



Handelshøyskolen BI

GRA 19703 Master Thesis

Thesis Master of Science 100% - W

Predefinert informasjon

Startdato:	16-01-2022 09:00	Termin:	202210
Sluttdato:	01-07-2022 12:00	Vurderingsform:	Norsk 6-trinns skala (A-F)
Eksamensform:	T		
Flowkode:	202210 10936 IN00 W T		
Intern sensor:	(Anonymisert)		

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Informasjon fra deltaker

Tittel *: The Prosocial Impacts of Win-Win Initiatives in Organisations

Navn på veileder *: Erik Løhre

Inneholder besvarelsen
konfidensielt
materiale?:

Nei

Kan besvarelsen
offentliggjøres?:

Ja

Gruppe

Gruppenavn: (Anonymisert)
Gruppenummer: 13
Andre medlemmer i
gruppen:

BI Norwegian Business School

GRA 19703

Master Thesis

The Prosocial Impacts of Win-Win Initiatives in Organisations

Study Programme:

Master of Science in Business, Major in Leadership and Change

Supervisor:

Associate Professor Erik Løhre

Date of Submission:

27.06.2022

Acknowledgement

We would like to express our gratitude to our supervisor, Erik Løhre, who has guided us through this thesis. He has provided us with honest feedback throughout the process with valuable insights to achieve better quality. We would also like to thank you for your support and giving us a safe environment to express our thoughts. You have brought a welcoming attitude and challenged us in a good way.

Lastly, we would like to thank everyone who has taken the time to participate in our study, and their contribution made it possible for us to complete our research for this thesis. We are also grateful for the encouragement we have received from our friends and family.

Sincerely,

Ann Cindy Pillai and Ellen Stuvik

Abstract

Prosocial behaviour is important because we get a better understanding of why people behave the way they do, especially when doing acts that favour others. If we want others to act kindly to us, we should also show the same behaviour towards them. It goes both ways. Researchers have investigated the norm that one should give without expecting to receive something in return (Makov & Newman, 2016). However, the setting changes when there is a benefit to gain from doing a good deed. Makov and Newman (2016) indicated that when there is an initiative with a win-win motive, people tend to rate it more negatively than an initiative with a “pure” altruistic motive.

In this thesis, we aimed to investigate whether a prosocial benefit would affect employees’ opinions of organisational charity. Our hypothesis examined employees’ satisfaction with their employer if the organisation donated to a fictional charitable foundation with or without receiving a benefit. We used a fictional foundation to reduce respondents’ strong thoughts and connections to other established organisations. By doing this, we could receive honest and real opinions from the respondents. Our experimental study was based on two conditions: an altruistic- and a win-win situation, with various control variables. There were 148 participants in Norway who partook in the study and were evenly divided and assigned to one of the two conditions. Even though our study found no statistical significance, we could at least suggest that employees are not more positive about initiatives with a profit in win-win situations. Future research should investigate why and under what circumstances people respond more negatively to win-win initiatives.

Table of Content

1.0 Introduction	1
2.0 Literature Review	4
2.1 Prosocial Behaviour	4
2.2 Prosocial Behaviour in Organisations	5
<i>2.2.1 Tainted Altruism</i>	6
<i>2.2.2 Effective Altruism</i>	7
<i>2.2.3 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)</i>	7
2.3 Win-Win Situations and Prosocial Behaviour	8
2.4 Rational-Experiential Inventory (REI)	9
3.0 Research Question and Hypothesis	10
4.0 Methods	11
4.1 Design of the Study	11
<i>4.1.1 Participants</i>	11
<i>4.1.2 Questionnaire</i>	12
<i>4.1.3 Reliability and Validity</i>	15
5.0 Results	15
5.1 Comparing “Altruistic” vs “Win-Win” Initiatives	15
5.2 Comparing Conditions to Control Variables	17
<i>5.2.1 Demographic Variables</i>	17
<i>5.2.2 Rational-Experiential Inventory (REI)</i>	19
6.0 General Discussion	20
6.1 “Altruistic” vs “Win-Win” Initiatives	20
6.2 Control Variables	22
<i>6.2.1 Demographics</i>	22
<i>6.2.2 Rational-Experiential Inventory (REI)</i>	24
7.0 Theoretical Implications and Future Research	25
8.0 Conclusion	27
References	28
Appendix 1	32
Appendix 2	39

1.0 Introduction

Over the years, studies on prosocial behaviour have received increasing interest. Human beings are the most social animals on our planet, with extraordinary care and cooperation for fellow individuals (Aknin & Whillans, 2021). The Golden Rule states the following: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” (New International Version, Matthew 7:12, n.d.). This is a common saying that many people know and are familiar with. If we as humans want others to help us, we must also lend a helping hand to others. The act of kindness goes both ways, and in relation to prosocial behaviour, it captures how a person acts in others’ favour.

According to Bolino and Grant (2016), prosocial behaviours are acts that can promote the welfare of individuals, groups, or organisations. Prosocial behaviour is considered important because it can create increased cooperation and trust between the parties involved to sustain communities and societies (Klein, 2017). The strong need for social interaction is grounded in prosocial behaviour and actions, such as donations, volunteering, and general supportiveness. These types of prosocial behaviours are universally admired and valued when helping others (Klein, 2017). Previous findings indicated that organisations that donated to charity could improve satisfaction and happiness among employees (Anik et al., 2013). Although humans can act selfishly, there are plenty of examples where humans show great generosity toward others. The war in Ukraine is a current event where humans have shown unity even in the worst of times. Norway is one of the countries that have welcomed refugees. The huge generosity people have shown is beyond what is expected and shows that during this crisis, people stood together and stayed strong despite nationality.

Researchers began investigating prosocial behaviours in organisations more than a quarter-century ago, identifying how employees contribute to others (Bolino & Grant, 2016). They have found that employees with strong prosocial motivations at work have increased happiness and satisfaction in life (Moynihan et al., 2015). More motivated employees are expected to perform with increased effectiveness (Grant & Sumanth, 2009). Bolino and Grant (2016) argue that employees may be

helpful or cooperative because it will make them look good to others, reflecting rational self-interest. It demonstrates that when employees value the success and well-being of others, they are more likely to engage in prosocial behaviour (Bolino & Grant, 2016). Prosocial behaviours are generally thought to reflect positively on an organisation; however, recent research suggests that people tend to respond negatively when organisations benefit from win-win initiatives (Makov & Newman, 2016). A rule of thumb indicates that prosocial behaviours are associated with a positive value, violating the norm that one should offer without expecting to gain something in return (Makov & Newman, 2016). An experiment performed by Newman and Cain (2014) found that self-interest taints people's evaluations of prosocial efforts and could also change the decisions people were willing to make.

