original items</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>Item deleted</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha if item deleted</b>
<b>Product Fairness</b>	4	0.742	Nil	0.742
<b>Marketing Communications</b>	7	0.836	Nil	0.836
<b>Price Fairness</b>	5	0.841	Nil	0.841
<b>Channels of Distribution</b>	5	0.835	Nil	0.835
<b>Consumer Attitude</b>	12	0.819	Nil	0.819
<b>Subjective Norms</b>	3	0.686	Nil	0.686
<b>Perceived Behavioral Control</b>	3	0.706	Nil	0.706
<b>Behavioral Intention</b>	5	0.900	Nil	0.900
<b>Actual Behavior</b>	4	0.806	Nil	0.806
<b>Self-confidence</b>	3	0.865	Nil	0.865
<b>Family Orientation</b>	4	0.833	Nil	0.833
<b>Health Consciousness</b>	3	0.793	Nil	0.793
<b>Women's Role and Perception</b>	4	0.864	Nil	0.864
<b>Religiosity</b>	3	0.877	Nil	0.877

Table 4.25 presents the Cronbach's alpha coefficient for all the constructs used in this study. It can be seen that almost all Cronbach's alpha values are more than 0.7 which is in line with what was suggested by Nunnally and Beinstein (1994) as a minimum acceptable limit. Only for the construct 'Subjective norms', the Cronbach's alpha coefficient is seen to be 0.686 which is higher than 0.6 and still acceptable as argued and explained by Hair *et al.* (2010) who referred a Cronbach's alpha value of more than 0.6 as a construct with acceptable reliability. And as such, no items were deleted on this



basis. As a whole, all items included in the instrument sufficiently proved to reflect an adequate level of internal consistency pertaining to their respective measures.

#### **4.11.2 Construct Validity**

Even though the measurements possess an appropriate level of reliability, still they don't necessarily imply goodness of measurement (Churchill, 1979; Sekaran, 2003) and they may lack on validity aspect which denotes the extent to which the measurements measure what they are actually intended to (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). In that regard, content and construct validities are considered to be the most frequently used measures. Content validity by experts is mostly a judgmental assessment of the items, constructs, and instrument as a whole which have been developed and based on extensive literature. On the other hand, construct validity is performed to ascertain that a test is evaluating the construct it was actually supposed to (Brown, 1996, p.231).

Moreover, construct validity is said to be necessary for ensuring overall validity. As such, in order to evaluate the construct validity, factor analysis was conducted in this study using principal components method in the SPSS. Factor analysis aims to identify the items explaining same construct. As the sample size for pilot study was comparatively smaller, this study resorted to examining factor analysis on each construct separately in line with studies of researchers like Ahire, Golhar, and Waller (1996), Black and Porter (1996), Saraph, Benson, and Schroeder (1989), and Al-Swidi (2012).

Table 4.26

*Factor Analysis and Reliability of the Final Instrument (Pilot Study)*

Construct	No. of Items	Factor loading for items in first factor*	KMO	Eigen-value	% of Variance	Cronbach's Alpha	Items Deleted	
<b>Product Fairness</b>	4	PF1	.816	0.690	2.413	60.314	0.742	Nil
		PF2	.878					
		PF3	.609					
		PF4	.778					
<b>Marketing Communications</b>	6	MC1	.607	0.812	3.365	56.080	0.811	MC7
		MC2	.895					
		MC3	.877					
		MC4	.722					
		MC5	.580					
		MC6	.753					
<b>Price Fairness</b>	5	PRF1	.805	0.832	3.089	61.773	0.841	Nil
		PRF2	.811					
		PRF3	.782					
		PRF4	.649					
		PRF5	.865					
<b>Channels of Distribution</b>	5	CD1	.706	0.790	3.059	61.187	0.835	Nil
		CD2	.794					
		CD3	.853					
		CD4	.727					
		CD5	.821					
<b>Consumer Attitude</b>	7	CA2	.730	0.814	2.997	42.820	0.774	CA1, CA8, CA10, CA11, CA12
		CA3	.587					
		CA4	.641					
		CA5	.557					
		CA6	.699					
		CA7	.673					
		CA9	.675					
<b>Subjective Norms</b>	3	SN1	.690	0.618	1.852	61.737	0.686	Nil
		SN2	.855					
		SN3	.803					
<b>Perceived Behavioral Control</b>	3	PBC1	.806	0.654	1.897	63.239	0.706	Nil
		PBC2	.738					
		PBC3	.838					
<b>Behavioral Intention</b>	5	BI1	.812	0.852	3.645	72.894	0.900	Nil
		BI2	.903					
		BI3	.892					
		BI4	.877					
		BI5	.777					

Table 4.26 (Continued)

Construct	No. of Items	Factor loading for items in first factor*	KMO	Eigen-value	% of Variance	Cronbach's Alpha	Items Deleted	
<b>Actual Behavior</b>	4	AB1	.836	0.768	2.601	65.027	0.806	Nil
		AB2	.859					
		AB3	.839					
		AB4	.678					
<b>Self-confidence</b>	3	SC1	.850	0.701	2.366	78.872	0.865	Nil
		SC2	.887					
		SC3	.926					
<b>Family Orientation</b>	4	FO1	.835	0.717	2.669	66.722	0.833	Nil
		FO2	.867					
		FO3	.801					
		FO4	.761					
<b>Health Consciousness</b>	3	HC1	.809	0.660	2.134	71.139	0.793	Nil
		HC2	.899					
		HC3	.820					
<b>Women's Role and Perception</b>	4	WRP1	.890	0.799	2.871	71.784	0.864	Nil
		WRP2	.830					
		WRP3	.836					
		WRP4	.831					
<b>Religiosity</b>	3	RY1	.915	0.736	2.417	80.558	0.877	Nil
		RY2	.880					
		RY3	.897					

\*Items are ordered as in the questionnaire set

Table 4.26 shows the factor analysis results. Firstly, KMO (Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin) measure of sampling adequacy was examined to ascertain the suitability of the factorability aspect of factor analysis. KMO index is used to make comparison between magnitudes of observed correlation coefficient and partial correlation coefficient (Kaiser, 1974). KMO value of around 0.90 was called as marvelous, 0.80 as meritorious, 0.70 as middling, 0.60 as mediocre, 0.50 as miserable, and unacceptable if it is less than 0.50 (Kaiser, 1974). As shown in Table 4.26, the KMO ranged from 0.618 to 0.852 exhibiting pertinence of factor analysis in the pilot study. Thereafter, pertaining to them, the factor

loadings of items were checked to ensure that all values are more than 0.50 (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Some items viz. MC7, CA1, CA8, CA10, CA11, and CA12 were deleted in the analysis on the basis of least individual KMO values after taking into consideration the contents of component matrix output initially generated after running factor analysis in SPSS. However, as they still possessed reasonably high factor loading, they were not deleted from the main questionnaire as it was assumed that they can play a more important role and yield better results with larger sample size. Furthermore, from the general view of statisticians, only those variables are deemed worth analyzing whose Eigen values are more than 1.00. This condition was fulfilled which can be seen in Table 4.26. Finally, the percentage of variance also ranged from 42.8 to 80.5 which shows that the constructs reasonably attempt to explain the model under study. As such, it was ensured through the pilot study that the instrument being used is valid and reliable which further led to collecting data for the main study.

#### **4.12 Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter explained the overall research design implemented in this study. This quantitative study based in Malaysia followed a multi stage sampling process in order to ensure utmost randomness. After conducting an extensive literature review, the operationalization of variables was finalised for developing the survey instrument relying on a 7-point interval scale. Data collection procedure and data analysis strategies were also explained in this chapter. Furthermore, content and face validities were conducted to refine the survey instrument, progressing towards conducting a pilot test wherein it was empirically confirmed that measures are internally consistent and they are promising to

do the job they are supposed to do. The next chapter presents data analysis results and discussion.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter deals with the analysis results pertaining to research objectives as stated in chapter one. It further seeks to present the results of hypotheses developed in chapter three. There are fifteen main sections covered in this chapter beginning with introduction which is further followed by response rate in the second section and data screening in the third section dealing with data cleaning issues. The fourth section deals with profiles of respondents surveyed in this study. Section five summarizes and explains the prime characteristics of data under descriptive analysis. The next section elaborates and justifies the use of Partial Least Squares approach to structural equation modeling used in this study. Thereafter, section seven seeks to elucidate and evaluate the measurement model ensuring that the items and constructs were doing their job appropriately through various validity measures. The establishment of second order construct is presented in section eight. It is followed by estimation of effect size seeking to show model's strength through  $R^2$  values in section nine of this chapter. Thereafter, section ten is presented to highlight the predictive abilities of the model under study which is further followed by establishing the goodness of fit aspect of the model under section eleven. Section twelve presents the structural model and results of hypothesis testing presented in different sub sections separately for direct, mediating, and moderating relationships. These hypotheses results have been further summarized in section thirteen leading to carrying out a discussion for the same in the fourteenth section. And finally, section fifteen presents the chapter summary.

## 5.2 Response Rate

Response rate can be estimated by dividing the number of respondents who actually took the survey to the sample size determined for the study (Hamilton, 2009). The research design of this study had resorted to surveying 450 female consumers at the shopping malls across four Malaysian states. Even though this sample size was set large enough to accommodate issues like measurement error, etc., still it was attempted to collect few more data than the target set in the rigorous and scientific sampling scheme decided for this study. As it was a consumer survey, the consumers were contacted directly by the researcher and the enumerators, and as such, achieving a response rate of 100%, there was no issue of any rejection of data on the basis of number of returned or not returned questionnaires. However, it was experienced that some respondents were not willing to spare time for the survey. Nevertheless, in all cases, the questionnaires were being viewed by the researcher while consumers answered and they were checked instantly for any omission or unticked responses. However, even after adequate caution, 14 questionnaires were found to be having some options unanswered while entering the data in SPSS and they were therefore rejected due to their unusable nature, and finally 469 usable questionnaires were considered for data analysis in this study.

Moreover, it is a well-known fact in statistics that a good sample must be proper representative of the population which makes the sample statistic appropriate for estimating population parameter under consideration. Keeping that in mind, this study followed a rigorous sampling process as described in section 4.4 of this thesis which included time sampling, day sampling, entrance sampling, etc. There can be bias found due to unrepresented samples or due to any kind of shortcoming in the measurement

process which can include the way questions are asked or even the state of respondents taking the survey (*Bias in survey sampling*, n.d.). As the data was collected at shopping malls directly from the consumers as per a fixed schedule determined by the researcher, there was eventually no issue of early or late respondents in context of this study. However, as a contribution to consumer studies, and for assessing any kind of potential bias which could include measurement bias, etc., this study examined survey time as the basis (Philippens, Loosveldt, Stoop, & Billiet, 2004; Purdon, Campanelli, & Sturgis, 1999) for making comparisons between groups. The data was separated into two groups wherein the first group consisted of 200 respondents surveyed during first half of a day and the second group consisted of 269 respondents contacted during the second half of a day. These groups were compared on all variables and their dimensions. This study resorted to employing independent sample t-test to check that whether any kind of discrepancy exists between the two by comparing the means of the two groups (Pallant, 2011). The results of independent sample t-test are given in Table 5.1 below:

Table 5.1  
*Independent Sample t-test Results*

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Levene's Test for Equality of Variances</b>		<b>t-test for Equality of Means</b>		
	<b>F-value</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>T-value</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
<b>Product Fairness</b>	.634	.426	-.914	467	.361
			-.921	439.339	.358
<b>Marketing Communications</b>	.633	.427	-1.033	467	.302
			-1.049	450.066	.295
<b>Price Fairness</b>	1.416	.235	-1.062	467	.289
			-1.078	449.429	.282
<b>Channels of Distribution</b>	.560	.455	.839	467	.402
			.852	449.833	.395
<b>Consumer Attitude</b>	.958	.328	.836	467	.403
			.850	451.296	.396
<b>Subjective Norms</b>	1.728	.189	.538	467	.591
			.542	438.470	.588



Table 5.1 (Continued)

<b>Perceived Behavioral Control</b>	1.345	.247	-1.623	467	.105
			-1.638	441.945	.102
<b>Behavioral Intention</b>	7.506	.006	-.803	467	.422
			-.824	460.499	.410
<b>Actual Behavior</b>	1.960	.162	-.256	467	.798
			-.261	451.368	.794
<b>Self-confidence</b>	3.251	.072	1.476	467	.141
			1.512	458.610	.131
<b>Family Orientation</b>	1.252	.264	-.788	467	.431
			-.793	439.233	.428
<b>Health Consciousness</b>	.691	.406	-.553	467	.581
			-.565	457.518	.572
<b>Women's Role and Perception</b>	1.251	.264	-.339	467	.735
			-.341	438.950	.733
<b>Religiosity</b>	.049	.826	-.588	467	.557
			-.585	422.488	.559

The results of t-test for equality of means presented in Table 5.1 show that there is no significant difference (p-value at 0.05 significance level) between the two groups for all measurement dimensions. It seems to reflect that the respondents belonging to these two groups eventually represented same population and that the responses obtained in this study are free of any kind of measurement or other bias. As such, on the basis of an absence of a noticeable statistical difference between the two groups, it can be assumed that the hypothesized relationships under study are not posed with any kind of potential bias. It will further be supported by examination of all measurement scales to confirm their relationship with the latent variables.

### 5.3 Data Screening and Missing Values

Prior to conducting analysis, this study relied on data screening mainly for treating missing values. It was necessitated from the fact that in SEM analysis, the available tools and techniques cannot function if there is any missing data available in the data set

(Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). Moreover, it should also be noted that the quality of data analysis largely depends on the suitability of data organization and its further conversion into a form appropriate for analysis (Kristensen & Eskildsen, 2010) and which is why data screening is deemed extremely useful for making it sure that the data have been entered correctly. Missing data can arise in different situations like – respondents inability to understand questions, or difficulty in answering, or lack of willingness to answer (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). It can be seen around that missing data is a commonly found situation in data analysis which was also advocated by Hair *et al.* (2010). There are different methods suggested for handling missing data like one method says simply drop the case (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). This study relied on using one of the methods recommended by Hair *et al.* (2010) which said that missing values can be replaced with the mean in SPSS if there is lower level of missing responses. As discussed in section 5.2, this study had already dropped 14 cases from taking into consideration for data analysis due to several unanswered questions. Still when the data entry was done and missing value was calculated in SPSS, 5 responses (Case ID: 9, 33, 67, 96, 154) were found to have no answer for one item each in all of the five cases. As the number of missing values was small, they were replaced with the mean (Hair *et al.*, 2010) and put to further analysis.

#### **5.4 Respondents' Profile**

For a coherent discussion and rational explanation of the results and findings, it is pertinent to have a clear understanding of the respondent's profile which is presented in Table 5.2 in this study. This study had finally considered responses of 469 female respondents for data analysis. Out of these respondents, maximum were seen to possess

educational qualification of upto senior secondary school (45.2%) or Bachelors (45%). Less than 10% respondents in total were found to have either no formal education (4.5%) or Master and above (5.3%).

Table 5.2  
*Respondents' Profile*

<b>Demography</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Education Level</b>	No formal education	21	4.5
	Senior secondary school	212	45.2
	Bachelors	211	45
	Masters and above	25	5.3
	Total	469	100
<b>Income Level</b>	0-3000 RM	308	65.7
	3001-6000 RM	114	24.3
	6001-9000 RM	39	8.3
	Above 9001 RM	8	1.7
	Total	469	100
<b>Age</b>	15-25 Years	399	85.1
	26-35 Years	48	10.2
	36-45 Years	19	4.1
	46-55 Years	3	0.6
	Total	469	100
<b>Ethnicity</b>	Malay	221	47.1
	Chinese	144	30.7
	Indian	92	19.6
	Others	12	2.6
	Total	469	100

As far as income level was concerned, the highest number of respondents (65.7%) was found to be in the range of 0-3000 RM per month. The second highest number of

respondents (24.3%) was in the range of 3001-6000 RM per month. Moreover, the highest earners (taken as 'above 9001 RM per month' in this study) were only 1.7% of the total number of respondents.

Thereafter, 85.1 % of the respondents were found to be in the age bracket of 15-25 years and remaining 14.9 % were 26 years or above. 0.6 % respondents were in the age group of 46-55 years. Moreover, the ethnicities of respondents were: Malay (47.1 %), Chinese (30.7 %), Indian (19.6 %) and others (2.6 %) wherein the category 'others' included respondents from countries like Indonesia, Thailand, Iran, etc. As a whole, it can be seen that the respondents varied considerably in terms of their backgrounds and as such, the data used in the study was found to be emerging from respondents of diverse economic and demographic backgrounds residing in the four Malaysian states.

### **5.5 Descriptive Analysis**

A descriptive analysis was performed in this study primarily to summarize and explain the main features of the data set from the standpoint of survey respondents on every variable/dimensions considered in the study. It was conducted mainly due to the fact that the descriptive statistics of dimensions explained through mean, standard deviation, variance, etc. collectively seek to offer a researcher a general view regarding how the survey respondents have responded to the survey instrument used in the study (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

Table 5.3

*Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables*

<b>Construct</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
<b>Product Fairness</b>	469	1	7	5.853	0.759
<b>Marketing Communications</b>	469	1	7	5.909	0.606
<b>Price Fairness</b>	469	1	7	5.917	0.655
<b>Channels of Distribution</b>	469	1	7	5.899	0.704
<b>Consumer Attitude</b>	469	1	7	5.885	0.596
<b>Subjective Norms</b>	469	1	7	5.672	0.752
<b>Perceived Behavioral Control</b>	469	1	7	5.851	0.804
<b>Behavioral Intention</b>	469	1	7	5.864	0.687
<b>Actual Behavior</b>	469	1	7	5.776	0.679
<b>Self-confidence</b>	469	1	7	5.900	0.826
<b>Family Orientation</b>	469	1	7	6.023	0.674
<b>Health Consciousness</b>	469	1	7	5.947	0.756
<b>Women's Role and Perception</b>	469	1	7	5.956	0.661
<b>Religiosity</b>	469	1	7	5.972	0.813

*Seven-points scale: 1=strongly disagree; 7=strongly agree*

The results of descriptive statistics presented in Table 5.3 show that all variables and their dimensions possessed a mean ranging from 5.672 to 6.023 which were all above the average value. The standard deviation of all dimensions ranged from 0.596 to 0.826 which is also considered acceptable. As such, it can be established that on the basis of responses i.e. opinions of respondents collected in this study explicitly reflect to an acceptable and satisfactory level of implementation with regard to all dimensions viz.

product fairness, marketing communications, price fairness, channels of distribution, consumer attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, behavioral intention, actual behavior, self-confidence, family orientation, health consciousness, women's role and perception, and religiosity.

## **5.6 Partial Least Square (PLS) Structural Equation Modeling Approach**

Application of structural equation modeling (SEM) in this study has been explained previously in section 4.9.1. This study resorted to using SEM for testing hypothesis which evolved from the proposed theoretical framework. The two mostly used approaches to SEM have been: covariance based (AMOS, LISREL) and variance based (Partial Least Squares), wherein one approach is not actually perceived superior to another by the researchers. Instead, depending upon the study objectives and nature of data, they offer a researcher alternative and relevant options to choose from. The prime difference between the two is that CBSEM has been mainly considered as confirmatory (towards testing a strong theory) in nature whereas PLS- VBSEM has been considered as prediction oriented (facilitating theory development).

Though CBSEM has been traditionally a popular approach, nowadays researchers tend to appreciate VBSEM because of its advantages pertaining to absence of factor indeterminacy or convergence issues (Henseler, 2010); comparatively simpler distributional assumptions (Reinartz, Haenlein, & Henseler, 2009); when the focus is on theory development or prediction; ability to estimate models which have got more variables than the observations (Dijkstra & Henseler, 2012); and ability to measure formative constructs (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2004). There have been several studies

describing the development and importance of PLS-VBSEM's methodological aspects, for example: Chin (1998), Ringle, Sarstedt, and Straub (2012), Tenenhaus, Vinzi, Chatelin, and Lauro (2005), and Wold (1982), etc.

As this study contained of a complex model consisting of several independent and dependent variables, moderating and mediating variables, and also demographic factors acting as moderating variables which sought need for multi group analysis, it resorted to using Smart PLS 2.0 (Beta) software developed by Ringle *et al.* (2005) for the SEM to statistically explain the relationships among the dimensions of independent variables and the dependent variables, alongwith the mediating as well as moderating variables. Highly complex models with several latent and manifest variables can be estimated by PLS which is also said to be capable of easily estimating hierarchical models, or moderating and mediating effects (Chin, Marcolin, & Newsted, 2003). The complexity inside a model can be calculated after considering a causality relationship among the model's latent concepts, termed as latent variables, each estimated by the means of various observed indicators which are called as manifest variables (Vinzi, Trinchera, & Amato, 2010). As it was also pointed out by Wold (1985), that PLS is quite useful among larger models wherein the prominence shifts from individual variables and parameters to sets of variables and aggregate parameters. Moreover, the focus of this study was on making prediction which also gave rise to the need of using PLS. Also, PLS is said to be free of any assumption in terms of sample size, normality, multicollinearity, etc. Alternatively speaking, as a major advantage, PLS relies on making minimal distributional assumptions, and as such, tests for normality, for instance skewness, kurtosis, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, etc. are not needed to be done while using Smart PLS

(Hossain, 2013). And in line with it, one of the reasons to select PLS SEM was to estimate the model of this study without letting it imposed by any kind of limiting constraints which might be a case in covariance based structural equation modeling.

