

THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY,  
SERVICE QUALITY, CUSTOMER SATISFACTION, CONSUMER RIGHTS  
AWARENESS AND REPURCHASE INTENTION

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To Almighty Allah, the one, and eternal,  
who begets not, nor was begotten,  
and whom, none is ever comparable.

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## **ABSTRACT**

Research efforts at investigating the effects of perceived corporate social responsibility (CSR) on consumer behaviour have received increased attention within the last two decades. Findings from these studies have however been inconsistent regarding the extent to which perceived CSR directly influences consumers' behavioural intentions towards companies and their products. Thus, there have been calls for the exploration of mediator and/or moderator influences on the CSR - consumer patronage intentions relationships. Therefore, this study investigated a model of direct and indirect relationships between perceived CSR, service quality, customer satisfaction, consumer rights awareness and repurchase intention. In addition, the study also sought to determine the dimensions of CSR perceived by customers in the study area. The study used quantitative research design and data were collected from 604 customers of the major mobile telecommunication service providers in Nigeria using convenient sampling technique. Data analyses were conducted using the Smart-PLS software and the PROCESS macro. Results indicated that consumer perceived CSR is best represented through a second-order construct comprising of ethical, legal and philanthropic dimensions. The findings also revealed that consumers' perceived CSR directly influenced service quality, satisfaction and repurchase intentions; while service quality and satisfaction were indicated as having partial mediating effects on the relationship between perceived CSR and repurchase intention. Furthermore, the study established that consumer subjective rights knowledge moderated the influence of perceived CSR on service quality and repurchase intentions. The study contributes to theory by integrating the literature on CSR and consumerism, while the practical implication of the study is that service companies should communicate their efforts at safeguarding consumer rights within their CSR communications. Future studies are recommended to extend the study to other leading industries, particularly in the manufacturing sector.

## ABSTRAK

Usaha penyelidikan dalam mengkaji kesan tanggapan tanggungjawab sosial korporat (CSR) terhadap tingkah laku pengguna telah mendapat perhatian yang meningkat dalam tempoh dua dekad yang lalu. Dapatan daripada kajian-kajian ini walau bagaimanapun tidak konsisten berkenaan dengan sejauh mana tanggapan CSR mempengaruhi niat tingkah laku pengguna terhadap syarikat dan produk mereka. Maka, terdapat keperluan untuk meneroka pengaruh perantara dan/atau penyederhana terhadap CSR - hubungan niat pengunjungan pelanggan. Oleh itu, kajian ini mengkaji model hubungan langsung dan tidak langsung antara tanggapan CSR, kualiti perkhidmatan, kepuasan pelanggan, hak kesedaran pengguna dan niat pembelian semula. Tambahan lagi, kajian ini juga bertujuan untuk menentukan dimensi CSR berdasarkan tanggapan pelanggan dalam kajian. Kajian ini menggunakan reka bentuk penyelidikan kuantitatif dan data dikumpulkan daripada 604 pelanggan penyedia perkhidmatan telekomunikasi mudah alih utama di Nigeria menggunakan kaedah persampelan mudah. Analisis data telah dilakukan menggunakan perisian Smart-PLS dan makro 'PROCESS'. Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa tanggapan pelanggan terhadap CSR adalah terbaik diwakili menerusi konstruk tahap-kedua yang terdiri daripada dimensi etika, undang-undang dan kebajikan. Penemuan ini juga menunjukkan tanggapan pelanggan terhadap CSR mempengaruhi secara terus kualiti perkhidmatan, kepuasan dan niat pembelian semula; sementara kualiti perkhidmatan dan kepuasan dilihat mempunyai kesan perantara separa ke atas hubungan antara tanggapan CSR dan pembelian semula. Tambahan lagi, kajian ini mengesahkan bahawa pengetahuan subjektif hak pengguna menyederhanakan pengaruh tanggapan CSR terhadap kualiti perkhidmatan dan niat pembelian semula. Kajian ini menyumbang kepada teori dengan cara mengintegrasikan literatur CSR dan konsumerisme, manakala implikasi praktikal kajian ini ialah syarikat-syarikat perkhidmatan harus menjelaskan usaha-usaha untuk melindungi hak pengguna dalam komunikasi CSR mereka. Kajian masa depan disyorkan untuk melanjutkan kajian ini kepada industri-industri utama yang lain, terutama sektor pembuatan.

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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AVE	-	Average Variance Extracted
CA	-	Corporate Ability
CB-SEM	-	Covariance-Based Structural Equation Modeling
CFA	-	Confirmatory Factor Analysis
CSR	-	Corporate Social Responsibility
ECO	-	Economic Responsibilities
EFA	-	Exploratory Factor Analysis
ETH	-	Ethical Responsibilities
FQUAL	-	Functional Quality
GSM	-	Global Systems of Mobile -telecommunications
HKCs	-	Higher Knowledge Consumers
LEG	-	Legal Responsibilities
LKCs	-	Lower Knowledge Consumers
LVS	-	Latent Variables Scores
OBK	-	Objective Rights Knowledge
OLS	-	Ordinary Least Squares Regression
PCA	-	Principal Component Analysis
PCSR	-	Perceived Corporate Social Responsibility
PLS	-	Partial Least Squares
PSQ	-	Perceived Service Quality

REP	-	Repurchase Intentions
SAT	-	Satisfaction
S-O-R	-	Stimulus -Organism-Response (Theory)
SMS	-	Short Message Services
SUBK	-	Subjective Consumer Rights Knowledge
TQUAL	-	Technical Quality
VAF	-	Variance Accounted For

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the Study and Motivation for Research

Businesses generally exist within the context of an environment, which consists of individuals and groups, commonly referred to as the stakeholders of business (Freeman, 1984, 2010). These stakeholder groups include customers, employees, shareholders, trade unions, suppliers, regulatory agencies, and the larger society; who are engaged in a mutually dependent relationship with the company (Clarkson, 1995; Freeman, 1984, 2010; Murray and Vogel, 1997; Papsolomou-Doukakis *et al.*, 2005). In this regard, it has become a recognized practice for businesses to come up with corporate initiatives that are aimed at providing some (economic and non-economic) benefits to the various stakeholders. These corporate initiatives include actions/activities such as corporate philanthropy and donation to charity, events sponsorship, production of environmentally friendly products, and so on (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004; Lee, 2010; Sen *et al.*, 2016).