Organisations may benefit from prosocial activities in a dynamic and competitive market (Reizer et al., 2020). However, organisations that perform strategies ending with a win-win result tend to experience a negative response due to benefiting from different initiatives (e.g., environment, volunteering, and donations) (Luria et al., 2015). Even though most would have believed that win-win strategies are positive for organisations and employees, it does not always appear this way. Doing something good with the intention of gaining a return can potentially make others react negatively. Previous research has suggested that even though win-win initiatives were to reflect positively on organisations, they were just carried out for their own success. Makov and Newman (2016) found that initiatives with, for instance, an environmental win-win were rated worse than initiatives with no environmental benefit. These forms of win-win initiatives could result in a damaged reputation and potentially harm the organisation more than intended.

According to Hur et al. (2019), employees can change their perception of the organisation's actions, which can influence attitudes and behaviours. Borglund and colleagues (2017) defined corporate social responsibility (CSR) as the responsibility of enterprises to society and can be divided into internal and external CSR. These can affect employees and their outcomes through different perceptions (Hur et al., 2019). Examples of internal CSR include care, help, and

support for employees' well-being, while external CSR describes organisations' engagement in society and their protection of the environment.

This thesis builds upon previous research and aims to study whether participants respond negatively toward organisational charity when they are informed that this is a win-win situation (i.e., the organisation will also benefit from the charitable behaviour) versus when there is a "pure" altruistic motive (i.e., the organisation does not explicitly state that they will benefit from the charitable behaviour).

Researchers such as Makov and Newman (2016) and Erlandsson et al. (2020) studied similar topics. They focused on how individuals perceive organisations (consumer perceptions) and how people perceive each other when doing prosocial actions (person perception). However, we aimed to get a better understanding of how employees perceive their own organisation in a win-win situation.

Throughout this thesis, we will refer to our two scenarios (Scenario A = Altruistic and Scenario B = Win-Win) as conditions. We wanted to explore this side of prosocial behaviour because of how employees behave and think when organisations spend money on charity and do acts of kindness. Of human nature, we show general care for others, but how does that apply if organisations try to involve their employees in similar acts of kindness? As we have already mentioned, being able to lend a helping hand to others is key if you want to proceed with something other than personal behaviour. In our study, we also wanted to explore if a person's thinking style could affect how people perceive altruistic or win-win initiatives. Epstein et al. (1996) presented experiential (intuitive) and rational thinking styles, with the intuitive thinking style usually associated with being holistic, while the rational thinking style is described as being analytical (Epstein et al., 1996). One could argue that those who think more analytically would react more positively to win-win situations, which logically speaking leads to more good. Building more knowledge on this topic is important so that organisations who want to do good deeds do it in the right way. It may speak to how organisations can attract or keep employees motivated for prosocial behaviour at work and observe how employees can be affected if the organisation contributes to good actions without having strong ties to the charitable foundation.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Prosocial Behaviour

Xiao and colleagues (2019) describe prosocial behaviour as measures that could benefit others. Similarly, Penner and scholars (2005) argue that prosocial behaviour is actions intended to benefit others, such as emotional comfort, financial help, assistance, or physical helping. Further, Xiao et al. (2019) stated that older people are more likely to be presented with opportunities to act prosocially compared to younger people. This is most likely because of their cognitive capacities and experiences. Research also suggests that one should explore prosocial behaviour at an early age since this could reduce problematic behaviour and increase academic results (Xiao et al., 2019).

In an experiment by Dunn et al. (2014), participants collected a \$10 gift card at Starbucks Coffee. The participants could spend the gift card on a friend or themselves, where they had to physically go to a Starbucks. The research implied that those who spent the gift card on a friend reported a higher state of happiness. However, this was only the case if the participants physically brought their friends to the coffee shop. Another study indicated that people are more satisfied and receive great happiness when they use the money on someone they are close to rather than acquaintances (Dunn et al., 2014). Close relationships could explain this since that is a critical factor for satisfaction. Similarly, Aknin and colleagues (2013) conducted a study with participants from Canada and South Africa. The task was to buy a goody bag filled with treats for either themselves as personal spending or a sick child located at a local hospital as prosocial spending. The researchers evaluated the participants' happiness before and after the assignment to evaluate whether prosocial spending led to a higher level of happiness than personal spending. They reported that in both countries, the participants received a higher level of happiness when choosing a gift for someone else compared to when choosing something for themselves (Aknin et al., 2013).

Aknin et al. (2011) conducted a study concerning the importance of social relationships between close friends and families when considering well-being. Participants were asked to recall, in as much detail as possible, when the last time they had spent approximately \$20 on someone with strong or weak ties. After

sharing their spending experiences, they reported their affection on the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS) (Aknin et al., 2011). The data proposed that when spending money on people, one will reach a greater level of happiness when spending it on close contacts than acquaintances.

Previous studies found that gender is a significant component of human prosociality as the tools stimulating social behaviour appear differently for males and females (Espinosa & Kovářik, 2015). Brañas-Garza et al. (2010) conducted a Dictator Game experiment under two treatments: a Dictator who proposes to divide a fixed amount of money between the Dictator and a Recipient. When participants were asked to share money with one of their friends from a previous social network, results showed that women reacted stronger when sharing with friends and family rather than strangers compared to men. Nonetheless, men increased their giving, but the results were insignificant. Then the instructions told the participants that the receiver relied on half of their share, but the results were also insignificant. However, the overall treatment showed significant results, suggesting that women tend to be affected by the social and emotional aspects while men adjusted their behaviour more than women (Brañas-Garza et al., 2010).

2.2 Prosocial Behaviour in Organisations

A study conducted in the United States by the Conference Board stated that Americans are less satisfied with their employer yet use more and more time at work (Anik et al., 2013). This implies that the more you work, the less satisfied you are with your workplace. Organisations are trying to find effective strategies to incentivise employees to increase their happiness. Anik and scholars (2013) suggest something called “prosocial bonuses”, which implies that organisations give their employees bonuses that are used to partake in prosocial actions towards charities. They also examined how job satisfaction was affected by allowing some employees to donate their prosocial bonus from the company to a charity (prosocial group) compared to the employees that did not receive this bonus (control group). The results showed that employees who donated a considerable amount to charity on behalf of their employer briefly enhanced their job satisfaction and happiness, as opposed to the employees in the control group (Anik et al., 2013).

While prosocial behaviour may positively affect individuals and organisations, an important question is how others perceive different types of prosocial behaviours. In this thesis, we have included types like tainted altruism, effective altruism, and CSR.