As such, data analysis in this study was done using Smart PLS software meant to perform PLS path modeling. It is also in line with Ringle *et al.* (2012) who pointed out that PLS-SEM can facilitate in enhancing the already existing good reporting practices in disciplines like marketing and strategic management. Moreover, SEM is said to be a unification of two dominant approaches— factor analysis and path analysis, which seeks to enable the researchers in examining concurrently the two important facets of a model which are, 1.measurement model (conventionally estimated through factor analysis) , and 2.structural model (conventionally estimated through path analysis) (Lee, Peter, Fayard, & Robinson, 2011). In this study, the data analysis was carried out through PLS path modeling performed for the two parts: firstly, for the measurement model which is called as outer model in PLS; and secondly for the structural model which is termed as inner model in PLS. The relationship between latent or unobserved variables was explained in the inner model, whereas the link between a latent variable and its manifest variables was described in the outer model. Furthermore, operationwise, PLS algorithm sought to produce loadings between the reflective constructs and their respective indicators as this study consisted of all reflective constructs only. In overall terms, similar to regression, PLS always attempted to stress on maximizing the variance of the dependent variables of the study explained through the independent variables (Chin, 1998). For a detailed explanation, the results of the PLS modeling are explained in subsequent sections.



## **5.7 Measurement Model (Outer Model) Evaluation**

Using Smart PLS, in the first step, the measurement model (outer model) was examined to ascertain the appropriateness of loadings of the indicators (items) on the theoretically devised respective constructs. Outer model is evaluated in order to affirm that items measure the construct they were supposed to measure, consequently ascertaining that the instrument used is reliable. Moreover, the purpose of outer model is to diagnose the relationship between observable and underlying constructs. As such, it becomes important to trace appropriate indicators for ensuring a proper operationalization of a particular construct (Churchill, 1979) which further necessitates estimation of construct validity which can be justified in SEM through content validity, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

### **5.7.1 Content Validity**

Content validity signifies the appropriateness and ability of items generated for a construct in measuring the main concept under study (Hair *et al.*, 2010). Moreover, Bohrnstedt (1970) and Vinzi, Lauro, and Tenenhaus (2003) suggest using Principal Component Analysis (PCA) method for assessing the indicators' underlying factor structure. Smart PLS is based on PCA method as such, the factor loadings were created for all indicators in Smart PLS. It is a basic requirement that all indicators must exhibit highest loading values on their respective constructs than that on other constructs. Theoretically it was already ensured through a comprehensive literature review that indicators belong to their respective constructs. However, to support it statistically, factor analysis was performed which is shown in Table 5.4. It can be seen in Table 5.4 that the

loadings of indicators are highest on their respective constructs as compared to their loadings on other constructs, and they consist of significantly and acceptably high loadings. These two lead to confirmation of content validity.

Table 5.4 seeks to show the loadings of all items pertaining to each of the constructs taken in this study which includes: product fairness, marketing communications, price fairness, channels of distribution, consumer attitude, perceived behavioral control, subjective norms, behavioral intention, actual behavior, and lifestyle (self-confidence, family orientation, health consciousness, women's role and perception, religiosity).

In line with Chan (2003), the item loading can be termed as poor if is less than 0.30, fair if it is in range of 0.31 to 0.50, moderate if it is between 0.51 to 0.60, moderately strong if it is in range of 0.61 to 0.80, and very strong if it is between 0.81 to 1 (Krause, Gathmann, & Gorschewsky, 2008). It was further supported that the item loading should be over 0.30 for the mutual relationships (Andresen, 2000). It can be seen in Table 5.4 that each of the loadings is greater than 0.61 which shows either moderately or very strong loading for each of the indicators taken in the study. A total of 8 indicators (MC4,MC7,CA1,CA8,CA9,CA10,CA11,CA12) were deleted which consisted of poor loadings as per aforesaid criteria.

Table 5.4  
*Cross Loadings of the Items*

Variable/Dimension	Item	AB	BI	CA	CD	FO	HC	MC	PBC	PF	PRF	RY	SC	SN	WRP
<b>Actual Behavior</b>	<b>AB1</b>	<b>0.752</b>	0.369	0.214	0.155	0.236	0.220	0.157	0.314	0.193	0.159	0.162	0.251	0.309	0.165
	<b>AB2</b>	<b>0.820</b>	0.394	0.255	0.145	0.209	0.251	0.223	0.346	0.155	0.192	0.164	0.260	0.293	0.177
	<b>AB3</b>	<b>0.762</b>	0.351	0.292	0.198	0.277	0.298	0.192	0.278	0.103	0.265	0.180	0.296	0.289	0.220
	<b>AB4</b>	<b>0.645</b>	0.278	0.263	0.190	0.341	0.283	0.209	0.212	0.158	0.257	0.202	0.245	0.193	0.223
<b>Behavioral Intention</b>	<b>BI1</b>	0.349	<b>0.679</b>	0.241	0.167	0.165	0.138	0.207	0.379	0.158	0.224	0.136	0.202	0.216	0.186
	<b>BI2</b>	0.332	<b>0.767</b>	0.255	0.210	0.240	0.227	0.268	0.453	0.126	0.252	0.210	0.224	0.260	0.216
	<b>BI3</b>	0.396	<b>0.835</b>	0.319	0.255	0.260	0.295	0.273	0.459	0.146	0.201	0.191	0.305	0.312	0.237
	<b>BI4</b>	0.342	<b>0.780</b>	0.333	0.261	0.244	0.284	0.289	0.387	0.117	0.150	0.162	0.216	0.280	0.215
	<b>BI5</b>	0.343	<b>0.684</b>	0.299	0.224	0.226	0.239	0.242	0.331	0.109	0.186	0.100	0.174	0.271	0.204
<b>Consumer Attitude</b>	<b>CA2</b>	0.254	0.245	<b>0.713</b>	0.198	0.124	0.176	0.214	0.332	0.227	0.275	0.103	0.199	0.221	0.169
	<b>CA3</b>	0.250	0.260	<b>0.756</b>	0.236	0.129	0.211	0.268	0.293	0.209	0.243	0.119	0.231	0.223	0.180
	<b>CA4</b>	0.223	0.211	<b>0.716</b>	0.253	0.188	0.218	0.289	0.221	0.218	0.286	0.133	0.223	0.226	0.190
	<b>CA5</b>	0.198	0.302	<b>0.713</b>	0.237	0.113	0.223	0.189	0.239	0.182	0.197	0.090	0.213	0.332	0.168
	<b>CA6</b>	0.214	0.267	<b>0.716</b>	0.266	0.243	0.243	0.306	0.220	0.225	0.272	0.076	0.191	0.221	0.172
	<b>CA7</b>	0.293	0.345	<b>0.641</b>	0.226	0.195	0.257	0.288	0.263	0.157	0.181	0.140	0.230	0.348	0.222
	<b>CD1</b>	0.158	0.165	0.205	<b>0.670</b>	0.124	0.154	0.297	0.189	0.252	0.477	0.094	0.203	0.082	0.197
<b>Channels of Distribution</b>	<b>CD2</b>	0.198	0.272	0.243	<b>0.748</b>	0.136	0.186	0.276	0.237	0.229	0.382	0.089	0.209	0.202	0.314
	<b>CD3</b>	0.189	0.239	0.234	<b>0.762</b>	0.193	0.265	0.362	0.205	0.260	0.413	0.134	0.270	0.180	0.292
	<b>CD4</b>	0.174	0.219	0.269	<b>0.799</b>	0.187	0.180	0.315	0.139	0.214	0.400	0.083	0.149	0.225	0.205
	<b>CD5</b>	0.124	0.207	0.274	<b>0.716</b>	0.124	0.155	0.302	0.135	0.187	0.319	0.048	0.104	0.171	0.162

Table 5.4 (Continued)

Variable/Dimension	Item	AB	BI	CA	CD	FO	HC	MC	PBC	PF	PRF	RY	SC	SN	WRP
<b>Family Orientation</b>	<b>FO1</b>	0.283	0.183	0.176	0.154	<b>0.740</b>	0.344	0.291	0.208	0.178	0.215	0.261	0.505	-0.001	0.274
	<b>FO2</b>	0.265	0.217	0.218	0.150	<b>0.764</b>	0.461	0.287	0.192	0.173	0.158	0.236	0.408	0.044	0.301
	<b>FO3</b>	0.243	0.288	0.207	0.165	<b>0.774</b>	0.481	0.248	0.195	0.157	0.184	0.216	0.279	0.142	0.271
	<b>FO4</b>	0.244	0.225	0.103	0.151	<b>0.717</b>	0.512	0.218	0.164	0.101	0.203	0.241	0.218	0.118	0.329
<b>Health Consciousness</b>	<b>HC1</b>	0.292	0.279	0.212	0.168	0.476	<b>0.780</b>	0.247	0.173	0.136	0.171	0.246	0.281	0.207	0.355
	<b>HC2</b>	0.280	0.217	0.238	0.243	0.504	<b>0.814</b>	0.304	0.222	0.201	0.206	0.305	0.264	0.170	0.398
	<b>HC3</b>	0.257	0.265	0.299	0.189	0.450	<b>0.792</b>	0.297	0.232	0.181	0.269	0.245	0.233	0.212	0.476
<b>Marketing Communications</b>	<b>MC1</b>	0.170	0.208	0.233	0.288	0.240	0.242	<b>0.669</b>	0.232	0.545	0.313	0.120	0.209	0.159	0.160
	<b>MC2</b>	0.173	0.255	0.236	0.307	0.255	0.285	<b>0.696</b>	0.235	0.436	0.309	0.150	0.129	0.106	0.214
	<b>MC3</b>	0.212	0.230	0.254	0.271	0.269	0.227	<b>0.733</b>	0.185	0.356	0.270	0.095	0.187	0.130	0.196
	<b>MC5</b>	0.161	0.236	0.282	0.320	0.264	0.291	<b>0.728</b>	0.280	0.292	0.346	0.175	0.195	0.135	0.267
	<b>MC6</b>	0.199	0.274	0.289	0.294	0.212	0.219	<b>0.710</b>	0.270	0.286	0.395	0.160	0.201	0.137	0.256
	<b>PBC1</b>	0.291	0.413	0.257	0.109	0.148	0.194	0.178	<b>0.804</b>	0.202	0.177	0.153	0.206	0.290	0.162
<b>Percieved Behavioral Control</b>	<b>PBC2</b>	0.340	0.467	0.363	0.171	0.209	0.209	0.335	<b>0.877</b>	0.247	0.224	0.225	0.177	0.268	0.213
	<b>PBC3</b>	0.330	0.447	0.287	0.308	0.265	0.247	0.322	<b>0.790</b>	0.219	0.297	0.186	0.191	0.238	0.248
<b>Product Fairness</b>	<b>PF1</b>	0.100	0.040	0.169	0.123	0.121	0.121	0.316	0.169	<b>0.753</b>	0.153	0.082	0.068	0.076	0.139
	<b>PF2</b>	0.129	0.121	0.235	0.229	0.164	0.198	0.369	0.191	<b>0.815</b>	0.218	0.115	0.190	0.105	0.191
	<b>PF3</b>	0.148	0.150	0.233	0.232	0.148	0.151	0.420	0.238	<b>0.779</b>	0.253	0.046	0.192	0.147	0.116
	<b>PF4</b>	0.235	0.204	0.234	0.329	0.189	0.193	0.510	0.231	<b>0.749</b>	0.312	0.065	0.174	0.143	0.155

Table 5.4 (Continued)

Variable/Dimension	Item	AB	BI	CA	CD	FO	HC	MC	PBC	PF	PRF	RY	SC	SN	WRP
Price Fairness	PRF1	0.201	0.187	0.276	0.249	0.227	0.192	0.341	0.244	0.248	<b>0.677</b>	0.148	0.131	0.102	0.211
	PRF2	0.233	0.209	0.253	0.340	0.185	0.209	0.383	0.177	0.180	<b>0.746</b>	0.091	0.134	0.131	0.202
	PRF3	0.226	0.235	0.225	0.396	0.241	0.232	0.338	0.199	0.186	<b>0.718</b>	0.087	0.179	0.174	0.205
	PRF4	0.182	0.172	0.217	0.427	0.148	0.192	0.304	0.186	0.261	<b>0.715</b>	0.107	0.181	0.114	0.215
	PRF5	0.169	0.150	0.228	0.505	0.087	0.135	0.275	0.196	0.226	<b>0.697</b>	0.122	0.149	0.163	0.215
Religiosity	RY1	0.188	0.189	0.099	0.121	0.262	0.298	0.181	0.158	0.068	0.141	<b>0.865</b>	0.139	0.068	0.524
	RY2	0.221	0.184	0.145	0.102	0.291	0.292	0.151	0.224	0.095	0.151	<b>0.844</b>	0.129	0.090	0.466
	RY3	0.166	0.159	0.150	0.065	0.235	0.233	0.163	0.190	0.084	0.094	<b>0.766</b>	0.070	0.060	0.387
Self-confidence	SC1	0.257	0.206	0.242	0.177	0.361	0.250	0.201	0.185	0.188	0.194	0.152	<b>0.849</b>	0.140	0.208
	SC2	0.281	0.277	0.245	0.222	0.385	0.283	0.240	0.219	0.162	0.205	0.089	<b>0.843</b>	0.250	0.210
	SC3	0.338	0.271	0.270	0.217	0.433	0.279	0.211	0.171	0.174	0.139	0.107	<b>0.802</b>	0.181	0.177
Subjective Norms	SN1	0.259	0.203	0.263	0.112	0.069	0.215	0.095	0.184	0.150	0.115	0.044	0.195	<b>0.736</b>	0.136
	SN2	0.294	0.314	0.295	0.218	0.112	0.193	0.184	0.290	0.109	0.181	0.095	0.155	<b>0.842</b>	0.145
	SN3	0.327	0.329	0.332	0.224	0.060	0.195	0.164	0.285	0.125	0.157	0.069	0.207	<b>0.831</b>	0.103
Women's Role and Perception	WRP1	0.163	0.218	0.184	0.247	0.299	0.430	0.224	0.208	0.137	0.278	0.305	0.184	0.128	<b>0.702</b>
	WRP2	0.176	0.202	0.132	0.226	0.212	0.353	0.213	0.154	0.138	0.185	0.347	0.130	0.089	<b>0.719</b>
	WRP3	0.180	0.219	0.235	0.279	0.334	0.407	0.251	0.219	0.154	0.219	0.445	0.158	0.105	<b>0.789</b>
	WRP4	0.236	0.194	0.206	0.170	0.299	0.329	0.230	0.162	0.144	0.188	0.533	0.226	0.135	<b>0.731</b>

AB: Actual Behavior; BI: Behavioral Intention; CA: Consumer Attitude; CD: Channels of Distribution; FO: Family Orientation; HC: Health Consciousness; MC: Marketing Communications; PBC: Perceived Behavioral Control; PF: Product Fairness; PRF: Price Fairness; RY: Religiosity; SC: Self-confidence; SN: Subjective Norms; WRP: Women's Role and Perception

Thereafter, Table 5.5 is presented below to show that each indicator load significantly on their respective constructs at 0.01 level of significance, which further indicates that validity is assumed through the factor analysis. These results finally led to considering that both content validity and the overall measurement of model is preserved.

Table 5.5  
*Factor Loadings' Significance*

<b>Variable/Dimension</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Loading</b>	<b>Standard Error</b>	<b>T-Value</b>	<b>P-Value</b>
<b>Actual Behavior</b>	AB1	0.752	0.025	30.203	0.000
	AB2	0.820	0.017	48.451	0.000
	AB3	0.762	0.022	34.394	0.000
	AB4	0.645	0.038	16.995	0.000
<b>Behavioral Intention</b>	BI1	0.679	0.033	20.626	0.000
	BI2	0.767	0.030	25.697	0.000
	BI3	0.835	0.018	47.207	0.000
	BI4	0.780	0.025	30.615	0.000
	BI5	0.684	0.046	14.955	0.000
<b>Consumer Attitude</b>	CA2	0.713	0.029	24.373	0.000
	CA3	0.756	0.026	29.070	0.000
	CA4	0.716	0.033	21.756	0.000
	CA5	0.713	0.039	18.156	0.000
	CA6	0.716	0.031	22.855	0.000
	CA7	0.641	0.039	16.285	0.000
	<b>Channels of Distribution</b>	CD1	0.670	0.041	16.516
CD2		0.748	0.027	27.384	0.000
CD3		0.762	0.030	25.832	0.000
CD4		0.799	0.021	38.175	0.000
CD5		0.716	0.039	18.464	0.000
<b>Family Orientation</b>	FO1	0.740	0.027	27.894	0.000
	FO2	0.764	0.025	31.189	0.000
	FO3	0.774	0.029	26.404	0.000
	FO4	0.717	0.032	22.402	0.000

Table 5.5 (Continued)

<b>Variable/Dimension</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Loading</b>	<b>Standard Error</b>	<b>T-Value</b>	<b>P-Value</b>
<b>Health Consciosuness</b>	HC1	0.780	0.029	27.296	0.000
	HC2	0.814	0.024	33.595	0.000
	HC3	0.792	0.026	30.627	0.000
<b>Marketing Communications</b>	MC1	0.669	0.042	15.961	0.000
	MC2	0.696	0.038	18.478	0.000
	MC3	0.733	0.032	22.796	0.000
	MC5	0.728	0.035	20.994	0.000
	MC6	0.710	0.038	18.809	0.000
<b>Perceived Behavior Control</b>	PBC1	0.804	0.025	31.883	0.000
	PBC2	0.877	0.012	74.333	0.000
	PBC3	0.790	0.023	33.932	0.000
<b>Product Fairness</b>	PF1	0.753	0.042	18.033	0.000
	PF2	0.815	0.031	26.037	0.000
	PF3	0.779	0.033	23.801	0.000
	PF4	0.749	0.038	19.637	0.000
<b>Price Fairness</b>	PRF1	0.677	0.041	16.499	0.000
	PRF2	0.746	0.030	24.595	0.000
	PRF3	0.718	0.038	18.948	0.000
	PRF4	0.715	0.036	19.902	0.000
	PRF5	0.697	0.039	17.929	0.000
<b>Religiosity</b>	RY1	0.865	0.014	63.001	0.000
	RY2	0.844	0.016	51.229	0.000
	RY3	0.766	0.029	26.683	0.000
<b>Self-confidence</b>	SC1	0.849	0.018	46.913	0.000
	SC2	0.843	0.024	35.507	0.000
	SC3	0.802	0.026	30.874	0.000
<b>Subjective Norms</b>	SN1	0.736	0.035	21.322	0.000
	SN2	0.842	0.020	42.046	0.000
	SN3	0.831	0.022	37.845	0.000
<b>Women's Role and Perception</b>	WRP1	0.702	0.029	24.243	0.000
	WRP2	0.719	0.033	21.466	0.000
	WRP3	0.789	0.023	33.679	0.000
	WRP4	0.731	0.027	27.385	0.000

### 5.7.2 Convergent Validity

In an attempt to ensure convergent validity, researchers try to show that the constructs' measures which should theoretically be related to each other are actually found related in such manner after the analysis. The three types of estimations viz. factor loadings, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) have been suggested to establish convergent validity (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

Firstly, all of the item loadings are examined and a loading value of 0.50 or more is suggested as acceptable in the literature of multivariate analysis (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair *et al.*, 2010). It can be seen in Table 5.6 that all items consisted of a loading higher than 0.50. Secondly, the composite reliability was examined which shows the degree to which the items consistently seek to indicate the latent construct (Hair *et al.*, 2010). The suggested ideal value for CR has been 0.70 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair *et al.*, 2010) and it can be seen in Table 5.6 that the CR values for all constructs were in the range of 0.825 to 0.871 which is well above the prescribed values. Thirdly, average variance extracted (AVE), which is extent of common variance among the study's latent construct indicators (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998) was examined whose value should be ideally more than 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair *et al.*, 2010). As it can be seen in Table 5.6, this condition was also fully met wherein the AVE values ranged between 0.501 and 0.692. As such, the results indicated that there exists convergent validity.



