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Corporate social responsibility and corporate image of Telkom SA SOC Limited

A research report submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management in Strategic Marketing

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Johannesburg, 2024

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ABSTRACT

State-owned enterprises are organisations owned by the government and they operate within government regulations. There are different factors that these organisations are obligated to account for in daily operations when making decisions; these factors define how state-owned enterprises (SOEs) differ from the private corporations in building their corporate image. The SOEs' environment remains in distress as the public regularly complain about their levels of service delivery and do not trust the SOEs, due to their perceived bad image. However, South African SOEs have the obligation to create special economic and social zones to improve the lives of South Africans.

Purpose

The use of corporate image in the private sector is increasing significantly, as it is a driver of brand loyalty, and scholars are increasingly researching branding -using various theoretical frameworks. The purpose of this study is to research the impact of corporate reputation as a mediator of corporate image for a state-owned enterprise (SOE). Further, the research assesses the indirect impact of corporate social responsibility on SOE corporate image and examines other major dependable variables that may have an influence relationship on corporate reputation.

Design/methodology/approach

To assess the study, a quantitative research method was employed, using the data obtained from Telkom customers; questionnaires were sent to individuals, using an electronic self-administered close-ended questionnaire. The data of a hundred and ninety (190) valid responses were analysed using SEM AMOS 28 and SPSS 28.

Findings

The outcome of the study revealed that out of nine hypotheses tested, five hypotheses were found insignificant and not supported, while the remaining four were significant and supported.

Practical implications

It is important for the company to priorities its service quality and marketing factors to align them with the corporate reputation, and corporate image by means of the company's corporate social responsibility efforts. By focusing on this area, the company can enhance its corporate image,

reputation, and stakeholder perception, ultimately contributing to the long-term sustainability of the business. Companies should reassess their CSR initiatives to ensure they align with stakeholders' expectations and contribute meaningfully to corporate reputation building.

Originality

The study contributes to understanding the impact of service quality dimensions, marketing factors and corporate reputation on corporate image. Corporate image, as a dependent variable, is influenced by different variables, including dimensions of service quality, such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy, marketing factors, namely, CSR, advertising exposure, social media marketing activities and website quality. Corporate repution plays a mediating role between these variables.

Keywords: State owned entities (SOE), service quality, corporate image (CI), corporate social responsibility (CSR), and corporate reputation (CR).

DECLARATION

I, Immanuel Mboniseni Nevondo (2402263), declares that this research report is my own work with the exception of indicated references that are fully acknowledged. The submission is in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management in Strategic Marketing at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. I confirm that this work has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at this or any other University.

Name and surname: Immanuel Mboniseni Nevondo.

Signed at Johannesburg

On the 20 day of February 2024.

DEDICATION

The study is dedicated to my partner and our wonderful babies. Your unwavering love, support, and understanding has been the guiding light throughout this journey. Despite the challenges and sacrifices, you have always been by my side by encouraging me.

To my late grandmother, your lifelong support and unconditional love has brought joy and understanding of hard work in my life. You are one who, in all seasons, strategically stored the seeds for the next season without fail and this strategy has taught me to prepare for the next season. In my learning of these, I will always fight to pass this knowledge on to your great-grandchildren and the next generation. I hope that Unarine and Thikho will carry on with the touch.

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I would like to take this opportunity to thank and appreciate the following people:

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My partner, Lutendo Nevondo, for the love and support -you are always by my side and your encouragement is much appreciated.
My Parents for believing in me.

This study couldn't have been where it is without your support.

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CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the core marketing conceptual ideas that were used. The chapter includes sub-sections for the summarised main problems that the study addresses, such as the study's background, study context, and problem statement. The chapter provides an overview of the study's intention, questions, importance, boundaries, and ethical considerations.

1.2 Background

A State-Owned Enterprise (SOE) is an entity formed by the government through legislation, with the aim of actively participating in commerce. The SOEs are essential for undertaking commercial activities on behalf of the government (Rohadin, 2021). The corporate image of SOEs has been neglected as they enjoy government backing (Namubiru et al., 2014). New changes in legislation have encouraged SOEs to consider whether these changes could force them to rethink their corporate image, in line with the operation. In recent years, the SOEs are no longer able to monopolise sectors, such as telecommunications, or insurance that are open to public competition (Heath, 2019). Other studies focus on building a strong corporate image for state owned enterprises and are reported as an integral part of firms in Uganda (Namubiru et al., 2014). The studies further found that corporate image has a significant influence in the entity's overall performance, even though the majority of SOEs have not fully embraced this. The research gap is to identify the factors that affect the corporate image by addressing research questions that consider the importance of corporate social responsibility in building the corporate image of SOEs. Building a positive corporate image is a prerequisite for businesses to enhance their competitiveness.

1.3 Context of the study

1.3.1 Overview of the state-owned enterprise

Governments around the world have created special economic zones by establishing their own entities that are expected to operate as companies within specific regulations, according to (Lenner

& Turner, 2019). The democratic dispensation of 1994 in South Africa advanced the transformation of the public sector to centralise government priorities. They further say that the transformation of the entities is to popularise and institutionalise the public sector so that there is broader access to public services. Most countries utilise state-owned entities as tools to position themselves for the future global economy, increasing financial competition, resources and skills development (Sulistyo & Darmayana, 2020). Globally, the state-owned enterprise is a phenomenon that exists in countries such as the United States of America (USA), South Africa (SA), China, Russia, Norway, New Zealand, and many other countries. The study context is to examine the corporate image value that would benefit SOEs' management and stakeholders' decisions regarding the improvement in the competitiveness of the enterprise.

The growing perception of corruption and other corporate governance transgressions in the SOEs, which are essential for development in third world countries, is starting to appear around the world (Munsanje, 2021; West, 2006). While there are signs of corrupt activities in organisations around the world, the poor governance of local enterprises makes it worse in South Africa. Public institutions are no longer at the forefront of countries' economic competitiveness but the poor governance in the sectors has become a stumbling block to this process (Nicholl, 2006). In response to these transgressions, stakeholders are starting to galvanise governments into addressing the SOEs' operations, aiming to transform them to embrace national competitiveness (Crawford et al., 2003; Dockery & Herbert, 2000; Parker, 1999). Although SOEs are common around the world, we find them predominantly in countries such as the USA, China, New Zealand, and South Africa.

The state-owned enterprises have not really understood the importance of the corporate image concept but lately, they are starting to consider its importance. The consideration is sparked by the increased awareness of customers' personal rights. Even though they are controlled by government, the SOEs see the need to improve their corporate image in public as necessary because the citizens have a choice to decide whether to connect to the national grid or find equivalent products or services elsewhere (Christiansen, 2013). Most developing countries have controlled sectors, such as electricity and water. The choice that customer have are not good for the state-owned enterprises' development hence the need to improve their corporate image.

1.3.2 Overview of the state-owned enterprises in the world

A pivotal dimension of SOEs is the extent to which they are now a global force. There are several large SOEs that are active internationally and engaged in trade, with some emerging countries pursuing explicit policies of SOE internationalisation (Büge et al., 2013). In accordance with this, enterprises contribute one out of ten of the global gross domestic product (GDP) and constitute about 20% of the world equity market (Bruton et al., 2015).

Company brand identity has several important strategic benefits, like gaining high market share, supporting brand extensions, reducing marketing costs and strengthening the brand against competitors (Alhaddad, 2015). State owned entities operate within stringent regulations due to pressures from all these stakeholders that are strategically aligned to the service delivery issue; this also includes enabling economic growth and accountability. While all government entities have corporate images that represent their identity, the purpose of this research is to investigate the relationship between brand identity, stakeholders and service delivery. Alhaddad (2015) mentioned that a positive and well-known corporate image is an intangible asset to all companies because the image is a powerful influencer that affects the customers' perception of the company and its ability. The company brand identity is a driver of the company performance in service delivery and the effect of both internal and external stakeholder behaviour which is the direct mediator. Relationship quality is enforced by the customer service experience when one looks at service driven industries (Nysveen et al., 2013).

Many countries have abandoned the idea of state-owned enterprises, favouring privatisation but insisting on state regulation for better control (Crawford et al., 2003; Dockery & Herbert, 2000; Parker, 1999). However, regulatory structures are being created as a mitigation to prevent a monopoly on essential services such as gas, electricity, telecommunications, water and sewerage sectors, while the United Kingdom's (UK) privatisation of their major enterprises and the introduction of regulation in 1984 is regarded as a benchmark for other countries (Parker, 1999). Parker (1999) mentioned that governance regulation depends on the institutional context because one country's regulatory system cannot be transferred to another country that has unique institutional constraints that need appropriate adaptation. BRICS countries, of which South Africa

is part, have different mandates in addressing the countries' national imperatives and thus, their SOEs (Gazetov et al., 2005; Gopa Kumar, 2010; Ralston et al., 2006; Sprenger, 2010; Thomas, 2012; Wang et al., 2009). In Brazil, the provision of electricity is important and strategic to the economy (Thomas, 2012). The Russia government controls communication, infrastructure, the military, industrialisation, natural resources and financial services (Sprenger, 2010). Manufacturing, mining, electricity and the construction sector in India are government controlled (Gopa Kumar, 2010). In China, they look at sectors, such as telecommunications, banking, raw materials and petrochemicals as drivers of the economy (Ralston et al., 2006; Wang et al., 2009).

There are several factors that contribute to the increasing importance of corporate image. Enterprises have forced businesses to significantly revise their business strategies to compete better to survive. Globalisation has been accelerated with the aim of increasing corporate image programmes, as the companies are spreading their reputation to the global market. For example, the USA has two of the most notable SOEs, such as Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac in the mortgage sectors and the mandate is not limited to lending only. While in South Africa, one of the biggest power generation utilities operates under strict government regulation.

In China, with many SOEs, it also has the Jin Jiang Hotel that is fully operated by government. The state owned enterprises are regarded as the backbone of economies for many countries, especially in the developing world (Yu, 2014). The state-owned enterprises that are well-managed and operating, as in Norway, assist growth and are successful in this regard. While in Russia, lack of transparency in the SOEs objectives and autonomy is excessive in setting the objectives (Kochetygova et al., 2005). The Russian government has made major progress in the corporate governance of SOEs in the last few years; the legal and regulatory framework has been adjusted for better protection against abuse and there is a voluntary code of corporate governance.

To realise the full economic benefits through this process will, however, take time (Thomas, 2012). In India, there is also a governance challenge where the corporate governance framework awareness is lacking in the political leaders and the government, including the lack of board member training, no information transparency, board structures, lack of directors' performance evaluation, directors self-interest and disinclination to change (Gopa Kumar, 2010).

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has become very important, while there is no universal definition and the wider scope of this concept has different meanings to the larger population in the world, due to various circumstances (Córdoba-Pachón et al., 2014). Some of the factors that stimulate interest in the corporate image is the society's growing expectation that organisations should be socially responsible. The engagement of CSR by companies is an important declaration when conducting their business in a manner that secures the future generation, while not neglecting the current generation.

Customers have the view that companies have a moral obligation to conduct themselves in a particular way that is significant to them. Companies around the world continue to consider the significance of CSR (Córdoba-Pachón et al., 2014). Some organisations have accepted reality and are reaping the benefits by presenting themselves in a socially and environmentally responsible manner. Enterprises around the world have a corporate image and their main goal is to maximise consumer's satisfaction. All these brands have meaning, and customers understand the meaning of the brand identities. The basis of the corporate image is as a symbol which the products and services use to identify themselves (De Chernatony & Dall'Olmo Riley, 1998). The study by Sulistyo and Darmayana (2020) discussed that public entities play a vital role in the economy of the country, especially the performance of state-owned entities that appeared as modifications for most of the countries.

Public service delivery is the most used word when the public is engaging with the public company, regardless of what an entity offers to the public and there can be misunderstanding on what the specific entity offers or renders. The ever-increasing competitive environment for business, the ability of the entity to perform is dependent on managing the intangible assets e.g. corporate brand identity (Gambetti et al., 2017). Currently, many customers consider the social and environmental image of the company when making purchase decisions.

1.3.3 Overview of the South African state-owned enterprises

South Africa, as a developing country, has established SOEs as a catalyst for economic growth, development, employment and economic transformation (Kikeri, 2018). SOEs operate under pressure as they are expected to promote efficient and effective services and contribute to

addressing socio-economic issues faced by the SA economy. According to the 2010 presidential review, there are approximately 715 such entities recorded in the Public Financial Management Act (Berman, 2016). There are about 300 public organisations entailing nine constitutional institutions, 153 national public entities, 21 main public entities, 26 national government entities, 72 provincial public entities, 18 provincial government business enterprises (Mashamaite & Raseala, 2018).The introduction of the Local Government Transition Act, of 1993 gave guidance on the reforms and the implementation of the new local government system in South Africa (RSA, 1993). The Local Government Transition Act of 1993 is the backbone of the City of Johannesburg, responding to the growing needs for services by the municipality and the city by introducing non-profit Municipal Owned Entities (MOEs).

The entities provide specific goods and services as a business to the municipality and the public. The main aim of creating SOEs was to ensure that effective and efficient services were provided to the growing population (Iroanya & Njingolo, 2017). Government has implemented the regulations and introduced state owned entities to promote cost containment of goods and services while delivering good quality services/goods (Berg & Tschirhart, 1988). With the ever-growing economy, population, and technology, both the nation and local government aim to support the growth and the positioning of SOEs in different sectors. The state-owned entities' management is complex when compared to private companies because of the public sector policy issue and the dominance of rapid changes (Osborne & Brown, 2012). Several authors (Chew & Vinestock, 2012; Gatenby et al., 2015) have discussed the uniqueness of the different stakeholders that they need to manage and satisfy.

South Africa, as a country, has several SOEs; most of them depend on bailouts from government to remain in operation and they are unable to function effectively, threating the economy with collapse. The corporate governance transgressions within South African SOEs have been widely publicised (Thomas, 2012). The report by Transparency International (2010) scored 4.5 and ranking South Africa at 54th out of 178 countries sampled for perceived corruption (Index, 2010). Moreover, this was not a good position when compared to other countries like Denmark, Singapore and New Zealand that have score 9.3, appearing as least corrupt counties. The report of

Transparency International (2022) has placed South Africa at the unchanged position of 43 out of 180 countries for the past 11 years.

South African SOE's play an essential role in the economy; they are responsible for providing infrastructure and services on which the economy relies on. The infrastructure and services include electricity generation, provision of water, freight logistics, transportation and telecommunication. The government regularly bails some of the country's important SOEs out, due to an inability to meet their mandatory obligation, let alone to sustain themselves. South Africa government SOEs, approximately 715 in 2012, were found in all levels of government for both commercial and non-commercial SOEs, together with subsidiaries. There are four types of commercial SOEs - incorporated and non-incorporated entities: 1. State owned companies (SOCs) operating under the Companies Act, 2. State interest companies (SICs) - government has no control but a material interest, 3. Statutory corporations (SCs) provide strategic goods and services, 4. Financial intermediaries (FIs). The non-commercial SOEs are tasked to handle public functions including regulatory work, advisory works and research functions. South African state owned enterprises are reported to have assets of over R1 trillion that is equivalent to 27% of the country GDP (Kikeri, 2018).

Some of South African major State-Owned Companies Profiles

- Air Traffic and Navigation Services Company Ltd
- Airports Company South Africa SOC Ltd
- Alexkor SOC Ltd
- Armaments Corporation of South Africa SOC Ltd
- Broadband Infraco SOC Ltd
- Denel SOC Ltd
- Development Bank of Southern Africa
- Eskom Holdings SOC Ltd
- Financial Sector Conduct Authority
- Independent Development Trust
- Industrial Development Corporation of South Africa Ltd
- Land and Agricultural Development Bank of South Africa
- Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa
- Petroleum Oil and Gas Corporation of South Africa SOC Ltd (The)

- Sasria SOC Ltd
- SEF SOC Ltd
- South African Broadcasting Corporation SOC Ltd
- South African Forestry Company SOC Ltd
- South African Nuclear Energy Corporation SOC Ltd (The)
- South African Weather Service
- Suid-Afrikaanse Poskantoor SOC Ltd
- Telkom SA SOC Ltd
- Trans-Caledon Tunnel Authority
- Transnet SOC Ltd

The country has a problem with legal and policy frameworks for infrastructure; there is a slow pace in correcting this, poor quality drafting, and parliamentary legislation scrutiny is inadequate, regulation is not strong and too much reliance is placed on poorly controlled and financed state owned enterprises (OECD, 2017). The country has been affected badly by corruption which has had an effect on the electricity generation monopoly and the railways while entities, such as the SAA and SABC, are bankrupt (Bracking, 2018; Peter et al., 2018). The South African government has failed to transform Telkom SA in the telecommunication industries to comply with pro-competitive policies even though the company is a state owned enterprise and regulated by an act of parliament (Sutherland, 2020).

The South African government's New Growth Path (NGP) targeted the creation of an additional five million jobs by 2020 and the majority of these jobs should come from the SOEs' developmental role in different industries. In line with the policies, such as the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF), the National Development Plan and the Industrial Policy Action Plan, the role of SOEs are highlighted as major contributors to develop infrastructure and economic restructuring, linking with the Nine-Point Plan that prioritises government activities, including water and electricity (Kikeri, 2018). The government initiatives strive to meet their goal of enabling SOEs to deliver development goals, support transformation and economic competitiveness. Major public enterprises are mandated to generate funds to cover their own operational costs and expansion programmes (Thomas, 2012).

This profit-orientation separates major public entities from other PFMA entities, excluding Telkom, which is partially owned by the state and listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. The continued attractiveness of Eskom bonds is enabled by the fact that government debts are guaranteed. This complacency is creating problems for SOEs like South African Airways, Eskom, Transnet and other SOEs in South Africa, currently. The survival of Eskom in the present form looks impossible without the continuing subsidies from both customer and taxpayers (Berman, 2016). However, there are some SOEs that are still performing better, including Telkom, that is a leader in information and communication technology (ICT) service provision in South Africa. The company offers ICT solutions, including mobile, high-speed fibre, data services, IT services, financial services, high mast tower solutions, and property management.

With the continuous need for new technology, the telecommunications industry is one of the fastest growing sectors in the world. From the South African perspective, the government's main objective is policy formulation to restructure the telephone industry by promoting an increase in foreign direct investment, enabling competition and efficiency. In early 1990s, the South African Department of Post and Telecommunications resorted to establishing Telkom as a state-owned company. Telkom had a monopoly in the provision of local and long distance telecommunications services, public payphones and international services (Fourie, 2001). The company is responsible for 5.5 million fixed lines with 50% shareholding in Vodacom. The entity shareholding is structured to include 40.5% South African Government, 49.2 % institutional shareholding, 3.7% treasury shares, and 6.6% which is non-institutional shareholding (Telkom, 2023).

1.4 Problem statement

The increase in popularising the brand image phenomenon for public sector organisations is becoming important to gain insights on the importance of corporate image for state owned enterprises. The context of identity in the public sector needs consideration to avoid application that is identical to the private sector that can risk damaging the organisation's image and create doubt on its legitimacy in the public sector (Leijerholt, 2019). The public SOE's responsiveness to residents' concerns is not to create a corporate image with the constructs of customer satisfaction, corporate reputation, and trust. The SOE's failure to create a strong corporate image

contradicts the rationale for their creation in the first place, would make them less efficient and non-responsive to delivery. In the 2010–2011 financial year, the Auditor-General reported that 88% of entities had problems meeting compliance (Gumede, 2019). For competitive advantage, any organisation strives to secure market share, the creation of corporate reputation, customer satisfaction and high levels of trust in the company. Building a positive image is a prerequisite in business competitiveness.

The organisation's corporate image is associated with the profile and behaviour of the company (Olins, 2003). Future research in exploring in detail the dimensions and other elements of corporate image was recommended (Tran et al., 2015). The maximisation of service delivery by SOEs needs financial sustainability as a key factor because a good financial position enables them to be effective and efficient for service delivery maximisation (Schoeman, 2011). The defining of fiscal responsibility is the sustainability or unsustainability of fiscal policy without blowing up or collapsing public debt (Burger, 2001). SOEs are failing in this operation and there are reasons for poor service delivery, including infrastructure overstated, allocated budget versus unlimited expenses needs, revenues limitation due to regulation, technical and management capacitation, poor governance, unskilled workforce and political interference, corruption, and misalignment with organisational objectives. The entity's services are not effective as the quality is poor (Gumede, 2019).