2.2.1 Tainted Altruism

Newman and Cain (2014) investigated how people often criticise charitable efforts which have provided personal gain. Evidence shows that when there is a presence of self-interest and charitable purposes, individuals can observe it as tainted (Newman & Cain, 2014). If a person does an act of kindness to others but does it to gain something in return, it can be perceived as “less morally right” than if a person did this action solely out of doing a good deed. Prosocial behaviour is likely to be accepted when there is only the presence of self-interest with no charitable gain (Newman & Cain, 2014). This form of prosocial behaviour is called tainted altruism and is not driven by expectations that profit charitable benefits or the explicit use of charity as a means to an end (Newman & Cain, 2014).

Newman and Cain (2014) examined whether the tainted-altruism effect extends to participants’ behavioural aim. The experiment investigated whether individuals were willing to sacrifice an opportunity to earn increased money for a charity, but only if they also earned considerable profits. The participants were randomly assigned to two different subject scenarios: a charity scenario and a corporation scenario. The participants in the charity scenario imagined they were the head of a charitable organisation and in charge of their upcoming fundraising event (Newman & Cain, 2014). On the other hand, participants in the corporation scenario were asked to imagine that they were the head of a corporation and oversaw their funding from investors. The results showed that participants in the charitable scenario were willing to sacrifice a considerable profit compared to the corporation scenario. This demonstrated that self-interest affects peoples’ evaluations of prosocial efforts and could also alter the decisions one is willing to make.

2.2.2 Effective Altruism

Erlandsson and researchers (2020) explained effective altruism as a way to do the most good. They further explained that effective altruism could less likely be seen as non-helping versus helping but instead something that is continuous where the value increases over a period of time with the amount of good that is made (Erlandsson et al., 2020). The scholars suggested that helping is perceived to be motivated by anticipated personal benefits, such as volunteering and donations. However, if organisations were to initiate win-win strategies, they could be perceived as no more moral than profit-seeking strategies with no benefits for the environment (Erlandsson et al., 2020). It implied that helping was solely motivated by material or social benefits.

Erlandsson et al. (2020) studied ten different types of helping to identify which aspects best predicted helpers' impressions. One type of help is called "pure versus mixed motives". This explains that helping others could be perceived as a way to get personal benefits; however, it can be more accepted when helping others is purely motivated by not receiving a personal gain (Erlandsson et al., 2020). The respondents were divided between two vignettes, which described a person's engagement in helping behaviour. The descriptions were manipulated in two aspects: the amount and type of help (e.g., donations). The scholars found that when individuals matched others' donations, thus surpassing another's donation, it would worsen the impression (Erlandsson et al., 2020). The results also suggested that organisations that surpassed each other were perceived as no worse than organisations that were to match donations because it was better to compete in charity than in profit (Erlandsson et al., 2020). Erlandsson and colleagues (2020) highlighted that the amount of help did not influence the impression of helpers but that many situational and motivational aspects of helping do.

2.2.3 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Over the past decade, there has been an increase in organisational involvement in CSR activities, such as charitable donations. McKinsey and Company (2009) conducted a survey with CFOs, business analysts and CSR experts, which resulted in people believing that the most significant way CSR programs could create value is by enhancing the organisation's reputation. Previous research has also argued that socially responsible organisations are more likely to perform better

financially, indicating a positive correlation between CSR and financial performance (Chernev & Blair, 2015). Additionally, this substantiates the argument with research revealing that an organisation's reputation for CSR would affect how consumers perceive price sensitivity and brands.

Chernev and Blair (2015) experimented on how consumer perception impacted CSR. Their aim of the test was to go back on their hypothesis, which emphasises that consumers could draw assumptions about a company's CSR behaviour. This means that products manufactured by organisations that are engaging in charitable donations are achieving increased profit compared to companies that are not engaging in charitable donations. The results indicated that a company's prosocial behaviour could benefit the perceived performance of its products (Chernev and Blair, 2015).

2.3 Win-Win Situations and Prosocial Behaviour

Past research has indicated that communal versus market relationships have brought forth fundamental differences in norms for behaviours (Makov & Newman, 2016). Based upon the norm that one should give without receiving something in return, questions the beneficial outcome of a win-win situation. Makov and Newman (2016) examined whether a win-win situation would be considered less favourable than an altruistic situation. The participants were introduced to a mock newspaper article, which explored advertisements used by the clothing brand Patagonia. The participants in the environmental advertisement condition read a pro-environmental campaign. In contrast, the participants in the control advertisement condition observed a standard campaign. The pro-environmental campaign (win-win initiative) introduced its environmental efforts before showing how they were profitable. In contrast, the standard campaign first highlighted how they were more profitable and then presented their environmental efforts (Makov & Newman, 2016). The results showed that Patagonia experienced notably lower evaluations with the pro-environmental advertising campaign than with the standard campaign.

Moreover, Makov and Newman (2016) tested whether differences in temporal order would cause a similar negative win-win effect. Research has suggested that the initial categorisation of an event can strongly affect the processing of

subsequent information. Thus, individuals tend to resist the categorisation of events even when they meet conflicting information. Makov and Newman (2016) hypothesised that when individuals are exposed to identical information about an organisation, they would have contrasting evaluations depending on whether they first see environmental or monetary benefits. All participants read identical information about Patagonia. However, half of the participants read the sustainability information first and then the profitability information. The other half read the profitability information first and then the sustainability information. As the researchers predicted, Patagonia was evaluated more positively when reading how profitable the company was before their sustainability information.

2.4 Rational-Experiential Inventory (REI)

We are also interested in how people perceive prosocial organisational behaviour. Previous research suggests that prosocial initiatives may be perceived less positively when they lead to a gain for an organisation than when they do not lead to such a gain. In other words, win-win initiatives are perceived less positively than “purely” altruistic initiatives. If this is the case, one may wonder whether there are individual differences in how prosocial initiatives are perceived. Would it, for example, matter whether a person has a more or less intuitive or analytical thinking style? Since an act of kindness is usually seen as a good thing, a win-win initiative could also be perceived as good for those involved, including, for example, increased utility. Those with a rational thinking style may recognise this to a larger degree than those with an experiential thinking style, which we want to investigate.

Previous research has proposed two different ways to process information: experiential (intuitive) and rational. Epstein and colleagues (1996) argue that there has been a considerable amount of research on these processes; however, only a small attempt has been used to consider to which degree people’s characteristics operate in one mode or another. Epstein et al. (1996) assumed that rational and intuitive thinking are the two most basic ways of explaining information. Epstein (1990, 1991, 1993, 1994) presented a guide referred to as cognitive-experiential self-theory (CEST). CEST suggests that individuals process information using two parallel systems: a rational and experiential system (Epstein et al., 1996). The rational system was utilised on a conscious level, namely analytical, verbal, and

intentional. Contradictory, the experiential system was described as holistic, non-verbal, automatic, and preconscious.