Table 5.6

*Convergent Validity Analysis*

<b>Variable/Dimension</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Loading</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>Composite Reliability</b>	<b>AVE</b>
<b>Actual Behavior</b>	AB1	0.752	0.735	0.834	0.559
	AB2	0.820			
	AB3	0.762			
	AB4	0.645			
<b>Behavioral Intention</b>	BI1	0.679	0.805	0.866	0.564
	BI2	0.767			
	BI3	0.835			
	BI4	0.780			
	BI5	0.684			
<b>Consumer Attitude</b>	CA2	0.713	0.803	0.859	0.504
	CA3	0.756			
	CA4	0.716			
	CA5	0.713			
	CA6	0.716			
	CA7	0.641			
	CD1	0.670			
<b>Channels of Distribution</b>	CD2	0.748	0.794	0.858	0.548
	CD3	0.762			
	CD4	0.799			
	CD5	0.716			
	FO1	0.740			
<b>Family Orientation</b>	FO2	0.764	0.739	0.836	0.561
	FO3	0.774			
	FO4	0.717			
	HC1	0.780			
<b>Health Consciousness</b>	HC2	0.814	0.709	0.838	0.632
	HC3	0.792			
	MC1	0.669			
<b>Marketing Communications</b>	MC2	0.696	0.751	0.834	0.501
	MC3	0.733			
	MC5	0.728			
	MC6	0.710			
	PBC1	0.804			
<b>Perceived Behavioral Control</b>	PBC2	0.877	0.764	0.864	0.680
	PBC3	0.790			

Table 5.6 (Continued)

Variable/Dimension	Item	Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
<b>Product Fairness</b>	PF1	0.753	0.778	0.857	0.599
	PF2	0.815			
	PF3	0.779			
	PF4	0.749			
	PRF1	0.677			
<b>Price Fairness</b>	PRF2	0.746	0.756	0.836	0.506
	PRF3	0.718			
	PRF4	0.715			
	PRF5	0.697			
	RY1	0.865			
<b>Religiosity</b>	RY2	0.844	0.767	0.865	0.682
	RY3	0.766			
	SC1	0.849			
<b>Self-confidence</b>	SC2	0.843	0.777	0.871	0.692
	SC3	0.802			
	SN1	0.736			
<b>Subjective Norms</b>	SN2	0.842	0.729	0.846	0.647
	SN3	0.831			
	WRP1	0.702			
<b>Women's Role and Perception</b>	WRP2	0.719	0.717	0.825	0.541
	WRP3	0.789			
	WRP4	0.731			

### 5.7.3 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity is aimed at confirming the construct validity of the outer model which seeks to ensure that the measures which shouldn't be related, are actually not found related after conducting the analysis. It further means that each measures are more related to their own respective constructs than to other constructs. For that, the square roots of average variance extracted (AVE) is examined with correlations among the constructs of the study in line with suggestions made by Chin (2010), and Fornell and Larcker (1981).

Table 5.7  
*Discriminant Validity Analysis*

Variable/Dimension	AB	BI	CA	CD	FO	HC	MC	PBC	PF	PRF	RY	SC	SN	WRP
<b>Actual Behavior</b>	<b>0.748</b>													
<b>Behavioral Intention</b>	0.469	<b>0.751</b>												
<b>Consumer Attitude</b>	0.339	0.386	<b>0.710</b>											
<b>Channels of Distribution</b>	0.226	0.299	0.333	<b>0.740</b>										
<b>Family Orientation</b>	0.346	0.304	0.236	0.207	<b>0.749</b>									
<b>Health Consciousness</b>	0.347	0.318	0.315	0.253	0.600	<b>0.795</b>								
<b>Marketing Communications</b>	0.259	0.341	0.368	0.418	0.349	0.356	<b>0.708</b>							
<b>Perceived Behavioral Control</b>	0.390	0.538	0.369	0.241	0.253	0.263	0.342	<b>0.825</b>						
<b>Product Fairness</b>	0.202	0.174	0.286	0.305	0.204	0.218	0.529	0.271	<b>0.774</b>					
<b>Price Fairness</b>	0.286	0.269	0.341	0.531	0.253	0.271	0.465	0.284	0.310	<b>0.711</b>				
<b>Religiosity</b>	0.233	0.215	0.157	0.118	0.319	0.334	0.200	0.230	0.099	0.158	<b>0.826</b>			
<b>Self-confidence</b>	0.351	0.302	0.303	0.247	0.472	0.326	0.261	0.231	0.210	0.216	0.139	<b>0.832</b>		
<b>Subjective Norms</b>	0.367	0.358	0.372	0.237	0.100	0.247	0.188	0.321	0.156	0.191	0.088	0.229	<b>0.804</b>	
<b>Women's Role and Perception</b>	0.258	0.283	0.261	0.313	0.392	0.516	0.313	0.254	0.195	0.295	0.560	0.239	0.155	<b>0.736</b>

Actually it is expected that 50% or more variance of indicators are accounted for, which means that the square root of AVE should be more than 0.50. In this study, Table 5.7 shows that the diagonal values (square root of AVE of the respective constructs) are higher than the other values of the column and the row in which they are situated, confirming the discriminant validity of the outer model. As such, in overall terms, the construct validity of the outer model was established, and it was further presumed that the subsequent results of hypothesis testing would be valid and reliable mainly because of the fact that the valid constructs offer conclusions which lead to generalisation of thesis' results. To conclude, construct validity was established in this study by confirming content validity, convergent validity, and discriminant validity.

### **5.8 Second-order Construct Establishment**

After the measures were established, the next step included offering evidence to support the theoretical model as denoted by the structural portion of the model in line with what was suggested by Chin (2010). Higher-order models quite frequently encompass testing second-order structures which consist of two layers of components (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2013, p.39). In this study, in line with previous studies, it was hypothesized to estimate the overall moderating effect of lifestyle which in first go necessitated considering it as a second order measurement model as it consisted of five dimensions (family orientation, health consciousness, self-confidence, religiosity, women's role and perception). From calculation perspective, in such cases, the estimation is done by taking into account the latent variable scores of the construct's (lifestyle in this study) dimensions (family orientation, health consciousness, self-confidence, religiosity, women's role and perception) as its indicators. Thereafter, to further advance the

knowledge, and on existing theoretical basis, it was also sub-hypothesized to see the individual effects of lifestyle's dimensions wherein dimensions performed as first order constructs. It should be noted that lifestyle was the only construct which was measured as a second order construct. All of the remaining constructs of this study were studied as first order constructs which got measured directly by a respective set of items.

Furthermore, for considering first order constructs (lifestyle's dimensions in this study), and in order to get them conceptually described by the second order construct (lifestyle), it was opined by Byrne (2010) that they have to be explicated appropriately by the hypothesized second order construct and also it is expected that they are remarkably distinct. It means that, prior to proceeding towards estimating the research model, it was essential to ensure that the first order constructs are deemed qualified enough to be conceptually described by the second order construct under consideration. In view of that, Table 5.8 presents the results pertaining to establishment of lifestyle as the second order construct in this study:

Table 5.8  
*Second-order Construct Establishment*

<b>Second-order Construct</b>	<b>First-order Construct</b>	<b>Loading</b>	<b>Standard Error</b>	<b>T-Value</b>	<b>P-Value</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>
	<b>Family Orientation</b>	0.798	0.025	32.480	0.000	0.637
	<b>Health Consciousness</b>	0.788	0.028	28.014	0.000	0.621
<b>Lifestyle</b>	<b>Religiosity</b>	0.641	0.038	17.021	0.000	0.411
	<b>Self-confidence</b>	0.576	0.052	11.124	0.000	0.332
	<b>Women's Role and Perception</b>	0.767	0.026	30.058	0.000	0.588

*P < 0.01*

It can be seen in Table 5.8 that the five first order constructs viz. family orientation, health consciousness, self-confidence, religiosity, and women’s role and perception are explained well by the lifestyle construct as the  $R^2$  values for these five range from 33.2% to 63.7%. The results as shown in Table 5.8 confirm the distinct nature of the constructs in this study and as such, lifestyle as a second order construct is established and explained by five hypothesized constructs in the first order. Moreover, it is ideally suggested that there should be a minimum of three constructs in the first order level in order to conduct a second order test (Hair *et al.*, 2010; Kline, 2011). In consistency with it, five first-order constructs had been selected in this study towards measuring lifestyle in the second-order position.

### **5.9 Effect Size**

$R^2$  values of endogenous constructs reflect the model’s strength. However, it can also be useful to estimate the substantiality of impact of an exogenous construct on the endogenous construct which is assessed by running the model once by omitting the exogenous construct (generating  $R^2$  excluded) and once by retaining the exogenous construct (generating  $R^2$  included) (Hair *et al.*, 2013). The change in  $R^2$  obtained as such is used to estimate the effect size ( $f^2$ ) which is calculated by using the following formula (Hair *et al.*, 2013):

$$f^2 = \frac{R^2 \text{ included} - R^2 \text{ excluded}}{1 - R^2 \text{ included}}$$

The guidelines suggested by Cohen (1988) for assessing  $f^2$  values are: “ 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35, respectively, represent small, medium, and large effects” (Hair *et al.*, 2013).

As such, the exogenous constructs affecting their respective endogenous constructs were considered one by one for calculating effect size as shown in Table 5.9, Table 5.10, and Table 5.11.

Table 5.9  
*Effect Size on Consumer Attitude (endogenous construct)*

<b>Exogenous Construct</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup>incl</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup>excl</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup>incl-R<sup>2</sup>excl</b>	<b>1-R<sup>2</sup>incl</b>	<b>Total Effect</b>
<b>Product Fairness</b>	0.196	0.189	0.007	0.804	0.009
<b>Marketing Communications</b>	0.196	0.174	0.022	0.804	0.027
<b>Price Fairness</b>	0.196	0.182	0.014	0.804	0.017
<b>Channels of Distribution</b>	0.196	0.181	0.015	0.804	0.019

Table 5.10  
*Effect Size on Behavioral Intention (endogenous construct)*

<b>Exogenous Construct</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup>incl</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup>excl</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup>incl-R<sup>2</sup>excl</b>	<b>1-R<sup>2</sup>incl</b>	<b>Total Effect</b>
<b>Consumer Attitude</b>	0.38	0.368	0.012	0.62	0.019
<b>Subjective Norms</b>	0.38	0.362	0.018	0.62	0.029
<b>Perceived Behavioral Control</b>	0.38	0.268	0.112	0.62	0.181

Table 5.11  
*Effect Size on Actual Behavior (endogenous construct)*

<b>Exogenous Construct</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup>incl</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup>excl</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup>incl-R<sup>2</sup>excl</b>	<b>1-R<sup>2</sup>incl</b>	<b>Total Effect</b>
<b>Consumer Attitude</b>	0.292	0.284	0.008	0.708	0.011
<b>Behavioral Intention</b>	0.292	0.238	0.054	0.708	0.076
<b>Perceived Behavioral Control</b>	0.292	0.28	0.012	0.708	0.017
<b>Subjective Norms</b>	0.292	0.267	0.025	0.708	0.035

It can be seen in Table 5.9 that the endogenous construct ‘consumer attitude’ is explained by four exogenous constructs whose effect size ( $f^2$ ) ranged from 0.009 to 0.027. Thereafter, Table 5.10 shows the endogenous construct ‘behavioral intention’ getting explained by three exogenous constructs whose effect size ranged from 0.019 to 0.181.

And finally, Table 5.11 seeks to show the endogenous construct ‘actual behavior’ getting explained by four exogenous constructs whose effect sizes were seen to be between 0.011 and 0.076. As a whole, these exogenous constructs indicate at having small to medium effect sizes on their respective endogenous constructs. Moreover, in this study, the three endogenous constructs namely consumer attitude, behavioral intention, and actual behavior were seen to contain reasonably high  $R^2$  values.

### **5.10 Predictive Relevance of the Model**

While conducting analysis using PLS SEM, researchers have been suggested to rely on measures demonstrating the model’s predictive abilities in order to evaluate the model’s quality (Hair *et al.*, 2010). A model’s predictive quality can be assessed (Fornell & Cha, 1994; Hair, Sarstedt, Ringle, & Mena, 2012) by cross-validated redundancy measure which is denoted as  $Q^2$ , a commonly found sample re-use technique (Geisser, 1974; Stone, 1974). Furthermore, in order for the model to have predictive validity according to Fornell and Cha (1994), the redundant communality should be bigger than zero for all endogenous variables which was also found to exist in this study (Table 5.12). In absence of that, a model is said to contain no predictive relevance. In Smart PLS software, predictive relevance of a model can be estimated by using blindfolding technique. This technique is tailored to estimate the parameters by excluding some of the data and by handling them as missing values (Fararah & Al-Swidi, 2013). Thereafter, the estimated parameters are processed to rebuild the raw data which were assumed previously as missing and consequently, the blindfolding technique creates general cross-validating metrics ( $Q^2$ ) (Chin, 1998). Chin (2010) pointed out that there can be diverse forms of  $Q^2$  depending upon the form of desired prediction. When the underlying latent



variable score cases are used for predicting data points, a cross-validated communality is achieved, whereas, a cross-validated redundancy is obtained when the latent variables which predict the block in question are used for predicting the data points (Chin, 1998; Duarte & Raposo, 2010; Wold, 1982).

Table 5.12

*Predictive Quality Indicators of the Model*

<b>Construct</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Cross-Validated Communality</b>	<b>Cross-Validated Redundancy</b>
<b>Consumer Attitude</b>	0.196	0.504	0.084
<b>Behavioral Intention</b>	0.380	0.564	0.200
<b>Actual Behavior</b>	0.292	0.558	0.148

Table 5.12 shows the results pertaining to prediction quality of the model under study. It shows that the cross-validated redundancies for the endogenous variables are 0.084, 0.200, and 0.148. These values reflect adequate predictive capabilities of the model based on Fornell and Cha (1994) criteria which necessitated these values to be larger than zero.

### **5.11 Goodness of Fit of the Overall Model**

After analyzing the predictive relevance of the model, the next step was to estimate goodness of fit (GoF). PLS which is variance based SEM facilitates deriving fit statistics from the discrepancy found “between the observed (in the case of manifest variables) or approximated (in the case of latent variables) values of the dependent variables and the values predicted by the model in question” (Hair, Sarstedt, Pieper, & Ringle, 2012). In variance based SEM, there is ideally said to be only one measure of GoF, unlike covariance based SEM. Moreover, the global GoF proposed for the PLS mainly caters to

the diagnostic aspect rather than formal testing one (Tenenhaus *et al.*, 2005; Wetzels, Odekerken-Schröder, & Van-Oppen, 2009).

As supported by Tenenhaus *et al.* (2005), GoF can be “defined as the geometric mean of the average communality and average  $R^2$  (for the endogenous constructs)” (Wetzels *et al.*, 2009) which is shown in the formula given below. A cut-off value of 0.5 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) has been proposed for communality as it equals AVE in PLS path modeling (Wetzels *et al.*, 2009). In order to estimate GoF in PLS path modeling, Wetzels *et al.* (2009) suggest using following formula:

$$GoF = \sqrt{(\overline{R^2} \times \overline{AVE})}$$

Table 5.13

*Goodness of Fit ( $R^2$  and Corresponding AVEs of Endogenous Constructs)*

<b>Construct</b>	<b><math>R^2</math></b>	<b>AVE</b>
<b>Actual Behavior</b>	0.292	0.559
<b>Behavioral Intention</b>	0.380	0.564
<b>Consumer Attitude</b>	0.196	0.504
<b>Geometric Mean</b>	0.279	0.542
<b>Goodness of Fit</b>		<b>0.389</b>

Table 5.13 is presented to show the goodness of fit in line with Hossain (2013), for the overall model under study. The formula given above has been used for estimating the GoF value which was found to be 0.389 which is ‘large’ reflecting an adequacy of global PLS model validity following the criteria for interpreting GoF values as proposed by Wetzels *et al.* (2009) who opined that the values of GoF can be: small=0.1, medium=0.25, and large=0.36.

## **5.12 Structural Model (Inner Model) and Hypothesis Testing**

After the goodness of fit of the outer model was established in the previous step, the next step included inspecting the standardized path coefficients for the purpose of testing hypothesized relationships considered in the study. Moreover, as mentioned previously, the Smart PLS 2.0 software was used to test the hypothesized model.

Conventional t-tests are not calculated in PLS SEM as a part of PLS algorithm for ascertaining the statistical significance of the loadings and that of the path coefficients as the underlying data is not assumed to be essentially normal (Barclay *et al.*, 1995). For such situations, Chin (1998), and Tenenhaus *et al.* (2005) supported the use of nonparametric resampling procedures like bootstrapping or jackknifing for inspecting the accuracy of the estimates and for generating significance tests results. As such, this study relied on using bootstrapping technique which is embedded in Smart PLS software for reaching to a conclusion that whether the path coefficients are significant or not from statistical point of view.

### **5.12.1 Hypothesis Testing and Path Coefficients for Direct Hypotheses**

Firstly, PLS algorithm was run in order to generate the path coefficients which are shown in Figure 5.1, and secondly, bootstrapping with 500 bootstrap samples which is bigger than the actual sample size of this study, thus meeting the condition suggested by Hair *et al.* (2013), and as used in the doctoral thesis by Hashim (2012), and Wilson (2011), as used by Henseler (2012), Lorenzo-Romero, Alarcón-del-Amo, and Constantinides (2014), and Lowry and Gaskin (2014), and as deliberated with J. Gaskin (personal communication, September 6, 2014) through email communication, was run in order to

generate the t-values which are shown in Figure 5.2. The purpose of running the model with all variables was to ascertain the results of direct relationships (independent and dependent variable relationship) emanating from the research objectives of this study.

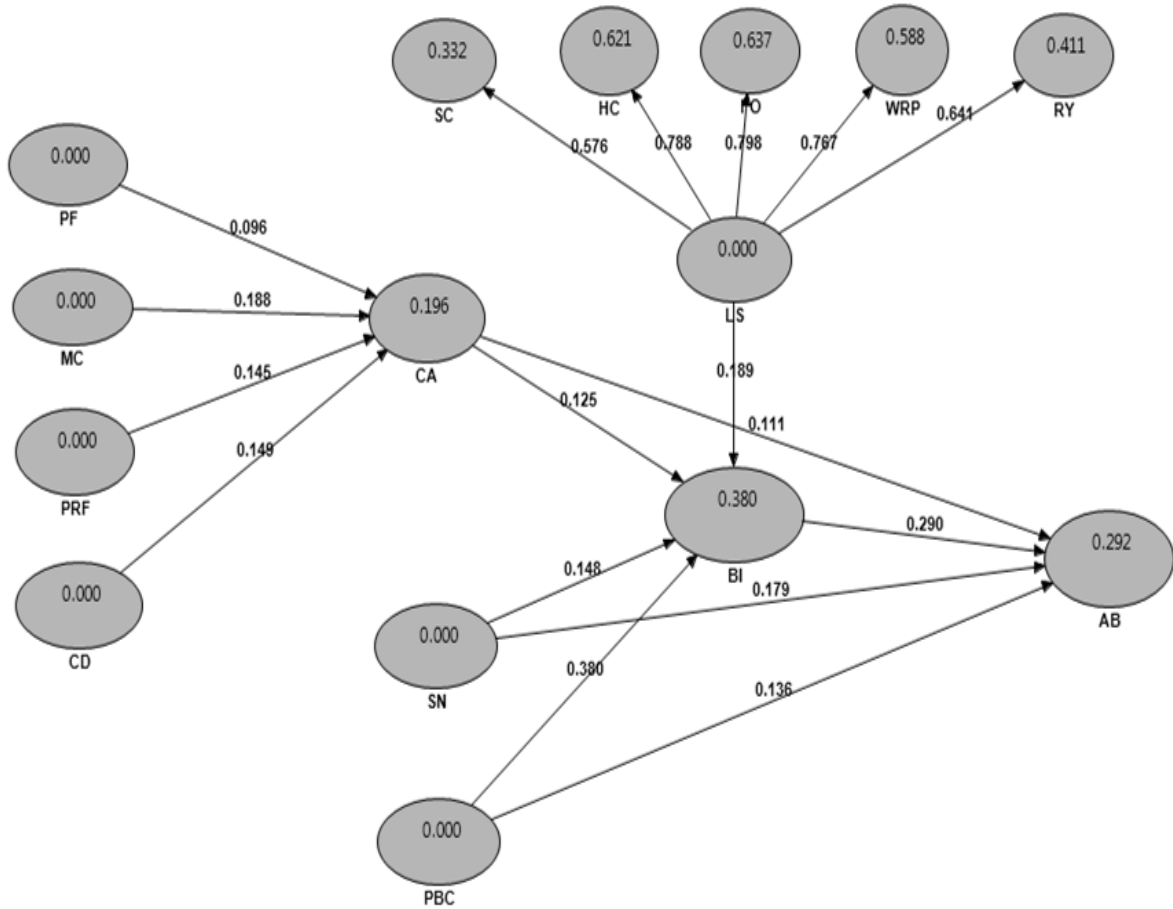


Figure 5.1

*Path Model Results ( $\beta$ -values): Direct Hypotheses*

[PF: Product Fairness; MC: Marketing Communications; PRF: Price Fairness ; CD: Channels of Distribution ; CA: Consumer Attitude; SN: Subjective Norms ; PBC: Perceived Behavioral Control; BI: Behavioral Intention; AB: Actual Behavior ; LS: Lifestyle; SC: Self-confidence ; HC: Health Consciousness ; FO: Family Orientation ; WRP: Women’s Role and Perception ; RY: Religiosity]

The path model results yielding  $\beta$ -values as shown in Figure 5.1, and the path model significance results yielding t-values as shown in Figure 5.2 generated from

bootstrapping technique further led to calculating p-values for all direct relationships (H1-H9) which finally became a basis for reaching to the conclusion about whether a hypothesis is supported or not.

