Conceptualising Corporate Philanthropy and Measuring its Effects on Employee-based Brand Equity

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Abstract

This thesis explores the evolving role of corporate philanthropy (CP) in forming and developing employee-based brand equity (EBBE), set against the backdrop of increasing global disruptions and the growth of philanthropic contributions. There is a need to refine the understanding and clarify the conceptual ambiguities of CP nowadays, particularly its impact on business management and societal engagement. Additionally, the potential of linking corporate philanthropic activities with the perspectives of internal stakeholders has been insufficiently recognised.

Addressing these gaps, this research aims to redefine CP within a business context, distinguishing it from general philanthropic efforts and similar concepts such as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Focusing on the 'unintentional reciprocal' nature of CP, where benefits flow between the corporation and society, this study particularly examines how philanthropic involvement in the workplace influences the development of employee-based brand equity. It seeks to understand CP's role not just as an altruistic practice but as a capable tool of enhancing corporate brand strength through employees' active roles.

The research employs a mixed-methods approach with a sequential exploratory design. It begins with semi-structured interviews to get insights about employees' perceptions, feelings, and actions towards CP and their corporate brands by thematic analysis, followed by an online survey with a representative UK employee sample to empirically test the proposed EBBE model. Supported by Fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative (fsQCA) Analysis, it enables a nuanced examination of the complex dynamics between CP and EBBE.

Building on Keller's Brand Equity Model, this thesis contributes to the theoretical landscape by offering a refined understanding of CP's integration within corporate branding and how this drives brand equity from an employee-centric perspective and a new focus on taking employee-based brand equity as a process with complex nature. The practical implications of this research are that it provides a diagnostic tool for practitioners to enhance their internal branding practices and strengthen employee-based brand equity effectively through CP initiatives. This research bridges theoretical gaps and enhances practical understanding, paving the way for more informed brand management and philanthropic involvement.

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my beloved grandmothers and great grandmother, Shuhui, Xiaodong and Shimei, they have left this world, while their love and spirit are the eternal flaming torch leading and inspiring my life journey.

Authors declaration

"I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution."

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Abbreviations

AVE - Average variance extracted

BAfB - Brand affinity block

BAsB - Brand assimilation block

BBB - Brand building block

BEB - Brand enactment block

CBBE - Consumer-based brand equity

CFA - Confirmatory factor analysis

CP - Corporate philanthropy

CR - Composite reliability

CRM - Cause-related marketing

CSR - Corporate social responsibility

EBBE - Employee-based brand equity

EFA - Exploratory factor analysis

FBBE - Financial-based brand equity

fsQCA - Fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis

HTMT - heterotrait-monotrait

IBE - Internal brand equity

OBE - Overall Employee-based brand equity

PRI - Proportional reduction in inconsistency

RP - Research proposition

SET - Social exchange theory

SIT - Social identity theory

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Research focus

The significance of corporate philanthropy (CP) has grown immensely over the past half-century, becoming an essential interface between firms and society (Gautier and Pache, 2015). This growth mirrors the evolution of philanthropic endeavours from the traditional roles occupied by early 20th-century foundations to complex modern engagements across health, education, and social services (Harrow et al., 2021). Recent global disruptions, from the COVID-19 pandemic to technological upheavals, have further shaped and had profound and consequential impacts on the philanthropic landscape, highlighting CP's evolving role in contemporary society (Agnew, 2021). The expansion of big-ticket philanthropy continues, revealing CP's indispensable role in modern society. In the UK alone, philanthropic donations have seen continuous growth, with contributions rising from £10.7 billion in 2021 to £12.7 billion in 2022 (CAF, 2023). This trend underscores the urgent need for academia and business to reevaluate and refine the understanding of CP, especially its impact on business management and society.

Historically, philanthropy has been primarily associated with traditional charities and foundations that focus on broad societal benefits (Harrow et al., 2021). However, in the corporate context, corporate philanthropy has evolved to serve as a critical bridge connecting businesses with their external environments. A growing body of literature recognises the importance of corporate philanthropy as one of the most cost-effective ways to improve a company's competitiveness (Porter and Kramer, 2002), especially for most large and multinational firms (Gautier and Pache, 2015). There is a need for CP to transcend mere charity, aligning closely with core business and corporate strategies to improve the corporate brand.