Epstein and scholars (1996) presented two studies to evaluate the validity of CEST. The first study introduced a version of the Rational-Experiential Inventory (REI) and analysed the relationship between the two self-reported process dimensions. Additionally, they examined the connection of REI to gender, responses, and coping ability. The second study was conducted with a large sample of students and examined a subtype of REI between rational and experiential thinking styles. Stereotypes of rational thinking style are often associated with masculinity, while intuitive thinking style is associated with femininity (Epstein, 1996). The results from the second study revealed that there is a difference in consequences for women and men in regard to these thinking styles. Epstein and colleagues (1996) proved that women who thought rationally tended to distrust other people. Further, evidence showed that women who tended to contradict the stereotype by being more rational showed problems with their casual relationships. On the other hand, evidence shows that men who contradict the stereotype by being intuitive remained in a great relationship with their mothers and intimate partners (Epstein et al., 1996).

3.0 Research Question and Hypothesis

In recent years, studies have tried to expand our knowledge of prosocial motives, impact, and behaviour at an organisational level. However, if research does not integrate the literature and explores the dark side, research on prosocial spending and behaviour will not advance. In response to this gap concerning individuals' perception of prosocial behaviour in organisations, we aimed to examine if employees reacted differently to their organisations' charitable behaviours. We further examined whether this depended on the behaviour being portrayed as a win-win situation or as altruistic. Moreover, how organisations employ both their CSR and employees' expectations towards prosocial motives. Therefore, in this thesis, we aim to investigate the following research question:

Could a win-win situation affect employees' opinions of organisational charity, yet maintain a positive impression of the employer?

Based on the findings in our literature review, we have developed one hypothesis that we will examine in our thesis. Our hypothesis is based on the relationship between altruistic and win-win initiatives. Our study will examine whether an organisational gain that results from prosocial actions impacts employees' positive impression of work. The hypothesis is, therefore, as follows:

H: Employees are more satisfied with their employer if the organisation donates to charity but does not state that they have anything to gain, than if it donates to charity, but states that this donation will help their reputation and increase profits.

4.0 Methods

4.1 Design of the Study

We conducted a study with an experimental research design in a controlled environment. The participants were randomly placed into groups, dividing them between the control group (Altruistic) and the experimental group (Win-Win). Each group was presented with either an altruistic or a win-win situation. The scenarios presented in the survey were applied as a substitute for a real-life setting with a fictional foundation.

4.1.1 Participants

We distributed the survey using our online platforms, such as Facebook and LinkedIn and directly sent it to family and friends. The survey was reshared among those who answered to get a broader respondent pool. An anonymous link was shared using the survey program, Qualtrics, that directed the participants to the survey. This survey program allowed us to distribute and randomly divide our respondents between two groups. The survey was conducted in Norwegian. After the survey was completed, the results were analysed using the tool, RStudio. We ran several tests to identify whether there was any difference between the impression of prosocial behaviour at work and the two conditions. Overall, there were 148 respondents in Norway (89 women, 57 men, 1 other, 1 unknown¹), with ages ranging from 16 to 77 ($M = 35.52$, $SD = 14.72$) who participated in the study. We excluded two participants who reported that they had never been employed.

¹ One participant did not report gender

This left us with 146 participants (88 women, 56 men, 1 other, 1 unknown). Of the valid responses², 72 participants were in the control group, while the experimental group consisted of 74 participants.

We wished to have a sample that would relate directly to prosocial organisational behaviour, and therefore we invited people who were currently employed or had previously been employed as our participants. Although this was a convenience sample, it was more representative of the target population (organisational employees) than if we had used a student sample or an online research pool. Furthermore, we were interested in the participants' education level. 26% of the participants had completed high school or less, 48% had completed at least a bachelor's degree or certificate of completed apprenticeship, 17% had a master's degree, 5% had completed education higher than a master's degree, and 3% reported other. The average work experience of the participants was 15 years ($SD = 13.3$). Approximately 26% of the participants also reported leadership responsibilities in their current employment. The number of employees they were responsible for ranged from 1 to 150 ($M = 18.35$, $SD = 30.27$); however, participants stated that this could vary from project to project (see Appendix 2 for detailed information about the respondents' life situation).

4.1.2 Questionnaire

The participants were presented with a consent form that informed them about the voluntary participation. They could stop at any time without any consequences. The participants were also informed that the survey would take approximately 8-10 minutes. After giving their consent, they were presented with demographic questions (e.g., age, gender, education) and questions about their employment conditions (e.g., work experience, leadership responsibilities).

We wanted the respondents to read about a current topic and therefore chose scenarios that addressed the environment in our study. The participants were then asked to imagine that they were working for an organisation that is giving an amount of 200.000 NOK to a charitable purpose. The organisation is giving the amount to a fictional foundation called *A Better Future* that works toward

² Some responses that came out as NA were removed from the overall data during each test

sustainable consumption. We utilised a fictional foundation in order to prevent some respondents from having strong opinions toward established organisations such as “UNICEF”, “Greenpeace”, “Amnesty”, et cetera. Half of the participants read that the management pointed out that the donation would be a great expense, yet it was morally right for the organisation to contribute as sustainability is important (altruistic condition). The other half read the same description from the management; however, an additional aspect was included (win-win condition). The management informed that *A Better Future* would give the organisation valuable advice that could contribute to reducing climate emissions, and increase profit and reputation for the organisation. To illustrate, the text in the win-win condition is shown below (translated from Norwegian):

“Imagine that your company is introducing a new charitable measure where they are donating an amount of money to a charitable purpose. Specifically, the company will donate 200.000 kroner to *A Better Future*, which is a foundation that works for sustainable consumption. In an internal email, the management writes the following: Although this is a big expense for us, sustainability is an important purpose that we believe is morally right for the company to contribute to. In addition, we believe that *A Better Future* can give us useful advice on how we can reduce our own climate emissions, which in the long run can provide increased profits because sustainability is important to our customers, and this can give us an increased reputation”.

The respondents were then asked about their satisfaction with five questions measuring their impressions of the organisation and prosocial behaviour. They were asked: (1) *To what extent are you positive about the company’s new charitable initiatives?* (2) *To what extent are you positive about working for “A Better Future”?* (3) *To what extent would you be proud to work for a company that donates to “A Better Future”?* (4) *To what extent do you think you would tell people you know about your company’s initiatives?* (5) *To what extent do you think this company contributes to improving society and the environment?.* The participants reported their answers using a 7-point Likert scale, with options ranging from “to a very small extent” to “to a very large extent”.