The poor service delivery has caused many protests by residents across the country, threatening the development and stability in local municipalities. The continuous poor functioning of this entities causes unsatisfactory service delivery hence the protest from communities. Despite the intended specialization, independence, and operational flexibility, municipal entities frequently face destabilization due to ongoing service delivery protests, while these they are designed to provide more efficient and adaptable services. However, the persistent protests indicate significant challenges in meeting community needs and (Peters & Van Nieuwenhuyzen, 2012). The environment in which SOEs operate needs companies that can implement marketing tools that are effective to become successful in the business. For the company's success, corporate image is instrumental as a strategic marketing tool.

The social responsibility activities influence the customers' attitude through the principle of generalised reciprocity of social change theory (Blau, 1964). The study further indicated that social, economic, and environmental social responsibility activities create generalised reciprocity (Eisingerich et al., 2011), while there is no direct benefit to the customers through CSR activities, because the customers are members of the society and reciprocate these activities (Eisingerich et al., 2011). Other scholars argued that organisations could create a positive corporate image when implementing CSR activities (Golob & Bartlett, 2007; Pomering & Johnson, 2009), while there is an increase of customer loyalty and the provision of sustained competitive advantage when the corporate image is positive (Lantos, 2001).

The brand communicates what image of the product or service has been marketed so that they reflect distinct identification and recognition by many customers. Marketers in business enterprises undertake brand communication, build brand recognition, build good reputation and setting of standards for the entity to maintain or surpass at all times (Sahin et al., 2011). Marketing researchers and practitioners' focal point of interest is brand loyalty. There are many reasons that motivate the companies to embrace brand loyalty as it generates benefits like competitor barriers, augments sales, minimises customer cost of acquisition and inhibits customers' susceptibility to competitor efforts in the market (Rundle-Thiele & Maio Mackay, 2001).

The study found that corporate success is impacted by corporate reputation (Sageder et al., 2018). It further discusses that good corporate image boosts corporate reputation. The focus of this study is on South African SOEs, which like other developing nations, demonstrate a degree of interest and appreciation for the function of this enterprises, opening new opportunities for the economy and enormous potential to grow. Despite the growing use of SOEs, there is limited literature in this topic of building corporate image on SOEs which is still under-developed in South Africa, and we can only find a few articles that focus on the corporate image of the SOEs. With this background, it is evident that we have a knowledge gap in this phenomenon.

1.5 Research objectives

The study adopts the following objectives:

- To examine the influences of CSR initiatives' implementation and how it contributes to corporate image.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of website quality on the corporate image of the organisation.
- To determine the influence of service quality and marketing factors on corporate reputation

1.6 Research questions:

- How does implementation of CSR initiatives contribute to corporate image?
- What is the contribution of website quality to the corporate image of the organisation?
- How does the influence of service quality and marketing factors contribute to corporate reputation?

1.7 Purpose of study

The purpose of this study is to ascertain factors that contribute to building a strong corporate image for state owned enterprises.

1.8 Contribution of the study

The study contributes twofold:

1) Practical contribution

2) Theoretical contribution.

1.8.1 Practical contribution

This study contributes by exploring different factors that have an impact on the corporate image of the SOEs. The study demonstrates the importance of corporate image to different stakeholders who form part of the SOEs. The paper practically reveals the relations that link the service quality and corporate image of the daily operations of organisations. This implies effective implementation activities that can be placed on the significance of understanding the importance of corporate image. This helps to raise the social integration of the public and the state-owned

entities. The management within the SOEs should consider engaging with the public through various social media platforms to understand their expectations. Better communication helps both the stakeholders and public have a better understanding of the entity's operational procedure.

1.8.2 Theoretical contribution

There are a variety of theoretical implications; this study's main theoretical contribution is the development of constructs on, respectively, satisfaction, corporate reputation and trust and further extends research about corporate image. The study develops a research framework, explores the correlation through various factors, and further takes empirical tests to verify the relationships,

The study increases knowledge and understanding on how public entities operate to understand factors that contribute to the corporate image of state-owned entities. This paper is concerned about understanding how satisfaction and corporate reputation can bring trust in the corporate image and how these entities operate within the South African economy. Most marketing researchers focus on the corporate image of privately owned enterprises. This paper identifies knowledge about the corporate image of the public entities.

1.9 Limitations of the study

The focus of study is on Telkom SOE as a state-owned enterprise within South Africa. The respondents of the research are ordinary customers who have an engagement with the organisation.

1.10 Organisation of the study

Chapter 1- Introduction and study background

This chapter provides insights into the research topic, the research background, and context of the study, theoretical framework, research problem, research objectives, questions, purpose, justifications and contributions of the study, delimitations of the study and definition of key terms.

Chapter 2- Literature Review

The literature review: This chapter covers the concept of SOEs from South Africa, developing countries and the global perspective. This includes the state of the industry, its service expectation and the challenges.

Theories, the conceptual model, and hypotheses development: This chapter provides detail on the theories used to ground the study and detailed explanations of the empirical literature. The conceptual model and hypotheses development: it also presents hypotheses derived from the model, as well as justifications for them.

Chapter 3- Research methodology

This chapter covers the research methodology for the study. It details the research paradigm, research approach, research design, research methods, population, sampling, sampling methods, data collection methods, pilot testing, data analysis methods, validity and reliability of the study and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4- Presentation of results.

The chapter focuses on the presentation, discussion, and analysis of findings of the study.

Chapter 5- Discussion of results

The chapter covers the discussion of the findings of the study.

Chapter 6- Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter covers the conclusion, recommendations, implications, and limitations of the study, as well as suggestions for future research.

1.11 Chapter summary

This chapter covered the following sub-sections, purpose of the study, context of the study, the problem statement, contribution of the study and delimitations. The chapter covered the theoretical grounding for the current study, which dealt with the different theories, including the Carroll Theory (Carroll, 1991), Stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984), the theory of SERVQUAL

(Parasuraman et al., 1988), and the model of image processing (Downing, 1989). The SOE background, global overview and South African overview is covered. The next chapter is a review of literature.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the corporate image of the state-owned enterprise from the global view, South African view and Telkom SA limited SOC. The theoretical groundings of the study, that is, the Carroll theory, the stakeholder theory, the theory of SERVQUAL and the model of image processing are discussed in the context of this study. Empirical literature is also discussed, and the chapter ends with the conceptual model and hypothesis development.

2.2 Overview of Telecommunication Industry in the world

The telecommunications sector has shown the ability to affect the country's development goals globally (Kumar, 2014). There are many social and economic areas in which the telecommunications industry can help South Africa to grow nationally. After democracy in 1994, South African consumers have increased the use of mobile telephones, the companies have benefitted from the increased demand despite the challenges that are related to the South African economy (Isaacs, 2020). The infrastructure of the telephone industry has developed significantly in the country. The room for expansion has the potential to increase the financial returns of the companies through market expansion because when the telecommunication sector grows, this can increase the domestic product of the economy in which they operate. This in turn, gives the companies' ability to participate in CSR programmes in the country.

It is important for the companies to help the government to transform the economy because socio-economic issues are challenging the economy (ElMassah & Mohieldin, 2020). The state encourages the stakeholders in all sectors of the economy to develop their sustainable development goals along with the targets as charters (Chirwa & Amodu, 2021). The social, economic and regulatory environments of countries vary; these environments have an influence on how companies operate in different nations (Ghauri et al., 2021). South Africa is just like any other country; it has its challenges and opportunities that companies are encountering. It is important for the companies to respond to the challenges of income gaps in the country (Von Fintel & Orthofer, 2020). Both the public sector and the private sector have been determined to

transform the way of doing business to show greater democracy and inclusiveness in the economy that previously disadvantaged most South Africans (Thomas, 2012).The government's contribution to this effort was to develop and protect infrastructure by using SOEs as instruments of social development (Williams, 2010). SOEs were established to minimise income inequalities and contribute to the development of the country.

Note Maybe we need to put more meat.

2.2.1 Overview of South African Telecommunication Industry

From the 1990s African countries has experienced the increase in the ICT infrastructure development and this boosted telecommunications sector(David & Grobler, 2020). South African telecommunication sector is regards as one of the fast growing sector in the country (Phale et al., 2021). The industry has become one of the big contributor in South African economy and it goes further playing the critical part of connectivity of people and businesses. The technological advancement has enable the transformation of the industry, moving from fix line, fax and telegram to dominance of mobile network. The mobile network telecommunications sector in South Africa continues to grow in terms of customers and mobile network operators (Paelo & Robb, 2020). The main players in the industry are Vodacom, MTN, Cell C and Telkom (Gaetsewe; Robb & Paelo, 2020). The South African telecommunication industry can be classified in two segments, namely, internet and voice. The industry is just like other industries; it has its own challenges such as competition, diminishing revenue on voice calls and inflation (Du Preez, 2020). Despite the challenges, there are opportunities that arise with evolving technology (Rota-Graziosi & Sawadogo, 2022).

There is an increase on the use of smart phones and an increase in data usage because consumers are more engaged with the internet nowadays (Al-Hawary & Obiadat, 2021). The industry is moving to a value added service approach where the service providers differentiate themselves by offering meaningful services and benefits to stand out from the competitors (Guven, 2020). This makes the industry more innovative and highly competitive (Du Preez, 2020). The South African telephone industry has shown an interest in driving the development goals of the country. The

industry can be utilised to drive social and economic areas of the country. Demand for mobile telephones has increased since the start of democracy in 1994 because people have realised the convenience of technology (Rosenberg & Vogelman-Natan, 2022). The mobile telephone infrastructure has developed in urban and remote areas of the country because of competition for market share. The growth of the companies has resulted in an increase in the gross domestic product of the country.

The main challenge faced by consumers in the sector is that of high data prices and Internet connectivity speed when compared to developed markets. Consumers use different data sim cards for reasonable cost networks, they find it difficult to depend on one service provider (Mothobi, 2017). The Independent Communications Authority South Africa (ICASA) introduced a data rollout commission led by Brands Eye in 2019 because of high data prices (Shava, 2021). Consumers believed that Telkom complies with the ICASA rules; they were satisfied with Telkom services while they were not happy with other service providers. It has been proven that data is the main revenue stream for South African service providers (Shava, 2021). Data cost remain a barrier to South African growth because these are higher than the cost in other countries in the world. Customers use different networks because of high data cost and call per minute.

Network providers are not only providing communication services in South Africa; they have developed various extra activities, such as education, healthcare, manufacturing, tourism, entertainment, infrastructure development and combating climate change (Kastouni & Lahcen, 2022). During the COVID-19 pandemic, many schools changed to e-learning and the data cost affected the whole of South Africa. Telecommunications aid in the distribution of information to all sections of society, thereby facilitating better performance of all sectors of the economy (Adam & Fazekas, 2021). Connectivity of telecommunication fosters social development, such as development education, health and better citizen involvement in civil society matters (Servaes, 2022).

2.2.2 Telkom SA limited SOC

Telkom SA SOC Limited is a South African telecommunications company providing fixed line, mobile, information communications, and technology (ICT) and data services to consumers and

organisations (Robb, 2020). Telkom was formed as one of the government department that falls under the Department of Post and Telecommunications (Menyennett, 2012). Telkom remained the fixed-line monopolist until the government of South Africa decided to adopt managed liberalisation in the telecommunications sector (Cramer & Chisoro-Dube, 2021). Before 1994, Telkom was perceived as a state-owned entity that was providing service only to affluent urban areas and did not to pay attention to the needs of the disadvantaged population in the rural areas. When democracy was introduced in South Africa after 1994, Telkom transformed into a customer-focused entity and it worked on providing better service to everyone (Moyo & Munoriyarwa, 2021).

The company remained a solely state-owned enterprise until 1997 when the government decided to sell 30% of the shares to the strategic equity partner of a consortium between Telkom Malaysia and SBC Communication International to the amount of R 5,58 billion (Menyennett, 2012). He further mentioned that 30% was divided into 18% to SBC Communication International which is based in the United States and 12% to Telkom Malaysia. It can be argued that the South African government aimed to align the company with the international standards of corporative governance when selling the shares to foreign shareholders. After selling the shares, the government remained the main shareholder, and as the main shareholder, it had a social responsibility to develop infrastructure in the disadvantaged rural areas (Menyennett, 2012).

Telkom also had the responsibility of improving its network in its service areas and of replacing old equipment with new equipment to provide improved services to the corporate customers who require advanced services. Technological development forced Telkom to invest more capital to be able to offer advanced services to the corporate world.

The company entered the next stage in 2002 when privatisation was introduced. The government mentioned that 20% of Telkom shares would be listed on both the Johannesburg Stock Exchange and the New York Stock Exchange. The government decided to partially privatise Telkom SA as an indication to demonstrate its willingness to liberate the South African economy and to attract foreign investors. After listing the shares, Telkom shareholders became a combination of government, local and domestic investors. The South African government owns 40.5% shares in

Telkom South Africa and 49.6% of the shares are held by institutional shareholders, 3.4% of the shares is held by treasury, and non-institutional shareholders have 6.5% (Govuzela).

Telkom SA has established an entity called the Telkom Foundation Trust. The established entity facilitates all corporate social initiatives of Telkom SA operating in different provinces with the objective of transforming disadvantaged communities through sustainable development programmes (Telkom 2023). The foundation integrates the state, educational institutions and the private sector to improve the quality of education in the country. Telkom attempts to place CSR as a part of its business strategies. It has different CSR programmes that help the country. Telkom has a Community Development Centre, which was established in 2007, it operates a programme called Programme Kemitraan dan Bina Lingkungan (PKBL) as a realisation of the CSR. Telkom also helps the economy by operating an environmental programme since the year 2009-2013 where it invests funds in the charity programme. The environmental programme provides scholarships, the development of laboratories, assists schools with resources needed, offers internships and teacher development programmes.

2.3 Theoretical Grounding of the study

The following theories are used for this research study: The Carroll Theory (Carroll, 1991), the stakeholder Theory (Freeman, 1984), the theory of SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1988), and the model of image processing (Downing, 1989).

2.3.1 The Carroll Theory

The proposal and development of the CSR pyramid by Archie B. Carroll concerns the aim of explaining the required obligations that business has about social responsibility to the local economy. Carroll's development of the original four constructs of CSR in 1979 and the depiction of the pyramidal CSR in 1991 reflected the capitalist societies of many Americans (Carroll, 1991;Brin & Nehme, 2019). While his study observed that Carroll's pyramid CSR level of depiction does play a significant role in European countries and is connected in some way (Crane

& Matten, 2007), Carroll (1991) defined social responsibility for a business as involving legal, ethical, economic and discretionary expectations to capture the society's hearts, while other scholars define CSR as the organisation's consideration of response, technical, issues over the narrow economic outlook, and the firm's legal requirements (Davis, 1973).

The idea or debates around corporate social responsibility (CSR) are at the centre of discussion between the organisations and the society globally. The term CSR was invented by Americans as Carroll expresses it, but there has been gradual adoption of the term and activities globally for the past several decades (Crane & Matten, 2007). Carroll specifies the theory as composed of four obligations that the firm has as the way in which the firm interacts with the community around it and the world (Brin & Nehme, 2019). They further mention that Carroll's theory creates a good foundation and infrastructure when the obligation is composed of legal, economic, ethics and empathy towards society.

2.3.2 The Stakeholder Theory

Proponents of stakeholder theory contend that it emphasises issues that concern the company stakeholders. The theory is propounded by Abrams (1951), where he specifies that the aim of a corporate entity is to try to combine the interest of all the shareholders in the company (Motshegwa et al., 2017) . The theory seems to be too simplistic, because of its concern with stakeholders only (Coleman, 2008), however, it is true that the stakeholder theory is better in explaining the role of corporate governance than the agency theory by highlighting different constituents of a firm (Naciti et al., 2021).

Consistent customer brand experience can be brought through co-ordination (Pike & Page, 2014). Brand leaders should show a clear understanding of the goals and values of the brand so that they are able to encourage other stakeholders to support and adopt brand congruency (Cox et al., 2014). Other studies supported that branding must be based on the association between businesses that share similar values and pursue strategies (Kavaratzis, 2009).

Stakeholders have different positions, and they play different roles in the organisation, some of them play crucial roles and share different relationships (Rowley, 1997). Some stakeholders are

reserved with limited association with other stakeholders, and they remain marginal on the decisions of the brand (Timur & Getz, 2008).

Due to different positions held by different stakeholders, there is a need for a brand manager for brand advocacy (Pike & Page, 2014); these managers are not required to assign the task but to encourage brand identification and motivate stakeholders to support brand identity. The use of positive word-of-mouth encourages voluntary and positive participation in brand development (Löhndorf & Diamantopoulos, 2014). Unlike private entities, state owned entities have a difficult landscape of stakeholders to appease and manage (Gatenby et al., 2015; Wiewiora et al., 2016). Stakeholder management can be challenging for any entity but significantly more difficult for SOEs (Heath & Norman, 2004). They further alluded that multi-task agency challenges and multi-principal agency challenges reduce the usefulness of agency theory in state owned entities.

The study shows that stakeholder theory is most appropriate to de-escalate existing and future conflicts among stakeholders, including that of SOEs, by co-ordinating the interests of each group to obtain some degree of satisfaction (Friedman & Miles, 2002). There is a need for relationships between public entities or organisations and different stakeholders to be formalised because there is no regulation for stakeholder issues (Clarkson, 1995). Thus, the call to have a legal framework for a stakeholder model that will assist in enforcing stakeholder relationships by recognising non-economic and economic stakeholders (Donaldson & Preston, 1995).

2.3.3 The SERVQUAL Theory

Quality is when customer specification is conformed to, the definition of the customer on quality is the most important, not that of the organisation's management (Parasuraman et al., 1988). The authors further discussed that for the organisation to earn a reputation, it must meet or exceed customer expectations when considering tangibles, responsiveness, assurance, reliability, and empathy. The determination of quality can be measured by SERVQUAL (Parasuraman et al., 1988), while quality service consists of the physical environment quality, outcome quality and quality interaction. The study reflected the view that customers' expectations are met because of the reliability dimension and surpass it using procedure measurement methods (tangibility, assurance, responsiveness, and empathy) (Ok et al., 2018), while the legitimacy of the

SERVQUAL model was affirmed by evaluation of service quality, expressed service quality engagement assessment reflects the customer's perception of assurance (AS), reliability (RL), responsiveness (RS), tangibles (TG) and empathy (EP) (Zeithaml et al., 2006).

Reliability refers to the ability to offer the promised service quality correctly and consistently, the assurance refers to the knowledge of employees' ability to retain customer trust and confidence continues, tangibles refer to physical facilities, equipment, and the availability of a personalised service offering, while empathy is individualised service and customer care, responsiveness, enthusiasm and prompt action when assisting with customer requests and challenges. The reason to propose the SERVPERF scale was to contradict the use of SERVQUAL in measuring service quality (Jain & Gupta, 2004). They further discussed that there is still no confirmation on which, between SERVQUAL AND SERVPERF, is best suited to measure service quality. The study shows that service quality as a multi-dimensional construct clearly indicates the effective areas of service quality establishing customer satisfaction (Umoke et al., 2020). They continue to reflect that customers show the level of satisfaction with empathy is high and satisfaction in tangibility is low.

The assessment on the effects of SERVQUAL, relationship quality and experience on BI of the retail consumer in the middle income level segment in South Korea has been studied (Özkan, Süer, et al., 2020a). The study confirms that SERVQUAL dimensions positively influence customers' experience values, purchase intention, relationship quality and SERVQUAL has a significant impact when considered with other factors. SERVQUAL is found to be important and a critical factor in business success because it influences customer satisfaction, profit increase, market share and value increase (Ramya et al., 2019). The company that prioritise the provision of high quality service to its customer, with innovation improvement and service reliability increases reputational value to the customers (Narteh & Braimah, 2020).