These acts along with so many others, which are aimed at projecting the company as being ethical and socially responsible, are captured under the concept of corporate social responsibility (CSR). CSR generally relates to the efforts/activities that a company undertakes with respect to meeting its obligations to its various stakeholders (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004; Brown and Dacin, 1997). It has over the

years become one of the major items that appear on most companies' annual reports, as well as the media, and other publicly circulated documents and websites (Ferreira *et al.*, 2010; Hutton *et al.*, 2001; Pirsch *et al.*, 2007). All of these are done in order to project the companies as corporate entities, who care for the interests of their stakeholders.

Beyond the normative cause for CSR however, management theorists have also pointed out that companies can actually use their CSR engagement as a tool for strategic advantage (Bhattacharya *et al.*, 2004; Drucker, 1980; Kotler and Lee, 2005; Porter and Kramer, 2006). In other words, companies can take advantage of their favourable CSR reputation as a means of gaining competitive advantage mostly in the form of favorable corporate image and reputation, and continuous patronage (Becker-Olsen *et al.*, 2006; Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004; Brown and Dacin, 1997). This thinking has generated considerable interest in both professional and academic discourse on CSR; with the aim to ascertain the beneficial effects of CSR engagement for companies (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004; Brown and Dacin, 1997; Ikejiaku, 2012; Sen *et al.*, 2006). Research has further revealed that among the various stakeholder groups and intended beneficiaries of CSR, the consumers have received the most attention and focus in CSR communication efforts of companies (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004). This is due to the belief that the existence of the business itself depends upon the patronage of the consumers (Agbonifoh and Edoreh, 1986; Bello *et al.*, 2012). This fact has led to an increasing attention to researches aimed at understanding the impact of CSR, as well as the consumers' responses to the initiatives, both within the academia and among business practitioners.

Brown and Dacin (1997) pioneered this stream of research, when they developed a framework that was used to investigate the relationship between corporate associations (comprising of corporate social responsibility and corporate ability) and consumer product responses (Berens *et al.*, 2005; Du *et al.*, 2007; He and Li, 2011; Lee, 2010; Pérez *et al.*, 2013). The framework developed by Brown and Dacin (1997) was in the form of Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) model, which sought to establish linear relationships between sets of independent, intermediate and dependent variables. The findings from the study indicate that CSR directly and positively

influences consumers' evaluation of a corporation; while at the same time indirectly influences consumer product responses through corporate evaluation.

A review of extant literature reveals that several studies have adopted the Brown and Dacin's (1997) framework to explore the relationships between CSR practices and consumers' attitudinal and behavioral intentions. The findings from most of these studies have however been inconclusive (Berens *et al.*, 2007; Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004; Kolkailah *et al.*, 2012; Marquina Feldman and Vasquez-Parraga, 2013; Walsh and Bartikowski, 2013). While some studies report positive and direct relationships, some others have reported insignificant or even negative relationships between perceived CSR and customer reactions. For example, some studies have reported positive effects of perceived CSR on customer' attitudinal responses such as favorable corporate attitude (Kolkailah *et al.*, 2012); perceived quality (Folkes and Kamins, 1999; Huang *et al.*, 2014; Swaen and Chumpitaz, 2008); customer satisfaction (Luo and Bhattacharya, 2006; Pérez *et al.*, 2013); purchase intentions (Becker-Olsen *et al.*, 2006; Carvalho *et al.*, 2010; Castaldo *et al.*, 2009; Gupta, 2002; Murray and Vogel, 1997; Pirsch *et al.*, 2007); a greater willingness of customers to pay higher prices for the company's products (Carvalho *et al.*, 2010; Creyer and Ross, 1997; Gupta, 2002); and customer brand loyalty (Carvalho *et al.*, 2010; Marin *et al.*, 2009; Su *et al.*, 2014). CSR has equally been helpful for companies' recovery from market crisis (Klein and Dawar, 2004; Pirsch *et al.*, 2007); while also serving as a form of insurance cover for firms against consumer boycotts (Becker-Olsen *et al.*, 2006), and also encouraging customer donations to identified CSR causes (Lichtenstein *et al.*, 2004).

As against studies which reported positive relationships between perceived CSR and customer reactions, findings from some other studies have indicated that the relationships between CSR initiatives and consumers' related outcomes are not always direct and evident (Castaldo and Perrini, 2004; Castaldo *et al.*, 2009; Marquina Feldman and Vasquez-Parraga, 2013). For example, Boulstridge and Carrigan (2000) has reported a 'zero' link between CSR and consumer purchasing decisions. Mohr *et al.* (2001) report a rather limited influence of CSR on purchase intentions, as only a few consumers mentioned that they considered CSR when making purchase decisions.



There have also been situations where consumers' favorable disposition towards CSR was found to be inconsistent with their actual buying behavior (Arredondo Trapero *et al.*, 2010; Kolkailah *et al.*, 2012; Marquina Feldman and Vasquez-Parraga, 2013). More so, Castaldo and Perrini (2004), Carrigan and Attalla (2001), and Loussaïef *et al.* (2014) have reported findings indicating that consumers may even fail to notice or consider the socially irresponsible behavior of a company when making their purchases.

The contradictory findings in the studies related to CSR and consumer reactions presented above, represents a lack of consensus on the issues relating to consumer attitudes and behavior towards CSR (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004; Kolkailah *et al.*, 2012; Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001). Researchers on the subject matter have thus continued to suggest the need to examine the possible causes of the mixed findings. Based on this suggestion, research efforts have thus far focused on either, or a combination of two major issues that could possibly help in resolving the discrepancies.