After responding to the scenarios, the participants were asked more generally about the topic of *prosocial behaviour*. Participants who had experienced prosocial measures at their current employment received a list of measures (e.g., health service, insurance, gender-neutral salary, lighthouse-certified organisation) where they selected what applied to their workplace. They were then asked about their personal thoughts about why their organisation engages in prosocial behaviour, with three questions: (1) *To what extent do you think your company is doing this because it is the right thing to do?* (2) *To what extent do you think your company takes such measures because it can increase profits?* (3) *To what extent do you think the company does it because it can give a more positive reputation?.* Those who did not experience prosocial measures at work received the same questions about why organisations generally engage in prosocial behaviour.

We chose to separate between satisfaction and proudness in order to analyse the respondents' attitudes toward their current organisation. This was because satisfaction highlights how an employee thrives at work, while proudness focuses on how employees take pride in how their contributions affect their job. The participants were asked the following questions: (1) *To what extent are you satisfied with your current job?* and (2) *How proud are you of your current job?.* Then, every respondent received a question that focused on CSR. We wanted to know their personal attitudes toward prosocial measures and CSR with one question: *To what extent do you think companies and organisations are responsible for participating in prosocial measures?.* The prosocial part of the questionnaire ended with a question about the participants' probability of doing prosocial acts in the future. We utilised a 5-point Likert scale for this section of the survey, with options ranging from "to a very small extent" to "to a very large extent".

The survey ended with a set of questions regarding REI (Epstein et al., 1994). These questions analysed participants' thinking styles: experiential (intuitive) or rational, and there were ten statements with five for each thinking style. The ten statements were based on the study conducted by Epstein and colleagues (1996, p. 399). The rational thinking style consisted of statements such as: *"I do not like to have to do a lot of thinking"*, *"I try to avoid situations that require thinking in-depth about something"*, and *"I prefer complex to simple problems"*. In contrast,

the experiential thinking style had statements like: *“I trust my initial feelings about people”*, *“When it comes to trusting people, I can usually rely on my gut feelings”*, and *“I can usually feel when a person is right or wrong even if I cannot explain how I know”*. The participants chose the alternative that suited them best on a 5-point Likert scale, with options ranging from “definitely not true of myself” to “definitely true of myself”.

4.1.3 Reliability and Validity

We decided that a survey experiment suited the thesis the most, as we could randomly place participants in two different groups. By doing this, we could eliminate that respondents knew how many conditions there were, and they would, therefore, not be affected by the win-win initiative that half the participants received. An example of what could potentially affect and weaken our validity was the gender bias between women and men. When analysing prosocial behaviour regarding gender, there should be an equal composition of each gender. However, this was a weakness in our study, whereas more women participated than men (60.3% women, 38.4% men, 0.7% other, 0.7% unknown).

During our study, we also had to consider that the participants were gathered from our social media platforms. This meant we could receive respondents from close relations, resulting in biased answers. Our results could be weakened by having family and friends partaking in the study. If we had distributed the questionnaire through an online survey platform using paid participants, we could have received non-biased answers and, therefore, strengthened the reliability of our study.

5.0 Results

5.1 Comparing “Altruistic” vs “Win-Win” Initiatives

The goal of this study was to look into our main hypothesis. We aimed to investigate how people responded when the prosocial donation was portrayed as altruistic compared to win-win. The participants rated how satisfied they were with the new initiative their employer introduced, with increased profits and reputation as an additional condition.

Table 1: Means, standard deviation, t-test, and Cohen's d for questions measuring perceptions of prosocial organisational behaviour portrayed as Altruistic or Win-Win

Question	Altruistic		Win-Win		t-value	p-value	Cohen's d
	M	SD	M	SD			
1. To what extent are you positive about the company's new charitable initiatives?	5.22	1.63	4.76	1.69	1.69	0.09	0.28
2. To what extent are you positive about working with <i>A Better Future</i> ?	5.29	1.38	4.89	1.57	1.64	0.10	0.27
3. To what extent would you be proud to work for a company that donates to <i>A Better Future</i> ?	5.10	1.66	5.10	1.69	0.009	0.99	0.0016
4. To what extent do you think you would tell people you know about your company's initiatives?	4.17	1.88	4.32	1.96	-0.47	0.64	0.08
5. To what extent do you think this company contributes to improving society and the environment?	4.76	1.52	4.38	1.66	1.43	0.15	0.24
6. Overall Mean of Q1-5	4.91	1.31	4.68	1.49	0.96	0.34	0.16

M and SD are used to present mean and standard deviation, respectively, with 146 respondents

Table 1 shows the ratings for each of the five questions in the two conditions. The internal consistency between the questions presented for the scenarios was excellent ($\alpha = 0.90$). Therefore, we used the mean of the five questions as the main dependent variable. Using this dependent variable, we completed a t-test to examine the difference between the means in the two conditions. The participants were less positive about the organisation's initiative if it would benefit their reputation ($M = 4.68$, $SD = 1.49$) than if the organisation donated to goodwill without any reference to a profit ($M = 4.91$, $SD = 1.31$). However, this difference was not statistically significant, ($t(144) = 0.96$, $p = 0.34$). At the very least, these results indicated that people were not more positive about win-win initiatives.

Table 1 shows that the effect sizes were relatively different for question 1 ($d = 0.28$), question 2 ($d = 0.27$), and question 5 ($d = 0.24$) as compared to question 3 ($d = 0.0016$) and question 4 ($d = 0.08$). Questions 3 and 4 highlighted the

participants' pride in working for the company, while questions 1, 2 and 5 highlighted more general impressions of the company and the charitable initiative. Since the results from the t-test of overall mean between question 1 to 5 were not statistically significant (see question 6 in Table 1), we could not state that there was any difference between conditions (see Table 1). However, we could speculate that if there is an effect that we failed to detect, this effect might relate more to general impressions of the organisation than to feelings of pride and a wish to share information about the prosocial initiative.

5.2 Comparing Conditions to Control Variables

This second analysis tested the potential control variables that could affect the outcome of comparing altruistic versus win-win initiatives, namely variables such as demographics, working conditions, and REI. This allowed us to understand our participants' backgrounds and potentially get a better knowledge of why they answered as they did. Studies have, among others, indicated that gender is one factor that can have a moderating effect, as women tend to care more about the social context compared to men (Espinosa & Kovářik, 2015).