2.3.4 The model of image processing

Some scholars have researched the work on the formation process of the corporate image. This considers the development of an image formation model (Downing, 1989), while the

conceptualisation of image formation is as a formation process impression (Williams & Moffitt, 1997), and focuses on the value maps hierarchy (Van Rekom, 1997). There are specific behavioural elements that are linked to the corporate image formation process (Cornelissen, 2000). Image is a representation of past perceptual or quasi-perceptual experience. There are different points of view from different stakeholders on the perceptions towards the corporate image construct, and they are also becoming aware of the corporate image formation process issues and the influence this has on consumer behaviour (Martínez & Pina, 2005).

while creating an understanding of what constitutes corporate image gives the management an opportunity to revise the company policies aiming to change customer behaviour in social fashion, positive ethics, increase satisfaction, loyalty and positive 'wow' behaviour (Andreassen & Lindestad, 1998; He & Mukherjee, 2009). Corporate image is the result of all the impressions, feelings, experiences and knowledge that people have about the organisation which are mentioned as essential elements of image (Davies & Chun, 2012; Worcester, 2009). This leads to the perception of stakeholders in the corporation (Melewar, 2003; Stuart & Kerr, 1999). Corporate image is both a tangible and an intangible construct as it's associations are interlinked with the conception of reputation.

2.4 Conceptual Development

2.4.1 Service quality

The design of a service quality focus was aimed to evaluate service quality and should be based on the parameters that are standardised, as developed by (Parasuraman et al., 1988). The quality of service is a reflection of the customers' evaluation perceptions of the received services at a certain moment (Parasuraman et al., 1985), while the definition of service quality is the anticipated level of excelling and further controls the level of excellence to meet customer desires (Wyckoff, 1990). Service quality is defined as the delivery of service excellence or service superior to customer expectations (Parasuraman et al., 1991). Service perceived value and customer's expectations are measured by service quality (Al-Tamimi & Al-Amiri, 2003). The criticism of

SERVQUAL has led to the development of a PAKSERV model for non-western contexts (Raajpoot, 2004). The author discusses that the concept of service quality is sensitive to culture and for south-east Asian and middle eastern contexts, the PAKSERV model is best suited (Raajpoot, 2004).

Another study explores service quality in a different culture, hence the suggestion of some cultural dimensions. Studies have divided their research into four dimensions as uncertainty avoidance, power distance, individualism or collectivism, and masculinity or femininity (Hofstede, 2011).
The research model of SERVQUAL determines the impact of five dimensions, including tangibility, responsibility, confidence, reliability, and empathy on consumer perceptions. The measure of the perfection of a product or service is quality service which is consistence of quality design and quality conformation (Tjiptono, 2009), while service can be viewed as a process of interaction in doing something for someone. The study concluded that reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and tangibles are service quality elements that simultaneously affect customer satisfaction (Setiono & Hidayat, 2022). The study further found that those elements of quality service have partially significant effect on customer satisfaction (Setiono & Hidayat, 2022). The service quality concept is a term on which its formulation depends, namely, the several factors that are related to the service and service firms (Ramya et al., 2019)

2.4.1.1 Reliability

This is a dimension of service quality that is an association between the courtesy, knowledge and ability of the employees for their self-confidence and they should have no doubt about the organisation's existence (Andri et al., 2022). The dimension attributes include the provision of promised services, performance of the service promised, dependably and accurately. The organisation should do things promised on time, should be sympathetic and reassure customers when they have problems while making sure that the company is dependable (Yarimoglu, 2014), with the inclusion of overdrafts as a privilege, in the case of banking (Agbor, 2011).

2.4.1.2 Responsiveness

This is a quality service dimension that relates to the organisation's willingness to assist customers with the provision of quick services. The attribute of the responsiveness dimension will include alerting customer timeously, with certainty of timeous service delivery, quick service to the customer, commitment to assisting customers and readiness to respond to customers. Service responsiveness can be taken as the willingness of a service provider to help their customers by delivering prompt service and swiftly (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

2.4.1.3 Assurance

This considers the knowledge and the courtesy that the employees must enable for trust and confidence on the part of the customer (Pakurár et al., 2019). This dimension attributes the ability of the employees in building customer trust, conducting transactions that make customers feel safe, they are consistently polite to customers and able to answer questions from customers. In the ranking of service quality, elements of assurance is ranked first according to (Grönroos, 2020); other scholars have ranked the assurance fourth (Raji & Joseph, 2022). while authors mentioned that assurance indicates the attitudes of the employees and how they behave, the employees' ability to provide friendly, courteous, confidential and competent services to customers (Parasuraman et al., 1994).

2.4.1.4 Empathy

With empathy, customers need to feel that the organisation prioritises them when they are providing services. Providing service to customers, paying personal attention and caring means that there is empathy (Parasuraman et al., 1994). They further state that conveying customer feeling is unique and special and it is at the core of empathy. This dimension has attributes that include giving individual attention to customers, employees taking care of the customer, prioritising customer interests, understanding customers' needs and operating hours that are comfortable (Pakurár et al., 2019). The authors have argued the consideration of inclusion operations and opening hours under the empathy dimension (Agbor, 2011).

2.4.1.5 Tangibles

This has been identified as the physical facilities e.g. personnel, equipment and communication (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Parasuraman et al., 1985; Parasuraman et al., 1994). The attributes of this service quality dimension include modern equipment, materials related to a visibly appealing service (Parasuraman et al., 1988); the authors further mentioned that tangibles have the same importance as empathy. There is a consideration of tangibles as elements that are distinct and show consistency across the cultures (Pakurár et al., 2019; Sultana & Das, 2016).

2.4.2 Marketing factors

Marketing factors consist of different variables and elements that have a direct impact on the success of the business (Deepak & Jeyakumar, 2019). The factors are categorised in two groups, such as internal and external marketing factors. It is important to understand that internal factors are controlled and managed by marketing teams of each business, while the external factors are affected by the external business environment, such as competitors, economic environment and social cultural factors (Ibrahim & Harrison, 2020). It is vital for marketing managers to balance the management of internal and external elements with the conceptualisation of internal elements with people and process and external factors that are represented by the traditional marketing mix (Saad et al., 2015).

2.4.2.1 Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate social responsibility can be defined in different ways as it continues to evolve with time. The International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) has provided a definition where it is described as the responsibility of an organisation for the impacts of its decisions and activities on society and the environment, through transparent and ethical behaviour that contributes to sustainable development (Okafor et al., 2021). Corporate social responsibility is a theory that affirms that firms are entities with economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic obligations (Melé, 2008). Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has been discussed since the 1950s, but it was not defined until much later when (Carroll, 1999) developed an understanding of its meaning, importance and impact (Srivastava et al., 2022). Further, the formation that we see today, became popular after it was defined by Archie Carroll's Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility in

1991 (Saleh, 2022). Carroll's model consists of four different CSR models known as economic, ethical, legal and philanthropic (Carroll, 1999).

CSR refers to the organisation's responsibility to make a positive impact by contributing to the society, and concerns for society's future needs. This is a kind of business self-regulation with the aim of being socially accountable (Lantos & McGillicuddy, 2019). There is no accurate approach on which companies can practice CSR, because many CSR initiatives strive to positively contribute to the community, the economy and the environment. The study states that in current business, organisations are facing increasing pressure from different stakeholders to portray a socially responsible behaviour; they are bound by the normative pressure of the institutional theory to meet the terms with the stakeholder needs with the aim establishing a sense of legitimacy among different stakeholders (Shahzad & Sharfman, 2017). They further revealed that CSR has become the companies' competitive strategy to raise their profits, improve customers satisfaction and loyalty, corporate reputation and bring a positive attitude to the organisational brands (Islam et al., 2021).

The study revealed that CSR can influence consumer behaviour when consumers are willing to switch to a brand that stood for a cause or participated in resolving the social issue. Consumers' perception of the value of a brand grows when CSR is incorporated, and it makes a business more competitive (Wang, 2020). It is significant for an organisation to create a safe environment for employees where diversity is addressed, and the fair distribution of organisational profit is encouraged in an ethical manner (Zulfiqar, 2019).

It is argued that the firms can only be socially responsible when the business is profitable and when the shareholders and investors are equally satisfied (Zaman & Liu, 2022). Other literature states that organisations allocate their important resources to CSR initiatives and contribute to innovative stimuli for value creation, preservation, by means of responding to changes in the culture of stakeholders (Hou et al., 2019), while, on the other hand, the organisations invest in CSR activities as a method of correcting the challenges caused by the business and the situations that prevailed before the business commencement of the organisation (Low & Bu, 2022).

The previous studies revealed that CSR has a positive correlation with corporate image, suggesting that organisations use CRS as an instrument of advancing the corporate image (Fauzan, 2022). Further, when the corporations operate well at corporate social responsibility, the customers create a constructive impression of the corporation. Corporate social responsibility has a positive impact on improving customers' perception about the company's image (Fauzan, 2022). According to Wang (2020), an improvement in the company's image might be the result of a company's contributions to the community; furthermore, the stakeholders can view an organisation as well behaved when it is being professional in conducting the business interests, is transparent and minimises adverse social effects with good intentions. The study has shown that hypotheses of corporate social responsibility performance have a positive effect on the organisational reputation (Javed et al., 2020); furthermore , other studies revealed that CSR has no impact on brand trust and brand image (Lee et al., 2018).

2.4.2.2 Social media marketing activities

In a competitive global landscape, businesses try to improve marketing effectiveness by identifying new marketing metrics related to business performance, therefore, traditional advertising does not have as effective an influence as in the past, and the goods and services requirements that meet customer needs are increasing. The level of competition is increasing where supply is greater than demand and traditional advertising becomes less efficient, so they introduce new forms of marketing; due to this, it is important to adopt new methods of marketing communications (Lee & Cho, 2020). Businesses have started using new technology and media, such as celebrity endorsements, social media advertising and managing user content to develop brand awareness among customers (Wang & Kim, 2017).

Social media consist of different digital communication forms, such as text, images, and videos, through which users interact with the aim of sharing information; this results in the formation of online communities (Sweet et al., 2020). Social media allows users to share information, interact and build online communities according to mutual interests; it is an online environment where individuals with common interests meet to share their thoughts and ideas (Guidi, 2020). The recent

systematic literature examined social media as internet-based channels that make it possible for users to interact with large communities who develop value from user generated content (Li et al., 2021). The use of social media platforms, based on technology, in marketing actions by businesses is critical in various aspects, such as the effect that consumers have on their products and brands and shared; they link with other consumers and it can be utilised by organisations as a platform through in which direct marketing actions can be carried out (Wibowo et al., 2020).

The significance of utilising social media is gained from interactions with users and content shared by an organisation or an individual. Organisations use social media communication networks and interactions to reach their desired marketing outcomes (Cartwright et al., 2021). Moreover, businesses can use social media to create a direct communication and form a relation with the customers. The study revealed that social media marketing activities have an influence on customer relationship quality (Wibowo et al., 2020).

Due to social media's interactive characteristics, it makes it easier to share knowledge, allows collaborations and larger communities can participate in activities other than media platforms, such as radio, billboards, print and television. Therefore, social media is considered the most important form of communication for spreading brand information. Social media marketing emphasises that it entertains the customers and customers can search by using the default search feature on social networking sites, hashtags, using direct searching options that the company provides, and it saves time and allows customers to get the most recent information. In addition, companies can perform integrated marketing activities with less effort and cost because of seamless interactions and communication among customers' digital services, media through social media (Tafesse & Wien, 2018).

Social media marketing activities (SMMA) gives marketers opportunities to lower prejudice and misunderstanding on the brand and to increase the value of the brand through the exchange of information and ideas (Yadav & Rahman, 2017). Social media gives companies an opportunity to recognise customers who are paying attention to the brand and engage with them on a personal level (Bazi et al., 2020). Providing real-time information and understanding the customers because

of information obtained by marketers from consumers to brand and consumers to consumers is advantageous to the business because it creates brand value (Zollo et al., 2020).

Social media marketing activities are defined as promotional and relational communication tools that complement the marketing activities of the organisation by providing greater interactivity through online interactions between companies and consumers (Ibrahim et al., 2020). They further define SMMA as the way in which consumers perceive the organisation or brand engagement in different social media marketing activities. There is a positive influence of dimensions of SMMA on trust and perceived value for airline products (Moslehpour et al., 2020). Other authors have examined the impact of social media marketing activities such as trendiness, customisation, E-WOM on brand trust and brand quality among followers of social media platforms for telecommunications companies (Hanaysha, 2022).

2.4.2.3 Advertising Exposure

Advertising is one of the elements in the promotion mix (Odunsi, 2020). It is mostly used by businesses, organisations and government agencies that direct messages to target public audiences. Advertising is a form of communication to more than one person, with the intention of informing or changing the behaviour of the customers (Fennis & Stroebe, 2020). Advertising is mostly used for consumer products, however, it does not have a direct impact on purchase although it helps the marketers to establish effective communication between the brands and consumers in their efforts to face competitors (Hendijani Fard & Marvi, 2020).

Advertising is a crucial element of the promotional activities which has become the undisputed tool of modern marketing which is characterised by centralised and mass production, differentiated with branded products, widely dispersed and sophisticated consumers (Fennis & Stroebe, 2020).

Companies advertise their brands to create awareness, show distinct features and facilitate the creation of a positive brand image (Bara et al., 2021). The study revealed that effective advertising can persuade the consumer to attempt goods and services that are advertised (Lina & Ahluwalia,

2021), furthermore, the effectiveness of advertising is linked with the way in which consumers subsequently process the advertisement message. In previous studies, it has been revealed that consumers positively accept the advertisement when they trust the advertiser and identify the advertisement as credible and trustworthy (Hussain et al., 2020). The perception of the credibility of the advertising has been shown to have a positive impact on attitudes toward advertising (Saraiva & Lues, 2023), while advertising value and purchase intention (Leong et al., 2020).

The marketers attempt to create incentives through different advertising attributes, such as credibility, entertainment, message relevance, and retention with the intention of developing a positive perception about the brand in consumers' minds. The trigger incentive has the probability of helping consumers to develop a positive perception, and encourage positive purchase intentions (Sierzchula et al., 2014). Currently, advertising has become extensive and a popular way of communicating with consumers (Kim, 2019). Looking at this, marketing is an integral part of any communication strategy for a business to success. Technology has made it possible for companies to rapidly spread the word to hundreds of potentials customers (Varghese & Agrawal, 2021). Companies have turned to social media as effective marketing tools, specifically targeted to increase customer loyalty. By increasing the customer base and retaining the customers, organisations use social media to create new touch points with customers, boosting loyalty (Handayani & Sihananto, 2023).

More and more organisations are utilising social media advertising to make CSR communication more effective on social media because it has influencers who can distribute and evaluate information on social media through peer associations with corporations and strong social networking (Cheng et al., 2021). They further mentioned that organisations are becoming environmentally friendly and efficient when manufacturing and distributing their products; they are protecting environmental resources by advertising; they are contributing to a greener and better environment for the public and fulfilling a part of their CSR (Cheng et al., 2021). This is a driving force for business success as it contributes to positive public perception and increases customer loyalty. CSR tend to be a significant factor in shaping the customers' perception about the

organisation, which in turn, encourages organisations to invest in CSR-related initiatives (Parray et al., 2023).

The benefits of CSR advertising to sustain and enhance a corporation's public image has been widely publicised (Jie et al., 2022). Consumer buying decisions are heavily influenced by social media advertising, and studies have examined the effects of advertising across different dimensions relative to impulse buying (Chen et al., 2022). The study establishes that CSR initiatives have a positive impact on business operations and it is important for the company to show ethical behaviour to the community (Parray et al., 2023). Understanding of advertising exposure, what brand is communicating and audience factors are critical (Jiang & Park, 2021).

The media messages that appeal to the customer base are also a critical factor, though often not the focus of studies which may note the medium used as an afterthought rather than as a key shaper of the outcome. In the instinctive CSR, advertisement used for communicating after a crisis are reflected to be differently received, based on whether the advertisement is identified as an advertisement primarily through perceived manipulation (Wu & Overton, 2021). Moreover, they demonstrate that the type of challenges being communicated has an impact on whether there is identification with the advertisement, at the end it affects consumer perception of the advertisement. The way that people perceive CSR messages may depend on the type of communication offered by that medium and how people perceive communicating in various ways.

2.4.3 Website Quality

Over the past years, websites have been considered as the most important tool in the internet platforms for disseminating information and providing services to the customers and general public (Morales-Vargas et al., 2023). A number of different authors have provided their meaning of website quality. A website is defined as the act of creating a right and exhaustive set of user requirements, by ensuring a web site provides relevant content that meets user expectations (Pilton et al., 2021). Website quality constitutes the features that contribute to its effectiveness for consumers (Gregg & Walczak, 2010), while other scholars define website quality as the ability to

meet users and owners' expectations as determined by a set of measurable attributes (Morales Vargas et al., 2020).

Website quality has a variety of meanings and dimensions of assessment. Website quality can also be viewed from the perception of consumers as the function of websites in collecting and distributing information (Herhausen et al., 2020) and, it is a desirable feature of online websites to meet consumer expectations (Giao et al., 2020). Authors have argued that website quality can be measured through the evaluation of browsing, arranging, and information targeting abilities, adding to its activity and processing speed (Al-Debei et al., 2015). Website quality gives the customers the first impression before they access all information offered by the company, it has an influence on the intention of use, which can affect the purchase intention (Qalati et al., 2021). Website quality is a significant element of online shopping websites because of the perceived impact on consumers' purchase intention (Cassandra & Kristin, 2017). The study demonstrated that consumers can perceive the benefits of using websites with higher perceived website quality, in that way, stimulating consumers' purchase intention (Qalati et al., 2021).

Most researchers have utilised perceived service quality in the dimensions of website quality, while website design is used as a precursor of perceived service quality (Sharma & Bahl, 2018). The scholars revealed a significant correlation between web design, perceived quality, and customer trust in e-commerce. Website quality has an impact on customer loyalty. Customer loyalty can be interpreted as the trustworthiness of the brand of the organisation on the part of the customer; this loyalty arises without pressure but comes from self-awareness. When the website quality is good, customers' perception about an online store rises and customers become loyal (Nabila & Pradana, 2021).

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The website plays a significant role in supporting relationships, sales and customers' trust in the brand (Warnadi & Aris, 2019). The study states that there are three determinant dimensions of website quality, namely, system quality, information quality and e-service quality (Suryani et al., 2020), while ten dimensions of website service quality were identified as efficiency, ease to use, reliability, fulfilment, security and trust, websites aesthetic, responsiveness, contact,

personalisation, ease of use, after an extensive literature review followed by expert opinion (Agrawal et al., 2018). Among all dimensions, the authors mention interaction, using an interpretive structural modelling technique, followed by analysis of MICMAC. ISM analysis revealed that security and trust are the most important that top management take serious the service dimensions (Kesharwani, 2020). Moreover, they proposed a website-quality conceptual model showing dimensions of the website quality, named as fulfilment or reliability, security, privacy, and trust, and customer service, the study found that all website-quality dimensions have an impact on purchase intention (Giao et al., 2020).

2.4.4 Corporate reputation

The theory of corporate reputation was initially developed in 1950s by Penrose, the concept of corporate image also emerged during those times (Balmer & Greyser, 2006; Pires & Trez, 2018). In recent decades, the phenomenon of corporate reputation has been attracting interest amongst marketing fields and marketing academics. Firms have started to look at corporate reputation as a most valuable intangible resource (Sánchez-Torné et al., 2020). The increase is reflecting where managers are placing importance on the value of favourable corporate reputation sustainability (Miotto et al., 2020). From a marketing perspective, corporate reputation is defined as the customer's accumulated impression of a company emanating from the interactive with the company (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990). Charles Fombrum, who is a pioneer on the corporate reputation literature, discussed it as a subjective concept, and defined as the collective judgement of the effectiveness of an organisation when comparing past and future projections on the basis of existing patterns (Aula & Mantere, 2020; Fombrun, 1996; Fombrun & Rindova, 2001). With this observation, it is important to highlight that long-term company success is not just dependent exclusively on the financial output and corporate reputation has turned into a combinatorial force, as various factors that impact the organisation at different level are drivers.

The influence of corporate reputation has the potential to create a sustainable competitive advantage and an improvement in the company's intrinsic value (Veh et al., 2019). The increase in the competitiveness of corporate reputation's relevance and contribution to the company long-term success has become more important than ever. The continuous changes in the business

environment, upholding high ranking by key stakeholders is regarded as a major competitive advantage (Barney, 1991; Cadez et al., 2019; Walker, 2010). The reputation is reflected as a social value that stakeholder hold and it is formed through the process by which persons compare what they know about the organisation that has values that they associate with being important for organisation to hold (Khanifah, 2020; Lloyd, 2007; Walker, 2010).