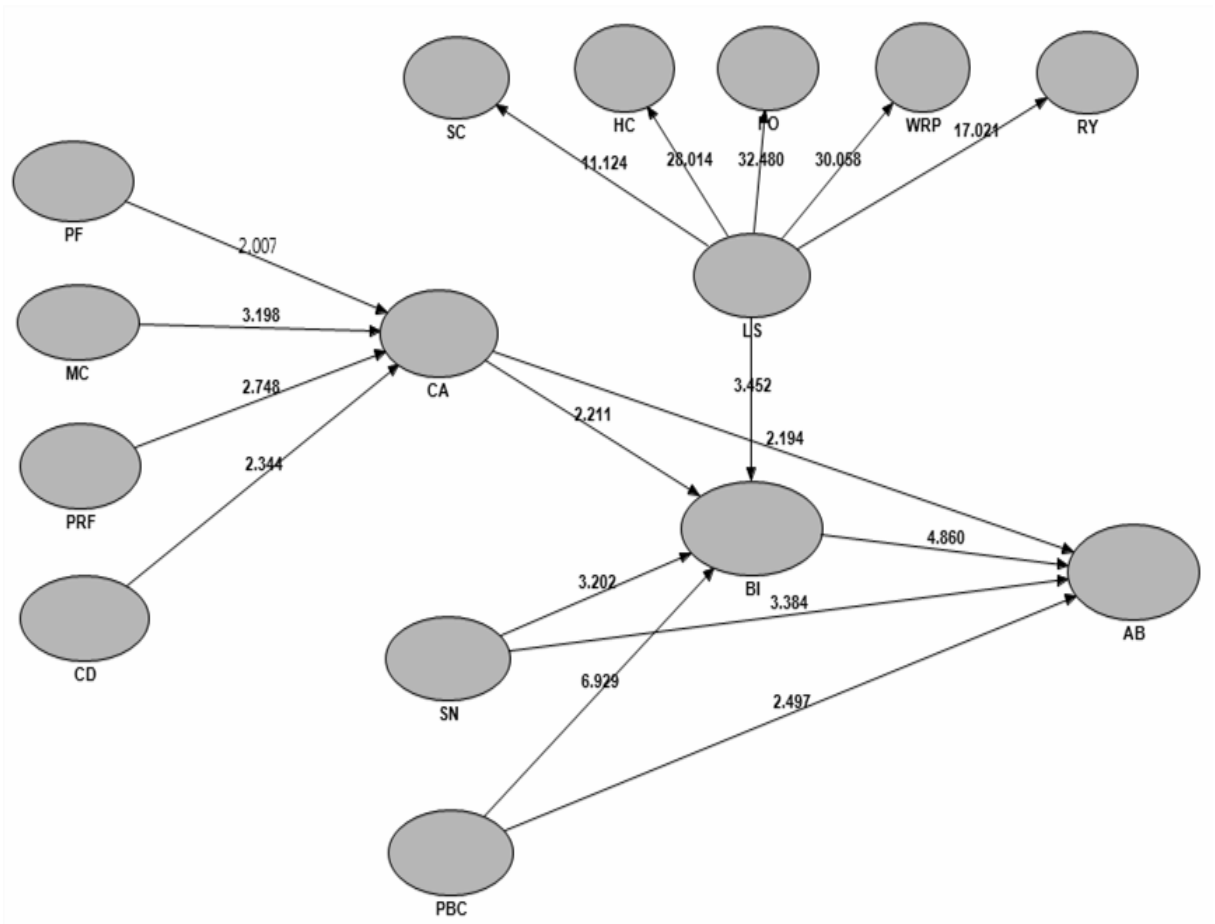


Figure 5.2

*Path Model Significance Results (t-values): Direct Hypotheses*

Table 5.14 shows the final results of the structural model (inner model). As it can be seen in Table 5.14, hypothesis H1 stating a significant positive relationship between product fairness and consumer attitude is supported at 0.05 level of significance ( $\beta=0.096$ ,  $t=2.007$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Thereafter, second hypothesis H2 was also seen to be supported indicating a significant positive relationship between marketing communications and

consumer attitude ( $\beta=0.188$ ,  $t=3.198$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Furthermore, hypotheses H3 and H4 were found to be accepted wherein price fairness ( $\beta=0.145$ ,  $t=2.748$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and channels of distribution ( $\beta=0.149$ ,  $t=2.344$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) respectively possessed a positive relationship with consumer attitude. Thereafter, behavioral intention was seen to be positively impacted by consumer attitude ( $\beta=0.125$ ,  $t=2.211$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), subjective norms ( $\beta=0.148$ ,  $t=3.202$ ,  $p<0.01$ ), and by perceived behavioral control ( $\beta=0.380$ ,  $t=6.929$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) as stated under hypothesis H5, H6, and H7 respectively, thus holding them all true. Finally, hypotheses H8 and H9 were supported showing that actual behavior is positively influenced by perceived behavioral control ( $\beta=0.136$ ,  $t=2.497$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) and by behavioral intention ( $\beta=0.290$ ,  $t=4.860$ ,  $p<0.01$ ) respectively.

Table 5.14

*Inner Model Results*

Hypothesis No.	Hypothesized Effect	Path coefficient	Standard Error	T-Value	P-Value	Decision
H1	<b>Product Fairness -&gt; Consumer Attitude</b>	0.096	0.048	2.007	0.023**	Supported
H2	<b>Marketing Communications -&gt; Consumer Attitude</b>	0.188	0.059	3.198	0.001***	Supported
H3	<b>Price Fairness -&gt; Consumer Attitude</b>	0.145	0.053	2.748	0.003***	Supported
H4	<b>Channels of Distribution -&gt; Consumer Attitude</b>	0.149	0.063	2.344	0.010**	Supported
H5	<b>Consumer Attitude -&gt; Behavioral Intention</b>	0.125	0.056	2.211	0.014**	Supported
H6	<b>Subjective Norms -&gt; Behavioral Intention</b>	0.148	0.046	3.202	0.001***	Supported
H7	<b>Perceived Behavioral Control -&gt; Behavioral Intention</b>	0.380	0.055	6.929	0.000***	Supported
H8	<b>Perceived Behavioral Control -&gt; Actual Behavior</b>	0.136	0.054	2.497	0.006***	Supported
H9	<b>Behavioral Intention -&gt; Actual Behavior</b>	0.290	0.060	4.860	0.000***	Supported

\*\*\*:P<0.01; \*\*:P<0.05; \*:P<0.1

### 5.12.2 Testing Mediating Effects

When two related constructs are intervened by a third construct, there is said to exist a mediating effect (Hair *et al.*, 2013). As this study made use of Smart PLS for conducting the data analysis, following the suit, it relied on using bootstrapping method (Hair *et al.*, 2013) which is considered slightly rigorous for estimating mediation effects however, decision on the basis of Baron and Kenny (1986) is also shown in Table 5.15. To estimate mediation using Baron and Kenny (1986), it is required to have  $a$ ,  $b$ ,  $c$ , and  $c'$  values wherein ' $c$ ' represents the effect of independent variable on the dependent variable without keeping the proposed mediator in the model, while  $a$ ,  $b$ , and  $c'$  are calculated by adding the proposed mediating variable in the model. Here, ' $a$ ' represents effect of independent variable on the proposed mediating variable, ' $b$ ' represents effect of proposed mediating variable on the dependent variable, and  $c'$  represents effect of independent variable on the dependent variable. If  $a$ ,  $b$ ,  $c$ , and  $c'$  are all significant, it is said to be partially mediating according to Baron and Kenny (1986) method which was also the case found in this study as shown in Table 5.15. However, as it was also determined to use bootstrapping method (Hair *et al.*, 2013) which is gaining popularity these days due to its rigor (Hayes, 2009), a further calculation (Appendix D) was done to estimate the bootstrap results of the indirect effect ( $a*b$ ). The decision under bootstrapping method is done on the basis of  $t$ -value of  $a*b$  as shown in Table 5.15. If  $t$ -value of  $a*b$  is  $> 1.96$ , mediation is said to exist, otherwise not.

Table 5.15

*Results of Mediating Hypotheses*

Hyp. No	Hypothesized Effect	a		b		a*b		c		c'		Decision	
		Path Coefficient	T-Value	Path Coefficient	T-Value	Path Coefficient	T-Value	Path Coefficient	T-Value	Path Coefficient	T-Value	Bootstrap	Baron and Kenny
H10	CA-> Behavioral Intention-> AB	0.171	2.792	0.290	5.155	0.049	2.517	0.160	2.937	0.111	2.078	Mediation	Partial Mediation
H11	SN-> Behavioral Intention-> AB	0.159	3.607	0.290	5.155	0.046	2.824	0.226	4.652	0.179	3.373	Mediation	Partial Mediation
H12	PBC-> Behavioral Intention-> AB	0.424	8.580	0.290	5.155	0.123	4.272	0.259	5.782	0.136	2.417	Mediation	Partial Mediation

CA: Consumer Attitude; AB: Actual Behavior; SN: Subjective Norms; PBC: Perceived Behavioral Control



Table 5.15 shows that all three hypothesized relationships (H10-H12) in concern were supported as having mediating effect in this study. It can be seen that hypothesis H10 was supported (t-value of  $a*b=2.517$ ) showing the presence of mediation effect of behavioral intention between consumer attitude and actual behavior relationship. Thereafter, hypothesis H11 was supported (t-value of  $a*b=2.824$ ) exhibiting a significant mediating effect of behavioral intention between subjective norms and actual behavior relationship. Finally, the relationship between perceived behavioral control and actual behavior was also seen to be significantly mediated (t-value of  $a*b=4.272$ ) by behavioral intention as stated under hypothesis H12. It should be noted that, as shown in the last column of Table 5.15, decisions on the basis of Baron and Kenny (1986) reflected partial mediation (a, b, c and c' values were all significant) for all of the aforesaid three hypotheses (H10-12) which are explained further in the discussion section (5.14) of this chapter.

### **5.12.3 Testing Moderating Effects**

When the influence of an exogenous variable on an endogenous variable is contingent upon the values of another variable, there is said to exist moderating effect wherein such variable moderates the relationship between the aforesaid exogenous and endogenous variables (Hair *et al.*, 2013). In this study, lifestyle was hypothesized (H13) to moderate the relationship between consumer attitude and behavioral intention. However, as it consisted of five dimensions, it was first analyzed as a second order construct wherein the latent variable scores of the five dimensions were used as its measurement indicators.

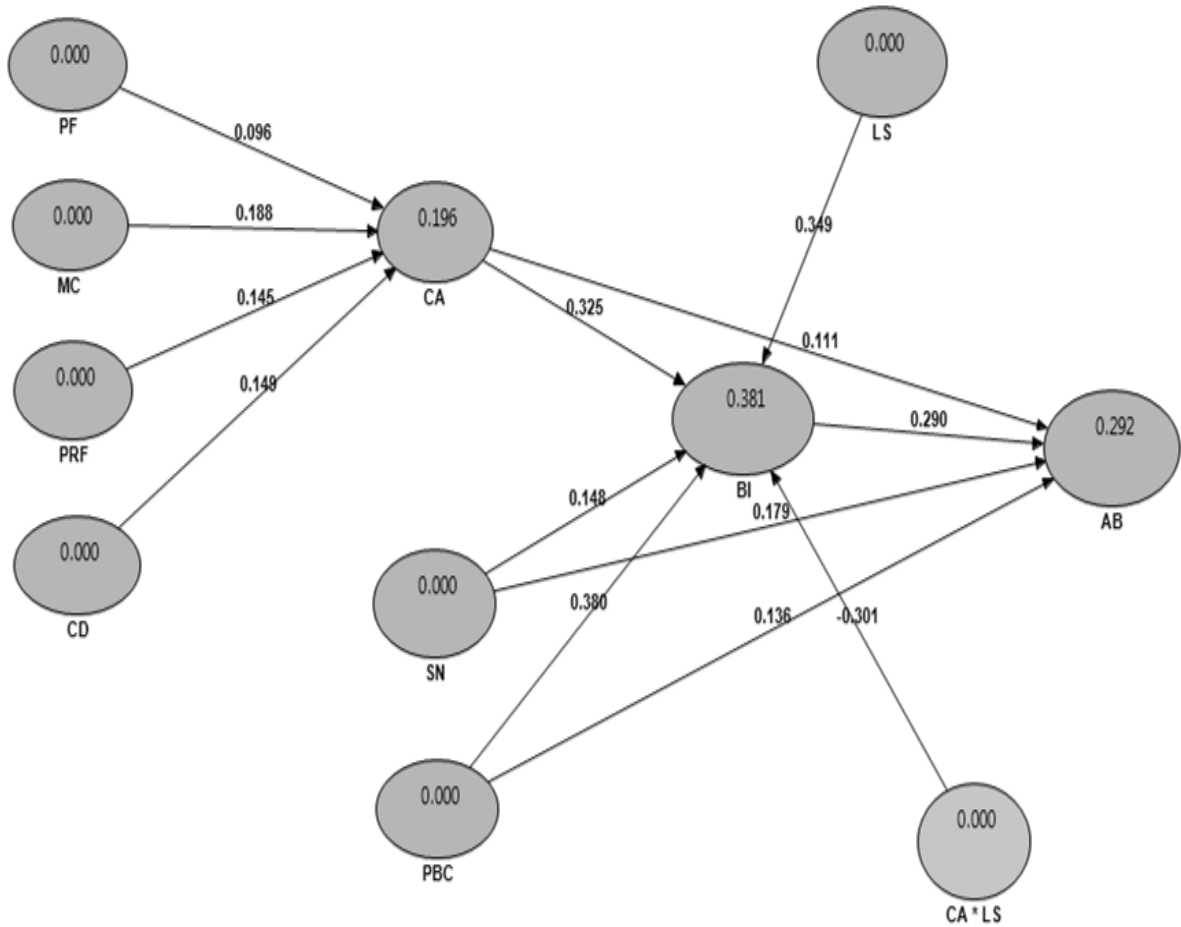


Figure 5.3

*Path Model Results (β-values): Interaction of Lifestyle (second-order construct)*

In SEM terms, the interaction of lifestyle (represented in the figure as CA\*LS under Smart PLS terminology) is shown in Figure 5.3 (path model results showing β-values). Thereafter, to gain a deeper insight and to advance the field of knowledge further, the dimensions (self-confidence, family orientation, health consciousness, religiosity, women’s role and perception) of lifestyle variable were also individually sub hypothesized (H13a-H13e) to moderate the relationship between consumer attitude and behavioral intention. As such, to estimate the potential moderation effects of these

dimensions, it was necessary to create the individual interaction of these dimensions which are represented in Smart PLS terminology as CA\*SC, CA\*FO, CA\*HC, CA\*RY, and CA\*WRP for the five respective dimensions of lifestyle variable. These interaction effects of lifestyle's dimensions can be seen in Figure 5.4 which shows the path coefficients of the proposed moderating effects of these dimensions individually.

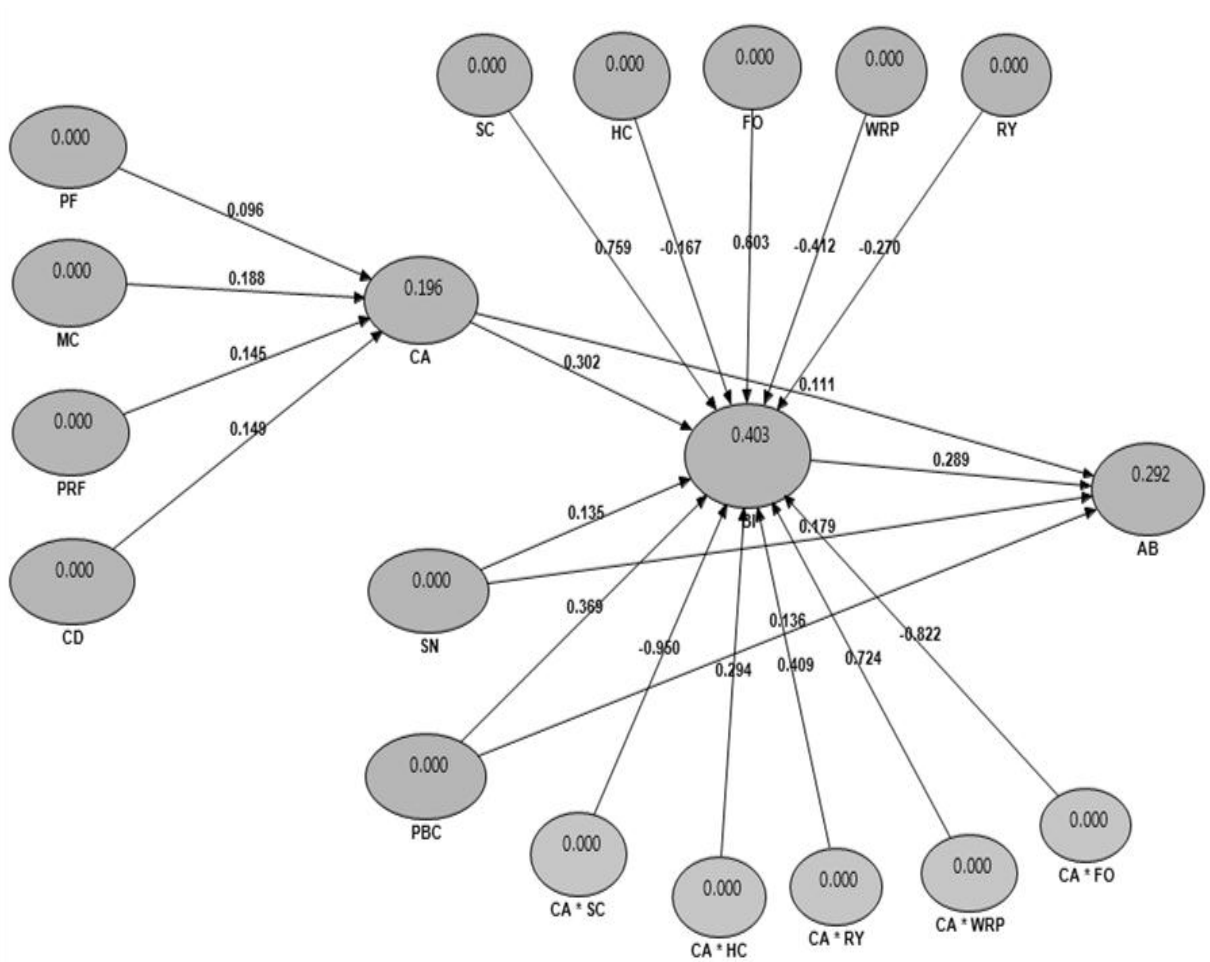


Figure 5.4

*Path Model Results ( $\beta$ -values): Interaction of Lifestyle's Dimensions*

As a whole, on the basis of path model results of the proposed moderating variable and its dimensions as shown in Figure 5.3 and Figure 5.4 respectively, and on the basis of

their significance results, the P-values were calculated and decisions were drawn regarding whether moderating effects exist or not. The results of moderating effects are presented in Table 5.16.

It can be seen in Table 5.16 that the hypothesis H13 was not supported ( $\beta=-0.301$ ,  $t=0.637$ ,  $p>0.1$ ) which shows that lifestyle did not moderate the consumer attitude and behavioral intention relationship as hypothesized in this study. Furthermore, self-confidence was seen to moderate significantly ( $\beta=-0.950$ ,  $t=2.047$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) the relationship between consumer attitude and behavioral intention as stated under hypothesis H13a. Thereafter, the relationship between consumer attitude and behavioral intention was found not to be moderated significantly by family orientation ( $\beta=-0.822$ ,  $t=1.258$ ,  $p>0.1$ ), health consciousness ( $\beta=0.294$ ,  $t=0.453$ ,  $p>0.1$ ), women's role and perception ( $\beta=0.724$ ,  $t=1.109$ ,  $p>0.1$ ), and religiosity ( $\beta=0.409$ ,  $t=0.703$ ,  $p>0.1$ ) as stated under hypotheses H13b, H13c, H13d, and H13e respectively.