5.2.1 Demographic Variables

Table 2: *Correlation between impression to prosocial behaviour and demographical questions in two different conditions*

Variable	<i>Altruistic condition</i>	<i>Win-Win condition</i>	<i>Overall conditions</i>
1. Age	$r = 0.16, p = 0.17$	$r = 0.08, p = 0.52$	$r = 0.11, p = 0.18$
2. Gender	$r = -0.04, p = 0.73$	$r = 0.23, p = 0.05$	$r = 0.11, p = 0.20$
3. Education	$r = -0.02, p = 0.85$	$r = 0.10, p = 0.42$	$r = 0.04, p = 0.65$
4. Work experience	$r = -0.13, p = 0.27$	$r = -0.02, p = 0.88$	$r = -0.07, p = 0.41$

Utilising a linear regression analysis, Table 2 showed that most of the control variables did not result in a significant effect in the altruistic condition and overall across the conditions. Gender was the only variable that showed statistically significant results in the win-win condition. Women in the win-win condition ($M = 4.95$) scored higher than women in the altruistic condition ($M = 4.87$). However, men in the altruistic condition ($M = 4.98$) scored higher than men in the win-win condition ($M = 4.26$). These results were surprising as we thought both genders would have scored higher in the altruistic condition rather than the win-win

condition. Nevertheless, only men scored lower in the win-win condition compared to women.

Table 3: *Correlation between impression of prosocial behaviour and attitudes toward own organisation in two different conditions*

Variable	<i>Altruistic condition</i>	<i>Win-Win condition</i>	<i>Overall conditions</i>
1. Satisfaction toward own organisation	$r = 0.12, p = 0.32$	$r = 0.32, p = 0.006$	$r = 0.23, p = 0.005$
2. Proudness toward own organisation	$r = 0.14, p = 0.24$	$r = 0.45, p = <.001$	$r = 0.32, p = <.001$
3. CSR	$r = 0.56, p = <.001$	$r = 0.54, p = <.001$	$r = 0.55, p = <.001$

After conducting a correlation test (Pearson correlation), we observed that the win-win condition and the overall result were statistically significant. However, CSR was the only significant variable in the altruistic condition. Both satisfaction and proudness were non-significant in the altruistic condition, and we observed that the correlation coefficient was closer to $r = 0$ (see Table 3).

Then the participants were asked if they had experienced prosocial measures in their current employment. These prosocial measures were, among others, gifts on special occasions, a pension, and a gender-neutral salary (see Appendix 1 for detailed measures). Figure 1 shows which participants had experienced prosocial measures at work in the two conditions.

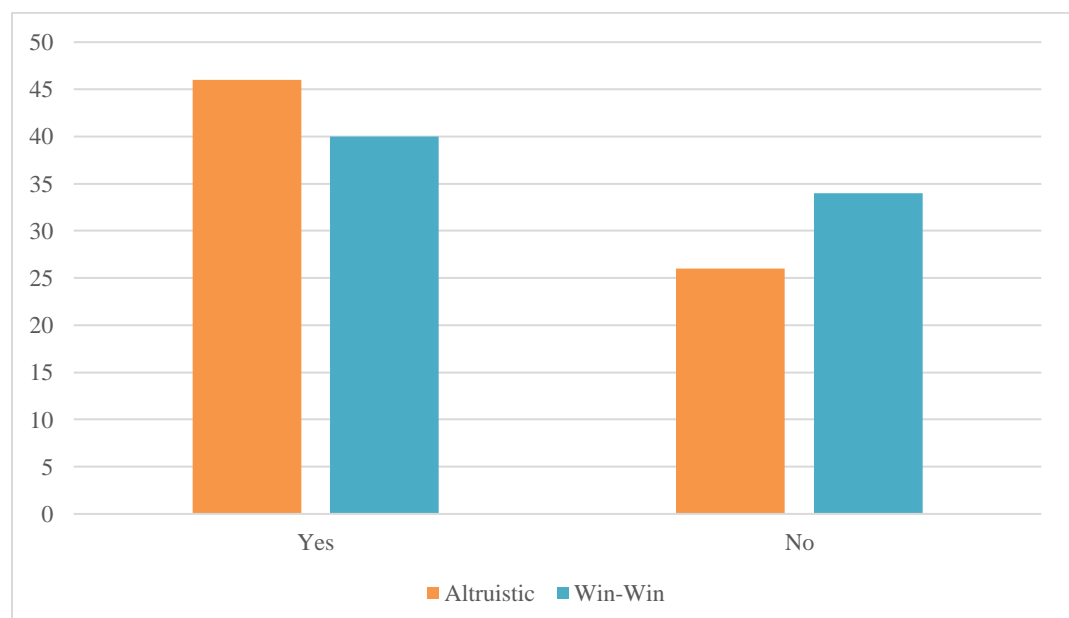


Figure 1: Results from those who had experienced prosocial measures at their current company

By asking the respondents these questions, we could get an indication of who knew the terminology “prosocial measures” beforehand. If respondents were familiar with the term prosocial behaviour, they could potentially have realised the purpose of our study. However, there were fewer participants who had not experienced prosocial measures at work in the altruistic condition (26 participants) than participants in the win-win condition (34 participants).

5.2.2 Rational-Experiential Inventory (REI)

Table 4: Correlations of impressions of prosocial behaviour in two different conditions for experiential and rational thinking styles

Variable	Altruistic	Win-Win	Overall conditions
1. Experiential	r = 0.24, p = 0.04	r = 0.15, p = 0.22	r = 0.19, p = 0.02
2. Rational	r = 0.14, p = 0.26	r = 0.07, p = 0.55	r = 0.10, p = 0.23

When we analysed the results from REI, we used a linear regression model and completed a correlation test. This allowed us to investigate whether the participants were engaged in a rational or intuitive thinking style when conducting the survey. In order to extract the correct data from the REI analysis, we had to reverse (i.e., 1→5, 2→4, 3→3, 4→2, 5→1) the scores from some of the statements. This included question 1: “I do not like to have to do a lot of thinking”, question 2: “I try to avoid situations that require thinking in-depth about something”, and question 5: “Thinking hard and for a long time about something gives me little satisfaction” (Epstein et al., 1996). These statements were reversed because they were negatively associated with the rest of the questions (see Appendix 1). Table 3 shows that the rational thinking style did not correlate with the two conditions and overall (both win-win and altruistic). However, the experiential thinking style showed a better correlation in the conditions and overall across win-win and altruistic. We could also observe that both altruistic and overall showed statically significant results in the experiential thinking style. In other words, more intuitive participants tend to respond more positively when an organisation donates to charity without receiving a benefit.

6.0 General Discussion

We started this thesis by introducing the dilemma that people tend to react negatively when organisations can benefit from win-win initiatives. Even though researchers have investigated prosocial behaviours in organisations for a period of time, the present research indicates that there is potential to expand our knowledge of prosocial motives.