The first issue has to do with the suggestions that the effect of CSR on consumer related outcomes may be dependent on other factors besides CSR itself (Brown and Dacin, 1997; Casado-Díaz *et al.*, 2014; He and Li, 2011; Marquina Feldman and Vasquez-Parraga, 2013; Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001). Several researchers have suggested the inclusion of additional variables into the models exploring the relationship between CSR and consumer behavior. These additional variables are mostly in the form of mediator and moderator variables, which according to Aguinis and Glavas (2012, p. 934), respectively represent the “*underlying processes*” and “*conditions under which*” consumers' perceptions of CSR “*leads to specific outcomes*”. Researchers have particularly emphasized on the need to explore moderator variables, which may include factors related to the company (e.g. The CSR domain, product quality, brand dominance, etc.) and/or related to the consumer (e.g. awareness, CSR support, and attributions) (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004; Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001); as well as those relating to industry, culture, national system and context (Azmat and Ha, 2013; Casado-Díaz *et al.*, 2014; Simpson and Kohers, 2002).

The second issue, which researchers believe could help resolve the equivocal findings, has to do with the definition and measurement of what the consumers actually perceive as constituting socially responsible behavior of companies (García de los Salmones *et al.*, 2005; Maignan, 2001; Ramasamy and Yeung, 2009). The general observation is that most studies have taken either of two opposite directions in their measurements of perceived CSR (García de los Salmones *et al.*, 2005; Maignan, 2001; Mohr *et al.*, 2001). While some studies have measured perceived CSR only based on the company's societal marketing/philanthropic efforts, others have adopted the "broader point of view" (García de los Salmones *et al.*, 2005, p. 372), by considering the multiple dimensions of CSR, particularly based on Carroll's (1979) 4-part theory of CSR.

Of the two approaches highlighted above, modern researchers have acknowledged the multi-dimensional view as a better representation of perceived CSR (García de los Salmones *et al.*, 2005; Maignan, 2001; Mohr *et al.*, 2001). At the same time, they have also emphasized the need for researchers to properly ascertain the perceived dimensions of CSR by respondents in specific contexts. This call is based on the fact that the CSR construct is often thought to mean "*different things to different people, in different places and at different times*" (Campbell, 2007, p. 950). Thus, the need to ascertain the actual dimensions to include in specific contexts and studies examining consumer responses to CSR becomes very important (García de los Salmones *et al.*, 2005; Maignan, 2001; Ramasamy and Yeung, 2009; Sen *et al.*, 2016; Vázquez *et al.*, 2012), in order to avoid the consequences of improper identification, which may lead to wrong conclusions.

A further justification for this study arises from the observations that research efforts on consumer responses to CSR have been skewed in favor of the developed countries. Researchers are unanimous in asserting that studies on consumers' perceptions of CSR have concentrated mostly on the developed economies, especially in Europe and America. Research efforts on perceived CSR and customer related outcomes in the emerging and developing economies (Nigeria inclusive) have so far remained at the infancy stage (Azmat and Ha, 2013; Fatma and Rahman, 2015; Jamali and Mirshak, 2007; Lee and Shin, 2010; Visser, 2008). This limited knowledge about

consumer perception and response to CSR in developing countries has led to insinuations that the consumers in these parts of the world are too preoccupied with the satisfaction of basic necessities of life than to care about higher order values such as CSR and consumer rights protection (Arli and Lasmono, 2010; Azmat and Ha, 2013; Ramasamy and Hung, 2004). Empirical validation of these claims are however scarce, thus leading to calls for systematic research on the subject matter in developing countries (Abd Rahim *et al.*, 2011; Andrianova and Yeletsikh, 2012; Azmat and Ha, 2013; Fatma and Rahman, 2015; Visser, 2008).

The foregoing background thus presents a motivation, as well as opportunity for research that could further enhance the understanding of the existing knowledge on the relationship between CSR and consumer responses. The imperativeness of this study is further amplified if one considers the fact that issues bothering on CSR, and consumer rights awareness and protection have remained contemporary issues in the general discourse on business – society relations (Alsmadi and Alnawas, 2012; Alsmadi and Khizindar, 2015; Donoghue *et al.*, 2016). To this end therefore, this study intends to focus on the perceptions and responses of customers towards CSR of Nigerian companies, with particular emphasis on the telecoms companies in the country.

## **1.2 Corporate Social Responsibility in Nigeria**

The development and practice of CSR in Nigeria has followed similar patterns as in most developing countries in the world. The general opinion is that CSR was ‘imported’ into the developing countries by the MNCs, whose headquarters are based in the western nations, especially of Europe and America (Amaeshi *et al.*, 2006; Helg, 2007; Ite, 2004). In the case of Nigeria, researchers are unanimous on the belief that the history of formalized CSR in Nigeria is closely linked to the CSR practices in the oil and gas multinationals (Ejumudo *et al.*, 2012; Helg, 2007; Ogula, 2012). This is not in any way surprising; given the fact that Nigeria is basically a mono-cultural

economy (Osemene, 2012), that has relied almost entirely on export of crude oil for her budgetary and developmental projections (Alabi and Ntukekpo, 2012; Ejumudo *et al.*, 2012; Ndu and Agbonifoh, 2014). Thus, the oil companies were the most visible and active players in the Nigerian economy. As such, companies in other sectors of the Nigerian economy merely followed the example of CSR as practiced by the oil companies.

Most researchers have described the early form of CSR practices in Nigeria as being neither for normative, altruistic or strategic reasons, but rather an attempt to reduce or compensate for the negative effects of the companies' operations on the society (Amaeshi *et al.*, 2006; Helg, 2007; Ite, 2004). This is evidenced by the fact that the CSR initiatives of the oil and gas multinationals have always been in response to public pressure regarding the negative consequences of the operations of the MNCs, especially in relation to labour issues, human rights and environmental pollution (Amaeshi *et al.*, 2006; Frynas, 2001; Ite, 2004). For a long period in the history of business – society relations in Nigeria, the idea of CSR was associated to correctional/philanthropic acts through community development efforts like the provision of pipe-borne water, building of hospitals and schools, construction of roads, and the likes (Helg, 2007).