Table 5.16  
*Results of Moderating Effects*

Hypothesis No.	Hypothesised Effect	Path Coefficient	Standard Error	T-Value	P-Value	Decision
H13	CA * Lifestyle -> BI	-0.301	0.473	0.637	0.524	Not Supported
H13a	CA * Self-confidence -> BI	-0.950	0.464	2.047	0.041**	Supported
H13b	CA * Family Orientation -> BI	-0.822	0.654	1.258	0.209	Not Supported
H13c	CA * Health Consciousness -> BI	0.294	0.649	0.453	0.650	Not Supported
H13d	CA * Women's Role and Perception -> BI	0.724	0.653	1.109	0.268	Not Supported
H13e	CA * Religiosity -> BI	0.409	0.582	0.703	0.483	Not Supported

\*\*\*:P<0.01; \*\*:P<0.05; \*:P<0.1

CA: Consumer Attitude; BI: Behavioral Intention

#### 5.12.4 Multi Group Analysis

In structural equations modeling, multi group analysis is conducted for testing differences between similar models estimated separately for two or more groups of respondents (Hair *et al.*, 2010; Hair *et al.*, 2013). In Partial Least Squares Path Modeling (PLS SEM), multi group analysis can be explained as a process of making comparison between PLS estimates across subpopulations (Henseler, 2012). The basic objective is to see whether a particular model behaves similarly or differently for such groups. In this study, two demographic variables viz. education and income were hypothesized to moderate the relationships between: product fairness and consumer attitude; marketing communications and consumer attitude; price fairness and consumer attitude; and channels of distribution and consumer attitude. As these kind of moderating variables (education, income) seek to capture some observable or unobservable traits of respondents, making group comparisons becomes highly beneficial from both practical and theoretical perspective which leads to obtaining differentiated findings (Hair *et al.*, 2013). As such, a multi group analysis was conducted wherein an attempt was made to observe that how the model behaves for different education and income groups. For statistical estimations under multi group analysis in such situations, income and education levels can be bifurcated in two groups: high and low. Accordingly, the data was divided (split in SPSS terminology) as per suggestions made by Byrne (2010) and Hair *et al.* (2013) and resultantly, separate data sets were created for high education group (respondents possessing bachelors or above qualification), low education group (respondents possessing education up to school or no formal education), high income group (respondents with an income of 3001 RM or more), and low income group

(respondents having income in the range of 0-3000 RM). And finally, the model under this study was run one by one for each of these four groups for making comparisons.

#### **5.12.4.1 Measurement Invariance**

One of the ways of comparing measurement models is suggested as measurement invariance or measurement equivalence whose prime objective is to ensure that models measured under different conditions produce equivalent depictions of the same construct (Chin, Mills, Steel, & Schwarz, 2012; Ellis, Aguirre-Urreta, Sun, & Marakas, 2006; Hair *et al.*, 2010). As such, the purpose of this analysis was to provide the first empirical comparison between the two groups created for both education and income individually and it further aimed at estimating the equivalence of factor loadings across the two respective groups. To do so, first of all the data for high education group was attached to the main model in Smart PLS and thereafter, PLS algorithm, and bootstrapping with 2000 resamples was run producing path model and significance output respectively. Similarly, the model was run for low education group also generating path model and significance results. From the output arising from these four results, statistically, a comparison between high education group and low education group was done estimating p-value for the invariance (equivalence) of the loadings as shown in Table 5.17.

Table 5.17

*Results of Invariance Analysis (Education groups)*

Construct	Items	High Education (n=236)			Low Education (n=233)			P-value	Invariance	
		Loading	Standard Error	T-value	Loading	Standard Error	T-value		Decision	Full/Partial Invariance
Actual Behavior	AB1	0.772	0.032	24.217	0.733	0.043	17.121	0.465	Invariant	Full
	AB2	0.823	0.023	35.367	0.809	0.027	30.515	0.683	Invariant	
	AB3	0.796	0.028	28.072	0.708	0.039	18.093	0.068	Invariant	
	AB4	0.641	0.060	10.606	0.668	0.052	12.835	0.741	Invariant	
Behavioral Intention	BI1	0.704	0.049	14.341	0.671	0.048	14.072	0.623	Invariant	Partial
	BI2	0.778	0.043	17.916	0.756	0.031	24.097	0.684	Invariant	
	BI3	0.849	0.025	33.886	0.825	0.023	35.767	0.472	Invariant	
	BI4	0.831	0.028	29.601	0.681	0.045	15.142	0.005	Not Invariant	
	BI5	0.767	0.030	25.394	0.532	0.112	4.728	0.042	Not Invariant	
Consumer Attitude	CA2	0.749	0.035	21.544	0.664	0.051	12.980	0.165	Invariant	Partial
	CA3	0.804	0.031	25.744	0.691	0.048	14.298	0.048	Not Invariant	
	CA4	0.729	0.045	16.043	0.694	0.050	13.996	0.608	Invariant	
	CA5	0.762	0.036	21.376	0.649	0.095	6.851	0.262	Invariant	
	CA6	0.741	0.046	16.080	0.684	0.045	15.306	0.381	Invariant	
	CA7	0.661	0.054	12.225	0.584	0.059	9.893	0.334	Invariant	
	Channels of Distribution	CD1	0.706	0.058	12.257	0.630	0.071	8.925	0.407	
CD2		0.771	0.046	16.652	0.716	0.045	15.888	0.393	Invariant	
CD3		0.776	0.042	18.259	0.745	0.048	15.486	0.626	Invariant	
CD4		0.831	0.036	23.232	0.759	0.037	20.523	0.164	Invariant	
CD5		0.717	0.073	9.864	0.724	0.046	15.581	0.935	Invariant	

Table 5.17 (Continued)

	MC1	0.712	0.051	13.837	0.617	0.085	7.288	0.334	Invariant	
<b>Marketing Communications</b>	MC2	0.751	0.039	19.215	0.596	0.093	6.403	0.122	Invariant	
	MC3	0.767	0.035	21.627	0.700	0.064	10.946	0.353	Invariant	Full
	MC5	0.733	0.054	13.600	0.725	0.057	12.796	0.915	Invariant	
	MC6	0.689	0.056	12.347	0.751	0.059	12.676	0.449	Invariant	
<b>Perceived Behavioral Control</b>	PBC1	0.816	0.033	24.685	0.783	0.045	17.413	0.549	Invariant	
	PBC2	0.886	0.016	54.036	0.867	0.021	42.030	0.474	Invariant	Partial
	PBC3	0.829	0.024	33.898	0.710	0.047	15.100	0.024	Not Invariant	
<b>Product Fairness</b>	PF1	0.803	0.047	17.080	0.693	0.120	5.757	0.392	Invariant	
	PF2	0.831	0.045	18.343	0.845	0.068	12.501	0.864	Invariant	Full
	PF3	0.827	0.036	22.958	0.678	0.102	6.621	0.169	Invariant	
	PF4	0.807	0.038	21.154	0.617	0.127	4.870	0.150	Invariant	
<b>Price Fairness</b>	PRF1	0.743	0.048	15.470	0.556	0.086	6.502	0.056	Invariant	
	PRF2	0.776	0.041	18.947	0.695	0.063	10.988	0.279	Invariant	
	PRF3	0.721	0.059	12.165	0.708	0.071	9.912	0.894	Invariant	Full
	PRF4	0.671	0.060	11.117	0.768	0.057	13.487	0.245	Invariant	
	PRF5	0.652	0.068	9.585	0.768	0.047	16.258	0.159	Invariant	
<b>Subjective norms</b>	SN1	0.796	0.033	23.845	0.626	0.093	6.704	0.086	Invariant	
	SN2	0.865	0.021	40.817	0.796	0.044	17.919	0.160	Invariant	Full
	SN3	0.824	0.034	24.533	0.859	0.034	25.268	0.460	Invariant	
<b>Life Style</b>	FO	0.798	0.034	23.559	0.797	0.068	11.776	0.988	Invariant	
	HC	0.789	0.038	20.958	0.808	0.069	11.744	0.806	Invariant	
	RY	0.590	0.066	8.926	0.641	0.100	6.396	0.670	Invariant	Full
	SC	0.654	0.059	11.144	0.563	0.113	4.981	0.471	Invariant	
	WRP	0.779	0.042	18.667	0.696	0.088	7.911	0.388	Invariant	

Invariant if  $P > 0.05$



The p-value column as shown in Table 5.17 presents the significance of difference between the two groups (high education and low education). In this study, when the loadings of two groups were compared, and if the difference found was not significant (i.e.  $p > 0.05$ ), it was said to be invariant or equivalent. In other words, it shows the equivalent representation of the loading across the two groups in question. Furthermore, when all loadings within a construct are invariant, the construct is said to possess full invariance, however, when at least two loadings in a construct are invariant, the construct is said to possess partial invariance (Hair *et al.*, 2010).

It was further opined by Hair *et al.* (2010) that it is necessary for all constructs to possess either full or partial invariance in order to move to the next stage of analysis. Accordingly, it can be seen from table 5.17 that all constructs for education groups were either partially or fully invariant allowing the researcher to move to the next step towards estimating moderating effects.

Similarly, the model was run for two groups of income namely high income group and low income group. Path model and significance results were obtained by running PLS algorithm and bootstrapping respectively which were further used to make comparison between the two groups as shown in Table 5.18. It can be seen in Table 5.18 that all constructs possessed either full or partial invariance. As such, after achieving the factor loadings' equivalence (Hair *et al.*, 2010) by cross validating for income and education groups, it allowed the researcher to move on to the next stage wherein path coefficients are compared for obtaining results of moderating effects.

Table 5.18

*Results of Invariance Analysis (Income groups)*

Construct	Items	High Income (n=161)			Low Income (n=308)			Invariance		
		Loading	Standard Error	T-value	Loading	Standard Error	T-value	P-value	Decision	Full/Partial Invariance
<b>Actual Behavior</b>	AB1	0.685	0.058	11.876	0.780	0.027	28.970	0.088	Invariant	Full
	AB2	0.774	0.036	21.696	0.841	0.018	45.922	0.063	Invariant	
	AB3	0.740	0.042	17.503	0.776	0.029	26.835	0.470	Invariant	
	AB4	0.619	0.079	7.849	0.669	0.044	15.365	0.543	Invariant	
<b>Behavioral Intention</b>	BI1	0.583	0.074	7.915	0.707	0.041	17.163	0.111	Invariant	Partial
	BI2	0.606	0.081	7.484	0.821	0.027	30.023	0.002	Not Invariant	
	BI3	0.775	0.036	21.440	0.867	0.019	45.346	0.013	Not Invariant	
	BI4	0.743	0.044	16.809	0.800	0.030	26.259	0.283	Invariant	
	BI5	0.738	0.043	17.121	0.664	0.066	9.997	0.449	Invariant	
<b>Consumer Attitude</b>	CA2	0.701	0.052	13.356	0.729	0.039	18.471	0.673	Invariant	Full
	CA3	0.739	0.055	13.481	0.767	0.034	22.594	0.645	Invariant	
	CA4	0.679	0.070	9.732	0.743	0.037	20.052	0.372	Invariant	
	CA5	0.747	0.038	19.575	0.685	0.070	9.735	0.535	Invariant	
	CA6	0.706	0.050	14.053	0.715	0.044	16.083	0.899	Invariant	
	CA7	0.661	0.056	11.717	0.621	0.061	10.163	0.669	Invariant	
	CD1	0.604	0.084	7.200	0.695	0.047	14.740	0.309	Invariant	
<b>Channels of Distribution</b>	CD2	0.726	0.056	13.023	0.758	0.034	22.329	0.611	Invariant	Partial
	CD3	0.707	0.062	11.463	0.791	0.034	23.116	0.193	Invariant	
	CD4	0.733	0.047	15.505	0.833	0.025	33.203	0.040	Not Invariant	
	CD5	0.638	0.093	6.835	0.750	0.043	17.433	0.212	Invariant	

Table 5.18 (Continued)

	MC1	0.645	0.098	6.554	0.667	0.049	13.499	0.816	Invariant	
<b>Marketing Communications</b>	MC2	0.699	0.074	9.433	0.689	0.050	13.656	0.908	Invariant	
	MC3	0.708	0.064	10.978	0.748	0.044	17.113	0.601	Invariant	Full
	MC5	0.649	0.104	6.224	0.758	0.037	20.712	0.229	Invariant	
	MC6	0.645	0.092	7.027	0.737	0.042	17.439	0.298	Invariant	
<b>Perceived Behavioral Control</b>	PBC1	0.745	0.057	13.027	0.825	0.029	28.219	0.169	Invariant	
	PBC2	0.840	0.032	26.211	0.890	0.016	56.539	0.116	Invariant	Full
	PBC3	0.776	0.049	15.972	0.787	0.030	25.862	0.839	Invariant	
<b>Product Fairness</b>	PF1	0.634	0.108	5.896	0.803	0.047	17.200	0.093	Invariant	
	PF2	0.822	0.072	11.475	0.813	0.040	20.405	0.906	Invariant	Full
	PF3	0.641	0.120	5.343	0.829	0.036	22.753	0.061	Invariant	
	PF4	0.822	0.057	14.498	0.709	0.062	11.491	0.233	Invariant	
<b>Price Fairness</b>	PRF1	0.636	0.081	7.855	0.705	0.054	13.149	0.461	Invariant	
	PRF2	0.697	0.060	11.674	0.772	0.042	18.368	0.297	Invariant	
	PRF3	0.602	0.104	5.787	0.768	0.040	19.102	0.075	Invariant	Partial
	PRF4	0.747	0.056	13.283	0.690	0.058	11.920	0.522	Invariant	
	PRF5	0.556	0.095	5.834	0.754	0.041	18.513	0.027	Not Invariant	
<b>Subjective Norms</b>	SN1	0.689	0.081	8.554	0.751	0.040	18.596	0.445	Invariant	
	SN2	0.809	0.041	19.870	0.862	0.023	38.200	0.220	Invariant	Full
	SN3	0.787	0.050	15.623	0.850	0.024	34.834	0.204	Invariant	
<b>Life Style</b>	FO	0.845	0.033	25.387	0.769	0.043	18.017	0.236	Invariant	
	HC	0.847	0.038	22.407	0.771	0.045	17.141	0.261	Invariant	
	RY	0.499	0.124	4.032	0.648	0.056	11.600	0.205	Invariant	Full
	SC	0.627	0.107	5.875	0.621	0.063	9.878	0.955	Invariant	
	WRP	0.790	0.061	12.993	0.722	0.049	14.655	0.399	Invariant	

Invariant if  $P > 0.05$

#### 5.12.4.2 Moderating Effects of Education and Income

Table 5.19 and 5.20 present the hypothesis results of demographic moderating variables namely education and income respectively.

Moderating effects of education are presented in Table 5.19 which shows that hypothesis H14 was not supported whereas hypotheses H15, H16, and H17 were supported. For hypothesis H14, when the path coefficients, standard error, and t-values of high education and low education groups were compared, the difference between the two groups was not found to be significant ( $P > 0.1$ ), and as such, it was concluded that education does not positively moderate the relationship between product fairness and consumer attitude. Thereafter for hypotheses H15, when the two groups were compared, the group difference between high education and low education was found to be significant ( $p < 0.1$ ) leading to the conclusion that education positively moderates the relationship between marketing communications and consumer attitude. Moreover, the influence of high education group ( $\beta = 0.255$ ,  $t = 2.901$ ) was seen to be stronger than that of low education group ( $\beta = 0.096$ ,  $t = 1.262$ ) on the relationship between marketing communications and consumer attitude. Afterwards, when the two groups were compared for hypothesis H16, the difference was found to be significant ( $p < 0.1$ ), which shows that there exists a positive moderating effect of education on the relationship between price fairness and consumer attitude. In this case also, high education group ( $\beta = 0.239$ ,  $t = 3.207$ ) had a stronger influence than the low education group ( $\beta = 0.078$ ,  $t = 1.210$ ) on price fairness and consumer attitude relationship. Finally, when the group comparison was made for hypothesis H17, the difference was found to be significant ( $p < 0.05$ ) which shows that education positively moderates the relationship between channels of distribution and

consumer attitude. Low education group ( $\beta=0.304$ ,  $t=3.735$ ) in this case was found to have a stronger influence than the high education group ( $\beta=0.026$ ,  $t=0.280$ ) on the relationship between channels of distribution and consumer attitude.

Moderating effects of income are presented in Table 5.20 which shows that all four related hypotheses (H18-H21) were not supported and thus, there was no moderating effect of income found in this study. For hypotheses H18, when the path coefficients, standard error, and t-values of high income and low income groups were compared, the difference was not found to be significant ( $p>0.1$ ) which shows that income does not moderate the relationship between product fairness and consumer attitude. Furthermore, when the group comparison was performed for hypothesis H19, the difference was also not found to be significant ( $p>0.1$ ) and it was concluded that income possesses no moderating effect on the relationship between marketing communications and consumer attitude. Thereafter, the group difference was not seen to be significant ( $p>0.1$ ) for hypothesis H20, which shows that income does not moderate the relationship between price fairness and consumer attitude. And finally, hypothesis H21 was also not supported with a non-significant ( $p>0.1$ ) group difference between high income and low income groups showing that there is no moderating effect of income on the relationship between channels of distribution and consumer attitude in this study.

Table 5.19

*Results for Moderating Effects of Education*

Hyp. No.	Hypothesis	High Education (n=236)			Low Education (n=233)			Moderation	
		Path coefficient	Standard Error	T-Value	Path coefficient	Standard Error	T-Value	P-value	Decision
H14	Product Fairness -> CA	0.057	0.065	0.873	0.115	0.068	1.693	0.268	Not Moderated
H15	Marketing Communications -> CA	0.255	0.088	2.901	0.096	0.076	1.262	0.087*	Moderated
H16	Price Fairness -> CA	0.239	0.075	3.207	0.078	0.065	1.210	0.051*	Moderated
H17	Channels of Distribution -> CA	0.026	0.093	0.280	0.304	0.081	3.735	0.012**	Moderated

\*\*\*:P<0.01; \*\*:P<0.05; \*:P<0.1 ; CA: Consumer Attitude

Table 5.20

*Results for Moderating Effects of Income*

Hyp. No.	Hypothesis	High Income (n=161)			Low Income (n=308)			Moderation	
		Path coefficient	Standard Error	T-value	Path coefficient	Standard Error	T-value	P-value	Decision
H18	Product Fairness -> CA	0.148	0.081	1.818	0.088	0.063	1.400	0.285	Not Moderated
H19	Marketing Communications -> CA	0.115	0.114	1.009	0.213	0.071	3.004	0.223	Not Moderated
H20	Price Fairness -> CA	0.199	0.088	2.256	0.120	0.062	1.927	0.229	Not Moderated
H21	Channels of Distribution -> CA	0.230	0.106	2.161	0.113	0.076	1.475	0.185	Not Moderated

\*\*\*:P<0.01; \*\*:P<0.05; \*:P<0.1 ; CA: Consumer Attitude

### 5.13 Summary of Hypotheses' Results

The summary of hypotheses results of this study has been presented in Table 5.21. It can be seen in the Table 5.21 that hypotheses H1-H12, H13a, and H15-H17 were supported whereas hypotheses H13, H13b-H13e, H14, and H18-H21 were found not to be supported.