6.1 “Altruistic” vs “Win-Win” Initiatives

We hypothesised that respondents who were presented with a condition without a benefit would be more satisfied with their employer than those presented with a reputational gain for the organisation. This allowed us to differentiate between the respondents and how an additional reading could affect respondents' points of view. Patagonia had previously done a similar study, with one group observing a standard campaign and another group observing a pro-environmental campaign (Makov & Newman, 2016). These results indicated that reading an additional component could affect people's attitudes. Since humans are known to be social species that show great care and cooperation for other fellow individuals (Aknin & Whillans, 2021), we had hoped that our study would indicate somewhat interesting results. Observing how organisations' donations affect employees meant that we could better understand employees' opinions toward organisational charity and their positive impression of the employer.

Although our study had the potential to give us interesting results and the possibility to observe whether an additional reading would affect employees, our results indicated otherwise. We found that employees had a somewhat less positive impression of a prosocial initiative when it was portrayed as win-win rather than altruistic. However, this difference was not statistically significant (see Table 1). We, therefore, had to retain the null hypothesis. Even though our hypothesis had to be retained, it did not necessarily mean that some of the results were not worth mentioning. A common theme among the answers for the conditions was that the respondents scored similarly regardless of which condition they were presented with.

There can be different reasons why the respondents score a generally high score for both conditions. Norway was ranked as number 12 according to the World Giving Index (WGI) in 2021, which provides an insight into the nature of giving in the world (Charities Aid Foundation, 2021, p. 19). According to the WGI, 49% of the Norwegian population donates to charity. The current situation in Ukraine has received great engagement amongst Norwegians. Many people have welcomed Ukrainian refugees and donated money and materials to those in need. We could speculate whether a reputational gain could be something most Norwegians do not notice due to already contributing to charity. If respondents were presented with a question about whether they do or do not donate to charity on their own initiative, we could have suggested otherwise. For instance, if respondents did not donate to charity before partaking in this study, we could have suggested that being a charitable nation does not affect whether or not the respondents were aware of the benefit presented in the win-win condition. However, these do not necessarily have to be our only explanations.

Some respondents could have noted the reputation when reading the win-win condition, but our research design of the questionnaire was not specific and clear enough. The manipulation of the win-win condition may have been too subtle, so that participants did not notice the additional reading or did not think that the organisational benefit was a decisive factor. As mentioned, respondents were informed that if the company donated to *A Better Future*, it could give them helpful advice on reducing climate emissions, which could increase profits and reputation. At first sight, this could just be perceived as something positive that anyone would want to contribute to and not a factor that challenges prosocial behaviour. This may be why many respondents scored higher because they believed that reducing climate emissions, no matter the benefits, was generally good for the company and society. However, despite these potential discrepancies, we found that respondents who were presented with the altruistic condition scored higher than respondents with the win-win condition (see Table 1). Although the difference went in the predicted direction, it was relatively small and non-significant.

Even though the results were non-significant, it does not necessarily mean that there is no correlation between satisfaction and prosocial behaviour. We found

somewhat larger effect sizes of the manipulation for questions 1, 2, and 5 (Cohen's d between 0.24 and 0.28) than for questions 3 and 4 (Cohen's d between 0.001 and 0.008) (see Table 1). These results allowed us to explore and speculate on previous research. Scholars have debated the aspect of self-interest and prosocial motives, and whether employees actually engage in organisational citizenship behaviour out of self-concern or out of prosocial motivation (Bolino & Grant, 2016). Questions 1, 2, and 5 addressed the generally positive impression that the respondents could have had. However, these were not strong impressions, yet probably more affectable. Questions 3 and 4 measured the "strong" emotional impressions and what lay closer to behavioural intentions. In other words, respondents could have been more constructive and restrained towards questions that affected them on a personal level, such as questions that addressed the environment. Despite this, genuine opinions could have given us an indication of whether the respondents would tell others about the initiative, as this indicates something about them as a person and their beliefs. In today's society, it can be taboo not to support the environment, and therefore, it could also be why many people stay silent and do not tell others if they sense that others disagree (Munoz, 2015). Meanwhile, respondents could have been more positive about the company-oriented questions because it does not affect them directly.

6.2 Control Variables

6.2.1 Demographics

We further investigated several control variables that could affect the outcome of the scenarios. As mentioned, we sought to have participants that were currently or previously employed rather than students and youths without working experience. As the average working experience was 15 years, it indicated that our data consisted of respondents who had worked for several years and gave us a representative target population. We wanted to mainly focus on employees who have made up an opinion about their employer and prosocial measures. By doing this, we could receive answers that best suited our study to actually determine whether a win-win condition would affect respondents' attitudes toward their own employer. If we had students or a younger population, the results could be non-applicable as we were asking questions directly about the respondents' own organisation.

Furthermore, we observed in Table 2 that gender was the only variable that showed statistical significance in the win-win condition. Previous studies suggest that women tend to care more than men in the social context (Espinosa & Kovářík, 2015), and several studies have been conducted to examine the natural nurturing between women and men. According to Christov-Moore et al. (2014), women are stereotypically portrayed as more nurturing, while men are considered less emotional and more cognitive. Women in our study scored higher on the Likert scale than men, suggesting that women can be more caring and nurturing. The mean between men and women was slightly different. Female respondents scored closer to “5” on the 7-point Likert scale while the male respondents scored closer to “4”. This could mean that women are, in fact, more prosocial than men; however, in this case, it could also show that men could potentially be more sceptical about the reputational aspect portrayed in the win-win condition.

After establishing our target population and gender, we wanted to examine the participants’ satisfaction and proudness with their current organisation (see Table 2). Table 3 showed that there were statistically significant results in both the win-win condition and overall between both conditions. However, CSR was the only statistically significant variable in the altruistic condition. Both satisfaction and proudness were non-significant. These results could indicate that employees in the win-win condition had a better relationship with their own organisation, especially if they were to contribute in doing prosocial actions. This might occur since a win-win strategy is generally thought to reflect positively on organisations and is perceived as something organisations should contribute to. If employees feel a sense of contribution to the overall well-being of the organisation, it could potentially enhance satisfaction. Bolino and Grant (2016) argue that once employees acknowledge that their actions will benefit others, their prosocial motives also increase, thus, insinuating an expectation of a virtuous cycle. Suppose employees feel that their organisation is lending a helping hand to others (i.e., charity); in that case, they could also feel more motivated and show prosocial behaviour at work as they feel an indirect sense of contribution. Respondents in the win-win condition could have perceived the additional reading as an act that goes both ways; the society works towards reducing emissions and a better climate, while the organisation gains a better reputation and increased profits. As mentioned, Chernev and Blair (2015) suggested that when organisations take part

in CSR, they have the opportunity to gain benefits, such as financial stability. This impacts the whole organisation and employees as they can provide work and grant their security, which can again enhance motivation. Nonetheless, the additional reading could have been perceived as positive by the respondents as they could have believed that organisations are obligated to participate in CSR. However, we thought that the respondents would react sceptical and negatively when the organisation stated that they would gain a benefit from contributing to prosocial actions.