At the onset of the present millennium however, companies in Nigeria started expanding their scope of CSR beyond correctional/philanthropic activities. Some companies began to adopt CSR as a strategic marketing tool, targeted at the consumers (Adeyanju, 2012; Mordi *et al.*, 2012). This development has been attributed to the deregulation of some key sectors of the Nigerian economy, such as the banking, telecoms, and downstream oil and gas sectors (Kuye *et al.*, 2013; Raimi *et al.*, 2014b; Raimi *et al.*, 2014). The deregulation exercise further exposed the Nigerian economy to the forces of globalization, which led to increased competition among companies; as well as an increased awareness and attention to CSR in the Nigerian academic and business circles (Raimi *et al.*, 2014, p. 316). Within a short time after the deregulation, the tempo of CSR increased in the country, with companies demonstrating a sense of responsibility towards the needs of their stakeholders, and most particularly, the consumers (Amaeshi *et al.*, 2006; Mordi *et al.*, 2012; Oguntade and Mafimisebi, 2011).

A number of these companies have actually taken a step further in their CSR implementation, by establishing separate foundations to take care of their CSR (Amaeshi *et al.*, 2006; Mordi *et al.*, 2012; Oguntade and Mafimisebi, 2011). The establishment of these separate foundations can be described as a step towards institutionalizing CSR in these companies. Examples of companies that have dedicated foundations for CSR are mostly found in the banking industry, the telecoms industry and the British American Tobacco (BAT) (Adeyanju, 2012; Amaeshi *et al.*, 2006; Helg, 2007; Mordi *et al.*, 2012; Osemene, 2012).

### **1.2.1 CSR Adoption and Practices by Telecoms Companies in Nigeria**

Companies in the telecom industry in Nigeria are regarded as the frontrunners in terms of CSR implementation in the country (Adeyanju, 2012; Osemene, 2012; Raimi *et al.*, 2014). The telecoms sector became very visible in the CSR practices due to the popularity and instant acceptance of the GSM by the Nigerian populace (Obadare, 2006; Tella *et al.*, 2009). It is on record that, prior to the introduction of the GSM mobile telephony in Nigeria, the number of active telephone lines in the country was just around 500,000 units (Obadare, 2006; Osemene, 2012; Tella *et al.*, 2009). The introduction of the GSM by the new companies, however, saw this figure rising to over 3 million active telephone lines by September 2003 (Obadare, 2005, 2006; Tella *et al.*, 2009).

The phenomenal growth recorded by the telephone subscription, however came along with a number of challenges, which, at different times, threatened the relationship between the companies and their various stakeholders (Adeyanju, 2012; Obadare, 2005, 2006; Osemene, 2012; Tella *et al.*, 2009). Given the tremendous success achieved by the companies, the stakeholders generally began to expect that the companies will make efforts to contribute to the overall welfare and betterment of the society (Adeyanju, 2012; Obadare, 2005, 2006; Osemene, 2012). Thus, there were expectations relating to availability and quality improvement in services,

environmental consciousness, as well as voluntary (moral and financial) contributions to the society. These expectations by the stakeholders are consistent with the general notion of CSR (Adeyanju, 2012; Obadare, 2005, 2006), which centers on stakeholders' expectations regarding the economic, legal, ethical and discretionary obligations towards the society (Carroll, 1979, 1991, 1999).

It is on record that the telecoms companies were initially reluctant to respond to the stakeholders' expectations (Adebisi and Akinmadelo, 2014; NCC, 2004; Obadare, 2005, 2006). However, a combination of pressures from several stakeholder groups, as well as the increased competition for customers among the telecoms companies served as compelling factors for the companies to adopt socially responsible practices. The pressure from the consumer advocacy groups is of specific importance to the context of this study, as it points to the importance of consumer rights awareness, and the powers it can confer on the consumers. The early period of mobile telephone development in Nigeria was fraught with complaints and agitations from consumers regarding the activities of the telecoms companies operating in the country. The period was characterised by unfair/unethical practices evidenced by poor service delivery, unreasonably high tariffs, and flagrant disregard for consumer rights issues (NCC, 2004; Obadare, 2005, 2006).

The unwillingness of the telecom companies to respond to consumer agitations led to the rise of consumer advocacy groups, who sensitised the consumers on their rights, and the need to pursue same. This led to the infamous GSM boycott in Nigeria on the 19<sup>th</sup> September 2003 (Mushiro, 2004; NCC, 2004; Obadare, 2005, 2006). The one-day boycott exercise led to loss of revenue for the companies, estimated at about one billion Naira (NCC, 2004; Obadare, 2005). Beyond the loss of revenue however, the boycott and its effect also served as a major turning point for CSR adoption by the companies. By the third quarter of the year 2003, the major companies in the telecoms industry began to demonstrate a renewed commitment to CSR and consumer rights protection (NCC, 2004; Obadare, 2005, 2006). These efforts were led by the two pioneer companies (i.e., MTN and Econet), who started embarking on aggressive promotional campaigns to highlight their contributions to social causes in the country (NCC, 2004; Obadare, 2005, 2006).

To further underscore their commitment to the implementation of CSR in the country, the telecoms companies also began to establish separate foundations that are dedicated to the formulation and implementation of CSR programs in the country (Mordi *et al.*, 2012; Oguntade and Mafimisebi, 2011). The establishment of CSR foundations by the telecoms companies in Nigeria has increased the visibility of the companies' efforts at being socially responsible. This is evidenced by the publicity, and the various awards, certificates and recognitions the companies have (individually and collectively) received at different times from local and international groups interested in CSR implementations (Adeyanju, 2012; Osemene, 2012; Sustainability Report, 2014).