Despite the growing trend of incorporating CP actions into core business (Arco-Castro et al., 2018), significant research gaps remain regarding the conceptualisation and role of CP within business research. A clear conceptualisation of CP in the business context remains elusive. Existing literature often blurs corporate philanthropy with related concepts like philanthropy in the general context (Godfrey, 2005; Sulek, 2010) and similar interchangeable concepts like Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), leading to

conceptual ambiguities (Gautier and Pache, 2015; Kotler and Lee, 2016). Moreover, the literature always falls into the debates of whether giving allows taking something back or the possibility of 'doing better by doing good' (Porter and Kramer, 2002; Gautier and Pache, 2015). As such, the inherent contradiction between improving the business brand and making a genuine commitment to social benefits always exists. Based on this, some companies still feel forced to engage in philanthropic activities, and few have figured out how to do it well (Porter and Kramer, 2002). Thus, a new conceptualisation of corporate philanthropy is needed to reflect the evolving role it plays in modern business, moving beyond the restricted traditional charitable altruism to a more integrated, strategic approach that aligns with brand values and stakeholder expectations. Companies are increasingly driven by the demand for social expectations, consumer expectations, and the need to engage employees in meaningful value-creating ways (Park et al., 2023). By being proactive and aware in corporate philanthropy, businesses open the door to more opportunities, including enhanced brand reputation, deeper connections with customers and communities, and increased employee engagement and loyalty (Pfajfar et al., 2022), ultimately differentiating themselves and creating a positive cycle of goodwill and corporate success.

Additionally, although corporate philanthropy has potential roles in building up a company's brand image, boosting loyalty (Porter and Kramer, 2002; Peloza and Shang, 2011) and raising reputations (Brammer and Millington, 2005), the literature still lacks a deep and systematic understanding of CP's role in enhancing branding and brand equity, specifically through internal stakeholders' perspectives. There are real-world examples that provide clues on how corporate philanthropy strategies play a crucial role in driving positive branding results from within. In the UK, companies like St. James's Place announced that 90% of their employees were involved in supporting communities and good causes in 2022 (SJP, 2023). Burberry declared that over 33,000 volunteer hours were dedicated by Burberry employees to impactful community projects (Burberry, 2022). In these cases, employees play a pivotal and active role as volunteers and donors, demonstrating their commitment to corporate philanthropy while also potentially serving as potential brand ambassadors and advocates. Tesco's 20-year partnership with Cancer Research UK exemplifies how corporate philanthropy can be a cost-effective strategy to enhance a company's reputation while strengthening employee-based brand equity. Through initiatives like sponsoring entry fees for employees in Race for Life events, Tesco has engaged over 20,000 colleagues annually in meaningful charitable activities (Tescoplc,

2021). By raising over £60 million for life-saving research, Tesco not only bolsters its public image as a socially responsible brand but also fosters a deep sense of pride and connection among employees. This is further reinforced by the Tesco Race for Life Hero awards, recognising colleagues who go above and beyond in supporting the cause. Such recognition could boost employee morale and brand loyalty, creating a workforce that is more engaged and aligned with the company's values. By integrating philanthropy into its core strategy, Tesco demonstrates how corporate giving can drive employee commitment, improve brand perception, and foster long-term loyalty at a relatively effective low cost.

The recent developments in the field of brand equity have led to a renewed interest in an employee-focused viewpoint, i.e., the employee-based brand equity (EBBE) (Boukis and Christodoulides, 2020; Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019; King and Grace, 2009), yet there is a scant focus in the existing research on how CP initiatives influence brand equity by focusing on these employees' perspectives. Meanwhile, the interplay between CP and EBBE involves complex dynamics that can extend beyond traditional consumer-focused metrics. Building upon the classic Keller's Brand Equity Model (Keller, 1993; Keller, 2001; Keller and Swaminathan, 2020), the current research highlights the complex nature of the EBBE phenomenon. This complexity necessitates a nuanced approach that examines how employee interactions with corporate philanthropy initiatives contribute to building brand equity from within (Tavassoli et al., 2014). The phenomenon of complexity is also identified to be linked with solving the conceptual noises in different EBBE definition camps (Tavassoli et al., 2014), criticising the limited explanation power of employees' roles in EBBE definitions (King and Grace, 2009) and revealing the unclear EBBE development process (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019).

1.2 Research purpose and objectives

Considering the research gaps identified, the overarching purpose of this research is to enhance understanding of how corporate philanthropy can contribute to broader social and economic objectives through its impact on internal branding and employee involvement. The specific goal of this PhD thesis is to examine the effect of corporate philanthropy on the development and formation of brand equity through an employee-centric lens (especially employees' perceptions, feelings, and behaviours). Consequently, the primary

research question is: How can corporate philanthropy be conceptualised in business contexts and how does it drive the development process of employee-based brand equity?