Reputation can be described as the stakeholder specific set of subjective evaluations, created over time being favourable or not, building value relative to competitors as a key conceptualisation of corporate reputation (Bălan, 2020). One of the drivers in the implementation of corporate social responsibility is reputation (Ajayi & Mmutle, 2021) and in turn, CSR has an impact on the company reputation when stakeholder are using their activities legitimately (Almeida & Coelho, 2019). The organisations that have a positive corporate reputation tend to reduce the cost on labour as they can attract good employees who are well trained. It has been claimed that the positive reputation of the company has the ability to generate value for the company in the labour market and an advantage in human resource efficiency (Odriozola et al., 2015). This underlines the competitive advantage. More companies are building and managing good corporate reputations as it is considered critical for organisations that are leading to successful competition in the continuous changing business world environment.

Good corporation reputation signals the quality and a performance bonded to internal stakeholders like employees, and external stakeholders like customers (Burke et al., 2018). The strategic perspective on corporate reputation has attributes of an intangible asset that is difficult for the competitors to mimic, acquire or substitute and it provides opportunities to gain competitive advantage (Rindova & Martins, 2012). Apart from the companies living up to their reputations, they generally try to maintain or improve stakeholder evaluations.

It can be argued that businesses that have good corporate reputations might perform better, have higher products prices, more customer attraction, higher profits, higher market value, higher organisational appeal, employee satisfaction and other benefits (Šontaitė-Petkevičienė, 2019). The organisation reputation is characterised by many factors, including customer satisfaction, quality

of services and products, corporate transparency, staff qualifications, social facilities, social responsibility, rights to provide the salary policy and the prevention of unfair competition (Almeida & Coelho, 2019; Golgeli, 2014). There is an emphases on strong corporate reputation as an important part of organization while others argues that it is a heart and soul of any organization (Narteh & Braimah, 2020).

2.4.5 Corporate Image

Corporate image is a fairly new concept, not many researchers have covered literature on this topic (Al Mubarak et al., 2019). Corporate image is considered as the people's views, attitudes and impressions towards the company (Yasin, 2021). The definition of corporate image is generalised as attitude and attention of the public's impression about the company (Abdur Rehman et al., 2021), and the different views of the company by the customers, suppliers, shareholders, community and the media (Al Mubarak et al., 2019). Corporate image can be considered from the view of creditors, customers, stakeholders both internal and external, about the company (Herstein & Jaffe, 2008). Corporate image works as an integral part between the organisation's individual image and the customer response towards the organisation. Moreover, the significance of the corporate image may also be the emotional perspectives summing up the customer's feelings, their beliefs, knowledge, impressions, ideas, and values towards the company. Corporate image has been seen as the outcome of people's beliefs, experience, feelings, thoughts, impressions, and knowledge about the company (Özkan, Süer, Keser, & İpek Deveci, 2020). Corporate image is an intangible asset that is valuable to the company (Gangi et al., 2023); the image has a positive effect on the likelihood of customer retention ((S,M Dam & T, C Dam, 2021). ~~(Dam & Dam, 2021).~~ There are specific components that form corporate image. Image has four components, namely, cognition, perception, motive and attitude (Hidayati & Huda, 2023).

Corporate image that is good will impact an optimistic audience. With a positive corporate image, a numbers of benefits to the company including competitive edge is enabled and it draws the potential customers toward its services and products (Zameer et al., 2015). For the service company, corporate image plays a significant role as service delivery affects the company image,

which will have a future influence on customer satisfaction (Irshad et al., 2022). The company's positive corporate image appeals to the investor (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990), and the employees (Gangi et al., 2019). Corporate image has the ability to influence the decision-making process of customers, especially when there are positive view points through continuous contracting promotions, good services, quality products and the use of integrating marketing communication (Hatch & Schultz, 2003; Martínez et al., 2019). Moreover, the significance of corporate image may also be the emotional perspectives summing up the feelings, beliefs, knowledge, impressions, ideas and values towards the organisation. There are six types of Images (PERKASA, 2023):

The current image: the image is linked directly to word-of-mouth, or the knowledge gathered from other people. The image is linked to the perception of a person on the organisation or business where the perception is shared with others.

Mirror image: is the image representation that is deemed right and believed by the company leader with a belief that from the outside of the company, he has seen company positive answers most of the time.

Wish image: emanates from the public expectation of the company which is received well and so interpreted. The desired picture is directly proportional to expectations and outcome; also, the company has high expectations while the public responds favourably to this perception.

Corporate image: with the corporate image, the company puts effort into the public view, in line with the company's reputation on positive image. The responsibility of working and be accountable for company's reputation improvement is one of the company's main objectives with the public relations.

Performance image: the image is targeted more on the company's topic, that is linked to the success of each member to uphold the image of the organisation.

Multiple images: the images complements the image of the company; these images include identity characteristics, the logos, uniforms, brand names and employees' skills that are all combined and are identified as the company's image. Corporate image is the perception of truth,

which involves public minds and the appearance in the media (Agustina et al., 2020). Corporate image can be seen as an "Iceberg" effect that is seen in the collective mentality or just an opinion on accepting the truth (PERKASA, 2023).

It is very important to understand that company image is seen as the most important asset that the company owns. Therefore, it also must be understood that company image, as an important factor, can affect the effectiveness of marketing. Further, there are a number of reasons underlining the importance of building and managing corporate image which include building a good company name, building employees' identity, sales stimulation, attracting investors and financial institutions, the creation of good relations with different stakeholders and competitive advantage.

2.5 Conceptual model and hypothesis development

The section explains the conceptual model development by critically analysing the literature and outlining the hypotheses development.

2.5.1 Conceptual framework

Figure 1 is the proposed conceptual framework of the study.

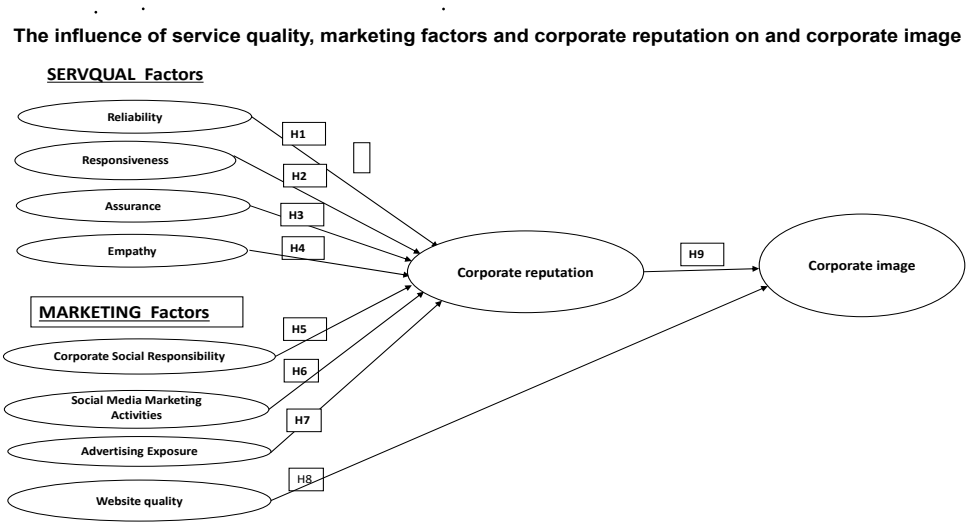

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Source: Author's own construction (2023)

2.6 Hypotheses Development

2.6.1 Service quality factors

Service quality is seen as the totality of goods and service characteristics, showing the ability of satisfying customers' needs that are obvious, and those that are hidden. To achieve success for the company that render services, it is a requirement to provide quality service to the customers (Rizard et al., 2022). The measurement of perfection on products and services is service quality which consists of quality design and quality conformity (Sirna et al., 2020). The other definition of quality service is the fulfilment effort that is needed and desires of the customers while balancing the customer expectations for accurate delivery (Norawati et al., 2021).

While other authors define service quality as an expected excellent service level and excellent service level control to meet customer desires (Mulyani et al., 2020). Customers' needs and their perception must be the initiation of the service quality (Tendur et al., 2021). Service cannot be felt physically but it is something that is exchangeable though selling and buying (Setiono & Hidayat, 2022), while service is an interactive process when doing something for someone (Diputri & Yusuf, 2019). Service quality is determined by five elements: 1) reliability, 2) responsiveness, 3) tangibles, 4) assurance, 5) empathy, as service quality dimensions (Sirna et al., 2020; Zhao & Di Benedetto, 2013).

2.6.1.1 Reliability

The attribute of the reliability dimension is service provision as promised, handling of customer service reliably, correctly delivery of services on time, service delivery as promised on time and documents' storage without errors. Reliability is related to the company employee's ability to

foster self-confidence, have knowledge, have courtesy and no question about the existence of the company.

H1: Service reliability has a positive impact on corporate reputation.

2.6.1.2 Responsiveness

This dimension of responsiveness is related to the service providers' willingness to assist customers and quick service provision with the dimension attributes informing customers about the assurance in delivery of service in time, good service to customers and willingness to assist customers and readiness to respond to customer requests.

H2: Service responsiveness has a positive effect on corporate reputation.

2.6.1.3 Assurance

The assurance relates to the staff knowledge, courtesy, ability to create trust and confidence. This dimension has the attributes of the employees' ability to build customer trust, conducting transactions that make customers feel safe, staff are consistently polite, the ability to answer customer questions.

H3: Service assurance has a positive effect on corporate reputation.

2.6.1.4 Empathy

Empathy is regarded as the care the service provides to customers in that they give personal attention to customers. The dimension attribute is attention given to individual customers, employees take great care when treating customers, prioritisation of customer interest, understanding of customer needs by employees and operating hours that are comfortable.

H4: Service empathy has a positive effect on reputation.

Table 1: Service quality ~~Operationalisation~~Operationalization

Variable	Dimensions	Indicator
Service Quality	Reliability	Reliability in providing skilled services from the sales representative. Reliability

	in providing technically skilled service sales.
Responsiveness	Customer who wants services must receive good responses. Provision of quick responses to customers. Feedback responses must be quick. When facing problems, employees must show responsiveness.
Tangibles	Maintenance of office facilities. Employees' appearance to service customers. Smooth service. Enough staff to service customers. Polite and friendly staff.
Assurance	Assurance of standards service, service costs guarantee and guarantee service legality.
Empathy	Have sympathy with customers. Communication with customers must be flexible. Showing involvement when following up the problem. Reliability on the provision of services in accordance with the employee knowledge level.

(Parasuraman et al., 1988; Tjiptono, 2011)

2.6.2 Marketing Factors

Marketing factors consist of different variables and elements that have a direct impact on the success of the business (Deepak & Jeyakumar, 2019). The factors are categorised in two groups, such as internal and external marketing factors. It is important to understand that internal factors

are controlled and managed by the marketing team of each business, while the external factors are affected by the external business environment, such as competitors, economic environment and social cultural factors (Deepak & Jeyakumar, 2019) . It is vital for marketing managers to balance the management of internal and external elements with the conceptualisation of internal elements with people and processes and external factors that are represented by the traditional marketing mix (Saad et al., 2015).

2.6.2.1 Corporate social responsibility and corporate reputation

Corporate social responsibility can be explained in different ways; the concept has continued to evolve with time. The International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) define this as an organisational responsibility for the impacts of its decisions and activities on society and the environment, through transparent and ethical behaviour that contributes to sustainable development (Okafor et al., 2021). CSR has been discussed since the 1950s, but it was not clear until much later when (Carroll, 1999) provided a clear definition of its meaning, importance and impact. The form in which it seen today became popular after Archie Carroll's Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility was developed in 1991 (Saleh, 2022). Carroll's model consists of four different CSR models, named as economic, ethical, legal and philanthropic (Carroll, 1999).

Organisations are currently facing increasing pressure from different stakeholders to portray socially responsible behaviour (Nave & Ferreira, 2019). They are bound by the normative pressure of the institutional theory to meet the terms of the stakeholder needs with the aim of establishing a sense of legitimacy among different stakeholders (Shahzad & Sharfman, 2017). The authors discovered that CSR has become the companies' competitive strategy to raise their profits, improve customers satisfaction and loyalty, corporate reputation and bring a positive attitude to the organisational brands (Islam et al., 2021). CSR has an influence on consumer behaviour when consumers are willing to switch to a brand that stood for a cause or participated in resolving the social issue (Wang, 2020).

Consumers' perceived value of a brand grows when CSR is incorporated and it makes a business more competitive. It is significant for an organisation to create a safe environment for employees where diversity is addressed and a fair distribution of organisational profit is encouraged in an ethical manner (Zulfiqar et al., 2023). There is an argument that the firms can only be socially responsible when the business is profitable and when the shareholders and investors are equally satisfied (Zaman & Liu, 2022). While other literature states that organisations allocate their significant resources to CSR activities and deploy the same as an innovative stimulus for value creation, preservation, and a means of responding to changes in the culture of stakeholders (Hou et al., 2019). On the other hand, the organisations invest on CSR activities as a measure of correcting the challenges caused by the business and the situations that prevailed before the business commencement of the organisations (Low & Bu, 2022). The mediation mechanism of corporate reputation between the relationship of corporate image and CSR is explained by the stakeholder theory (Singh & Misra, 2021). The stakeholder theory viewpoint suggests that business activities are oriented towards the stakeholders through socially responsible actions and the behaviours of enterprises. Customer attitude becomes positive to the business corporate responsibility's positive perception. This has led to improvement of CR and also leads to improved performance of the business (Le, 2023), while from a resource base value, CSR can be a strategic intangible resource with corporate reputation. Within the current literature, other authors have confirmed the positive nexus between corporate social responsibility and corporate reputation, where they found that there is a strong effect between CSR and reputation of the company (Gallardo-Vázquez et al., 2019), while CSR practices was found to elevate the company reputation (Maldonado-Guzman et al., 2017). It has also been found that CSR activities have a positive and significant relationship to corporate reputation (Le, 2023). If there is a positive awareness of communities or customer partnership with regard to the company's CSR involvement, it positively affects the corporate reputation (Cadez et al., 2019).

The previous studies on corporate social responsibility revealed that CSR has a positive correlation with corporate image, suggesting that the organisations use CRS as an instrument of advancing the corporate image (Fauzan, 2022). When the corporation operates well at corporate social responsibility, the customers create a constructive impression of the corporation. It can be argued

that corporate social responsibility has a positive impact on improving customers' perception about the company's image (Fauzan, 2022). Additionally, improvement in the company's image might be as a result of a company's contributions to the community, stakeholders' view on the company and behaving professionally in conducting the business interests, transparency and minimising adverse social effects with good intentions (Wang, 2020).

The company's commitment to all their social responsibilities influences their reputation, especially in the developed countries. The company's reputation mostly comes from its historical activities in the environment in which it operates (Zhang & Schwaiger, 2009). CR is an influential differentiation tool which can be made through CSR obligation (İYİGÜN & YALÇINTAŞ, 2017). The company reputation is important to a corporate company for the organisation that does not have a good reputation, success will be limited and the long-term future cannot be guaranteed (Saleh, 2022). There is a positive impact on the economic performance of the enterprise when it has a good reputation, while the company's reputation is a regulated alignment of beliefs and ideas about a firm in reference to its historical performance and future projections, when compared to competitors in the industry.

If the company performance is outstanding, it can contribute to creating a good reputation for the organisation. This means that to gain a good reputation, the company must align its interests with those of its stakeholders. The loss of reputation is regarded as a major concern for any business, and the loss of reputation will also bring financial loss in both the short and long term (Szwajca, 2018). For developed countries and competitive environments, it has been proven that companies that are committed to social responsibility contributions, augment the company reputation in the community in which they operate, and the good reputation of the firm contributes to economic performance. The study found that that corporate social responsibility performance has a positive effect on the organisational reputation (Javed et al., 2020), furthermore another study revealed that CSR has on impact on brand trust and brand image (Balqiah et al., 2022).
H5: CSR has positive impact on corporate reputation.

2.6.2.2 Social media marketing activities

Social media marketing activities and corporate reputation

The rapid growth on the use of the internet and social media has resulted in transformation on how organisations and stakeholders communicate. Stakeholders post their opinions about the firms' goods and services on social media (Denktaş-Şakar & Sürücü, 2020). The characteristics of social media, such as interactivity, global range and speed, has an effect on reputation building and protection (Jain et al., 2021). It is argued that social media develop a channel of interpersonal communication that can be an opportunity or threat to firms' corporate reputation (Cornelissen, 2020).

Social media can be utilised as a tool that creates a desired image and reputation because it can build interactive relationships with more people, including the stakeholders (Dijkmans et al., 2015). The authors justify that the advantage of social media is that it allows a business to establish a close relationship with all engaged groups of stakeholders (Manetti & Bellucci, 2016). The group engagement allow transparency and requires honest dialogue that gives an opportunity to develop greater trust from the stakeholders (Meintjes, 2021). The use of social media is important and justified, not only in creating the desired reputation; it can also be used in the context of protecting the company's reputation from threats. The studies have discovered that the development of social media not only has positive effects, it has increased the reputational risk of the organisations as one of the most sensitive resources (Nobanee et al., 2021). Social media is the environment that forms the potential for the creation of significant and strong opinion-forming centres, which can post good and bad information about the organisation (Nobanee et al., 2021).

The negative comments from the customers or false information can create an avalanche of negative comments on social media (Reuter & Kaufhold, 2018). To protect the reputation of a firm from social media attacks, it is necessary for a firm to respond on the same channel to protect their image. It is argued that a firm needs to be present on social media and monitor the comments all the time (Palalic et al., 2021). Social media is significant for managing all situations, not only negative and false information but also for the correction of errors and information sharing by the organisation (Szwajca, 2013). Moreover, the authors highlighted that

social media is participative, interactive and dialogic. It allows conversation between business and its stakeholders (Sivarajah et al., 2020).

Social media can also be used to persuade customers and inform them about new product information in a timely manner (Aydin et al., 2021). From the literature reviewed above, it has been proven that when social media pages of the firm are managed effectively, social media can result in a positive corporate image of a firm. The use of social media has become the pivotal part of the communication for corporations, the organisations' display CSR through social media. The study has proven that organisations with CSR messages on social media platforms have higher reputation scores than those who do not share CSR information on social media pages (Lee, 2020).

The study has proven the relationship and impact of CSR on corporate reputation (Kim & Kim, 2017). CSR has an influence on stakeholders' positive perception and contributes to the maximisation of the potential of corporate reputation (Ellemers & Chopova, 2021). The effects of different types of social media engagement on the corporate reputation of the organisations has revealed that comments have a substantial impact on reputation (An et al., 2017). CSR can influence stakeholders' positive assessment (corporate reputation) when they are aware of the organisation's social responsibility activities in the first place. On the other hand, there is a belief that attaining the desired corporate reputation requires stakeholders' awareness and believability activities through effective communication (Coombs & Holladay, 2013).

There is a view that communication enhances corporate reputation, gives greater customer satisfaction and employee commitment, and attracts foreign investors (Bayoud et al., 2012). Thus, to contribute towards a favourable reputation, organisations must use effective communication strategies, they must also understand the meanings and interpretations that stakeholders attach to the marketing activities and communication, in general. It has been found that there is a lower probability of finding negative comments about company CSR on social media platforms (Singh & Misra, 2021). The hypothesis on the effects of social media engagement about CSR on corporate reputation was tested and was positive.

H6: Social media marketing activities has positive impact on the corporate image.

2.6.2.3 Advertising -exposure

Advertising exposure and corporate reputation

The studies have proven that a positive image of a firm improves customer satisfaction and loyalty, hence it can result in a better firm performanc**e** (Ali et al., 2020). Business aims to create marketing strategies to enhance their corporate image (Kim et al., 2011), as part of formulating marketing strategy advertising intensity is a vital factor of firm reputation (Wang & Qian, 2011). Organisations use advertising as a differentiating market strategy and way of obtaining legitimacy (Özturan & Grinstein, 2022; Zhang et al., 2010). When the stakeholders realise that a firm is differentiated, they learn more about it, including the products and practices they offer (Ganda & Milondzo, 2018). When a firm that is building credibility and good image, external stakeholders create a good assessment of corporate legitimacy that create resources in turn (e.g., financial investments, talented employees, new competencies) (Liu et al., 2022; Nikolaeva & Bicho, 2011). Therefore, stakeholders increase, they consider the organisations with higher advertising intensity, as a result firms that advertise more convey positive messages of a firm which increases customers loyalty, corporate reputation and corporate image (Taoketao et al., 2018). When the firm publishes positive information, the stakeholder's attention helps firms acquire external legitimacy, which enhances its image, while by contrast, when advertising intensity is lower than before, stakeholders tend to ignore most positive information about the firms because they cannot focus on corporate messages.