The importance attached to CSR as a marketing tool has led to an increase in the number of CSR foundations currently operating in Nigeria; as companies in other industries have also joined in establishing foundations to handle their CSR activities (Amaeshi *et al.*, 2006; Mordi *et al.*, 2012; Oguntade and Mafimisebi, 2011). For the telecoms industry, which is the focus of this study, the prominent CSR foundations include the MTN-Nigeria Foundation (MTNNF), the Globacom Foundation, and the Etisalat Center for CSR (Adeyanju, 2012; Helg, 2007; Osemene, 2012; Raimi *et al.*, 2014; Sustainability Report, 2014). Judging by the performance of these telecoms companies in terms of CSR implementation, researchers and analysts have adjudged the telecoms companies as the frontrunners in the efforts to extend the conception of CSR beyond corporate philanthropy that used to be prevalent in the country (Mordi *et al.*, 2012; Osemene, 2012; Raimi *et al.*, 2014; Sustainability Report, 2014). This opinion is evidenced by the fact that the visibility of the CSR initiatives of the telecoms companies in Nigeria now extends to such areas as environmental sustainability (e.g. MTN's bio-degradable recharge cards and Etisalat's Eco-SIM cards), economic empowerment, health, education, sponsorship of cultural and sporting events, as well as relationship with various stakeholders, through active engagements (Adeyanju, 2012; Helg, 2007; Osemene, 2012; Raimi *et al.*, 2014; Sustainability Report, 2014)

### 1.3 Problem Statement

The expectations of positive attitudinal and behavioral responses towards companies that are considered as socially responsible has inspired academic research interests among management and marketing scholars. Beginning with the research by Brown and Dacin (1997), the literature on CSR and consumer responses has witnessed a proliferation of empirical researches within the past two decades (García de los Salmones *et al.*, 2005; He and Li, 2011; Hildebrand *et al.*, 2011; Pérez *et al.*, 2013). Several studies have extended the Brown and Dacin's framework, to include a variety of consumer response variables; all with the aim to determining how consumers actually perceive and respond to CSR. Findings from most of these studies have however remained largely contradictory and inconclusive (Al Jarah and Emeagwali, 2017; Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004; Gürlek *et al.*, 2017; Kolkailah *et al.*, 2012; Marin *et al.*, 2009), as researchers have reported mixed findings regarding the nature and extent to which perceived CSR directly influences consumer product responses. For instance, while some studies (i.e., Civero *et al.*, 2017; Du *et al.*, 2007; Mandhachitara and Poolthong, 2011; Marin *et al.*, 2007) have reported positive effects of Perceived CSR on consumer responses; some other studies (i.e., Bravo *et al.*, 2012; Gracia de los Salmones *et al.*, 2005; Kim *et al.*, 2017). Thus, necessitating the call for more studies on the CSR phenomenon.

Specifically, researchers have been urged not to limit their research efforts to just investigating whether perceived CSR impacts or consumer behavior or not (Aguinis and Glavas, 2012; Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004; Castaldo *et al.*, 2009). Research efforts should also investigate the possible moderator and mediator relationships that may exist between perceived CSR and the consumer response variables, in order to have better understanding of the CSR effect (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004; Casado-Díaz *et al.*, 2014; Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001). These moderator and mediator variables include those related to the company and/or consumers, as well as those relating to industry, culture, national system and context (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004; Casado-Díaz *et al.*, 2014; Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001; Simpson and Kohers, 2002).



Several researchers have responded to these suggestions, by including the indirect effects and relationships in models used in their studies. Prominent mediator variables examined in the literature includes perceived service quality, customer satisfaction, consumer trust, and identification with the company (He and Li, 2011; Luo and Bhattacharya, 2006; Matute-Vallejo *et al.*, 2011; Poolthong and Mandhachitara, 2009; Swaen and Chumpitaz, 2008; Vlachos *et al.*, 2009). Among these potential mediators, perceived service quality and customer satisfaction have been of particular interest to most researchers. This is because the constructs of service quality and customer satisfaction have gained prominence in the marketing literature as the major predictors of consumer behavioral intentions (He and Li, 2011; Luo and Bhattacharya, 2006; Matute-Vallejo *et al.*, 2011). Thus, some researchers have maintained that consumers will be unwilling to sacrifice these traditional features/determinants for an abstract concept like CSR, which has no direct bearing on companies' ability to deliver goods and services effectively and efficiently (Auger *et al.*, 2003; Boulstridge and Carrigan, 2000; Pomeroy and Dolnicar, 2009; Yuen and Thai, 2016). This view is further supported by the consideration that perceived CSR relates to the satisfaction of higher-order needs, as compared to service quality, which relates to the satisfaction of lower-order needs (Vlachos *et al.*, 2009). Thus, implying that consumers would naturally be more concerned about the later than the former.

On the other hand, several other researchers have argued that in the present globalization era, product and process standardization have become the norm for all companies; as such, companies can no longer rely on the traditional product and brand differentiation strategies (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004; Gupta, 2002; Mombeuil and Fotiadis, 2017). In the view of these authors, the key to competitive advantage now lies with intangible assets that are not easily imitable such as an outstanding corporate image built through CSR (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004; Engizek and Yasin, 2017). Given these contending viewpoints, researchers have investigated the mediating role of service quality and customer satisfaction on the influence of perceived CSR on consumer behavioral intentions.

Findings from such studied have revealed that service quality and satisfaction as having varying degrees of mediation effects ranging from full mediation

(Mandhachitara and Poolthong, 2011), partial mediation (He and Li, 2011; Poolthong and Mandhachitara, 2009), and no mediation (Khan *et al.*, 2015) on the targeted relationships. More importantly however, a noticeable feature with most of these studies is they have mostly concentrated on the unique mediation effects, without accounting for the sequential mediation that is likely to exist within such models. The serial mediation arises when two mediation variables in a model are causally related (Hayes, 2013; Taylor *et al.*, 2008); as in the case of service quality and customer satisfaction. There is overwhelming evidence in the service marketing literature that customer satisfaction mediates the effect of service quality on consumer behavioral intentions (Bagozzi, 1992; Gotlieb *et al.*, 1994; Yuan and Jang, 2007). Thus, any model including these two as mediators of the CSR effect needs to account for the sequential mediation in order to give a clearer view of the relationships and effects amongst the construct.