Figure 1 indicated that fewer participants in the win-win condition observed prosocial measures at work. Since the respondents in the win-win condition received a foreshadowing of prosocial measures (i.e., reputation) earlier in the questionnaire, they could have been more observant when asked if they experienced prosocial measures at their current employment. The results could have been different if both conditions had a more complementary description of what prosocial measures are. The term *prosocial behaviour* can be quite new and unknown to the commons, and a better and equal description for both the scenarios could have given us a different outcome. Since the participants could have been affected by the prosocial measure described in the win-win condition, participants' satisfaction and proudness toward their employer could have been influenced to a degree. These results are interesting in the way that we can try to understand why people scored the questions in the conditions as they did. If we had started the questionnaire by describing what prosocial measures are, we could have received a different outcome. Presenting the term *prosocial measures* could have affected our manipulation of the additional reading. Therefore, having a description of what prosocial measures are after the scenarios made the participants answer the questionnaire without an indication of what the survey was actually about.

6.2.2 Rational-Experiential Inventory (REI)

The last part of the questionnaire investigated respondents' impressions of prosocial behaviour in the two conditions and REI. The participants answered the statements on what fitted them the most, where we aimed to see if their thinking style correlated with their attitudes toward prosocial behaviour. The results showed no correlation between rational or experiential thinking styles and

attitudes to prosocial behaviour overall. However, an unexpected outcome was the positive correlation within the experiential thinking style, but only for the altruistic condition. Nonetheless, the correlation between experiential and the conditions overall showed statistical significance (see Table 4), which was also driven by the altruistic condition. This could indicate that those who are more intuitive and trust their gut feeling react more positively when an organisation does a prosocial action. This only occurred when the organisation did not emphasise its own advantage. It could indicate that win-win situations are not as intuitive or “easy to like”. This supports our hypothesis that employees are not more satisfied with their employer if they state that they would donate in order to help their reputation and increase profit, which was driven by those who show a more intuitive thinking style. Individuals with an intuitive thinking style reflect more holistically and try to understand the broader spectrum. While individuals with a rational thinking style are associated by thinking analytically. They usually try to understand the cause-and-effect relations (Norris & Epstein, 2011) and what is triggered by that specific cause. This could mean that the respondents in our study who embraced an intuitive thinking style trusted their initial feeling while completing the questionnaire. However, the respondents showing a rational thinking style could have been more analytical and reflected on their answers when doing the questionnaire.

7.0 Theoretical Implications and Future Research

All studies are known to have limitations, and our study is not an exception. Previous literature indicated that researchers have mainly studied prosocial behaviour on the individual level. However, there are deficiencies regarding win-win situations combined with the reason behind a prosocial act. Makov and Newman (2016) even questioned the conventional assumption that individuals are expected to respond favourably to environmental initiatives, as these win-win initiatives may be advantageous for organisations. Previous research has focused on the positive effects of prosociality; however, overlooking their negative effects. Even though prosocial motives and behaviours are intended to benefit others, current research shows that it often entails consequences.

In addition to limitations identified by other scholars, we observed several limitations to our study that should be further addressed. As we have previously

mentioned, our research design could have been different. The design could have been too controlled, and the aspect of reputation was not specific enough in the additional reading. This could have affected our result since the description of the win-win condition was probably too vague for the respondents to notice.

Respondents could have answered differently if the questions were presented in another way and using other forms of scenarios (i.e., NGOs, sports leagues). A questionnaire does not allow the participants to express themselves beyond the established options, while interviews could have made room for facial expressions, feelings, and attitudes. However, such a design is time-consuming and requires more attention which future researchers should consider.

In addition, using a real-life situation with prosocial organisational behaviour could have affected the results. An advantage of real-life situations is the depth of details that can make the scenarios more credible. Furthermore, these situations would provide genuine outcomes. However, we approached a fictional scenario in order to generalise the questions to receive non-biased answers. It also allowed us to receive a direct comparison of an altruistic versus win-win situation, which could be challenging to achieve if we observed real cases in organisations.

Additionally, a fictional scenario allows the participants to answer without limit since they have no attachment to the study's outcome. These situations are an effective way to get real and trustworthy answers from participants.

Another significant limitation was that this study was conducted in Norway. Even though single-country studies can be valuable because of their informative base and help avoid pitfalls when doing international business (Tung & van Witteloostuijn, 2008), this did not apply to this case. Whether an employee is satisfied with their employer if they contribute to charity can occur in every country. The survey was distributed only in Norwegian, which meant that this study excluded English-speaking residents in Norway. According to the WGI (Charities Aid Foundation, 2021), the Norwegian population can be considered generous, which can explain why many participants score on a higher scale. To further investigate the aspect of reputational gain, future research should focus on an international level as some countries can be driven by other factors (i.e., religion). This can potentially affect the results for each country.

Lastly, we encourage researchers to investigate further the different attitudes between employees in the private and public sectors. Employees can have different opinions about charitable purposes, as income results from various sources. The private sector can have more funds to distribute, while the public sector mainly has its income from the government. There is a higher probability that a company in the private sector sponsors a sports team than a company in the public sector, such as schools, law enforcement, et cetera.

8.0 Conclusion

Scholars have previously studied the individual aspect (consumer- and person perception) of prosocial behaviour. However, the purpose of our thesis was to identify whether a win-win situation could affect employees' perception of contribution to organisational charity while maintaining a positive impression of the employer. Our results showed no statistical significance between the altruistic- and win-win conditions, forcing us to retain the null hypothesis. Although we could not state that employees are more satisfied with their employer if the organisation donates to charity without anything to gain, we could at least say that people generally do not seem to be more positive about win-win initiatives, as one might expect from a logical viewpoint. Thus, our study does not contradict Makov and Newman's (2016) research, where they argue that people tend to respond negatively when there is a benefit. Our findings suggest that people's thinking styles may affect how we perceive win-win initiatives. We could argue that those with an intuitive thinking style trust their gut feeling and perceive their employer's prosocial acts more positively. However, this was mainly the case when the organisation did not explicitly state that they had something to gain. Despite these findings, we could not conclude that employees' opinions are affected if the organisation donates to charity with the expectation of gaining a benefit while maintaining a positive impression of the employer.

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