Organisations communicate their CSR initiatives through a formal reporting process, as well as advertising (Du et al., 2010; Pradhan & Roy, 2011), which positively recover the CR of a firm (Ajayi & Mmutle, 2021). Advertising has been proven to be effective in improving the profitability of a firm (Bashir, 2022). Market-oriented advertising communication also improves customer perceptions positively, which subsequently leads to higher profitability (Bashir, 2022). Organisations have been known to influence significant stakeholders through effective advertising.

It can be both proactive (initiatives to enhance the reputation) and defensive (minimising prior negative image/ reputation) (Bromley, 2000). Advertising has been found to be effective in improving the company profitability (Paton & Williams, 1999; Pourkarimi & Kam, 2022). Market-oriented advertising/ communication also improves customer perceptions positively, which leads to higher profitability (Dai & Reich, 2023; Yang & Basile, 2021). When firms communicate CSR activities to relevant stakeholders, it improves CR and subsequent performance. As advertising affects the CR and performance of a firm, we hypothesise that.

H7: Advertising exposure has a positive effect on corporate reputation.

2.6.2.4 Website quality

Website quality and corporate image

With the advantages brought by technology, from the marketing perspective of communication and positive reputation building, it is necessary to highlight the importance of the company website. Websites allow good communication between the entity and stakeholders (Torres et al., 2020). When companies create a website, it is important to consider that people are not only browsing the internet, but they also browse through looking for necessary information about the company. For this reason, it is important for the website to be appropriately structured and to have textual content on its web page. The website is very important, enormous and it continues to grow (Stefko et al., 2016). The use of a corporate website could build consumer acceptance of the company. The researchers proposed that to enhance online CSR presentation, the companies need to use media richness to increase the consumer's ability in analysing and understanding the intended message (Benitez et al., 2020). As a result, consumers tend to develop a positive attitude toward the company and it also improves the image of the company (Mat Saat & Selamat, 2015). Previous studies revealed that the structural and informative features of a website have an impact on consumer behaviour towards the information (Hwang et al., 2011; Leong et al., 2021).

When a website provides quality information, it plays a pivotal role in the consumer decision making about the company. The belief factors from website quality that presents precise information is more constant than other factors in generating and leading consumer behaviour. This can advantage an organisation that views present information that leads to consumer

behaviours on how they view the organisation. There are studies that have examined the correlation between CSR and corporate image, but there is a dearth of studies that have tested the impact of CSR web disclosure with the corporate image directly. The study found the use of websites created the connection between user and company (Dwivedi et al., 2021). It has been proven that communication in the technological space has drastically affected consumers behaviour (Mohamad et al., 2022), however, there are only a few studies that relate the impact of advertising CSR on corporate image. The hypothesis has been developed, based on the above literature review.

H8: Website quality has a positive impact on corporate image.

2.6.3 Corporate reputation

Corporate reputation and corporate image

The corporate social responsibility efforts of the organisation can be a strategic resource for intangible assets, such as corporate reputation. The concept of corporate reputation is defined as the most valuable resource of a business, considering it as an intangible asset that differentiates the organisation from others in the market place (Le, 2023). There is a positive nexus between corporate reputation and corporate social responsibility and this has been confirmed by current literature that confirms that CSR has strong effects on the company reputation of SMEs (Gallardo-Vázquez et al., 2019), while others found that corporate social reputation activities can elevate the company reputation (Maldonado-Guzman et al., 2017) and supported the finding that CSR activities can improve the corporate reputation (Valdez-Juárez et al., 2018). The corporate reputation of the organisation is positively affected by the CSR practices when customer and partners are positively aware thereof (Cadez et al., 2019). The good reputation of the company can enable the firm's market demand alignment, investor attraction, employees' motivation and enhances competitive advantages.

The corporation's credible actions build corporate reputation (Herbig et al., 1994; Song et al., 2019). Moreover, scholars have stated that corporate reputation is affected by customer trust and corporate image (Allen, 1984; Özkan, Süer, et al., 2020b; Park et al., 2014). Research studies have integrated the three important corporative aspects of corporate image, customer trust and corporate reputation with service quality in the process of building corporate reputation. In the industry, good reputation is the antecedent of building an innovative image (Porter, 2008), establishing a

corporate image results in corporate reputation (Park et al., 2014). The explanation of corporate reputation starts with corporate identity which builds on the perception of organisational stakeholders (Almeida & Coelho, 2019; Fombrun, 1996). The developed images from various stakeholders assist in forming corporate reputation, while the outcome of the corporate image building process is corporate reputation (Park et al., 2014). Further, building a favourable image is important because it assists in developing a good reputation and boosts customer trust (Song et al., 2019).

Corporate image and corporate reputation are considered as two constructs that are distinct and are strongly related. The relation of image and reputation appeals to the idea of socially constructed entities and is driven from the shareholder's perception (Özkan, Süer, et al., 2020b). There is a dynamic, bilateral relationship between company reputation and image (Gotsi & Wilson, 2001). They further suggested that theorists argue that corporate reputation and corporate image are strongly related concepts while being different. Others advocate that corporate reputation and corporate image should be incorporated into the explanation of customer loyalty (Özkan, Süer, et al., 2020b). With Telkom customers, when customers perceive that corporate reputation is favourable, the corporate image is enhanced as well.

H9: Positive corporate reputation has significant effects on corporate image.

2.7 Chapter summary

The first part of the section dealt with literature in the telecommunication industry - global, local and Telkom SA Limited. The review of literature pertained to the 10 study constructs and the development of hypotheses. The last part presented the conceptual model for the study and explicated the hypotheses put forward and the proposed relationships between the study constructs.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the discussion of the research methods that were used when conducting the research study and the process used. These processes include details on the research in simple but clear terms, research strategy steps, research designed, methodology of research, research area, data sourcing from which information is to be derived. All this includes stating categorically if data is secondary or primary, the research population, sample size considered, information gathering techniques employed, information gathering tools, methods and tools used to analyse the data gathered, analysis of the accuracy, validity, credibility, and integrity of the data to produce results that are in line with the research objectives.

3.2 Research philosophy

Research philosophy refers to a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge (Saunders et al., 2007). For academic investigation, there is frequent use of positive and interpretivist philosophical stances. Methodology in research is defined as systematic methods to investigate a research problem when collecting data, utilising different techniques, interpreting the collected information and providing the outcome of the research data. Research methodology is a way of solving research problems systematically (Murthy & Bhojanna, 2009). Different steps are usually adopted by researchers in studying the research problem with different reasons behind them (Snyder, 2019). Research approaches are divided into categories, which are pragmatism, positivism and interpretivism (Bell et al., 2022). The research methods and designs are derived from the world standardised research approaches that are classified as a philosophical world view, research method and research design. The standardised approaches from the world viewpoint are further formed from the three most used and known approaches, that are mixed methods approach, quantitative approach and qualitative approach (Hair et al., 2007). The quantitative research methods consist of positivism in the world view whilst on the other hand, qualitative research methods include interpretivism and a mixed research approach is anchored on pragmatism.

This study serves description function that is measurable through quantitative analysis. Quantitative research focuses on collecting and analyzing numerical data to identify patterns, compute averages, assess correlations, and extract broad insights. The approach is utilized across diverse disciplines. Analyzing quantitative data involves using statistical methods to process and interpret numerical data(Snyder, 2019).This research paper follows a positivist paradigm to examine the relationship between the variables. The positivist approach is chosen due to its emphasis on objective reality, quantifiable data, and the use of statistical methods to derive conclusions. The positivist paradigm underpins this research, emphasizing objective measurement and the testing of hypotheses. Positivism is based on the assumption that reality is stable and can be observed and described from an objective viewpoint without interference from the observer. This paradigm supports the use of quantitative methods and statistical analysis to investigate social phenomena.

The study further uses a deductive approach because it is suitable for positivist approach and related to the quantitative research method. The research approach uses questionnaires to create understanding of observations which allows one to compare different appreciation of the people's views through empirical data (Snyder, 2019).

The choice of the positivist paradigm for this research is based on its distinct features that are summarized in Table 2 compared to other paradigms. By using a positivist approach, this research aims to provide empirical evidence on the relationship between the variables. The outcome of the study ~~are~~is expected to be generalizable to a broader population.

Table 2 -The features of different paradigms summarised :

Table 2: Key features of research paradigms

Positivist	Constructivist	Realist
• The study is free from the researcher's bias.	• To obtain data the researcher interacts with the targets.	• For independent reality, it comprises various perceptions.
• Knowledge is gained and confirmed using exact observations or measurements of phenomena.	• Knowledge is checked using the meanings ascribed to the studied phenomenon.	• Realism is cognisant of the values of researchers and human system.

• By deconstructing the phenomenon into different components for ease of assessments and facts finding. This supports the philosophy that causes are likely to determine effects or outcomes.	• Inquiry changes both researcher and subject.	•Social actors involvement plays an important part in the acquisition of knowledge by people and therefore it should not be understood autonomously.
• This paradigm emphasises that researchers must not be biased and separate their emotions from the research subjects. Researchers must just simply test and empirically justify the hypothesis that they stated.	• Knowledge is perspective and time driven.	• The use of the appropriate approach for the particular research topic is important and the level of existing knowledge pertaining to it.

Source: (Krauss, 2005)

3.3 Research Design

The aim of this section is to demonstrate an understanding of methodology. A research design is the framework for selecting type of methods to use for data collection and data analysis (Saunders et al., 2012). The framework set-up in the research design process is very important as it determines the relevance and integrity of all the data and information used in the research study. Marketing research can be defined as a process of collecting, designing, analysing and reporting data that can be utilised to solve problems in marketing (Burns et al., 2014). Research design is the strategy that explains how, when, and where data is collected and analysed (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The research methods have three most used and known approaches, that are quantitative approach, qualitative approach, and mixed approach research methods (Bell et al., 2022).

Qualitative research methods are particularly well suited for exploratory studies, as a qualitative study is used primarily to gain a better understanding of human perceptions, values, feelings and patterns, as well as to dive deeper into the problem at hand (Hair et al., 2010). A quantitative research involves the administration of structured questions with the scheduled response alternatives (Burns et al., 2014). This study uses the quantitative research method– with the objective of quantifying data, generalizing the outcome to the targeted population, and use their responses to analyse their responses statistically. Descriptive studies include the specification

methods that enable the selection of the sources for information; it is pre-planned and structured (Malhotra et al., 2010). This method typically includes surveys, panel and secondary data for quantitative analysis. The quantitative survey method was utilised to collect data from a sample of people, which can then be used to generalize information about the whole population. , this study utilised a survey research technique, which involves sample selection and analysis to ascertain the relative incidence, contributions, and interrelationships of variables. Consequently, survey research can be categorized as a type of field study (Saunders & Aragón-Zavala, 2007).

A survey is a method of collecting information from large population which allows a researcher to learn about people's opinions and behaviours (Schneider & Harknett, 2022). This method allows the researcher to get a snapshot of what is happening in that group. Data collection tool such as questionnaire was used to collect ~~information .~~information. Questionnaires are utilised to answer questions and solve problems, assess needs, set goals, determine whether goals have been achieved, form the basis for future comparisons, analysed and explain trends over time, and what generally exists, in what amount and at what level (Fife-Schaw, 2020). Compared to other data collection tools, the study adopted questionnaires as a data collocation tool and as it is adequate ways to collect data about people. Quantitative survey techniques allow the researcher to collect more information about the sample group than just the characteristics that can be measured (Khajavy et al., 2021). This method can help the researchers measure attitudes and opinions that are difficult to measure with observational methods. The method can be utilized to describe the characteristics of the role players in the SOEs.

When conducting academic research, a researcher must take the time horizon into account. Accordingly there are two different kinds of time horizons such as cross-sectional and longitudinal (Iovino & Tsitsianis, 2020). The cross-sectional time horizon is employed when studying a population or phenomenon over a short period of time, as is the case with the majority of surveys(Mendis et al., 2023) . On the other hand, a longitudinal time horizon is defined as the recurrent observation of a population or phenomenon over time while gathering data (Toyon, 2023). Cross-sectional timed horizon was utilized in this study.

3.4 Population and sampling

When conducting the survey, researchers need to ensure that the aim of the survey is clarified to get higher responses. Therefore, the respondent should be assured that the purpose of the survey would only be utilised for academic purposes. The survey should also have the contact information of the researcher and supervisor for eliminating any doubts about the genuineness of the research study. The researcher must promise the respondents that their answers would be kept confidential and remain anonymous.

3.4.1 Target population

The target population refers to a group of units from which a sample is chosen (Bryman & Cramer, 2012). Target population is also regarded as a group of elements that the researcher uses from which to draw some information and make inferences grounded on the data at hand (Malhotra, 2010). It is described as the summation of all likely research subjects that fit into the set standards and suits the study's needs of the researcher (Burns & Groves, 1997). Target population is also defined as all possible participant clusters (the collective term used to describe all classes or groups) from which the sample in a study can be extracted (Bryman, 2011). This means that the group of respondents must be large, concretely specified and used by the researcher to select a sample and to generalise the research outcomes, based on the selected sample (Wagner et al., 2012). The population that is targeted by the study is any person who has been serviced by Telkom, employees and individuals who are residents South Africa. The respondents were selected randomly using their contacts from WhatsApp, Facebook and LinkedIn.

In summary, the target population relevant to this study should have the following characteristics:

- Telkom customers
- Member of public in South Africa
- Aged between 18 – over 65 years.

3.4.2 Sampling frame

Sampling frame is defined as a list of all units of interest in a study population. The sampling frame is made up of group of all elements in the population from where the target sample is drawn (Bell et al., 2022). The categories of sampling methods are broadly divided into two, mainly, probability and non-probability. The use of non- probability sampling method in this study is appropriate, as the population is selected in random manner. In the sample universe, the questionnaire was administered to the customers of Telkom (public), based on their previous experience with the company and how they view the brand image of Telkom SA as a state-owned entity.

3.4.3 Sampling method

Sampling method is defined as the process of picking certain participants or a subset of the entire population to evaluate the characteristics of the population (Wang & Cheng, 2020). The method and process of selecting a true reflection of the population study is called sampling (Hair et al., 2010). With this understanding, they further stress the suitability of a sampling method to ensure it meets the scientific research requirements fairly and without bias. A solid sampling plan creation in the study is critical because of the significant heterogeneity usually observed in the target population (Wang & Cheng, 2020). The data collected from the sample group should be appropriately referred in the sample population. There are two types of sampling, which are probability and non-probability sampling.

Probability sampling is the selection of the study population, without predetermined criteria given to each item, object, participant, or a subset in the study population with an equal chance of being selected at random (Hair et al., 2007). Probability sampling techniques have various forms that include simple random sampling, stratified sampling, systematic and cluster sampling, while non-probability sampling respondents' selection does not involve a "random" procedure. The sampling method, and research population members do not have an equal chance of being selected (Penrod et al., 2003). Therefore, in non-probability sampling, various forms include convenience, purposive, quota, snowball, and self-selection.

For this research study, the data was collected using convenience sampling which is suitable for non-probability sampling to examine the effects of service quality, marketing factors and website showing the corporate image of the company. The methods is non-probability sampling technique that is commonly utilised for both quantitative and qualitative research study as it requires less effort, cost effective, less time consuming and easy to work with (Golzar et al., 2022).The definition of convenient sampling is a research method that utilises readily available respondents to the researcher, the fact that nothing more specific is ascribed to who responds but rather who is accessible (Penrod et al., 2003). Convenience sampling was used for data collection from any participant who was willing to take part in the research study, where the researcher was able to approach and accessibility was convenient. The researcher sent questionnaires to all respondents over the age of 18 years. All respondents were considered while also taking other relevant considerations, like the methodology for data analysis meant to be utilised, into consideration.

3.4.4 Sampling size

For research, the study sample is defined as an aggregate of items, group of people, items or objects that are drawn from a larger population for validation and measurement to fulfil a certain narrative (Hair et al., 2010). In the meantime, the sample should be able to provide a true reflection of the whole population to ensure that the drawn results from the study are a true reflection of the whole study population. To enable generalised survey findings, the survey requires the utilisation of an appropriate sampling calculation. Therefore, the research uses different software, techniques, and online tools for sample size calculation to achieve more accurate results.

The researcher made use of the Raosoft sample size indicator. Based on Raosoft (2015) sample size indicator, 250 respondents should be considered for sampling, therefore because data analysis was analysed using SEM AMOS, a sample size of 300 was considered for the purpose of this study. Sample size determination techniques are used to get the best and most reasonable information. To augment the probability of reaching the preferred sample of 300, 400 questionnaires were dispersed to mitigate the prospective of no-responses and declines.

3.5 Research instruments

Research instruments are defined as tools used to gather data, date measurement and data analysis that relates to the research subject (Bryman, 2011). The choice of instrument for data collection is much influenced by the type of data intended to be collected (qualitative or quantitative) and how you plan to collect it. The study survey made use of an online questionnaire that was sent to a chosen sample of 500 prospective participants, with a target of 300 intended sample respondents. The researcher ensured that the questionnaire designed was valid, reliable and not ambiguous or bogus to ensure that collected data validate the research (Saunders et al., 2007).

3.5.1 Research instrument items

Questionnaire is referred as a group of questions that are sent to respondents in a survey. A questionnaire is defined as a set of questions for obtaining statistically useful or personal information from individuals by Merriam Webster, while Collins further defines it as a list of questions which are answered by respondents to provide information for a report or a survey (Sharma, 2022). Questionnaires gather structured and numerical data that can be managed in the researcher's absence, and it can be analysed easily (Bryman & Cramer, 2012). It is crucial to pay attention to the questionnaire design, wording of questions and the order in which questions are asked for validity and reliability of the results (Wagner & Ingersoll, 2012).

Research scales were structured to fit the subject matter of the study. For the purpose and context of this research study, proper modifications were made to fit the current research. The various forms of scales include Likert scale, Semantic differential scale, Graphic rating scaling and Side by side matrix (Summers et al., 2019). This research used the Likert scale to measure variables such as reliability2, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, corporate social responsibility, social media marketing activities, advertising exposure, website quality, corporate reputation and corporate image. The measurement items were measured using the five-point Likert-type scales that is anchored by the scale of 1= as strongly disagree to the scale of 5= as strongly agree to express the degree of agreement

3.6 Data Collection

To achieve the research objective, the researcher employed questionnaire technique. The technique is one of the trusted tools of measurement in social research studies (Abbas, 2020) .The data was collected from respondents via an electronic self-administered survey questionnaire that was close ended. The questionnaire was administered online by creating a URL link on Qualtrics which was sent to respondents via different social media. There are several factors to consider when deciding on which scales to incorporate in a questionnaire and which ones to use while analyzing data. The researcher designed in three sections such as screening, demographics, and construct measurements. The screening question was used to get the targeted respondents for the study by asking whether the respondent has Telkom service experience.

For pre-testing questionnaires, a pilot study was used to assess the validity of the quantitative instruments. The questionnaire can be pilot tested using a small sample to give some feedback and to boost readability before finalising the questionnaire (Bell et al., 2022). To increase content validity, the questionnaire was assessed by one professional in marketing management; this led to small adjustments of the scale measurements. The reviewed questionnaire was then sent to 400 prospective participants through social medial, including Facebook, LinkedIn and WhatsApp. The data was collected from the 26 December 2023 to 20th January 2024.

~~3.5.1~~3.6.1 *Measurement*

The list of measurement items was preliminarily selected after an extensive review of service quality, marketing factors, corporate reputation, and corporate image literature. For customer perceptions' evaluation and ensuring validity of the questionnaire, Telkom customers and members of the public in South Africa were invited to respond to the survey.

There are four types of measurement that can be utilised for research purpose, however the use of both nominal scale and ordinal scale measures are suggested. This two-measuring scale should be able to interpret the relationship between the variables. The data that is collected is subject to quantitative analysis. The measurement instruments, data sources/collection methods and procedures were used to employ quality assurance (i.e., measurement assessment, validity, reliability).

~~3.6~~3.7 Validity and Reliability

Reliability and validity have close relationship, but they have different meanings, and they present different properties of measuring instrument. Typically, an instrument can be reliable and not be valid, but it is valid it has higher probability of being reliable (Sürücü & Maslakci, 2020). Nevertheless, reliability does not guarantee validity when its alone. A test can be reliable and still fail to accurately measure the intended behaviour or quality. It is important for researchers to examine both validity and reliability for the best results. The degree to which a research instrument measures what it is intended to measure is known as its validity (Nawi et al., 2020).