As in the case with mediation, researchers have also sought to investigate moderating variables in the relationships between perceived CSR and consumer response variables. The inclusion of moderator variables has further enhanced the understanding of the antecedents and consequences of consumers' responses towards CSR. However, researchers are still of the opinion that several possible moderator variables abound, whose effect have not been explored in relation to CSR and consumer responses (Azmat and Ha, 2013; Azmat and Samaratunge, 2009; Liu and Fei, 2010). Particular emphasis has been placed on the possible moderating effects of variables related to consumer values and personality traits (Marin *et al.*, 2009), and context (Azmat and Ha, 2013; Azmat and Samaratunge, 2009; Simpson and Kohers, 2002). Thus, it becomes necessary to search for potential moderators of the effects of perceived CSR on consumer response variables.

According to Berger and Corbin (1992), identification of "potential moderators (would) involve surveying the literature for variables that might enhance or inhibit the influence" of perceived CSR on "the specific behaviors of interest" (p.80). These potential moderators should, as a matter of necessity, be logically aligned with the phenomena under study (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010). Therefore, within the literature, the variable "consumer rights awareness" has been shown to be an important direct

predictor of consumer complaint behavior (Bhuiyan and Al-Enazi, 2013; Donoghue and de Klerk, 2009; Donoghue *et al.*, 2016; Zhao and Othman, 2010); a phenomenon which is logically related to both CSR and consumer rights awareness. This study thus investigates the possible moderating effect of consumer rights awareness on the relationship between perceived CSR and consumer responses.

Discussions within the literature has shown that consumer rights awareness is considered an integral part of consumerism, which is reported to be historically linked with CSR (Agbonifoh and Edoreh, 1986; Alsmadi and Alnawas, 2012). Several researchers have pointed out that CSR and consumerism emerged partly in response to the expressions of discontent by consumers (and the society at large) against the unethical business practices of companies, especially in the developed countries (Agbonifoh and Edoreh, 1986; Danciu, 2015; Dusuki, 2008; Klein *et al.*, 2004; Yusoff *et al.*, 2012). This belief is further strengthened by the prominent feature in most definitions of CSR, which emphasizes the companies' self-controlled behavior aimed at improving/safeguarding the interests of the stakeholders (Andreasen and Drumwright, 2001; Davis and Blomstrom, 1975; Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001). With the consumers regarded as the most important stakeholders of business (Carvalho *et al.*, 2010; Du *et al.*, 2007; Folkes and Kamins, 1999; Russell and Russell, 2009), the adoption of CSR by a company thus, presupposes that such a company becomes committed to protecting consumers' rights and interest (Alsmadi and Alnawas, 2012; Azmat and Ha, 2013; Castaldo *et al.*, 2009; Jalilvand *et al.*, 2017).

Based on the requirements highlighted above, it is logical to expect that the consumer, whose right is to be protected, should at least have a basic knowledge of his/her rights in order to be able to effectively assess and reward the firm's CSR initiatives appropriately. Put simply, if a company claims to be committed to protecting consumer rights and interests, the customer needs to be aware of such rights, so as to know whether they are being protected or not. Incidentally however, despite the multitude of researches that have studied the antecedents and consequences of consumer perception and responses to CSR, no study till date (to the best of the researcher's knowledge) has investigated the possible effect(s) of consumer rights awareness. Thus, there is no empirical evidence on the effects of consumer rights

awareness on consumer responses to CSR. This has led to suggestions for the inclusion of consumer rights awareness variable as a possible (moderating) variable on the relationship between CSR and consumer response (Azmat and Ha, 2013).

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study aims to examine a conceptual model of the direct and indirect relationships between consumer perceived CSR and consumer behavior outcomes. Specifically, the research focuses on (1) the direct influence of perceived CSR on perceived service quality, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intention, (2) the importance of perceived service quality and satisfaction as mediators of the relationship between perceived CSR and consumer repurchase intention, (3) the moderating effects of consumer rights awareness on the relationships between perceived CSR and service quality perceptions, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intention. These relationships have been formulated based on the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) theory, which focuses on the interrelationships between social stimulus, intervening variable(s) and human response; and the social cognition theory, which establishes connections between human cognition (knowledge), feelings and behavior towards the environment (Fiske and Taylor, 2010).

Furthermore, as an important element in the investigation of CSR's effect on consumer behavior, researchers have advocated the need for proper definition and measurement of the construct 'perceived CSR' (García de los Salmones *et al.*, 2005; Maignan, 2001; Ramasamy and Yeung, 2009). Criticisms of earlier researchers who measured the construct based on cause-related/philanthropic activities of companies have led researchers to depend on the Carroll's (1999) 4-dimensions model in gauging consumer perceived CSR. However, divergent opinions have emerged on the actual dimensions to be included in consumer studies, as evidence has shown that the construct tends to have different meanings across contexts (García de los Salmones *et al.*, 2005; Khan *et al.*, 2015; Martínez *et al.*, 2014). For this reason, this study also made efforts to confirm multidimensionality of the perceived CSR construct among consumers in the study area. Specifically, the study has focused on identifying the actual dimensions that consumers in Nigeria include in the global construct of CSR.

#### **1.4 Aims and Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this study is threefold: first, the study aims to ascertain the dimensions of perceived CSR from the perspectives of the consumers in the study area (i.e., Nigeria). Secondly, based on the dimensions identified, it examines the effects of perceived CSR on consumers' service quality perceptions, satisfaction, and repurchase intentions. Thirdly, the effects of consumer rights awareness as a moderator of the effects of perceived CSR on service quality, customer satisfaction and repurchase intentions are examined.

Based on the general aim highlighted above, the study seeks to achieve the following specific objectives:

- i. To determine the dimensions of CSR as perceived by consumers in Nigeria.
- ii. To examine the relationships between perceived CSR and service quality perceptions, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intentions.
- iii. To examine the mediating effects of service quality and customer satisfaction in the relationships between perceived CSR and repurchase intentions.
- iv. To determine the moderating effects of consumer rights awareness on the relationships between perceived CSR and service quality, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intentions.

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

Arising from the objectives of the study, this research aims to answer the following questions:

- i. What are the dimensions of CSR as perceived by consumers in Nigeria?
- ii. What are the relationships between perceived CSR and service quality perceptions, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intentions?
- iii. To what extent do perceived service quality and customer satisfaction mediate the influence of perceived CSR on consumer repurchase intentions?
- iv. Does consumer rights awareness moderate the relationship between perceived CSR and perceived service quality, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intentions?