Table 5.21

*Hypotheses Summary*

<b>Hyp.</b>	<b>Hypothesized Path</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>Direct Relationships</b>		
H1	Product Fairness -> Consumer Attitude	Supported
H2	Marketing Communications -> Consumer Attitude	Supported
H3	Price Fairness -> Consumer Attitude	Supported
H4	Channels of Distribution -> Consumer Attitude	Supported
H5	Consumer Attitude -> Behavioral Intention	Supported
H6	Subjective Norms -> Behavioral Intention	Supported
H7	Perceived Behavioral Control -> Behavioral Intention	Supported
H8	Perceived Behavioral Control -> Actual Behavior	Supported
H9	Behavioral Intention -> Actual Behavior	Supported
<b>Mediating Effects</b>		
H10	Consumer Attitude -> Behavioral Intention-> Actual Behavior	Partial Mediation
H11	Subjective Norms-> Behavioral Intention-> Actual Behavior	Partial Mediation
H12	Perceived Behavioral Control-> Behavioral Intention-> Actual Behavior	Partial Mediation
<b>Moderating Effects</b>		
H13	Consumer Attitude * Lifestyle -> Behavioral Intention	Not Supported
H13a	Consumer Attitude * Self-confidence -> Behavioral Intention	Supported
H13b	Consumer Attitude * Family Orientation -> Behavioral Intention	Not Supported
H13c	Consumer Attitude * Health Consciousness -> Behavioral Intention	Not Supported
H13d	Consumer Attitude * Women's Role and Perception -> Behavioral Intention	Not Supported
H13e	Consumer Attitude * Religiosity -> Behavioral Intention	Not Supported

Table 5.21 (Continued)

<b>Hyp.</b>	<b>Hypothesized Path</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>Multi Group Analysis: Moderating Effects of Education</b>		
H14	Product Fairness -> Consumer Attitude	Not Moderated
H15	Marketing Communications -> Consumer Attitude	Moderated
H16	Price Fairness -> Consumer Attitude	Moderated
H17	Channels of Distribution -> Consumer Attitude	Moderated
<b>Multi Group Analysis: Moderating Effects of Income</b>		
H18	Product Fairness -> Consumer Attitude	Not Moderated
H19	Marketing Communications -> Consumer Attitude	Not Moderated
H20	Price Fairness -> Consumer Attitude	Not Moderated
H21	Channels of Distribution -> Consumer Attitude	Not Moderated

#### **5.14 Discussion of Findings**

An empirical investigation was conducted to test the model based on the relationships among variables as postulated in the theoretical framework of this study pertaining to antecedents and consequences of consumer attitude towards ethical marketing practices reflected by product fairness, marketing communications, price fairness and channels of distribution in Malaysian facial care sector with consideration of moderating effects of demography and lifestyle and its dimensions. The sources of information for hypothesis testing were female consumers from across Malaysia which further led to achieving research objectives emerging from the problem statement and research questions. The measurement model went through several stages of desirable statistical treatment and it was refined adequately so as to reach to the structural model with goodness of fit having achieved which further enabled hypothesis testing. As such, in the subsequent sections,



hypotheses results are discussed corresponding to the research objectives formulated under this study.

#### **5.14.1 Direct Paths**

*Relationship between ethical marketing practices (product fairness, marketing communications, price fairness, and channels of distribution) and female consumers' attitude in the Malaysian facial care sector.* The first objective was to investigate the extent of relationship between various aspects of ethical marketing practices and attitude of female consumers in the Malaysian facial care sector. For achieving this objective, there were four hypothesis (H1-H4) developed in this study wherein product fairness, marketing communications, price fairness, and channels of distribution were taken as antecedents of female consumers' attitude towards ethical marketing practices of firms.

Hypothesis H1, which asserted a positive relationship between product fairness and consumer attitude was accepted using PLS output with a significant relationship found between these two variables. The existence of a significant positive relationship between product fairness and consumer attitude can be attributed to the likelihood that fairness aspects in product like suitable product features, transparency in product information, potential safe application etc. are considered important and as a rudimentary requirement by the female consumers which further helps them form a stronger attitude towards the firms offering such products. Put differently, higher the product fairness maintained by firms, the stronger will be the formation of consumer attitude in the facial care sector. With a  $\beta$  value of 0.096 for this relationship, product fairness emerged as an antecedent at fourth position in terms of extent of influence on consumer attitude. This corroborates the

findings of Oberseder *et al.* (2011) who revealed that consumers are seen to report having positive attitude towards buying products from the firms that are ethically and socially responsible.

Hypothesis H2, which stated a positive relationship between fairness in marketing communications and consumer attitude was also supported. The positive relationship between marketing communications and consumer attitude can be attributed to the possibility that female consumers expect honesty in advertisements, show intolerance to deception in firms' marketing actions, and possess due privacy concerns in terms of sharing of their personal information, and accordingly, they perceive it vital that firms should be fair in their promotions and marketing communications related activities. As such, the greater is the ethicality of firms in their marketing communications, the stronger will be the attitude of consumers. Fairness in marketing communications emerged as the strongest antecedent of consumer attitude with a  $\beta$  value of 0.188 for this relationship. This is in line with the findings of Koklic (2011) who revealed that consumers immensely value promotional activities and they expect from the marketers that they offer adequate information.

Hypothesis H3 specifying a positive relationship between price fairness and consumer attitude was accepted. The positive relationship between price fairness and consumer attitude seems to emerge from the possibility that Malaysian female consumers expect prices to be fair in all aspects which indicates that they expect value for money, and that they duly appreciate honest and genuine pricing in the facial care sector. Alternatively, the higher is the fairness in pricing, the stronger will be the formation of consumer attitude towards firms resorting to such practices in the facial care sector of Malaysia.

With a  $\beta$  value of 0.145, price fairness was found to be the third strongest antecedent of consumer attitude in an ethical context studied in the Malaysian scenario. This is in consistency with Khandelwal and Bajpai (2012) who claimed that higher level of price fairness leads to generating higher level of consumer attitude.

Hypothesis H4 stating a positive relationship between fairness in channels of distribution and consumer attitude was also supported. The positive relationship between fairness in channels of distribution and consumer attitude can be attributed to the likelihood that Malaysian female consumers perceive it imperative that facial care firms follow distributive justice while making the products available, and they seem to further expect that the retail stores should serve them well, and that the marketers should not discriminate among the consumers. As such, the greater is the fairness in distribution aspects, the stronger will be the consumer attitude towards firms following such practices. With a  $\beta$  value of 0.149, fairness in channels of distribution emerged as the second strongest antecedent of consumer attitude. This is in line with the findings of Viriyavidhayavongs and Yothmontree (2002) who revealed that consumer's perceptions of a firm's ethics towards various stakeholders like middlemen, suppliers, etc. play an important role in determining their purchase decisions.

*Whether consumer attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control predict behavioral intention of female consumers towards consideration of ethical marketing practices in buying facial care products in Malaysia.* This was the second objective determined in this study. In order to achieve this objective, three hypotheses (H5-H7) were formulated. Hypothesis H5, which stated a significant influence of consumer attitude on behavioral intention towards considering ethical marketing aspects, was found

to be supported. This significant relationship seems to arise from the possibility that female consumers with a favorable attitude towards ethical marketing practices of firms tend to cultivate adequate motivation and willingness which leads to having a positive intention towards considering products of such firms while planning to buy facial care products. Alternatively speaking, stronger is the consumer attitude, more positive will be the behavioral intention in an ethical context. This is consistent with the findings of Shehryar and Hunt (2005) who unveiled that the buyers are seen to possess higher intentions to purchase when it is perceived that the retailer's action is fair.

Hypothesis H6 specifying a positive influence of subjective norms on behavioral intentions towards considering ethical marketing aspects was found to be supported. It shows that female consumers' circle of influence has a noteworthy say in determining their willingness to consider ethical marketing practices while planning to buy facial care products. This significant relationship can be attributed to the possibility that women consumers in general, though unsure about the exactness of beauty products' claims, still possess propensity to look beautiful which gets further heightened by looking at the gorgeous celebrities or influence persons or by meeting friends, relatives or family members who seem to look charming and attractive. Suggestions made by such persons regarding a particular product's ability to meet to its beautifying promise without causing harms can motivate consumers to try such products and thus they seem to get motivated and possess a positive behavioral intention arising from the influence of subjective norms. Put differently, it can be said that the greater is the subjective norms, the stronger will be the behavioral intentions towards considering marketer's ethicality during buying

situations. This is in consistency with Hyllegard, Yan, Ogle, and Lee (2012) who revealed that subjective norms predict intention towards socially responsible brands.

Hypothesis H7 stating a positive influence of perceived behavioral control on behavioral intention was seen to be supported. There can be likelihoods that female consumers do not have adequate information to assess or they might find it difficult to understand and interpret the intricacies of ethical issues as stated in product claims. As such, the positive influence of PBC on behavioral intentions highlights the fact that consumers' perceptions of ease or difficulty in considering ethical marketing practices significantly determine their behavioral intentions. Alternatively, higher the perceived behavioral control, greater will be behavioral intentions towards considering ethicality of marketers while planning to buy facial care products. This is in line with the findings of Yoon (2011) who conducted a study on digital piracy issues and reported that PBC influences the behavioral intentions of individuals.

*Influence of perceived behavioral control, and behavioral intention on the actual behavior of female consumers towards consideration of ethical marketing practices in the Malaysian facial care sector.* This was the third objective of this study and two hypotheses (H8-H9) were framed accordingly. Hypothesis H8, which stated a positive influence of perceived behavioral control on the actual behavior was discovered to be supported. A positive influence of PBC on actual behavior reflects that consumers' perception pertaining to difficulty or ease in taking ethicality of marketers into consideration also influences the actual behavior of consumers in line with the TPB. Thus, put differently, the higher the perceived behavioral control, the more will be the chances of ethical marketing practices being considered during performance of actual

behavior by the female consumers. It is line with the claims of Kang *et al.* (2006) who stated that PBC is found to exert direct impact on actual behavior towards something.

Hypothesis H9 asserting a positive influence of behavioral intentions on the actual behavior was found to be supported. The positive influence of female consumers' behavioral intentions on their actual behavior tend to support the general understanding that consumers will finally do what they intend to do, and highlights that consumers' behavioral intentions derived through enhanced motivation and willingness arising from favorable evaluation of firms' ethical marketing practices will largely shape their actual behavior while buying facial care products. Alternatively, the stronger is the behavioral intention, the higher will be the possibilities of considering ethical marketing aspects during enactment of actual behavior by the consumers in the Malaysian facial care sector. This is in line with the findings of Penz and Stöttinger (2005) who conducted a study on counterfeits and asserted that intention to purchase significantly influences the actual behavior of consumers.

#### **5.14.2 Mediating Paths**

*Mediating roles of female consumers' behavioral intention between their attitude and actual behavior relationship; subjective norms and actual behavior relationship; and perceived behavioral control and actual behavior relationship, in an ethical marketing context in the Malaysian facial care sector.* This was the fourth objective of this study and three hypotheses (H10-H12) were formulated to achieve this objective. In general, mediation seeks to reveal how a third variable influences the relationship existing between two other variables and it basically explains a process or mechanism e.g. how a

stimulus converts into response (MacKinnon, Fairchild, & Fritz, 2007). Another example, in terms of Bagozzi, Baumgartner, and Yi (1989) who rationally raised the concern that how come it is possible that attitude which is a mental event can influence behavior which is an observable action, and they further opined that a mental event automatically does not turn into action in general without having achieved the state of preparedness/willingness/motivation to perform that action and possibly which is why Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) introduced intention as a mediator between attitude and behavior addressing the aforesaid issue and explaining the mechanism as to how an attitude finally leads to performance of a certain behavior through formation of intentions. Accordingly, behind consideration of behavioral intention as a mediator which “transforms the psychological state into guided bodily responses” (Bagozzi *et al.*, 1989), the overall idea in this study was to address the occasionally observed attitude behavior discrepancies and to explain the reality that whether or not a favorable attitude of consumers towards ethical marketing practices of firms get converted into actually having them considered by the consumers while buying or even in post purchase behavior.

Hypothesis H10, which stated a mediating influence of behavioral intention between consumer attitude and actual behavior relationship in an ethical marketing context, was supported. Though, it was recognized as a partial mediation situation wherein consumer attitude in addition to affecting actual behavior indirectly through behavioral intention, also significantly influenced actual behavior directly which is in line with Bentler and Speckart (1979, 1981), and Sentosa and Mat (2012). As such, it was found that behavioral intention partially mediates the relationship between consumer attitude and

actual behavior towards considering ethical marketing practices. It further means that if female consumers through a positive evaluation of firms' ethical marketing practices possess stronger attitudes, then they will have enhanced motivation and willingness resulting in stronger behavioral intentions, which will ultimately lead to a positive actual behavior towards taking ethical marketing practices into consideration in the Malaysian facial care sector, as empirically supported in this study. Furthermore, the partial mediating influence of behavioral intention can be attributed to the rationale pronounced by MacKinnon *et al.* (2007) who identified that as psychological behaviors are found to have umpteen causes, it is often found unrealistic to anticipate that a mediating variable would be entirely explained by an independent to dependent variable relation (Judd & Kenny, 1981). It can also be supported with the observation that intention is seen to explain around 39% variance, as reported in the meta-analysis on TPB variables by Armitage and Conner (2001). As such, the partial mediation effects of behavioral intention between consumer attitude and actual behavior towards considering ethical marketing practices reflects that at times, a favorable attitude in concern can also directly stimulate action taken with no or little thought in situations like impulse buying or purchases done as response to irresistible emotional pressures, in line with Bagozzi *et al.* (1989).

Hypothesis H11 specifying a mediating influence of behavioral intention between the subjective norms and actual behavior relationship was supported wherein the effect was recognized as partially mediating. It was seen that subjective norms also possessed a direct influence on actual behavior of consumers which is in line with Okun, Karoly, and Lutz (2002). It means that with higher extent of perceived social pressure by the



Malaysian female consumers, the behavioral intention rises which further positively influences their actual behavior towards seriously considering ethical marketing practices of facial care firms. Put alternatively, the more positive is the subjective norms, the stronger will be the behavioral intention to perform actual behavior in the ethical context in concern. Furthermore, it is observed that intention captures the motivational aspects of an action, and it does not capture the implemental aspect which refers to the volitional phase wherein an individual develops specific plans ensuring that the decision is realized (Gollwitzer, 1993; Okun *et al.*, 2002). As such, the partial mediating effect denotes that subjective norms also exert influence on such volitional component of performing a behavior by considering ethical marketing practices.

Hypothesis H12 which stated a mediating influence of behavioral intention between the perceived behavioral control and actual behavior relationship was supported and the mediating effect was recognized as partial which is in line with Ajzen (1991), and Plotnikoff *et al.* (2011). This finding is in agreement with the theory of planned behavior and it indicates that with increasing perceived behavioral control reflecting an enhanced perception of availability of opportunities and resources, the behavioral intention gets stronger towards exhibiting a positive actual behavior by taking into consideration the ethical aspects of marketers. The partial mediating influence can be attributed to the concern that with greater perceived behavioral control which also tends to trigger a direct impact, performance of behavior is likely to increase towards consideration of fairness aspects.

### **5.14.3 Moderating Paths**

*Moderating influences of lifestyle and its dimensions (self-confidence, family orientation, health consciousness, women role and perception, and religiosity) on the relationship between female consumers' attitude and their behavioral intention towards consideration of ethical marketing practices in buying facial care products in Malaysia.* It was the fifth objective of this study and six hypotheses (H13, H13a-H13e) were formulated to achieve this objective pertaining to moderating influences. A moderating variable in general is a “qualitative (e.g., sex, race, class) or quantitative (e.g., level of reward) variable that affects the direction and/or strength of the relation between an independent or predictor variable and a dependent or criterion variable” (Baron & Kenny, 1986, p.1174).

Hypothesis H13 stating a moderating influence of lifestyle on the relationship between consumer attitude and behavioral intention towards consideration of ethical marketing practices in buying facial care products in Malaysia was seen not to be supported. The absence of moderating influence of lifestyle denotes that Malaysian female consumers with varying lifestyle do not show any significant difference between the consumer attitude and behavioral intention relationship. It can also be said that consumers with high/low or urban/semi-urban/rural lifestyle in Malaysia behave similarly while forming intentions deriving from the strong motivation emanating as a result of their positive attitude formed towards ethical marketing practices in the facial care sector. It is contrary to the findings of Chen (2011), and Ko *et al.* (2010) who reported existence of moderating role of lifestyle in determining consumer intentions.

Hypothesis H13a specifying a moderating influence of self-confidence of the relationship between consumer attitude and behavioral intention towards consideration of ethical

marketing practices in buying facial care products in Malaysia was found to be supported. The observed moderating influence of self-confidence reflects that with varying levels of self-confidence, Malaysian consumers gain different level of willingness towards considering ethicality of firms which can be attributed to the possibility that enhanced optimism and stronger beliefs of women can make them think and act out of the box. It is further explained by the negative  $\beta$  value (-0.950) for this moderating relationship which also justifies the consideration of 2-tailed relationship for the lifestyle aspects in this study, and which further reflects that a higher level of self-confidence of Malaysian female consumers is associated with a lower willingness to consider ethical marketing practices of firms. This is in consistency with the claims of Hunt and Vitell (2006) which asserted that even after perceiving an alternative as ethical, an individual due to one's self aspects and other preferences can end up choosing less ethical alternatives.

Hypothesis H13b which stated a moderating influence of family orientation on the consumer attitude and behavioral intention relationship towards consideration of ethical marketing practices in buying facial care products in Malaysia was seen not to be supported. The nonexistence of moderating influence of family orientation denotes that variations in level of family orientation does not lead to any significant changes in the way consumers form their behavioral intentions as a result of a favorable attitude towards ethical marketing practices of firms. Put differently, considering fairness aspects as resilient requisite, Malaysian female consumers with greater or lower level of family orientation tend to behave similarly in context of acquiring motivation and willingness to consider the fairness aspects while buying facial care products. It can be said to be somewhat in conformity with Yusof and Duasa (2010) who claimed that in Malaysia,

women are usually the final decision makers on small and everyday household expenditure. It also hints at the possible role of extended families wherein an individual's decision is seen to be less influenced due to presence of more number of members in the family, in line with Childers and Rao (1992).

Hypothesis H13c asserting a moderating influence of health consciousness on the relationship between consumer attitude and behavioral intention towards consideration of ethical marketing practices in buying facial care products in Malaysia was found not to be supported. The absence of moderating influence of health consciousness denotes that variations in the levels of consciousness towards a good health do not lead to significant changes in the level of motivation and willingness to consider fairness aspects of firms. Alternatively, Malaysian female consumers with high or low levels of health consciousness tend to behave similarly towards possessing a behavioral intention abreast with their attitude formed towards the ethical marketing practices of firms. This is contrary to the findings of Chen (2011) who revealed the existence of moderating influence of health consciousness in determining consumer's intentions and willingness.

Hypothesis H13d stating a moderating influence of women's role and perception on the relationship between consumer attitude and behavioral intention towards consideration of ethical marketing practices in buying facial care products in Malaysia was seen not to be supported. The nonexistence of moderating influence of women's role and perception connotes that traditionalist or modern views, career orientation or no career orientation, and variations in overall general perception of Malaysian women consumers do not lead to any significant change in their overall willingness to peruse ethical marketing practices of firms in the facial care sector. It is contrary to the claims of Koubaa *et al.* (2011) who

revealed that different levels of values possessed by women for instance in terms of status consciousness, materialism, traditionalism, societal consciousness, etc. exert differing impact on determining their intentions towards purchasing skin care cosmetics.

Hypothesis H13e specifying a moderating influence of religiosity on the relationship between consumer attitude and behavioral intention towards consideration of ethical marketing practices in buying facial care products in Malaysia was found not to be supported. The absence of moderating influence of religiosity indicates that varying levels of religiosity of Malaysian female consumers do not result in a significant change in their behavioral intention towards consideration of ethical marketing practices emerging from their overall attitude. Put differently, Malaysian consumers with high or low religious inclination possess tendency to behave similarly by having similar level of willingness to take into account ethicality aspects while planning to buy facial care products. This is consistent with the findings of Ramly *et al.* (2008) who revealed that religiosity does not play a determining role in establishing ethical beliefs of consumers.

*Moderating influences of education and income on the relationship between ethical marketing practices (product fairness, marketing communications, price fairness, and channels of distribution) and female consumers' attitude in the Malaysian facial care sector.* It was the sixth and final objective of this study for which eight hypotheses (H14-H21) were formulated. These hypotheses were tested by conducting multi group analysis. Hypothesis H14 which stated a positive moderating influence of consumer's education level on the relationship between product fairness and consumer attitude in the Malaysian facial care sector was seen not to be supported. The absence of moderating influence of education level denotes that Malaysian consumers across varying educational

backgrounds do not show any significant changes in forming their attitude by evaluating the fairness of products. Alternatively speaking, possibly expecting product fitness and safety as a basic requirement, Malaysian female consumers whether possessing high or low level of education, behave in a similar fashion towards judging the products on fairness basis in the Malaysian facial care sector. This is in consistency with the findings of Serwinek (1992) who revealed that educational differences are not significant determinant of business ethics perceptions.

Hypothesis H15 asserting a positive moderating influence of consumer's education level on the relationship between fairness in marketing communications and consumer attitude in the Malaysian facial care sector was found to be supported. The moderating influence of education level connotes that varying level of education leads to differences in the pattern consumers exhibit towards forming their attitude by perusing fairness in marketing communications. It should be noted that, as previously discussed in hypothesis H2, fairness in marketing communications had emerged as the strongest antecedent of consumer attitude in this study and thus seems to hold immense significance in the eyes of Malaysian consumers. With a bigger  $\beta$  and t-values, consumers with high education tend to possess a stronger influence than the consumers with low education on the relationship between fairness in marketing communications and consumer attitude. It means that if firms maintain appropriate fairness in their marketing communications, Malaysian consumers with high education are likely to form stronger attitude than the consumers with low education. It can be attributed to the possibility that female consumers with high education are usually more exposed and thus possess higher expectations from the firms towards maintaining a greater extent of fairness in their

promotional activities and as a result of it, they also appreciate the firms by forming a stronger attitude towards them. This is consistent with the findings of Boztepe (2012) who revealed that education has a moderating influence on the green purchasing behavior of consumers. It should be noted that the categorization of levels of education in the research of Boztepe (2012) was done in a different manner than this study, as such, though education moderates in both studies, the levels of education with high beta value might vary in these two studies.