This study used Cronbach Test, composite reliability value and average variance extracted value to measure reliability. To ensure validity of the study the research questions were aligned to the objectives of the study. As a result, convergent validity and discriminant validity tests were conducted gauge validity. Moreover, Model fit test is a statistical method that was used to assess how a proposed model fits the observed data in structural equation modelling. The metrics of the model are often the most influential part of information for research using CFA (Marcoulides et al., 2020). The hypothesis test was also used as a statical technique that determine whether the data is sufficiently supported.

~~3.6.1~~3.7.1 Internal Validity

Internal validity in this study is verifies cause and effect relationships between the test situation and the results. Internal validity shows that having standard data assist the researcher to omit irrelevant results from the study (Sürücü & Maslakci, 2020). When the sample groups are properly selected and measured, the correlation between data becomes satisfactory. The lower chance of mixing the study, the internal strength becomes higher, and we can be certain about the conclusion. Internal validity of this study was ensured by studying protocol which follows all relevant procedures for administration of research instrument and sending it out to the respondents.

~~3.6.2~~3.7.2 External validity

External validity refers to how well the findings from the study's sample can be applied to a larger population or other target population. Because external validity comes in two different forms we distinguish between larger population and other target population. Generalizability can be defined as conclusions made from the sample taken from a defined population (Lesko et al., 2017). while transportability refers to inferences based on sample but intended for different population (Bareinboim & Pearl, 2014). The creditability of generalizability and transportability inferences can individually account for variety of dimensions. The research event was experienced as a real-world event by informing the participants about the purpose of the study.

~~3.6.3~~3.7.3 Content validity

Content validity refers to the degree in which the items or tests accurately represent the behaviour being studied (Roebianto et al., 2023). content validity can be further explained as measure of how well a test assesses a construct and the relevancy of the test items to the aspects being measured. A test is considered content valid when its items appropriately measure the construct Moreover. It is important to avoid using excessive number of items to measure attributes, instead a representative selection of items is necessary. The research was guided by reviewing literatures that are associated with corporate image and corporate social responsibility and data collection methods before it created a measuring instrument.

~~3.6.4~~3.7.4 Reliability

A test is considered reliable when gives the consistent results across different researchers under stable conditions without variations. Reliability shows consistency and ability to replicate outcomes over time. Furthermore, reliability is seen as the degree to which a test does not have measurement errors, because the errors eliminate the test reliability(Sürücü & Maslakci, 2020). This helps the researcher to make comparisons that are reliable. Reliability is a very

important factor in this study and is presented as an aspect contributing to validity and not opposed to validity.

~~3.7~~3.8 Ethical Considerations

For this research study, primary data was used as a collection method and addressed ethical issues by showing that:

- All respondents who participated in the survey did so voluntarily.
- The questionnaire did not contain discriminatory, offensive, and unacceptable language.
- The participants' privacy and non-disclosure was always maintained.
- The analyses and discussion was maintained at a high level of objectivity.
- APA referencing system was used for all the work that was cited from other authors.

~~3.8~~3.9 Chapter summary

The chapter outlined the research study methodology and design that was used, as well as depicting possible research outcomes at the end of the study, and these outcomes should align with the stated objectives of the study. The chapter is designed to collect, analyse, and interpret numerical data to derive meaningful insights. The next chapter is the presentation of data.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

The chapter focuses on the presentation, discussion, and analysis of findings of the study.

4.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the results collected from the 263 respondents who completed the online survey. To analysis the data, SEM AMOS and SPSS 28 was used. This chapter discusses the descriptive statistics on the respondents' demographics, followed by an example of the measurement scales that were utilised for the variables included in the study. Measurements for reliability and validity are also discussed. The path modelling (PM) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) are provided, in addition. The testing and discussion of the hypotheses outcomes was done.

4.2 Descriptive profile of respondents

For data analysis for this research study, SEM AMOS and SPSS 28 were used. Between 03 January 2024 and 09 February 2024, information was gathered, using an electronic survey questionnaire (Appendix B). A response rate of 71% was achieved with 285 survey forms out of the 400 that were sent out. The research participants were asked to provide demographic data, including their age group, level of education, income and gender in the survey's first section. The respondents were also asked if they had received services from Telkom SA and 73% of the responses had receive services while 27% did not, as reflected in figure 3.

Figure 3 illustrates the respondents who have received services from Telkom

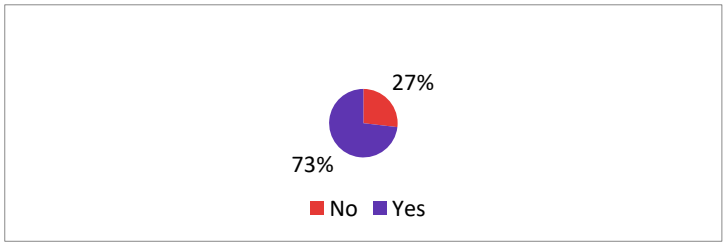

Figure 23 Respondents who have received services from Telkom.

4.2.1 Demographics

4.2.1.1 Gender

Most of the respondents were female at 51% with males at 48% while 1% preferred not to disclose their gender. Female representation is larger and this is in line with the South Africa national population. Statistic SA Census of 2022 has revealed that the South African population has increased from 51,7 million people in 2011 to 62 million in 2022 while females constituted 51,5% and males amount to 48,5% of the population.

Figure 4 illustrates the gender of the respondents in the current study.

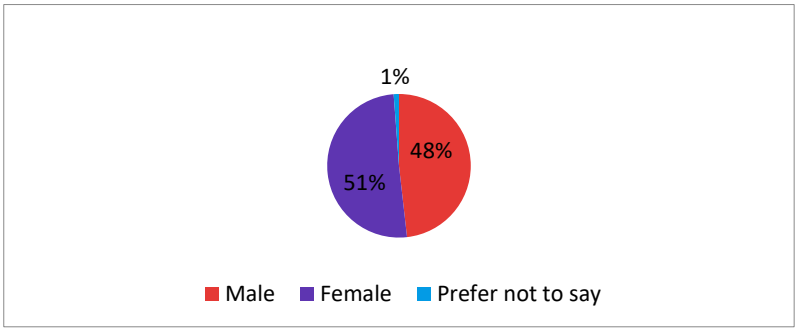

Figure 34 Gender of respondents

4.2.1.2 Age Category

The research results revealed that a higher percentage of the research population is between the ages of 25-40 years, making it 47% of the research population. This was followed very closely by the 41-65 age group, which constitutes 44% of the research population. The smallest group age group are respondents who are 66 and above years which constitute 2% of the research population.

Figure 5 illustrates the age category of the respondents in the current study

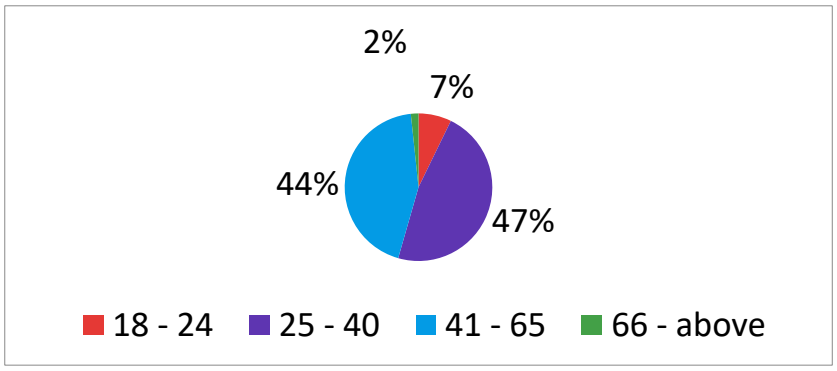

Figure 45 Age categories of respondents

4.2.1.3 Monthly earnings of respondents

Figure 6 illustrates the monthly earnings of the respondents in the current study.

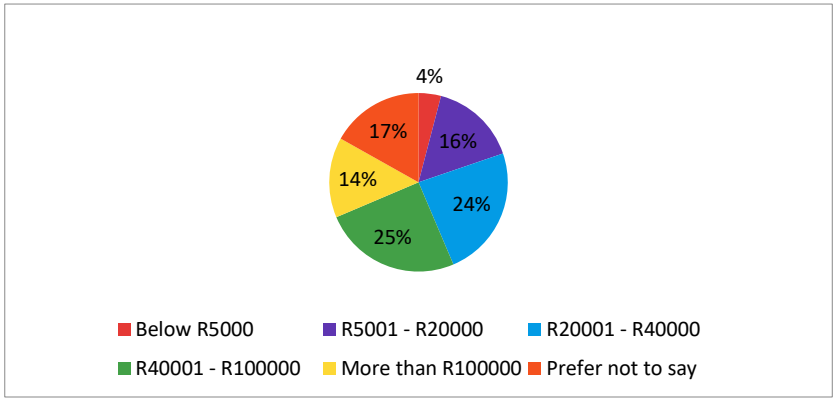

Figure 56 Monthly earnings of respondents

4.2.1.4 Academic Qualifications

Most respondents, 52%, have acquired postgraduate qualifications, followed by 15% for both undergraduate and diploma, the lowest of 3% is for those who only have matriculation. This is consistent with the fact that most of the study respondents are more educated as they hold postgraduate degrees. The study respondent's minority possesses a matriculation qualification and higher certificate respectively.

Figure 7 illustrates the academic qualification of the respondents in the current study.

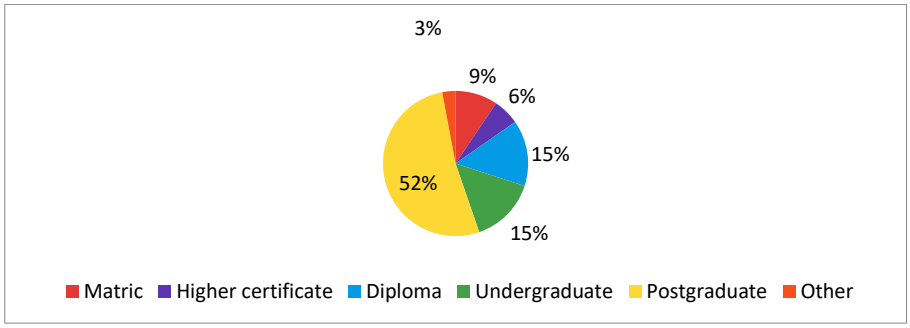

Figure 67 Academic qualification of respondents

4.3 Reliability measurements

This section portrays the results obtained from testing the measurement scales for reliability. Reliability refers to the consistency or the precision of measurements (Nawi, Tambi, Samat, & Mustapha, 2020). The scale can be used to measure the same construct many times. There are different ways that can be used to conceptualise consistency and reliability, namely, Cronbach Test (α value), Composite Reliability (CR value) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE value) and these were tested to assess the measurements of scales reliability.

4.3.1 Cronbach Alpha

Cronbach's α is the most frequently test used to determine the internal consistency of an instrument (Obiondo-Wood & Haber, 2013). The average of all correlations in every combination of split-halves is determined. Instruments with questions that have more than two responses can be used in this test. Cronbach Alpha coefficient is one of the important and pervasive statistics in research including the use of test construction, and the method can be used to measure internal consistency or reliability of a set of survey. The use of statistics determine whether the collection of items measures the same characteristic consistently. Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient ranges between 0 to 1. The coefficient between 0.7 to 1 is acceptable to imply the internal consistency and reliability (Taber, 2018). The table below illustrates the coefficient in the region between 0.71 to 0.89. Based on results presented from the table, there is good internal consistency of the results. The correlation coefficient of less than 0.3 indicates a weak correlation and 0.3– 0.5 is moderate and greater than 0.5 is strong. The item-to-total values for this study range from 0.341 to 0.829 and which exceeds the threshold of 0.3, thus indicating strong reliability.

Table 3: Cronbach's Alpha results

Research Construct		Descriptive Statistics				Cronbach's Test		C.R. Value	AVE Value	Factor Loading
		Mean Value		Standard Deviation		Item -total	α value			
RLB	RLB1	4,594		0,798		0,775				0,855
	RLB2	4,536		0,830		0,721				0,794
	RLB3	4,420		0,854		0,645				0,716
	RLB4	4,540	4,522	0,757	0,810	0,773	0,872	0,877	0,761	0,830
ASR	ASR1	4,741		0,659		0,770				0,824
	ASR2	4,696		0,674		0,780				0,866
	ASR3	4,688		0,690		0,829				0,897
	ASR4	4,580	4,676	0,822	0,711	0,684	0,890	0,898	0,828	0,725
EMP	EMP1	3,513		1,179		0,699				0,901
	EMP2	3,696		1,166		0,564				0,801
	EMP3	3,107		1,338		0,588				0,572
	EMP4	3,946	3,566	1,119	1,201	0,423	0,765	0,772	0,588	0,379
RSP	RSP1	4,656		0,729		0,786				0,940
	RSP2	4,607	4,632	0,726	0,727	0,786	0,880	0,883	0,875	0,835
CSR	CSR1	4,321		0,839		0,531				0,612
	CSR2	4,326		0,871		0,755				0,850
	CSR3	4,384		0,823		0,737				0,865
	CSR4	4,415	4,362	0,924	0,864	0,439	0,796	0,823	0,727	0,581
SMA	SMA1	4,438		0,881		0,563				0,638
	SMA2	4,500		0,873		0,692				0,759
	SMA3	4,076		1,263		0,710				0,815
	SMA4	4,326	4,335	1,005	1,006	0,792	0,841	0,855	0,721	0,863
AE	AE3	3,353		1,321		0,601				0,669
	AE4	3,652		1,169		0,635				0,764
	AE5	3,522	3,509	1,242	1,244	0,664	0,790	0,793	0,690	0,810
WQ	WQ1	3,723		1,188		0,341				0,313
	WQ2	4,022		1,098		0,506				0,447
	WQ3	4,321		1,026		0,631				0,886
	WQ4	4,138	4,051	1,203	1,129	0,525	0,707	0,731	0,534	0,821
CR	CR1	4,308		1,045		0,587				0,581
	CR2	4,330		1,023		0,576				0,643
	CR3	3,964		1,284		0,628				0,781
	CR4	4,121	4,181	1,140	1,123	0,615	0,790	0,790	0,614	0,769
CI	CI1	4,321		1,031		0,751				0,852
	CI2	3,728		1,459		0,602				0,717
	CI3	4,165		1,188		0,764				0,829
	CI4	4,500	4,179	1,007	1,171	0,527	0,821	0,843	0,700	0,615

Note :RLB=Reliability; ASR=Assurance; EMP=Empathy; RSP=Responsiveness; CSR= Corporate Social Responsibility; SMA=Social Marketing Activities; AE=Advertising Exposure; WQ=website Quality; CR=Corporate Reputation; CI=Corporate Image.

4.3.2 Composite reliability

Composite reliability is another way in which the internal consistency can be measured. It is recommended that the reliability of a construct is more than 0.70. High composite reliability is a very good indication that all the items constantly measure the same construct. Values greater than 0.90 cannot be considered as showing internal consistence while values greater than 0.95 should not be considered at all.

From the results illustrated, we see all the composite reliability for the constructs range from 0.731 to 0.898, which exceeds 0.70. This is a clear indication that all the items are consistent. There are no values greater than 0.90.

The AVE must include items with a standardised coefficient ≤0.50. The AVE presented in the table ranges between 0.534 to 0.875., which is more than 0.5; this shows the accuracy of the measurement model.

4.4 Validity measurements

The degree to which a research instrument measures what it is intended to measure is known as validity (Robson, 2011). Validity in quantitative research refers to how well a measuring tool measures what it is intended to measure (Thatcher, 2010).

4.4.1 Convergent validity

This is the extent to which two variables measured independently are related to one another (Straub, 1989)**.** It is established on the results of two distinct instruments measuring the same concepts that have strong correlation. Convergent validity is evaluated by assessing the outer loadings of the indicators to determine the average variance extracted (AVE) from each construct. The rule of thumb for acceptable convergence is an AVE > 0.50, that states AVE of more than 50 percent of the indicator variance is part of the construct score (Hair et al., 2017c). The factor loading of the table displays the outcome the outcome that ranges from 0.313 to 0.940.

4.4.2 Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity is demonstrated when two variables are predicted to be unrelated and the findings are confirmed to be unrelated by empirical means. This is mostly used to differentiate one group from another. This illustrates a negative relationship among measures which theoretically should not be related (Messick, 1995; Sperry, 2004). The intercorrelation metrics in table 4 shows the results that ranges from -0.06 to 0.806. This indicates a weak multi-collinearity relationship between the variables.

Table 4: Inter-correlations matrix

Inter-Correlations Matrix										
	RLB	ASR	RSP	EMP	CSR	SMA	AE	WQ	CR	CI
RLB	1									
ASR	.604**	1								
RSP	.482**	.630**	1							
EMP	.213**	.215**	.603**	1						
CSR	.406**	.443**	.358**	.247**	1					
SMA	.412**	.417**	.373**	.205**	.745**	1				
AE	.241**	.266**	.336**	.281**	.309**	.313**	1			
WQ	.251**	.215**	.201**	.218**	.183**	.124	.512**	1		
CR	.271**	.123	.040	-.021	.158*	.194**	.115	.560**	1	
CI	.297**	.172**	.121	-.006	.222**	.219**	.045	.326**	.806**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Note :RLB=Reliability; ASR=Assurance; EMP=Empathy; RSP=Responsiveness; CSR=Corporate Social Responsibility; SMA=Social Marketing Activities; AE=Advertising Exposure; WQ=website Quality; CR=Corporate Reputation; CI=Corporate Image.

4.4.3 Model fit assessment

Model fit test is a statistical method that can used to assess how a proposed model fits the observed data in structural equation modelling (Marcoulides et al., 2020). Model fit assessment is an integral part of applying confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to empirical data. The metrics of model fit are often the most influential part of information for research using CFA. Table 5 shows the data that results from the model adopted in the research.

Table 5: Model Fit Indexes (CFA)

Model Fit Index	Acceptable Threshold	Results	Outcome
CMIN/DF	Less than 3	2,852	Accepted
GFI	Greater than 0,900	0,902	Accepted
NFI	Greater than 0,900	0,907	Accepted
RFI	Greater than 0,900	0,951	Accepted
IFI	Greater than 0,900	0,979	Accepted
TLI	Greater than 0,900	0,962	Accepted
CFI	Greater than 0,900	0,976	Accepted
RMSEA	Less than 0,08	0,043	Accepted

Note: (χ 2 /DF) = Chi-square/degrees of freedom; GFI= Goodness Fit Index; NFI= Normed Fit Index; TLI= Tucker-Lewis Index IFI= Incremental; Fit Index; CFI= Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA= Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

4.4.3.1 Chi-square (χ2 /DF)

The chi-square test is a statistical test that utilises contingency tables to analyse frequencies and counts of categorical data (Rolke, & Gongora, 2021). The statistical test can be used to test discrepancies between categorical variables from random sample to test the goodness of fit on results expected and observed. The chi squared theory states that any value less than 3 is the expected outcome. The results obtained gives a chi-squared of 2,852 which is less than 3. Based on the results, it can be concluded there is acceptable fit within two sets of random variables.

4.4.3.2 Goodness of fit

Goodness-of-fit refers to a statistical test that determines how well sample data aligns the distribution from a population with a normal distribution. The test hypothesises whether a sample is skewed or represents the data expected to find actual population. Any distribution with GFI greater than 0.9000 represents a good fit. The study findings show a GFI of 0.902 which represent the acceptable match.

4.4.3.3 Normal Fit index

NFI value ranges between 0 and 1, NFI values closer to 1 mean a good fit. Moreover, the value higher than 0.900 is under the Normal Fit Index and is acceptable. The study illustrates a NFI of 0.907 which is under the acceptable level of 0.900. We can conclude that the fit is good.

4.4.3.4 Relative fit index

Values greater than 0.900 are considered as a good fit. The result from the table illustrates the RFI value of 0.951, therefore it can be categorised as a good fit.

4.4.3.5 Incremental fit Index

Incremental index is commonly utilised when assessing the fit of the structural equation model. A value greater than 0.900 is considered as a good fit under the relative fit index. The result from the table shows an IFI value of 0.979 which is a good fit.