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This study is significant in the sense that it contributes to the existing body of knowledge on the impact of CSR on consumer behavior. At the same time, it also provides important (practical) contributions for managers and regulatory authorities, regarding CSR implementation, and management of business-society relationships.

In terms of the *contribution to knowledge*, the research represents an attempt to bridge three important gaps identified in the CSR literature. These gaps include the theoretical, contextual and empirical gaps associated with the extant literature on CSR and consumer behavior. The introduction of the consumer rights awareness variable represents an attempt to fill a theoretical gap in the CSR literature. This is due to the fact that the issue of customer rights awareness has not yet received the attention of researchers in the CSR and customer reactions literature. By considering the possible moderating effect of consumer rights awareness, additional insights are expected to be gained relating to customers' reactions to CSR activities of business (Azmat and Ha, 2013).

The study also attempts to fill a contextual gap, by presenting a developing country (Nigeria) perspective on consumer response to perceived CSR. A review of the extant literature has shown that studies on consumer response to CSR have received minimal attention in developing countries; thus, necessitating the calls for increased research efforts in those parts of the world (Alsmadi and Alnawas, 2012; Azmat and Ha, 2013; Fatma and Rahman, 2015). With specific reference to Nigeria, researchers (e.g., Adewuyi and Olowookere, 2010; Okpara and Wynn, 2012) have observed a general scarcity of empirical studies on CSR-consumer responses in the country. Most CSR related studies in Nigeria have either focused on community relations activities of oil firms in the Niger-Delta (Alabi and Ntukekpo, 2012), or examined its application and perceptions from the organizations' view point (Amaeshi *et al.*, 2006; Babalola, 2012). Thus, this research contributes to the empirical knowledge relating to consumer response to CSR and how this response is influenced by consumer rights awareness in Nigeria, and by extension, the developing countries.

In terms of the *contribution to management practice*, the findings from this research are beneficial to management practice as they help company managers in the study context to understand how the customers perceive their CSR, and how it reflects on the consumers' perception of service quality, satisfaction and patronage behavior. It is also expected that the findings will provide valuable information regarding the relationship between customer rights awareness, and consumer behavior; specifically, as it relates to its impacts on the customers' perception and responses towards the companies CSR practices. The knowledge of how consumer rights awareness impacts on the relationship between CSR and customer responses is important for two reasons. First, is the fact that engagement in CSR represents an additional cost structure for companies (Ailawadi *et al.*, 2014; Christopher and Luke, 2013; Hutton *et al.*, 2001; Luo and Bhattacharya, 2006; Poolthong and Mandhachitara, 2009), and as such, it is important for the companies to be able to justify these costs (Poolthong and Mandhachitara, 2009).

Secondly, the telecoms companies in Nigeria have had to contend with accusations of disrespect for customers' rights and protection, which had led to customers' boycott action in the recent past (NCC-CAB, 2012; Obadare, 2005, 2006).

As such, it is important for the companies to understand the potential effects of consumer rights awareness on their dealings with the customers, and the steps needed to be taken to improve the customers' positive perceptions in this regard.

The findings of the research are also valuable to policy formulators, especially with regards to CSR, consumer rights and protection, and quality standards. Issues relating to the weak legislative and regulatory framework on CSR, consumer rights protection and quality standards have been the focal points of discussion in Nigeria for quite some time (Adewuyi and Olowookere, 2010; Obadare, 2005; Raimi *et al.*, 2014). The findings of the research have provided insights into dimensions of CSR as perceived by the consumers', perceived service quality in the telecoms industry, as well as level of consumers' awareness of their rights. As such, the regulatory agencies may be able to understand the specific areas where improvements are required in terms of the activities relating to regulation and enforcements of CSR, consumer protection and quality standards respectively.

### **1.7 Scope of the Study**

The scope of this research focuses on the relationship between perceived CSR, service quality, customer satisfaction, and repurchase intentions; in Nigeria, with consumer rights awareness as moderating variable. The research was conducted using sample of customers of telecommunications companies in Nigeria. The choice of the telecommunication industry as a reference point is due to its growing significance in the Nigerian economy. Since the deregulation of the sector in the year 2000, the industry has maintained an active lead in the Nigerian economy. Available statistics indicate that Nigeria now has over 148 million active mobile telephone users, representing a tele-density of 106% as at March 2016 (NCC website, 2016). The telecoms industry in Nigeria has maintained a leading position in Africa in terms of subscriber base (NCC-CAB, 2012; Tella *et al.*, 2009).



Data for the study were collected using a structured questionnaire administered on a convenience sample of mobile telephone subscribers in the two largest cosmopolitan cities in Nigeria (i.e., Kano and Lagos cities). The study sample is limited to the four major telecoms services providers, namely: Airtel Nigeria Ltd., Etisalat Nigeria, Globacom Nigeria Ltd., and MTN Nigeria. These companies are actively engaged in CSR activities, which are heavily promoted through a variety of media, such as print, broadcast, and electronic media; as well as through SMS messages that are often sent to customers. Table 1.1 shows the four major telecoms companies in Nigeria, and their respective market shares.

**Table 1.1:** Major Telecoms companies in Nigeria, and their market shares

	<b>Airtel</b>	<b>Etisalat</b>	<b>Globacom</b>	<b>MTN</b>
No. of Subscribers	33,866, 798	21,877, 542	34,608,793	57,045,721
Percentage %	23%	15%	23%	39%

Source: Nigerian Communications Commission ([www.ncc.gov.ng](http://www.ncc.gov.ng))

## 1.8 Operational Definition of Terms

- i. **Corporate Social Responsibility:** This is “the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time” (Carroll, 1979, p. 500).
- ii. **Perceived Corporate Social Responsibility:** This refers to the customers’ perceptions of the degree to which companies assume economic, legal, ethical and discretionary responsibilities towards their stakeholders (Maignan *et al.*, 1999).