Hypothesis H16 stating a positive moderating influence of consumer's education level on the relationship between price fairness and consumer attitude in the Malaysian facial care sector was seen to be supported. The moderating influence of education denotes that female consumers with varying education level exhibit dissimilarity towards attitude formation on account of price fairness aspects. As high education group witnessed higher  $\beta$  and t-values, it is reported that Malaysian consumers with high education possess a stronger influence than the low educated consumers on the relationship between price fairness and consumer attitude. It can be attributed to the likelihood that consumers with high education possess higher awareness and accessibility to information at a wider scale including internet resulting in their enhanced understanding of the pricing issues appreciated at the global level which further raises their expectations towards firms' adherence to price fairness at the local level and also consequently empowers them to reward the firms accordingly through formation of a stronger attitude. This is line with the findings of Boztepe (2012).

Hypothesis H17 specifying a positive moderating influence of consumer's education level on the relationship between fairness in channels of distribution and consumer

attitude in the Malaysian facial care sector was found to be supported. The moderating influence of consumers' education level indicates that variations in consumers' education level leads to exhibiting dissimilarities in the way they form their attitude with regard to fairness in channels of distribution. In this case, low education group showcased a higher  $\beta$  and t-values which means that Malaysian consumers with low education possess a stronger influence than the consumers with high education on the relationship between fairness in channels of distribution and consumer attitude. It can be due to the possibility that female consumers with low education might possess limited awareness and information about wide global distribution network available these days and that they confine themselves to considering only certain sales points, probably the popular ones or the ones in proximity, and which is why they show enhanced expectations towards fairness being maintained by these channels of distribution. This is in consistency with Fullerton *et al.* (1996) who unveiled that individuals with highest ethical concern appear to possess low education.

Hypothesis H18 asserting a moderating influence of consumer's income level on the relationship between product fairness and consumer attitude in the Malaysian facial care sector was seen not to be supported. The absence of moderating influence of consumer's income level on the relationship between product fairness and consumer attitude reflects that variations in income of Malaysian consumers do not lead to differences in their pattern of attitude formation by perusing the fairness of products in the facial care sector. Put differently, bearing in mind product safety and appropriateness a matter of earnest concern and more so as a growing habit nowadays, Malaysian female consumers possessing either high or low income show tendency to behave similarly towards



developing their attitude by judging the products on fairness basis. This is in line with Newman and Bartels (2010) who revealed that income is not seen to exert any effect on consumers' behavior in context of products that are ethical and environment friendly. Also, it is contrary to the claims of Muncy and Vitell (1992) who asserted that consumers' ethical beliefs are expected to be influenced by their levels of income.

Hypothesis H19 which stated a moderating influence of consumer's income level on the relationship between fairness in marketing communications and consumer attitude in the Malaysian facial care sector was found not to be supported. The nonexistence of moderating influence of consumer's income level shows that variations in consumer's income level do not lead to any significant changes in the way consumers form attitude towards the fairness in marketing communications. Alternatively speaking, possibly due to promotion's extensive reach to consumers' everyday life, Malaysian female consumers with either high or low income possess a tendency to act similarly towards forming attitude by conducting evaluation of fairness in the marketing communications aspects of firms in the Malaysian facial care sector. This is consistent with the claims of Newman and Bartels (2010).

Hypothesis H20 stating a moderating influence of consumer's income level on the relationship between price fairness and consumer attitude in the Malaysian facial care sector was seen not to be supported. The absence of moderating influence of consumer's income levels seeks to show that varying income of Malaysian consumers do not result in any significant changes in their attitude development as a result of fairness in the pricing aspects. Put differently, seeing price justice as a serious concern probably due to ever growing inflationary forces, Malaysian female consumers possessing either high or low

income tend to behave in a similar fashion towards forming their attitude by judging the price fairness in Malaysian facial care sector. This is in keeping with the claims of Newman and Bartels (2010).

Hypothesis H21 specifying a moderating influence of consumer's income level on the relationship between fairness in channels of distribution and consumer attitude in the Malaysian facial care sector was found not to be supported. The nonexistence of moderating influence of consumer's income level depicts that varying levels of consumer's income do not lead to any differences in the relationship between fairness in channels of distribution and consumer attitude. Alternatively, possibly with an expectation of not being discriminated or ignored through selective or manipulated distribution system, Malaysian female consumers who possess either high or low levels of income, both consider ethicality issues significant and develop their attitude in a similar way by evaluating the fairness in distribution aspects of firms in the Malaysian facial care sector. This is again in line with the claims of Newman and Bartels (2010).

### **5.15 Summary of the Chapter**

As the model of the research was prediction oriented aiming at theory development, this study relied on using partial least squares structural equation modeling for finding the hypotheses results. It has been found to be extremely useful in marketing research. As such, the analysis began with description of study variables and profiling of respondents. Thereafter, the measurement model (called as outer model in Smart PLS) was evaluated for various kinds of validity and reliability aspects. It was further supported by the predictive power and goodness of fit of the model. After these, the structural model was

examined to test the hypothesized relationships which were all reported in this chapter. Finally, the summary of hypotheses results was presented followed by a discussion on those results as to what they mean and why they would have resulted as such. The next chapter seeks to present key findings and contributions of this study.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

#### **6.1 Recapitulations of the Study**

This quantitative study sought to investigate the antecedents and consequences of female consumers' attitude towards ethical marketing practices in the Malaysian facial care sector with moderating effects of demography and lifestyle and its dimensions. The theoretical framework under study was underpinned with the theory of planned behavior (Appendix E) and supported with consumer decision process model (Appendix F). By adapting and/or adopting valid scale items from the previous studies and after conducting an extensive review of literature (Appendix G), a consumer survey was designed and conducted using an instrument based on 7-point interval scale validated through several statistical measures under the pilot test (Appendix H). Progressing further, the main data collection was done from the four representative states of Malaysia leading to data screening and estimating content validity, factor loading significance, convergent validity and discriminant validity for the measurement model (outer model) using SmartPLS 2.0 SEM software. After establishing these statistical measures, as proposed in the model of the study, lifestyle variable was established as a second order construct which further permitted the researcher towards calculating effect size and predictive relevance of the model. Upon satisfactory establishment of these statistical measures, goodness of fit (GoF) was estimated for the model which resulted in achieving structural model (inner model) which was further used for hypothesis testing. This study achieved a variance (Figure 5.1) of 29% for actual behavior and 38% for behavioral intention which is in line

with the meta-analysis conducted by Armitage and Conner (2001) who discovered that on an average “the TPB accounted for 27% and 39% of the variance in behavior and intention, respectively”. The hypothesized relationships under this study consisted of direct, mediating and moderating paths which were calculated one by one for obtaining hypothesis test results. Moderating effects of demography were tested through multi group analysis and invariance tests whereas mediating relations were tested through bootstrap method in addition to calculating and reporting the traditionally trendy Baron and Kenny (1986) method.

### **6.1.1 Key Findings**

Subsequent to the multivariate data analysis and test results of hypotheses, the key findings of this study are summarized as follows:

Product fairness representing product safety aspects and avoidance of deception of all kinds in products’ features and packaging was seen to be positively related with consumer attitude. It shows that Malaysian female consumers are sincerely concerned with fairness in product aspects while judging a facial care product prior to buying thus forming their perceptions accordingly. Thereafter, fairness in marketing communications characterizing avoidance of manipulations in selling activities was seen to be positively related with consumer attitude, additionally emerging as its most strong antecedent. It signifies that Malaysian female consumers expect high degree of fairness in the promotional activities/messages of the firms. Furthermore, price fairness denoting a firm’s adherence to justifiable and reasonable pricing and abstinence from resorting to unfair pricing practices was also seen to be related with consumer attitude positively

which implies that Malaysian female consumers expect from the facial care firms that they charge reasonable prices for their respective products. Afterwards, fairness in channels of distribution signifying adherence to ethicality in making the products available to consumers was found to possess positive relationship with consumer attitude which raises the significance of female consumers' concern towards expecting non-discriminatory channel actions and avoidance of situations like artificial shortages or restricted availability of products. As a whole, addressing the first research question, it can be said that ethical marketing practices and female consumers' attitude do possess significant positive relationship.

Consumer attitude in this study considered as an overall positive or negative evaluation of the ethical marketing practices of firms was found to have a positive influence on behavioral intentions. It signifies that Malaysian female consumers will be motivated enough to consider the products of firms which take adequate fairness measures in their marketing aspects leading to formation of a favorable attitude which further encourages them to possess positive behavioral intentions. Thereafter, subjective norms perceived in this study as the social influence arising from the peers, family, or other important persons was seen to have a positive influence on behavioral intentions. It implies that an approval or support from one's social circle regarding consideration of ethical marketing aspects leads to one possessing positive behavioral intentions. Afterwards, perceived behavioral control representing consumer's perceptions of easiness or difficulty in considering ethicality aspects and gaining information about the same was seen to positively influence behavioral intentions which signifies that female consumers' enhanced outreach to resources and convenience aspect would lead them towards

possessing stronger behavioral intentions. As a whole, from the findings of this study, in connection with second research question, it can be said that consumer attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control significantly predict female consumers' behavioral intentions towards considering ethical marketing practices while planning to buy facial care products.

Perceived behavioral control denoting a consumer's perception of her control over performing a certain behavior was also seen in this study to exert a positive influence on the actual behavior showing the significant role of consumers' confidence, conveniences, product's availability, and resourcefulness in terms of information, time, etc. in determining the performance of their actual behavior towards considering ethicality of marketers while buying facial care products. Thereafter, behavioral intention representing in this study the factors and degree of motivation capturing how meticulously consumers are attempting to consider ethical marketing practices while planning to buy, was found to positively influence consumers' actual behavior. It seeks to highlight that the Malaysian female consumers will buy products from the firms for which they possess stronger behavioral intentions emerged as a result of several factors of motivation like favorable evaluation of firms' ethical marketing practices, or stronger social influence regarding the same, etc. As such, with regard to the third research question, it is reported that perceived behavioral control and behavioral intention do significantly influence actual behavior of Malaysian female consumers towards taking into consideration the ethicality aspects of marketers.

Thereafter, behavioral intention was found to mediate the consumer attitude and actual behavior relationship partially which denotes that the behavior of consumers is not fully

under volitional control. It signifies that Malaysian female consumers after forming a favorable attitude due to firms' efforts towards adhering to fairness in marketing activities further form stronger behavioral intentions and finally exhibit a positive actual behavior towards considering fairness aspects. Also, it brings into attention the current reality in Malaysian context that consumers are also getting prejudiced by non-rational and/or non-volitional aspects while buying facial care products, for example as seen in impulse buying situations. Thereafter, behavioral intention was discovered to partially mediate the relationship between subjective norms and actual behavior which highlights that with enhanced influence of the social circle, Malaysian female consumers feel motivated to perform behavior towards considering fairness of firms' marketing activities. It also connotes that subjective norms can also directly influence the implemental phase of the behavior, for example when accompanied by relatives or friends during purchases.

Also, behavioral intention was found to have a partial mediating influence between the perceived behavioral control and actual behavior relationship. In this study, ethical marketing practices are being investigated which means that the consideration of fairness aspects by the consumers would depend on whether or not consumers perceive that adequate opportunities, convenience, and options are available for considering ethical marketing practices while contemplating to buy facial care products. Accordingly, the finding signifies that Malaysian female consumers with enhanced perception of accessibility to resources and opportunities for considering fairness aspects while planning to buy will form stronger behavioral intentions towards taking these aspects into serious consideration while exhibiting actual behavior. It also highlights that the likely



performance of Malaysian consumers' actual behavior towards perusing fairness aspects will tend to increase and get directly influenced by increasing perceived behavioral control. As such, entertaining the fourth research question of this study, it can be enunciated that behavioral intentions of female consumers play a mediating role between the respective relationships of consumer attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control taken with the actual behavior of such consumers towards engaging their buying behavior with fairness considerations. Also, through positive significant attitude-intention-behavior relationships, it is empirically established that Malaysian female consumers walk their talk with regard to consideration of ethicality aspects by exhibiting the actual behavior in conformity with the attitude they possess towards ethical marketing practices.

Lifestyle as a second order construct addressing consumers' interests, opinions, and a general approach towards ways of living was seen to exert no moderating influence on the relationship between consumer attitude and behavioral intention. It signifies the growing significance of ethical issues in the eyes of Malaysian female consumers who showcased that whatever is the lifestyle of consumers, they behave similarly towards having strong willingness to consider ethical marketing practices arising from their attitude formed as a result of marketers' adherence to fairness in their marketing activities. Furthermore, self-confidence which reflects consumers' optimism and strong belief in talents and capabilities to pursue their affairs was found to possess moderating influence on consumer attitude and behavioral intention relationship. With observed negative  $\beta$  value for the said relationship, it signifies that Malaysian female consumers with greater level of self-confidence give less importance to ethical marketing practices

while planning to buy facial care products. It can be possibly due to a demanding attitude, courageous mentality and challenge seeking behavior that they give significance to other aspects also while planning to buy such products.

Afterwards, family orientation referring to a woman's belief with regard to establishing and maintaining an amicable family relationship was seen to possess no moderating influence on the consumer attitude and behavioral intention relationship. It highlights the similarity in the interests of Malaysian consumers possessing different level of family orientation to consider fairness aspects through demonstrated similarity in their willingness to do so. Alternatively speaking, assuming it important, the women consumers with greater or smaller level of family orientation tend to exhibit similar focus on considering ethical marketing practices of firms while planning to buy facial care products. Thereafter, health consciousness reflecting an overall alertness towards maintaining a healthy lifestyle and an interest towards buying healthy products in general was observed to possess no moderating influence on the consumer attitude and behavioral intention relationship. It signifies that Malaysian female consumers whether highly conscious or least bothered towards appreciating a healthy lifestyle do possess similar levels of willingness and motivation to consider ethical aspects when planning to buy facial care products.

Furthermore, women's role and perception reflecting in this study the Malaysian women's general belief towards work equalities, career orientation, office-home balance, traditional or modern views was seen to have no moderating influence on the consumer attitude and behavioral intention relationship. It signifies that Malaysian women consumers whether modern or traditional, careerist or housewife, enlightened or

parochial, etc. tend to exhibit similar level of willingness to consider ethicality aspects while planning to buy facial care products showing that fairness aspects are considered equally important by women of varying perceptions in Malaysia. Afterwards, religiosity reflecting the general religious beliefs and spiritual inclination of Malaysian consumers was found to possess no moderating influence on the relationship between consumer attitude and behavioral intention. It highlights the reality that Malaysian female consumers whether highly religious or least religious, highly spiritual or least spiritual, report to possess similar level of motivation and willingness to consider fairness aspects while contemplating to buy facial care products in Malaysia deliberating it as a common significant issue for them. As such, addressing the fifth research question of this study, it is reported that lifestyle as a second order construct, and its dimensions viz. family orientation, health consciousness, women's role and perception, and religiosity do not exert any moderating influence on the relationship between female consumers' attitude and their behavioral intention towards consideration of ethical marketing practices in buying facial care products in Malaysia. However, self-confidence which is one of the lifestyle's dimensions does possess a moderating influence on the female consumers' attitude and their behavioral intention relationship.

Consumers' education level was seen not to moderate the relationship between product fairness and consumer attitude which signifies that Malaysian female consumers with high or low educational backgrounds seem to give similar importance to fairness concerns and they tend to behave in a similar way towards forming their attitude with regard to fairness aspects in the facial care products. Afterwards, consumers' education level was seen to possess a positive moderating influence on the relationship between

fairness in marketing communications and consumer attitude which further signified that when firms ensure that they adhere to ethicality in their marketing communications, Malaysian female consumers with high education will exhibit stronger attitude than those with low education. Furthermore, education level of consumers was observed to possess a positive moderating influence on the relationship between price fairness and consumer attitude which further highlighted the reality that if firms adhere to fairness in their pricing aspects, female consumers with high education are likely to form stronger attitude than the consumers with low education. Thereafter, consumer's education level was seen to exert a positive moderating influence on the relationship between fairness in channels of distribution and consumer attitude which further signified that upon firms' adherence to maintaining ethicality in distribution aspects, Malaysian female consumers with low education will form stronger attitude than the consumers with high education.

Furthermore, consumer's income level was observed to possess no moderating influence on the relationship between product fairness and consumer attitude which further highlighted the reality that Malaysian female consumers with high or low income give similar importance to ethicality aspects and behave in a similar fashion towards forming attitude on the basis of product fairness maintained by the firms in facial care sector. Afterwards, consumer's income level was found to possess no moderating influence on the relationship between fairness in marketing communications and consumer attitude which further signified that Malaysian female consumers with either high or low income, both display similar pattern of attitude formation made on the basis of evaluating fairness in marketing communications of firms in the facial care sector. Thereafter, consumer's income level was not seen to possess any moderating influence on the price fairness and

consumer attitude relationship which further highlighted that Malaysian female consumers with high or low income exhibit similar ways of developing attitude by basing their perceptions on the price fairness aspects in the Malaysian facial care sector. Finally, consumer's income level was not found to possess any moderating influence on the relationship between fairness in channels of distribution and consumer attitude which signified that irrespective of their high or low level of incomes, Malaysian female consumers considering ethicality aspects reasonably important behave similarly towards forming attitude on the basis of evaluating fairness in the channels of distribution in the Malaysian facial care sector. As a whole, addressing the sixth and final research question of this study, it can be said that consumer's income level shows no evidence of any moderating influence witnessed in an ethical context, however, education positively moderates the respective relationships of fairness in marketing communications, price fairness, and fairness in channels of distribution taken with female consumers' attitude in the Malaysian facial care sector.

## **6.2 Theoretical Contributions**

In marketing ethics research, previous studies had mostly focused on the promotional aspects with few studies concentrating on the product, price and place aspects (Schlegelmilch & Oberseder, 2010). Also, it was suggested that consumer studies in an ethical scenario has to still catch up (Akhter *et al.*, 2011a) particularly in developing economies like Malaysia (Ismail & Panni, 2008; Rahim *et al.*, 2011), and accordingly, an intense gap was identified to contribute to the marketing literature by conducting studies on the sensitivities and perceptions of consumers with regard to marketing practices of firms in an ethical context (Green & Antoine, 2011; Kumar *et al.*, 2014). As such, based

on the above, inclusion of ethical aspects of the 4 Ps and investigation of their influence on Malaysian consumers' attitude in this study is a contribution to the body of marketing ethics knowledge. Centered on the research outcomes, it is confirmed that Malaysian female consumers' attitude is significantly influenced by product fairness, price fairness, and fairness in marketing communications and channels of distribution in the facial care sector. Based on this, it can be said that this study validates the claims of Oberseder *et al.* (2011), and Lamsa *et al.* (2008) which affirm that consumers report positive attitude towards buying from the firms that are perceived as fair, ethical and socially responsible and that these should be incorporated into the model.

Furthermore, consumers' overall evaluation and favorable perception about ethicality of firms has not been always observed getting translated into real action raising an attitude-behavior gap which is a perpetual issue in consumer behavior (Carrigan & Attalla, 2001; Neale & Fullerton, 2010), and it needed to be addressed in order to have a holistic view of the matter in concern. In that direction, on the basis of research outcomes of this study, it is reported that consumer attitude towards ethical marketing practices of firms significantly influences their behavioral intention which further is seen to exert a positive significant influence on the actual behavior of consumers. These research outcomes can be further said to furnish supportive explanation towards corroborating the claims of De Pelsmacker *et al.* (2005) who asserted that consumers in general possess a positive outlook towards firms' ethical efforts and show willingness to pay upto 10 percent higher for the products perceived by them as ethically marketed and produced. As such, this study has contributed to the body of marketing ethics knowledge by empirically confirming that female consumers in Malaysia act in line with their perceptions, and that

an attitude-behavior gap towards consideration of marketers' ethicality is not seen among Malaysian female consumers. It is also hoped that it has contributed to the ethics based research conducted by using theory of planned behavior.