4.4.3.6 Tucker Lewis index

Bentler (1990) proposed to use population non-centrality parameters to define an index. This index is heavily dependent on conventional cut-off values established under normal-theory maximum likelihood (ML) with continuous data. Any value greater or equal to 0.900 is considered as a good fit. The study displays the TLI value of 0.962 and falls under a good fit.

4.4.3.7 Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA)

RMSEA measures the average discrepancy between a statistical model's estimated values and the actual values. This is commonly used in structural equation modelling to provide a mechanism for adjusting for sample size where Chi-square statistics are utilised. Values of 0.01, 0.05 and 0.08 indicate excellent, good and mediocre fit respectively; the study shows the RMSEA value of 0.043 indicating that a good fit exists, and we can depend on the data.

4.4.3.8 Comparative index

The table displays the comparative fit index of 0.976 which is greater than the minimum threshold of 0.900; it can be concluded that the study has the acceptable level of fit on the researched random variables.

4.4.4 Confirmatory factor analysis

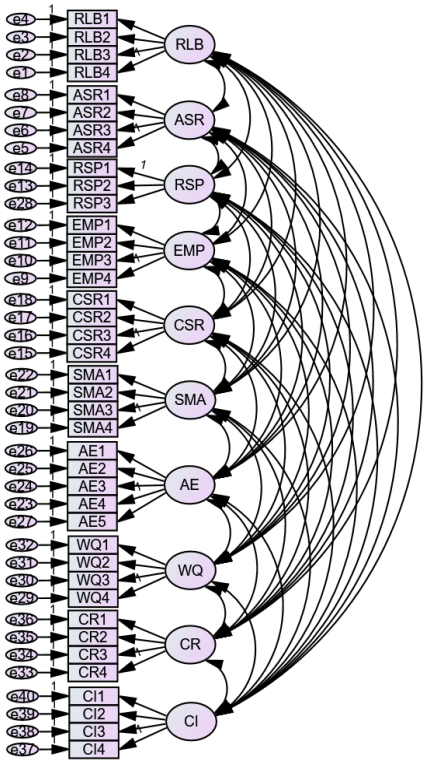

Figure 78 Confirmatory Factor Analysis Model

4.5 Path Modelling

Path analysis is a causal modelling approach that explores the correlations within the variables to understand their effects on the data. The process of path analysis is done using a model which is a mathematical illustration of the data. This model is a powerful tool used for understanding complex data. The method is also known as Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), Covariance Structural Equation Modelling (CSEM), Analysis of Covariance Structures, or Covariance Structure Analysis (Kline, 2023). The hypothetical model in path analysis usually consists of variables, such as observable (endogenous) variables and latent (exogenous) variables. Path analysis has the goal of understanding patterns of correlations between the hypothetical results and explains as much of the regional variation as possible with the model specified. Path analysis focuses on decisions about the whole model and whether it needs to be rejected, modified or accepted. The path model of the study is illustrated below with the variables on the left side that are independent variables explaining the dependent variables on the right side.

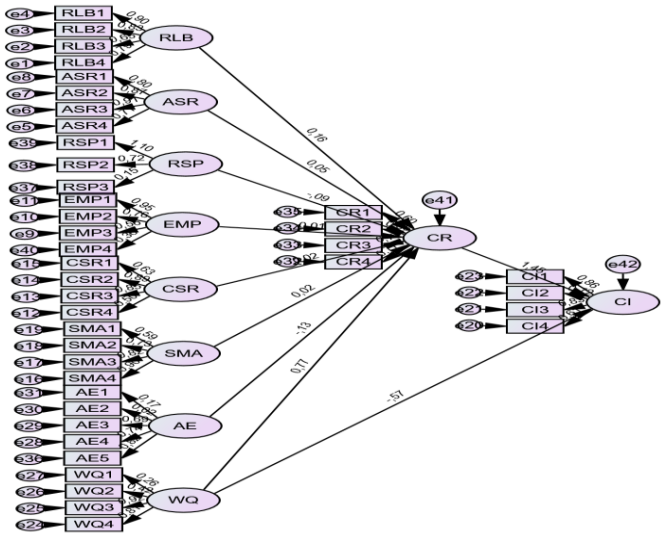

Figure 89 Path Model

4.6 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing is a statistical technique used to determine whether the data is sufficiently supported for a particular hypothesis (Bernini et al., 2023). Hypothesis testing creates a research hypothesis and null hypothesis to test the hypothesis on a sample of the population. The results of hypothesis testing are often interpreted using p-values and confidence intervals (Kocsmár et al., 2023). The p-value is a statistical measure used to determine if the null hypothesis should be rejected or not. It summarises the outcome of the study by comparing the results to what random chance may yield. A p-value less than 0.05 is usually considered statistically significant, but this cut-off is not without criticism. Path coefficients are also used to test the hypotheses. Path coefficients play a significant part because they analyse the causal relationship between the variables. Path coefficients represent the strength and direction of correlation between the variables on the path model. A level of 0.5 is used to assess the statistical significance of the path coefficient. The results of the study are displayed below.

Table 6: Hypothesis 1- Reliability and corporate reputation

Hypothesised Relationship	**Path coefficient**	**P-value**	**Outcome**
CR <--- RLB	0,156	***	Supported and significant

Note: c***=p<0.01

The table indicates a path coefficient of 0.156, suggesting a positive and significant relationship between Reliability (RLB) and Corporate Reputation (CR). The P-value is less than 0.01, demonstrating that this hypothesis is statistically significant and well-supported.

Table 7: Hypothesis 2- Responsiveness and corporate reputation

Hypothesised Relationship	**Path coefficient**	**P-value**	**Outcome**
CR <--- RSP	-0,091	0,08	Not significant

For hypothesis 2, the path coefficient of -0.091 a weak indicate negative relationship between responsiveness and Corporate reputation . The P-value shows the confidence level of 0.08, meaning that that the hypothesis is statistically insignificant.

Table 8: Hypothesis 3–Assurance and corporate reputation

Hypothesised Relationship			**Path coefficient**	**P-value**	**Outcome**
CR	<---	ASR	0,052	0,227	Not significant

Hypothesis 3. The path of coefficient is 0.052 which shows a weak positive relationship between assurance and corporate reputation. While the P value of 0.227 indicates that the relationship is statistically insignificant, as it is much higher than the common threshold of 0.05 for significance.

Table 9: Hypothesis 4- Empathy and corporate reputation

Hypothesised Relationship			**Path coefficient**	**P-value**	**Outcome**
CR	<---	EMP	0,01	0,811	Not significant

Hypothesis 4: The path coefficient of 0.01, value indicates a negligible positive relationship between Empathy (EMP) and Corporate Reputation (CR). The p-value of 0.811 shows that the relationship is not statistically significant as it above 0.05.

Table 10: Hypothesis 5-Corporate Social Responsibility and Corporate Reputation

Hypothesised Relationship			**Path coefficient**	**P-value**	**Outcome**
CR	<---	CSR	0,02	0,642	Not significant

Hypothesis 5: path coefficient of 0.02 shows a very weak positive relationship between CSR and Corporate Reputation because a close to zero suggests that CSR has minimal impact on CR. The P-value demonstrates the confidence level of 0.642 which is significantly higher than the typical threshold of 0.05, indicating that the relationship is not statistically significant.

Table 11: Hypothesis 6 – Social Media Marketing Activities and Corporate Reputation

Hypothesised Relationship			Path coefficient	P-value	Outcome
CR	<---	SMA	0,016	0,711	Not significant

Path Coefficient (0.016) indicates an weak positive relationship between Social Media Marketing Activities (SMA) and Corporate Reputation (CR). While the P value of 0.711 which is much higher than the standard significance level of 0.05, suggesting that the relationship is statistically insignificant. With a P-value of 0.711, there is insufficient evidence to conclude that SMA has a significant effect on CR.

Table 12: Hypothesis 7-Advertising Exposure and Corporate reputation

Hypothesised Relationship			Path coefficient	P-value	Outcome
CR	<---	AE	-0,134	0,006	Supported and significant

Hypothesis 7: shows the path coefficient of -0.134 which indicates a negative relationship between Advertising Exposure (AE) and Corporate Reputation (CR). A negative value suggests that higher advertising exposure may be associated with a lower corporate reputation. The P-value of 0.006 is below the standard significance level of 0.05, indicating that the relationship is statistically significant.

Table 13: Hypothesis 8- Corporate Image and Website Quality

Hypothesised Relationship			Path coefficient	P-value	Outcome
CI	<---	WQ	-0,572	***	Supported and significant

Note: c***=p<0.01

Hypothesis 8: The path Coefficient -0.572 indicates a strong negative relationship between Website Quality (WQ) and Corporate Image (CI). While P-value 0f less than 0.01 indicates a statistically significant relationship, reinforcing the strength of the association.

Table 14: Hypothesis 9- Corporate Image and Corporate Reputation

Hypothesised Relationship			Path coefficient	P-value	Outcome
CI	<---	CR	1,447	***	Supported and significant

Note: c***=p<0.01

Hypothesis 9: Path Coefficient of -0.572 indicates a strong negative relationship between Website Quality (WQ) and Corporate Image (CI). A higher negative value suggests that lower website quality is associated with a diminished corporate image. The P-value of (* = p < 0.01)**indicates a statistically significant relationship, reinforcing the strength of the association.

4.7 Chapter summary

In this chapter, the study presented the demographic profile of the respondents in descriptive statistics, following by an example of the measurement scales used for the variables included in this study. The study discussed the measurements for validity and reliability and the presentation of the study hypotheses.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The chapter covers the discussion of findings of the study.

5.1 Introduction

The chapter's intention is to expand and explain the research objective, while giving more clarity to the results obtained and presented in chapter 4. The analysis of the data in this study was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. The chapter focuses on the respondents' profile representation, discussion of the hypotheses and the research study conclusion.

5.2 Respondents' profiles

The survey questionnaires were sent electronically to prospective participants via WhatsApp and other social media. To ensure the appropriate respondent took part in the study, only those participants who were Telkom customers or had received service from Telkom indicated this by replying 'yes' or 'no' to the screening question and those marked "yes" were included to maintain the research instrument integrity.

5.2.1 Demographic profiles

The research question that constitutes the main problem is to examine the relationship between dependent variables, moderator and independent variable and the respondents were Telkom SA Limited customers or individuals who had received services or individuals who have knowledge of Telkom SA Limited as a brand. Literature suggests that the corporate image of the state-owned enterprise is affected by the service quality, marketing factors, website quality and corporate reputation, as some of the critical factors as evidenced by customer or competitor reviews.

The study focused on customers of the brand and the research population was Telkom SA customers in South Africa. The results presented have shown 73% of the respondents are serviced or have received service from Telkom. The study results have presented the gender of the respondents and there is consistence between country gender representation where 51% of respondent are female, 48% are male and 1% did not want to disclose their gender. The age

demographic has reflected that the larger population of 49% were aged between 24- 40 years, followed by 43% in the ages between 41-65 years, noting that the smallest was 2% of the age 66 and above. The higher percentage of respondents at 52% have postgraduate degrees, followed by 15% of individuals holding diplomas, while individuals who possess undergraduate degrees contribute 14,62 % and the smallest is people who have other qualifications.

The brand Telkom attracts middle-class people as the report from the survey study evidently indicated that 25% of respondents are earning between R40,001.00 to R100,000.00, with 24% of the individuals earning between R20,001.00 and R40,000.00, followed by 17% of the people earning below R5,000.00, but noted the significance of 16% of people earning between R5,001.00 and R20,000.00 and finally, the individuals earning above R100,000.00 contribute 14% of the population sample.

5.3 Hypothesis discussion

5.3.1 Hypothesis 1

H1: Reliability has a positive influence on corporate reputation

Service reliability and corporate reputation have a significant relationship, as supported by the study with a H1 path coefficient of 0.156 and a 0.001 confidence level indicated by the P- value. This shows that the hypothesis is significant and supported. This proves that service reliability has a high probability of affecting corporate reputation positively. This has also been supported by previous studies where this outcome was in line with prior studies that showed that reliability is a more effective and powerful attribute in building corporate image (Song et al., 2019). Moreover, it has been pointed out that responsiveness has the highest score in the expectation and perception of all service quality dimensions, which proved the importance of responsiveness in corporate reputation (Sobol & Farrelly, 1988).

5.3.2 Hypothesis 2

H2: There is no positive relationship between responsiveness and corporate reputation

The path coefficient of the hypothesis is -0.091 which shows the negative relation between RSP and CR. The P-value indicates the confidence level of 0.08, showing that the hypothesis is

insignificant. The results show that the hypothesis is not supported. Service responsiveness has proven not to have a positive effect on corporate reputation as it has been proven by the research study. The finding of this study is contrary to the study that found that service responsiveness is one of the predictor variables that contribute to corporate reputation (Virappan & Chan, 2020). Their study results were consistent with the finding of another study (Wilson, 2018).

5.3.3 Hypothesis 3

H3: There is positive relationship between assurance and corporate reputation

The path coefficient is 0.052, The confidence level of 0.227 indicates that the hypothesis is not significant. The hypothesis results reflect that the service assurance has a positive effect on the corporate reputation. The current study results do not support a previous study that found that service quality assurance does have a significant effect on the corporate reputation of the company. The earlier study suggested the relationship between assurance and corporate reputation is significant and supported, stating that only responsiveness, assurance and empathy have contributed to corporate reputation (Virappan & Chan, 2020). Paying attention to the quality of assurance is more likely to benefit corporate reputation from the high quality of such services (García-Sánchez et al., 2022). They further discussed that an exploratory analysis on assurance of service has an effect on the external business image and on the relationships with stakeholders is demonstrated, while the results acquired on a sample of 604 multinational corporations form the year 2011–2017 show the existence of a reputational advantage for those corporations that have contracted a higher quality assurance service.

5.3.4 Hypothesis 4

H4: There is no positive relationship between empathy and corporate reputation

The path coefficient is 0.01. The confidence level of 0.811 indicates that the hypothesis is not significant. The results for the current study indicate that service empathy has no significant impact on the corporate reputation. The test for this hypothesis reflect an insignificant relationship between empathy and corporate reputation. This study result is not consistent with another study that found empathy to be the only service dimension to have a low correlation with corporate

reputation (Ali & Raza, 2017). According to the regression analysis, the results show that empathy, as a predictor variable, as a contributing factor to corporate reputation is not significant. The study found that only responsiveness, empathy and assurance as service quality dimensions have contribution factors to corporate reputation (Virappan & Chan, 2020), while the results were found to be in line with another study that showed that the relationship between empathy and corporate reputation is significant (Wilson, 2018).

5.3.5 Hypothesis 5

H5: There is a positive relationship between corporate social responsibility and corporate reputation

The path coefficient between corporate social responsibility and corporate reputation is 0.02 which demonstrates a negative relationship; this is supported by the p value of 0,642 with the confidence interval level of 0.642 that is greater than 0.05. The hypothesis is not supported and not statistically significant and the results indicate a poor correlation between the variables. This statistical result does not support the proposed hypothesis of the study and earlier findings that corporate social responsibility has a positive impact on corporate reputation (Javed et al., 2020; Lantos & McGillicuddy, 2019; Shahzad & Sharfman, 2017), in that socially responsible activities of the organisation are linked to a positive corporate reputation and there is limited literature that supports the results obtained. Previous studies on corporate social responsibility revealed that CSR has a positive correlation with corporate reputation, with the suggestion that firms utilise CSR as an instrument of improving their corporate image. The degree of CSR engagement is closely associated with strengthening or depleting CR. Specifically, firms that invest in CSR initiatives and CSR disclosure may enhance their CR and vice versa (Le, 2023).

5.3.6 Hypothesis 6

H6: There is a positive relationship between social media marketing activities (SMMA) and corporate reputation

The path coefficient which shows the direction of the link between SMA and CR is 0.016 and the P value has the confidence level of 0.711; this indicates that the hypothesis is insignificant. The results of the hypothesis examine the relationship between Social Media Marketing Activities

(SMA) and Corporate Reputation (CR). The path coefficient of 0.016 represents the strength and direction of the relationship between SMA and CR. The path coefficient of the results shows a small positive relationship between the variables. The coefficient shows a weak correlation between the variables. The p-value of the statistical results is 0.711 which is considerable higher than a 0.05 level of confidence. This shows that the hypothesis is insignificant. Based on the given outcome, it shows that there is insufficient evidence to support the hypothesis. Given the weak correlation path coefficient of 0.016, along with a high p-value, this shows that any observed relationship between SMA and CR in the dataset is possibly due to random variation rather than a meaningful association.

In the digital environment in which we live, consumers are increasingly selective when they have the intention to purchase a product (Lina & Setiyanto, 2021). Consumers are always looking for company information through different social media platforms and before purchasing from the company, they check the reviews in e-commerce, reading content and blogs or from influencers (Dwidienawati et al., 2020). The reasons behind poor performance of the organisation's social media were investigated by (Chan & Guillet, 2011). The authors revealed that there is a lack of interactions between the firms and their clients. People provide the wrong information and incorrect content about the companies on social media sites and not responding to customers has an impact on the organisation (Chan & Guillet, 2011). These factors not only lead to poor performance of the company but negatively affect the corporate reputation. The authors argued that social media communication enhances the brand image and the overall evaluation of the brand more effectively than the traditional marketing tools, such as advertising (Bruhn et al., 2012).

5.3.7 Hypothesis 7

H7: There is no positive relationship between advertising exposure and corporate reputation

The statistical results indicate a negative correlation between advertising exposure and corporate reputation. It shows the path coefficient is -0.134, indicating the correlation between advertising exposure and corporate reputation. This shows the inverse relationship between the variables because as advertising exposure increases, corporate reputation tends to decrease. The p-value associated with the path coefficient shows the confidence level of 0.006. This value is less than

the conventional significance threshold of 0.05, indicating statistical significance. A p-value of 0.006 suggests that there is a lower likelihood (0.6%) that the observed relationship between AE and CR is due to random chance.

The negative path coefficient suggests that an increase in advertising exposure is associated with a decrease in corporate reputation. This finding may indicate that excessive or poorly executed advertising campaigns could have a negative impact on the reputation of a company. It is argued that corporate reputation is a reflection of stakeholder perceptions, which is influenced by how an organisation presents itself through advertising (Veh et al., 2019). With the increase on the use of technology where there is a high level of media usage, not all the advertisements are serving as promotion but as the organisation's values and identity. This literature is not supported by the statistical results of this study. Moreover, effective advertising strategies that highlight the organisation's ethical practices, quality of products and services, and commitment to societal welfare can enhance corporate reputation (Singh & Misra, 2021). Additional research shows that advertising positively affects brand equity, especially when the message creates a satisfactory customer reaction to the product in question compared to a similar non-branded product (Khan et al., 2023).

5.3.8 Hypothesis 8

H8: There is a positive relationship between website quality and corporate image.

The path coefficient is -0.572 which denotes the direction of the link between WQ and CI. A 0.01 confidence level of P value shows that the hypothesis is supported and significant. The statistical results show the path coefficient and a p value outcome that is supported and significant. The structural equation model shows the strength and direction of correlation between the independent and dependent variables. The path coefficient of –0.572 indicates a negative relationship between the variables. The p-value results indicate a confidence level that is very small and likely smaller than 0.001. This implies that the relationship between WQ and CI is statistically significant at a high level of confidence. The outcome suggests a statistically inverse correlation between the variables. This means that when corporate image declines, website quality increases, and vice

versa. This means that, based on the data provided, there is strong evidence to support the hypothesis that corporate image and website quality are significantly related.

5.3.9 Hypothesis 9

H9: There is a positive relationship between corporate reputation and corporate image

The results show a path coefficient of 1,447; this indicates a significant relationship between CR and CI. A 0.01 confidence level of P value shows that the hypothesis is supported and significant. Given a path coefficient of 1.447 suggests the strength and direction of the relationship between CR and CI. The path coefficient is higher than zero and shows a positive relationship between the variables, meaning that as CR increases, CI also tends to increase. The p-value of *** ($p < 0.01$) indicates that the relationship between CR and CI is statistically significant. A p-value less than 0.01 indicates strong evidence against the null hypothesis, supporting the alternative hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between CR and CI. The outcome of the hypothesis is supported and significant, meaning that the data provided enough evidence to prove that there is indeed a significant positive relationship between CR and CI. It can be agreed that as a company's commitment to corporate responsibility increases, its corporate image tends to improve as well.