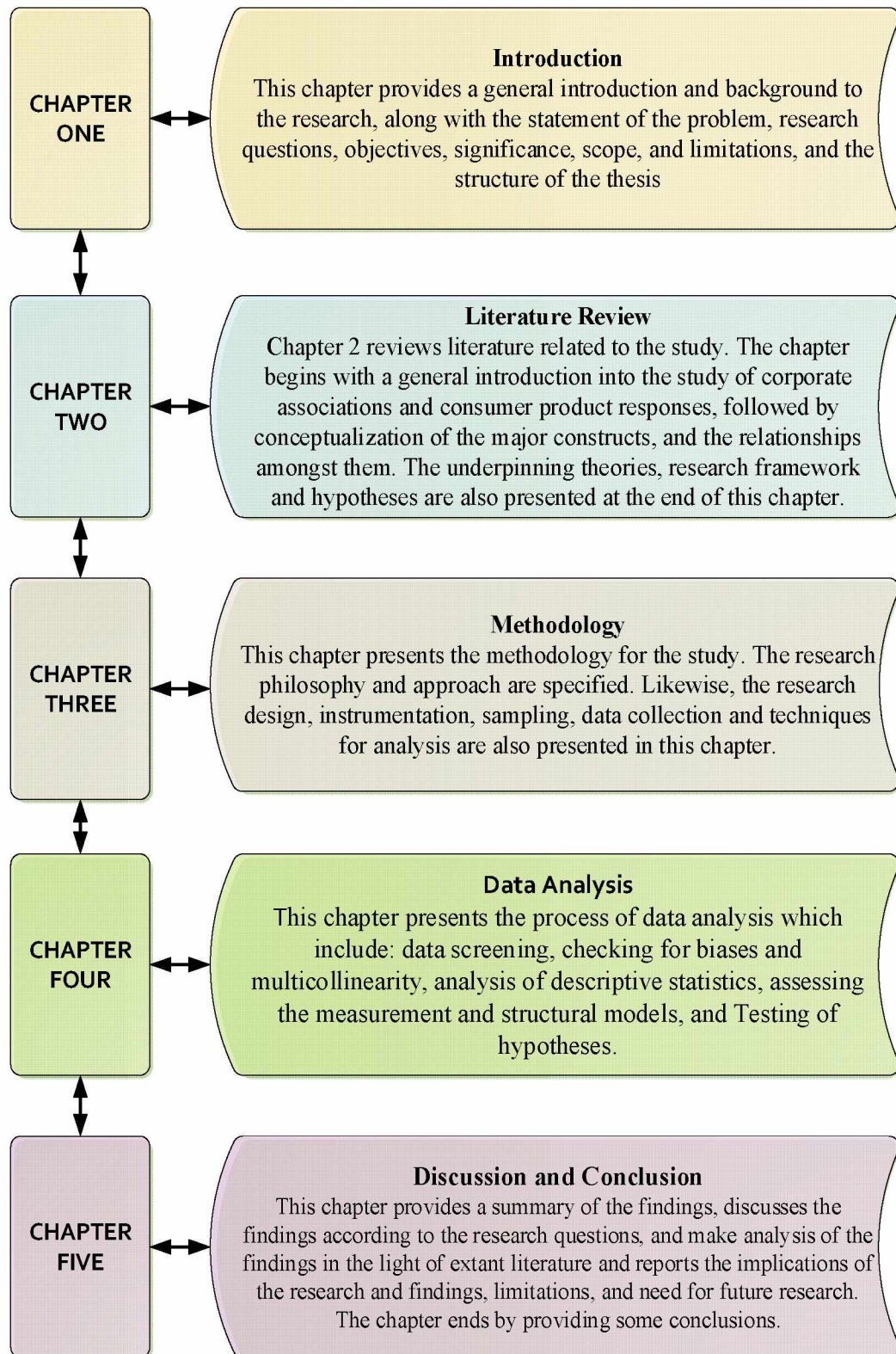
- iii. **Consumer Rights Awareness:** This is defined as the consumers' knowledge and understanding of their rights regarding their experiences with companies and/or products (Bhuiyan and Al-Enazi, 2013; Zhao and Othman, 2010).
  
- iv. **Perceived Service Quality:** This is defined as the "customer's overall impression of the relative inferiority/superiority of the organization and its services" (Bitner and Hubbert, 1994, p. 77).
  
- v. **Customer Satisfaction:** Customer satisfaction relates to individual feeling of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product's perceived performance in relation to his/her expectations (Kotler 2003).
  
- vi. **Customer's Repurchase Intention:** Customer repurchase intention relates to the tendency that consumers will purchase a particular good or service from the same company again, and deliver their use experiences to friends and relatives (Cronin *et al.*, 2000; Kuo *et al.*, 2009; Wang *et al.*, 2004; Zeithaml *et al.*, 1996).

## 1.9 Organization of the Thesis

The thesis is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 provides a general introduction and background into the study. The problem statement, research objectives and questions, significance of study, scope and limitations of the study were all highlighted in this chapter. Chapter 2 provides the review of literature about the thesis. The discussions covered the theoretical background to the study of CSR and consumer responses, meaning and dimensions of CSR, and relationships of CSR with service quality, customer satisfaction, repurchase intention, and consumer rights awareness. The chapter also discussed the underpinning theories and the development of hypotheses.

Chapter 3 of the thesis provides detailed explanation of the methodology adopted in the thesis. Detailed explanations on the research philosophy, approach, and design were provided, along with method of data collection and the statistical tools and techniques employed in conducting the analyses and test of hypotheses in the thesis. Chapter 4 presents a detailed account of the data, and the analyses carried out in the study. The discussion covered the data cleaning process, descriptive analyses, and the test of measurement and structural models in the PLS-SEM, along with the test of moderation effects with component variables in the PROCESS macro.

Chapter 5 provides discussions on the findings of the study. The chapter starts with a general overview of the research, followed by discussions on each component of the research findings as they relate to the research objectives, and the existing literature. The chapter also discussed the contributions of the study, in terms of knowledge, theory, and practice. Limitations of the study along with suggestions for future researches were also provided in the chapter. Figure 1.1 presents a graphical illustration of the organisation of the thesis.



**Figure 1.1:** Thesis Structure

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