Moreover, behavioral intention is discovered in this study to partially mediate the relationships of consumer attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control taken with the actual behavior of consumers towards ethical marketing practices of firms. These findings corroborate the claims of Bentler and Speckart (1979, 1981), and Sentosa and Mat (2012) for the significant direct influence of consumer attitude on actual behavior, that of Okun *et al.* (2002) for the direct influence of subjective norms on actual behavior and, that of Ajzen (1991), and Plotnikoff *et al.* (2011) for the direct influence of perceived behavioral control on actual behavior. In addition to witnessing a strong role of perceived social pressure in directly affecting consumers' actual behavior, it has highlighted another peculiarity of Malaysian consumers towards giving attention to non-volitional or non-rational aspects while performing actual action in context of buying with ethical considerations. Therefore, as per the meta-analysis on TPB by Armitage and Conner (2001) who revealed that on an average TPB is seen to account for around 27% of variance in behavior, this study thus sought to explain the other possibilities which can influence consumers' actual behavior and thus contributed to the theory.

The need of studying consumer attitude towards ethical marketing practices of firms had been stressed upon by adding moderating and mediating variables (Hanzaee & Taghipourian, 2012), and in that regard, lifestyle (Akhter *et al.*, 2011a; Zhao *et al.*, 2011) and demography (Deng, 2012; Pharr, 2011; Rahim *et al.*, 2011) were opined as possible factors with potential to influence consumer's ethical perceptions. As such, inclusion of

lifestyle and demographic variables education and income as potential moderators in an ethical scenario confronted by consumers is a contribution to the body of marketing ethics knowledge. Results showed that lifestyle does not moderate the relationship between consumer attitude and behavioral intention towards ethical marketing practices. The non-significant moderating influence of lifestyle is contrary to the claims of Chen (2011), and Ko *et al.* (2010) who revealed that varying lifestyle leads to formation of dissimilar intended behavior. As such, this study has seemingly given rise to an inconsistency in this regard which is a contribution to theory and offers opportunities for further investigation. Lifestyle's four dimensions health consciousness, family orientation, women's role and perception, and religiosity also did not moderate the said relationship highlighting the emerging significance of ethical considerations by consumers of all types irrespective of their lifestyle aspects. However, self-confidence, the only dimension of lifestyle which was found to moderate the relationship between consumer attitude and behavioral intention towards ethical marketing practices indicates the emergence of women's rising level of self-confidence in Malaysia.

Furthermore, income was not seen to moderate the relationships of product fairness, price fairness, fairness in marketing communications and channels of distribution taken with consumer attitude. These results corroborate the claims of Newman and Bartels (2010) who revealed in their study that income does not have any significant effect on the behavior of consumers in context of ethical and environment friendly products. Furthermore, results showed that education moderates the relationships of price fairness, and fairness in marketing communications and channels of distribution taken with consumer attitude. As a whole, these outcomes support the claims of Shah *et al.* (2012),



and Young *et al.* (2010) who opined that demographic dissimilarities might have influences on the ethical sensitivities of consumers. As such, in addition to contributing to the body of knowledge by investigating and reporting the aforesaid moderating effects in an ethical context, it is also hoped that this study has contributed to the research based on ethics and consumer behavior using consumer decision process model.

Malaysia has been prone to skin related issues emerging from natural or other causes. Cosmetics industry can further aggravate this problem by posing as a likely threat to people (Ross, 2006) if marketers do not adhere to their ethical obligations towards making safe products. However, skincare category has been one of the most vulnerable industries and sort of some impossible promotional claims can be seen very commonly like getting a fair and beautiful face within a short span of time (Riji, 2006). Furthermore, in the skincare category, facial care sector possesses the largest current and forecasted retail values in Malaysia (Euromonitor International, 2014) which necessitate the attention of researchers and strategists. As such, taking facial care sector in this study in line with suggestions made by Kyung (2012) has made sectoral contribution to the Malaysian facial care sector offering insights for basing future marketing strategies and research directions.

Developing economies are seen to be far behind the progressive nations in terms of ethical standards and conduct of business (Shafer *et al.*, 2007; Vogel, 1992) and also there have been paucity of ethics based studies in the less developed economic systems like Malaysia. Furthermore, it was recommended to conduct consumer studies in Malaysia on the issues like product quality, safety of products, misbranding practices and product adulteration (Ismail & Panni, 2008), towards identifying sources of most

influence over consumers' purchase decisions (Rahim *et al.*, 2011), and describing the attitude and perceptions of consumers towards marketers' ethicality (Kumar *et al.*, 2014). As such, conducting this consumer study in an ethical context towards the marketing practices of firms in the Malaysian environment sought to contribute to the scarce literature pertaining to ethical scenarios and considerations in Malaysian businesses and environment.

### **6.3 Methodological Contributions**

Besides the previously discussed theoretical contributions, this study also made sincere attempts to contribute methodologically.

The major contribution has been towards following a rigorous multi-stage sampling method. Usually, mall intercept surveys are said to be weak in terms of sampling. However, this study went a step further and considered several minutest details to the extent possible and took into consideration even gate sampling, day sampling, time sampling, etc. Considering various aspects like these increases the randomness which can facilitate a stronger generalization of findings. According to the limited knowledge of the researcher, this kind of rigorous mall related sampling is possibly one of the firsts in Malaysia. It will encourage the future researchers in achieving data with enhanced quality from mall surveys.

The measures of different variables were adapted and/or adopted from various sources wherein studies were originally conducted in dissimilar environments. In such situations, it becomes imperative to establish validity and reliability of scales which was extensively done in this study through various statistical calculations as mentioned in the data

analysis sections of this thesis. It now offers a valid and reliable instrument to Malaysian and international researchers willing to study ethical aspects of marketing and consumer perceptions about the same with an enhanced precision and simplicity.

Consideration of lifestyle as a second order construct with five dimensions addressing different facets of women specific lifestyle is another significant contribution made in this study. The lifestyle construct was statistically established with the latent variable scores of those dimensions. To get into more detail, even the dimensions were also sub-hypothesized in order to understand nitty-gritties of Malaysian consumer's behavior.

Furthermore, in order to study the moderating influences of education and income, multi group analysis was conducted. However, prior to conducting multi group analysis, a rigorous calculation was done for conducting invariance analysis which established that constructs are behaving similarly across the high and low education and income groups respectively.

#### **6.4 Managerial Implications**

The empirical results of this study offer ample evidence for corroborating the relationships identified among the constructs of this study alongwith the mediating and moderating effects. These relationships have been proved or disproved statistically and explained in previous sections. This section now draws attention of managers and offers practical implications by highlighting the overall perception and attitude of the consumers with regard to ethical marketing practices of firms.

Marketing is a stream which has time and again been linked with ethicality issues and also it has not been very clearly known by the marketers that whether or not it pays dividend to be ethically conscious and dutiful as different countries show differences in consumers' orientation and behavior towards perusing fairness aspects in their general decision making. In that regard, highlighting the role of marketer's ethical practices, this study establishes in a Malaysian context that consumer attitude is significantly influenced by the ethical marketing practices depicted by product fairness, price fairness, fairness aspects in marketing communications and channels of distribution. The most significant influence was observed to arise from fairness in marketing communications which emerged as the strongest antecedent of consumer attitude. These imply that managers need to adhere to ethicality and fairness aspects in conducting their marketing activities, more particularly in their promotional actions. It is suggested to the managers that they offer products that are safe and disclose all vital information pertaining to ingredients and associated costs as well as risks which might assist a buyer in making proper decisions. Marketers are also advised to avoid misleading sales tactics, discriminatory practices in product distribution, and untruthful or deceptive advertisements. In Malaysian facial care sector, as mass anti agers are expected to witness a substantial and remarkable growth, it will be useful to have it recognized especially by the marketers of this segment in addition to those from other segments, that Malaysian consumers are in search of value for money and they do consider fairness aspects while buying facial care products. As marketing values every step that can keep customers delighted and retained, an ability to meet consumers' aforesaid demand can put them in real advantageous position in the short as well as in the long run.

Consumers pass through several psychological and behavioral states while contemplating to buy products. Conceptually, and as generally seen in markets world over, there could be situations wherein consumers do possess a favorable attitude towards some aspects, however, when they actually perform their behavior like when they actually buy or recommend to their known ones, they might behave differently or in other words, they might not behave in line with their attitude that they possessed towards those aspects in the beginning. It has always been a matter of concern for the marketers to understand the chances of presence or non-presence of such discrepancy in their respective segments so as to strategize accordingly. In that regard, this study empirically establishes that in an ethical context, Malaysian female consumers tend to show a behavior which is in positive synchronization with their intentions and attitude towards ethical marketing practices of firms. It was statistically achieved that the efforts of marketers towards adhering to offering fairness in their product aspects, pricing, marketing communications, and channels of distribution lead to formation of a favorable attitude among the consumers which further motivates them to consider these fairness aspects by exerting a positive significant influence on their behavioral intention which finally influences performance of their actual behavior by taking into consideration the ethicality aspects. It implies that managers must be putting in all efforts towards maintaining ethicality across their marketing activities in order to ensure that consumers find their products appropriate and fit starting from their initial assessment of products at the attitude formation stage to the intention development stage when consumers are planning to buy, and during the stage when consumers actually act upon.

Furthermore, subjective norms influence behavioral intention of consumers towards considering ethical marketing practices. It seeks to suggest managers for taking efforts towards giving significance to social aspects in its promotional campaigns. For instance in the advertisements, family members & friends can be shown playing key roles leaving long lasting memories. Also, a positive influence of perceived behavioral control on the behavioral intention as well as on the actual behavior towards taking into consideration fairness aspects identify the need of corporates towards sincerely making adequate opportunities and information easily available to the consumers so that they find it convenient to understand, consider and incorporate fairness aspects and base their decisions accordingly during the time of intention formation as well during performance of actual behavior. It was also seen that behavioral intention partially mediates the relationships between consumer attitude and actual behavior, subjective norms and actual behavior, perceived behavioral control and actual behavior. It implies that marketers of facial care products must resort to developing volitional strategies for the phase when consumers make implemental plans towards decision realization (Gollwitzer, 1993; Okun *et al.*, 2002) as well as non-volitional strategies like persuasive tactics for inducing behavior change in a kind of automatic manner (Bagozzi *et al.*, 1989).

Lifestyle of consumers has generally been presumed to influence consumer behavior towards ethical considerations which is useful for the marketers to understand in different markets. In that regard, this study discovered that Malaysian female consumers' lifestyle does not moderate their attitude and intention relationship. Also, out of five dimensions of lifestyle taken in this study, four were found to possess no moderating influences. These four dimensions were health consciousness, family orientation, women's role and

perception, and religiosity. However, one dimension namely self-confidence was found to possess a moderating influence on the consumer attitude and behavioral intention relationship in an ethical context which sought to show that women consumers with higher level of self-confidence show less interest and willingness to consider ethical aspects of marketers than the women with lesser level of self-confidence. As a whole, on the basis of above, it is recommended to the marketers of facial care products to move on with a unified strategy with regard to lifestyle aspects for the time being by accommodating and realizing that Malaysian women who are highly self-confident would require enhanced efforts for seriously lending their ears towards firms' messages pertaining to ethical aspects. Also, as lifestyle is a volatile and dynamic aspect which can witness remarkable changes with passage of time, it is suggested to the marketers that they regularly keep track of future studies on lifestyle in an ethical context.

Demography seeks to offer rational justification for similarities or dissimilarities in the consumer consumption pattern or in social tendencies in addition to being a traditional basis for market segmentation. In that regard, this study revealed that education level of Malaysian female consumers moderate the respective relationships of fairness in marketing communication, fairness in channels of distribution, and price fairness taken with consumer attitude. Consumers with high education show stronger perceptions and a stronger attitude as a result of firms' adherence to fairness in pricing and marketing communications which shows that highly educated consumers give more importance to these aspects. Marketers need to provision and incorporate such demands of consumers while designing their marketing programs pertaining to ethicality aspects. Also, consumers with low education were seen to form stronger attitude arising from fairness in

channels of distribution than the consumers with high education. It implies that product availability aspects are to be ensured in a fair manner wherein consumers with low education do not get a feeling of being ignored or discriminated. Furthermore, education did not moderate the relationship between product fairness and consumer attitude which identifies a key issue that whatever is the education level of female consumers, it should be ensured by the marketers that the products they offer are always safe, fit and reliable, as it is deemed important by all.

Afterwards, income of consumers was not seen to possess any moderating influence on the respective relationships of product fairness, price fairness, fairness aspects of marketing communications and channels of distribution taken with consumer attitude which indicates that marketers of facial care products do not need to focus more on the income aspects of consumers while formulating their marketing strategies and that a unified strategy seems workable at this point of time. However, in future, marketers need to remain vigilant about the changing influences of demographic aspects on the consumer behavior in an ethical context.

As a whole, it is duly recognized that the firms do not exist to make paternalistic decisions and that they do exist for profits, still it is important for the marketers to adhere to ethicality for the reasons relating to the marketplace as well as to the moral realm (Gibson, 2005), and the aforesaid recommendations made in this regard can lead to firms having an enhanced reputation due to their overall fair dealings with the consumers, which will ultimately reflect in their enriched firms' value.



## **6.5 Policy Implications**

Ethical enhancements are usually deemed desirable in almost every sphere of society, however, from this study confined to marketing which actually caters to almost every individual, it can be inferred that there exists a willingness among the consumers to consider fairness aspects while considering to buy facial care products. Put differently, consumers are prepared to consider ethicality of marketers while buying, policy makers are visibly geared up to make Malaysia an ethically and morally high society as per challenge four of Malaysia Vision 2020, corporates though calculative are usually aware of their corporate social responsibilities probably due to their awareness gained from global practices in this field according to the literature, the required step now is to coordinate, assemble and reinforce the thoughts and understanding of the aforesaid three parties for actual implementation and successful achievement of the said noble vision for the betterment of Malaysia. In order to do so, in addition to streamlining necessary regulations, it is recommended for the policy makers to formulate several public relations exercises and campaigns for expanding awareness about ethics and values across various segments of society. By involving influence groups, some conferences/events can be organized with ethics based themes inviting corporate, academia, and the media.

Furthermore, several consumer forums active all over Malaysia can be used as platform for spreading the roles and responsibilities of corporate and also the rights of consumers through published reports or posters/pamphlets in addition to relying on modern social media marketing tools like twitter, facebook, youtube, etc. Over a period of time with strict law enforcements for unethical practices, the aforesaid steps will expectedly assist the policy makers achieve the dream of seeing Malaysia developing with intrinsically

improvised mindset towards maintaining higher virtuousness in the area of marketing serving consumers with a humane touch and utmost ethicality, thus contributing significantly to some extent to the desired success of challenge four of Malaysia Vision 2020.

## **6.6 Limitations of the Study**

Though, this research made several contributions as mentioned in the previous sections of this chapter, still it is felt that it had some limitations as usually witnessed in other studies. Firstly, this study was conducted by taking into consideration the facial care sector of Malaysia which consists of highest retail value and growth rate in the skin care category, however, the findings of this study cannot be used to generalize the whole cosmetics industry of Malaysia which also includes other product segments, though with smaller retail values.

Secondly, the sampling of this study in line with Sudman (1980), and Singhapakdi *et al.* (1999) was confined to city limits due to expected higher level of awareness about ethicality issues in such areas. Rate of urbanization, population compositions, etc. were taken into account, however, by considering some more economic indicators, selection of few more semi urban areas and smaller towns could have supposedly yielded different results which would have been interesting to discover.

Thirdly, this study surveyed only female consumers because they are the major users of facial care products. However, males are also found to use facial care products. As such, the findings of this study should not be generalized for both genders, though the hints can definitely be speculated.

Fourthly, influence of ethical marketing practices was considered in this study. However, in ethics based studies, influence of counterfeits or unfair practices can also yield useful findings which can let consumers opine in little more direct form while expressing comments towards lack of fairness or issues pertaining to unpalatable experiences meted by them in past.

Fifthly, this study took into consideration two demographic variables viz. education and income for studying their links with the main model under study. Inclusion of other controlled demographic variables could have produced further meaningful variations and enhanced justifications for the findings.

### **6.7 Recommendations for the Future Research**

Directions for future research are presented on the basis of limitations as well as findings of this study.

Future studies in the area of ethical marketing can consider taking into account products and services from other industries, and product segments like hand care, body care, etc. from the cosmetics industry for understanding the differences or for making comparisons among the consumer's behavior across various product segments. It is also suggested to include other semi urban areas in the sampling process of ethics based studies, particularly in Malaysia. Furthermore, females do provide useful insights in the cosmetic industry based studies, however, it will be useful to consider males also for conducting future studies as they may offer value adding opinions which can assist the practitioners in expanding their existing markets by consolidating their marketing strategies.

It is further suggested to consider other demographic aspects like age, ethnicity, religion, employment status, etc. for understanding how consumers across different groups behave towards ethical aspects of marketers. Furthermore, even though it was supported with literature, the lifestyle variable wasn't found to possess a moderating influence on the model under study creating an inconsistency which is worth visiting by the future researchers. It is thus recommended to test it in other settings by sample expansions and/or by inclusion of other context specific cultural aspects.

As Malaysia seems to be on its way towards giving more importance to maintenance of ethics at all levels, it will be useful to conduct studies on perception of Malaysian consumers towards unfair practices, counterfeits, piracy, etc. For instance, this study took into consideration the influence of product or price fairness on the attitude of consumers. However, the results of studies like influence of 'lack of fairness' on consumer attitude in Malaysia can generate alarming results for the corporate who might be struggling to compete and survive either due to their ignorance or due to paucity of context specific awareness. In general, it will offer additional insights to the corporate assisting them further in formulating more pragmatic marketing strategies.

Moreover, as Malaysia is moving consistently towards higher level of economic development and towards enhancing standard of living for everyone, ethics of practitioners will arise as a significant phenomenon/concern in the coming days in context of ensuring that consumers are offered safe and high quality products and services under all circumstances. Similarly, research will also be fostered in this area. Therefore, in order to build a strong foundation and body of knowledge in this area in a Malaysian context, it would be useful to explore 'what', 'why' and 'how' of ethicality

issues through qualitative or mixed method based research designs. Emerging cases of fairness or unfairness, narration of some ethical issue from Malaysia which has sustained over a period of time are some of the example areas which can be addressed by the researchers. Also, studies based on indepth interviews with business professionals and marketing academicians can be conducted to come up with new models of ethics in order to boost up this area of research further.

Finally, this consumer study resorted to underpinning its model with the TPB. It is recommended to explore ethics based models in future studies in a Malaysian context for knowledge building in a comparatively emergent field like this.

## **6.8 Conclusion**

On the basis of overall research findings, the conclusions made for this study are as follows:

Ethical marketing practices do possess significant positive relationship with consumer attitude. In that regard, product fairness, price fairness, and fairness aspects of marketing communications and channels of distribution are discovered to have significant influence on formation of consumer attitude. In keeping with the above, corporates are left with no choice but to follow high level of fairness in their marketing activities in order to have the consumers motivated and retained.

Afterwards, behavioral intentions of consumers towards considering ethicality of marketers while planning to buy is predicted significantly by the consumer attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Furthermore, the actual behavior

towards taking into consideration the ethical marketing practices while buying products are seen to be significantly predicted by the behavioral intention and perceived behavioral control. Moreover, behavioral intention of consumers towards ethical marketing practices mediates the relationship of consumer attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control taken with the actual behavior of consumers. Thus, the predictive power of TPB emerged to act in support of the model under study. Also, it can be said that Malaysian female consumers reflect no difference between what they say and what they do in context of ethical marketing practices. Moreover, it can be concluded that maintenance of fairness in the marketing activities will lead to formation of stronger consumer attitude which will further lead to buying the products of such firms in the facial care market of Malaysia.

Lifestyle as a second order construct is not seen to moderate the relationship between consumer attitude and behavioral intention in context of ethical marketing. When estimated individually, lifestyle's four dimensions viz. health consciousness, family orientation, women's role and perception, religiosity also did not moderate the consumer attitude and behavioral intention relationship, however, one of the dimensions viz. self-confidence emerged to possess moderating influence on consumer attitude and behavioral intention relationship which highlights the significance of rising confidence level of Malaysian women in modern times.

Consumer's education level is not seen to moderate the relationship between product fairness and consumer attitude. However, education positively moderates the relationship of price fairness, marketing communications, and channels of distribution taken with consumer attitude. Furthermore, consumer's income level does not possess any

moderating influence on the relationship of product fairness, price fairness, fairness aspects of marketing communications, and channels of distribution taken with consumer attitude.

The framework initially conceptualized for this study, underpinned further with the theory of planned behavior and supported with the consumer decision process model finally resorted to using variables viz. product fairness, marketing communications, price fairness, channels of distribution, consumer attitude, behavioral intention, actual behavior, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, lifestyle, health consciousness, self-confidence, family orientation, women's role and perception, religiosity, and demography. The findings of this study reflect that the model under study, which is aptly in line with the theory, achieves the empirical fit and the reliance on such theory is deemed justified as such.

To conclude, a need to maintain acceptable level of ethics by the marketers of Malaysia is recognized as a key driver towards their survival, growth and sustainability. Because, ethics does matter to Malaysian consumers.

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