The results of this current study have proven the hypothesis as the data analysis supports it and shows the significant relationship between corporate reputation and corporate image. The two constructs have been identified as the most important corporate signals but the empirical studies usually only include these as separate (De Leaniz & del Bosque Rodríguez, 2016). While there is this view, there is literature that has asserted the relationship between corporate reputation and corporate image (Abratt & Kleyn, 2012; Gray & Balmer, 1998; Walsh et al., 2009). The study has demonstrated that the relationship between corporate image and corporate reputation is affected by customer judgement evaluation like service quality, satisfaction and perceived value perceptions (Özkan, Süer, et al., 2020b). Through PR campaigns and advertisements, corporate image can be shaped quickly (Balmer, 1998), while some have argued that regular impressions that are created by corporate image, tend to shape corporate reputation (Alessandri, 2001).

5.4 Chapter summary

Chapter 5 presented the research demographics of the study respondents. The chapter further shows a comparison between the research respondents' understanding of the research questionnaire with literature; therefore, this represents the gap in study. Moreover, a thorough discussion of the hypotheses showing the results of all nine hypotheses is discussed; the data collected shows that only three hypotheses showed a significant positive correlation with corporate reputation while corporate reputation has a significant positive relationship with corporate image.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter covers the conclusion, recommendations, implications, and limitations of the study, as well as suggestions for future research.

6.1 Introduction

The chapter objective is to conclude the research study findings and provide implications of the findings, requiring recommendations. The section provides a summarised conclusion of the research study throughout all the chapters from study introduction to the conclusion. With this chapter, the author discusses the conclusion, implications of the findings and study limitations, including proposals of future study.

6.2 Conclusion of the study

The study aimed to investigate the relationship between marketing factors and service quality dimensions on corporate reputation and image within the context of Telkom. The hypotheses were tested using path analysis, and the findings shed light on how different dimensions of CSR and service quality influence corporate reputation and image. This research was conducted to investigate whether service quality with its dimension of responsiveness, empathy, reliability and assurance, marketing factors elements of CSR, social media market activities and advertisement exposure play an important and significant part in corporate reputation. The study also tested the hypothesis of website quality in relation with corporate image - the results showed a supported and significant relationship between the variables. Furthermore, the finding demonstrated the role of this construct in the perceived corporate image of Telkom SA Limited in the South African context. The study results have revealed that some of the constructs were not supported and insignificant, while others were supported and significant as per data analysis.

The objective of this study was to comprehend how corporate image, as a dependent variable, is influenced by the independent variables with corporate reputation as a mediator; this shows how the customers of Telkom SA view the company image through these variables. Study results have demonstrated that almost half of the hypotheses are not supported and not significant which

include H2 responsiveness, H3 empathy, H4 assurance and H7 advertising exposure. The study further revealed that there are no significant relationships between corporate reputation and other marketing factors, such as corporate social responsibility, advertising exposure, as well as social media marketing activities. This finding may suggest that while these factors may be important in the broader context of CSR and marketing factors, they do not directly impact how Telkom's SA's corporate reputation is perceived by stakeholders. The negative relationship between corporate reputation and advertising exposure might be caused by the fact that Telkom's method of advertising is ineffective or irrelevant to the customers and this may be detrimental to the company's corporate reputation.

The study found that service reliability positively and significantly impacts corporate reputation, indicating that Telkom SA's limited efforts to provide reliable services to customers have a tangible effect on how the organisation is perceived by stakeholders. The results also showed a significant negative relationship between website quality and corporate image. This validates the importance of a high-quality website maintenance as an essential component of building a positive corporate reputation. Moreover, the study also found a significant positive relationship between corporate reputation and corporate image, indicating that enhancing corporate reputation may improve corporate image and perceptions among stakeholders.

6.3 Implications of the study

Corporate reputation is significant to all organisations. It is important to analyse the impact of CSR on the corporate reputation of the organisation. The study suggested the practical and theoretical implications. The study analysed the impact of service quality factors, such as reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy, on corporate reputation and the impact of marketing factors, such as corporate social responsivity, social media marketing factors, advertising exposure and website quality on corporate reputation.

6.3.1 Theoretical implications

The study made theoretical contributions that will increase the knowledge and understanding of the effects of corporate social responsibility on the corporate image of organisations using theories, such as Stakeholder theory, Carroll theory, SERVQUAL theory and the model of

image processing . This study contributes to bring more understanding on the relationship between SERVQUAL factors and marketing factors, corporate reputation and corporate image by testing the hypothesis. This study will help academics and scholars through a theoretical contribution to support their research studies.

The study utilised the SERVQUAL theory, Stakeholder theory and Carroll theory to develop the conceptual model, as shown by the literature, in order to minimise the research gap. The studies suggest that service reliability has a positive influence on corporate reputation; the relationship between the variables denotes that meeting stakeholders' expectations for reliable services contributes positively to corporate reputation. Further, there is a significant positive correlation between corporate image and corporate reputation that shows a positive influence on stakeholder perceptions about corporate image.

The significant correlation that exists between a company's reputation and service reliability is consistent with Carroll's emphasis on fulfilling economic responsibilities by providing reliable services to customers, while service quality dimensions, such as service reliability and website, have significance that other dimensions may not have. A significant positive correlation between corporate reputation and service reliability aligns with the reliability dimension of SERVQUAL. This finding provide insights that can affect the corporate reputation.

6.3.2 Practical Implications

Based on the outcome of the study there is a significant positive relationship between service reliability and corporate reputation, recommending that marketing managers should always ensure that customers receive reliable service to enhance the corporate reputation. Telkom must focus on enhanced service reliability by investing in technology and good customer service to enrich its reputation amongst the stakeholders of the business. When considering other service quality factors, such as responsiveness, assurance and empathy, the study showed insignificant relationships with corporate reputation. Telkom should continue to prioritise responsiveness,

provide assurances, and show empathy in business operations and interactions to improve stakeholder perceptions and maintain a positive corporate reputation.

Marketing activities, such as CSR and social media marketing activities, do not have a significant relationship with CR. This indicates that CSR initiatives and social media marketing activities undertaken by the company might not have a direct impact on CR. Telkom must align their initiatives to meet stakeholders expectations; this could entail improving CSR communication, concentrating on projects that appeal to stakeholders, and effective communication of CSR efforts on all the company's communication platforms.

The study further shows a significant positive correlation between corporate reputation and advertising exposure. Advertising that lacks detailed information may have a negative impact on the corporate image of Telkom, As a result, marketers of the organisation must evaluate the marketing strategies and ensure that they align with the values and objectives of the organisation to avoid negative impacts on the corporate reputation.

A negative correlation between corporate image and website quality implies that stakeholders form perceptions about a firm's image, based on the quality of its website. Companies need to invest in their website as a representation of their brand and corporate identity. Investing in high-quality data results in good functionality of a website, and user experience is essential to maintain a positive corporate image among stakeholders. Frequent evaluation and maintenance to meet evolving user expectations and technological improvements is essential for the organisational website to uphold a positive corporate image.

The results further show a strong positive relationship between corporate reputation and corporate image. The strong correlation between the variables should be recognised by Telkom that should implement strategies that enhance them. Positive actions that can be taken to enhance the relationship between corporate reputation and corporate image include good delivery of services and good marketing that will result in a positive corporate image which will lead to trust and loyalty among stakeholders.

6.4 Recommendations

This report has opened a gap for potential researchers to investigate the relationship between CSR and CI in the context of other organisations. To ensure their studies are valid and reliable, the following recommendations are made, based on the findings of the study.

The study could not find significant correlations between corporate reputation variables, such as responsiveness, empathy, and corporate social responsibility - further research may be needed to investigate the potential impact of these dimensions on corporate reputation and image. Further research should be conducted to investigate the stakeholders' perceptions about the company's CSR activities.

Stakeholder engagement is important for understanding what is expected from stakeholders and their views about the organisation's CSR initiatives. Telkom needs to conduct more research on different communication platforms to ensure that their initiatives align with stakeholders' expectation.

Continuous monitoring and evaluation of CSR initiatives and corporate image needs to be implemented. This can be done through interaction with customers on social media platforms, collection of feedback from different stakeholders and modifying CSR and communication efforts, as required.

6.5 Limitations of the study

- The study has different limitations that might have potential on studies that will be conducted in future. The study employed a quantitative method using closed ended questions, which limits the respondent interaction with the questions as findings are based on numerical responses, the researcher could get little insight about the respondents.

- Data collection: The data was collected through a close-ended self-administered electronic survey questionnaire. The other methods of data collection could have been used to allow respondents to motivate their answers and get full understanding of the questions.
- Contextual specificity: The results of the study may be specific to Telkom SA Limited as the study focus on the company's customers. Even though the findings may be specific to Telkom SA, the study results might also be used by the other entities in the industry in general, noting data was only collected from Telkom SA customers in South Africa. While the research might to used generally in the telecommunication industry, it can be utilised for developing countries that have similar conditions as South Africa, but it might not be useful in developed countries and under-developed countries.
- Limited scope of variables: the study did not consider other essential factors that could have an influence on corporate reputation and corporate image. The focus was on specific dimensions of service quality, marketing factors and the correlation between corporate reputation and corporate image.
- Sample size**:** The study focused on people who have received service experience from Telkom SA, while the researcher used convenance sampling that has an element of bias. The main challenge of convenience sampling in the study is that the research results are biased because they lack generalisability (Emerson, 2021). This does not represent a large population or the target market of the company and inadequately represents the broader population or target market of Telkom. This could limit the generalisability of the findings to other contexts or populations.
- Theoretical limitations: theories such as SERVQUAL, Carroll theory, stakeholder theory and model of image processing theory are important theoretical frameworks, however, they might not adequately explain the complexity of how corporate reputation and image are formed. Other theories could have provided more insights for the study.

6.6 Suggestions for further research

It is suggested that further research on this topic should not exclude customers who use other network service providers considering that the study focused only on Telkom customers. It would have been more informative if the focus groups were key stakeholders in Telkom, including customers, employees, government representatives, and community members, to explore their perceptions of the company's corporate social responsibility initiatives and their impact on corporate image. The mixed method would have provided deeper insights into stakeholders' attitudes, beliefs, and experiences. The outcome of the study, where customer perceptions were examined, may only apply to Telkom SOE but not to other organisations. Future studies may test whether the same conclusion applies to other companies.

A comparative study with other organisations by comparing Telkom's corporate social responsibility practices and corporate image with those of other entities operating in similar industries could be undertaken; the analysis can highlight best practices, difficulties, and areas for improvement for businesses operating in similar industries.

The author realised the few disadvantages of the study. The drawback is the fact that some variables used in the survey were not translated into simple words or local meanings due to the limited time of data collection. This shows that people could have answered the questions differently had there been clearer meanings, and the study outcome could have been different. Adding other theories of corporate image could have resulted in different results from the study.

The above research suggestions aim to deepen understanding of the complex relationship between corporate social responsibility and corporate image within the context of Telkom as a state-owned entity, providing valuable insights into the telecommunications industry.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Participation Information Sheet

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Dear Sir/Madam

I am conducting a research study titled "Corporate social responsibility and corporate image for Telkom SOC Limited". Please spare 5–10 minutes of your time to complete the accompanying questionnaire below. Your response is important to the study, and there are no right or wrong answers. Your name will be kept anonymous, and your responses are strictly confidential, so you will not be identified as a respondent in this study or any articles that may emanate from it.

Kindly note that participation is voluntary, so if you do not wish to participate, please feel free to opt out at any point in time. Please note that voluntarily completing the self-administered assessment will be regarded as your consent. There is no risk, penalty, or loss of benefits, whether you participate or not. It is therefore our request that you answer all questions honestly.

If you have any questions afterwards about this research, please feel free to contact me using the details listed below. If you have any queries, concerns, or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this

study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (non-medical), telephone +27(0)117171408, email Shaun.Schoeman@wits.ac.za.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the study.

Researcher: Immanuel Mboniseni Nevondo

2402263@students.wits.ac.za| 0825679865

Supervisor: Dr Neo Ligaraba

neo.ligaraba@wits.ac.za | 011 717 8299

Appendix B: Research Instrument

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. SCREENING QUESTION:

Yes	1
No **If NO, CLOSE INTERVIEW**	2

SECTION A – Demographic Questions

Q1 Please indicate your age group.

- 18 - 24
- 25 - 40
- 41 - 65
- 66 - above

Q2 Please indicate your gender.

- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say

Q3 What is your highest level of education?

- ○ Matric
- ○ Higher certificate
- ○ Diploma
- ○ Undergraduate
- ○ Postgraduate
- ○ Other

Q4 What is your household's gross monthly income?

- ○ Below R5000
- ○ R5001 - R20000
- ○ R20001 - R40000
- ○ R40001 - R100000
- ○ More than R100000
- ○ Prefer not to say

SECTION B: Core Questions

In this section, please indicate the extent to which you disagree or agree with each of the following statements. You can indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement by

clicking the corresponding number in the 5-point scale ranging from: (1) = Strongly disagree; (2) = Disagree; (3) = Neutral; (4) = Agree; (5) = Strongly agree

1. Reliability						
		Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
REL1	Telkom has a clear service protocol and is dependable.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
REL2	Telkom has a good procedure and system to store customer data.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
REL3	Telkom provides a correct end-to-end service process.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
REL4	I feel that Telkom is reliable.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

2. Responsiveness						
		Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
RES1	Telkom's service officers promptly attend to your needs.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
RES2	The service officers from Telkom provide convenient service without a burdensome process.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

RES3	The Telkom's service officers are responsive and able to solve your request.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

3. Assurance						
		Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
AS1	Telkom employees are always courteous towards its customers.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
AS2	I feel safe in receiving service from Telkom.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
AS3	I feel that Telkom employees can be trusted.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
AS4	Telkom employees knowledgeable and always answer customers' questions.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
AS5	Telkom employees have the knowledge to answer customers' questions.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

4. Empathy						
		Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**

EMP1	Telkom's operating hours are convenient for me.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
EMP2	Telkom support staff give me individual attention.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
EMP3	Telkom support staff understand my specific needs.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
EMP4	I feel that Telkom have my best interests at heart.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

5. Corporate Social Responsibility						
		Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
CSR1	Telkom improves the welfare of the communities in which it operates.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
CSR2	Telkom as a SOE tries to achieve long-term success.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
CSR3	Telkom tries to reduce its consumption of natural resources.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
CSR4	Telkom aim to improve its economic performance.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

6. Social Media Marketing Activities						
		Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
SMM1	Contents shown on Telkom's social media seem interesting.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

SMM2	Conversation or opinion exchange with others is possible through Telkom's social media.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
SMM3	Contents shown in Telkom's social media is the newest information.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
SMM4	Telkom's social media offers customized information search.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

7. Advertising Exposure						
		Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
AE1	Heard an advert on Radio advertising Telkom	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
AE2	Heard an advert on TV advertising Telkom	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
AE3	I have seen a print advert(Newspapers or magazines) advertising Telkom	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
AE4	I have seen an outdoor Billboards advertising Telkom	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
AE5	I feel very positive when I see Telkom advertisements.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

8. Website Quality						
		Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**

OMQ1	Telkom's owned-media does not just sell - it also entertains me.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
OMQ2	This media supplies relevant and up-to-date product/service information about the company.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
OMQ3	The media is a convenient source of product/service information for Telkom	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
OMQ4	Telkom's owned media is credible and trustworthy.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
OMQ5	Telkom owned media is credible and trustworthy.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

9. Corporate Reputation						
		Strongly disagree	**Disagree**	**Neutral**	**Agree**	**Strongly agree**
CR1	I think that Telkom has an outstanding corporate reputation.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
CR2	I think Telkom is well known.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
CR3	I easily identify with Telkom.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
CR4	I am familiar with the products/services that Telkom provide to consumers.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

10. Corporate Image

		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
CI1	I have always had a good impression of Telkom.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
CI2	In my opinion, Telkom has a good image in the minds of consumers.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
CI3	I believe that Telkom has a better image than its competitors do.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
CI4	I believe that Telkom have good corporate image.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Thank you for your participation ☺

Appendix C: Ethical Clearance Certificate

Graduate School of Business Administration
University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

Wits Business School Ethics Committee
Constituted under the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical)

Ethics Clearance Certificate

Ethics protocol number: WBS/SM2402263/666
This certificate is only valid with a legitimate ethics protocol number and signed by the Researcher (below)

Project title	Corporate social responsibility and corporate image of Telkom SA SOC Limited
Investigator / Researcher	Mr Immanuel Mboniseni Nevondo
Nature of Project	MM (Strategic Marketing)
Decision of the Committee	Approved, provided stakeholders and participants are guaranteed confidentialty.
Issue Date of Certificate	2023-07-06
Expiry date	Date of submission of the project / research report
Chairperson	Dr Pius Oba +27 11 717 3976 +27 82 733 6587 pius.oba@wits.ac.za

Declaration by Researcher

One copy must be signed by the Researcher and returned to the Chairperson of the Wits Business School Ethics Committee.

I fully understand the conditions under which I am authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee.

Signature

11 July 2023
Date:

Appendix D: Standardised Regression Weights

Standardized Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate
RLB1	<---	RLB	0,855
RLB2	<---	RLB	0,794
RLB3	<---	RLB	0,716
RLB4	<---	RLB	0,83
ASR1	<---	ASR	0,824
ASR2	<---	ASR	0,866
ASR3	<---	ASR	0,897
ASR4	<---	ASR	0,725
EMP1	<---	EMP	0,901
EMP2	<---	EMP	0,801
EMP3	<---	EMP	0,572
EMP4	<---	EMP	0,379
RSP1	<---	RSP	0,94
RSP2	<---	RSP	0,835
CSR1	<---	CSR	0,612
CSR2	<---	CSR	0,85
CSR3	<---	CSR	0,865
CSR4	<---	CSR	0,581
SMA1	<---	SMA	0,638
SMA2	<---	SMA	0,759
SMA3	<---	SMA	0,815
SMA4	<---	SMA	0,863
AE3	<---	AE	0,669
AE4	<---	AE	0,764
AE5	<---	AE	0,81
WQ1	<---	WQ	0,313
WQ2	<---	WQ	0,447
WQ3	<---	WQ	0,886
WQ4	<---	WQ	0,821
CR1	<---	CR	0,581
CR2	<---	CR	0,643
CR3	<---	CR	0,781

CR4	<---	CR	0,769
CI1	<---	CI	0,852
CI2	<---	CI	0,717
CI3	<---	CI	0,829
CI4	<---	CI	0,615

Appendix E: Turnitin report

MMSM FINAL RESEARCH REPORT IM NEVONDO (2402263)2 .docx

ORIGINALITY REPORT

10%	10%	9%	%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	core.ac.uk Internet Source	3%
2	www.mdpi.com Internet Source	1%
3	wiredspace.wits.ac.za Internet Source	1%
4	www.emerald.com Internet Source	1%
5	journalfirm.com Internet Source	<1%
6	www.researchandmarkets.com Internet Source	<1%
7	www.researchgate.net Internet Source	<1%
8	www.ipadaconference.com Internet Source	<1%
9	Jameson L. Hayes, Brittany R.L. Duff. "Introducing a special issue on advertising &	<1%

Appendix F: University Clearance

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

APPENDIX 2

UNIVERSITY CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE[5]

Name: Immanuel Mbonisani Nevondo ..... candidate for the degree of MASTER OF MANAGEMENT IN STRATEGIC MARKETING (MMSM) .....

has today submitted her/his thesis/dissertation/research report/project for examination.

a) Has this thesis/dissertation/research report/project been submitted with the consent of the supervisor?	**YES** ✓	**NO**
b) To the best of your knowledge are you able to confirm that the candidate has acknowledged all information used in the thesis, dissertation or research report/project?	**YES** ✓	**NO**
c) To the best of your knowledge are you able to confirm that the candidate has not used any confidential information without the required permission in the thesis, dissertation or research report/project?	**YES** ✓	**NO**

If **No**, please provide an explanation in the supervisor's report.

d) Did the candidate's research involve any engagement with people, animals, or the environment?	**YES** ✓	**NO**
e) If **Yes**, did the candidate obtain ethical clearance by the relevant, approved ethics committee of the University before the research was conducted?	**YES**	**NO**

f) If **Yes**, please state the ethics certificate number WBS/SM2402263/668

(If **No**, the degree may not be awarded.)

Name of Supervisor DR NEO LIGARABA

Signature of the Supervisor .....

Date 24 February 2024

[5] This form is applicable to all Faculties within the University.