Specifically, four core objectives guide this research:

a) **To conceptualise corporate philanthropy in a business-related context:** This involves a systematic review of existing literature to define and classify the scope and role of corporate philanthropy in business settings.

b) **To conceptualise employee-based brand equity as a development process:** This involves a literature review of existing different conceptualisations of employee-based brand equity and developing a conceptual framework that integrates CP initiatives into the holistic development process of EBBE.

c) **To advance the understanding of the linkage between corporate philanthropy and employee-based brand equity:** This will be achieved by semi-structured interviews providing insights into the practical implications of corporate philanthropy on brand equity from employees' perspectives.

d) **To empirically test and assess the employee-based brand equity formation process in a CP-related context:** Utilising online surveys, this objective aims to empirically test the proposed framework and evaluate the complex nature of CP and EBBE.

By achieving these objectives, the research will provide empirical evidence and theoretical advancements to understand how corporate philanthropy can foster the development of employee-based brand equity.

1.3 Research methodology

To address the research objectives and guided by a critical realism paradigm, this PhD research adopts an exploratory sequential mixed methods research design, which combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches for the broad purpose of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration (Johnson et al., 2007). The sequential exploratory design is best suited for exploring a phenomenon (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2017), where the quantitative strand is conducted based on the richness of the results of the qualitative phase.

Specifically, this design involves collecting qualitative data using semi-structured interviews with employees who have experienced corporate philanthropic activities in their workplace and managers who have organised and managed those activities (Study 1). Participants were invited to introduce their corporate philanthropy experiences during the semi-structured interviews. The interviews also help identify the dimensions and meanings of participants' perceptions, feelings and actions regarding their CP participation and corporate brands. The transcriptions are analysed based on thematic analysis to gain a deep understanding of CP and EBBE as complex and novel phenomena. Study 1 is necessary for getting insights to inform the development of the proposed components of the EBBE process model and the research propositions.

Following the qualitative phase, the quantitative data collection involves an online survey (Study 2) with a representative sample of UK employees who have experienced corporate philanthropic activities in their workplace. The finalised EBBE model is therefore tested in Study 2. The questionnaire was designed via Qualtrics and distributed through the Prolific platform. The survey data analysis involves Fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA), which helps test the model and identify specific combinations or configurations of elements to predict a particular outcome in the model (Ragin and Fiss, 2008).

1.4 Expected contributions

The current thesis expects to make theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions to the scholarship.

This research expects to make **theoretical contributions** in the field of corporate philanthropy (CP) and employee-based brand equity (EBBE). First of all, the thesis expects to make a significant theoretical contribution by integrating CP within a business context. By critically differentiating CP from similar concepts and emphasising its voluntary nature and potential for reciprocal outcomes, this research provides a more inclusive and advanced conceptualisation of it. Meanwhile, this study presents a nuanced classification of CP and its interaction with various stakeholders. This thesis's most important theoretical contribution lies in its empirical examination of how employees' involvement in corporate philanthropy facilitates the development of EBBE. The research delves into the cognitive,

affective, and behavioural sequence that employees undergo in corporate philanthropic activities while developing the perception of the brand's overall strength, thereby innovatively illustrating the complex configuration of critical components for EBBE development. This analysis includes assessing various causal 'recipes' that enhance corporate brand strength, effectively bridging existing gaps in branding theory. The thesis offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the complex interplay between employee engagement in philanthropy and the resultant brand equity. This shifts the focus from traditional static brand equity concepts to a more holistic and dynamic approach to internal branding within the contemporary corporate environment.

Additionally, the fsQCA method presents a novel approach to understanding the complexity of how employees respond to brands' CP-related efforts in the EBBE process. It also allows for thoroughly examining these reactions, enhancing the overall strength of employee-based brand equity. Moreover, this research will use the advantages of mixed methods to enhance an overall understanding of the research topic.

This research provides three key **managerial implications** for enhancing brand equity through corporate philanthropy. First, managers can adopt a holistic view of the key building blocks and detailed conditions of the corporate philanthropy-driven employee-based brand equity model of this research to foster cognitive, affective, and behavioural development among employees, ultimately improving brand effectiveness. Second, the research offers insights into identifying core conditions for achieving specific branding outcomes. Finally, managers can use flexible branding strategies by selecting optimal solutions from various 'recipes' presented in the research, allowing them to tailor initiatives that strengthen brand equity through CP activities. Overall, the model of this research and the key findings serve as diagnostic tools for managers to assess brand development, implement targeted interventions, and optimise CP efforts for long-term brand success.

1.5 Thesis structure

The current thesis includes ten chapters, which are structured and organised in the following way. **Chapter 1** introduces the research focus, objectives, methodology, expected contribution and thesis structure. **Chapter 2** presents a systematic review of the literature on corporate philanthropy research by exploring the conceptualisation and classification of CP and offering a critical lens on CP-related effects. This chapter also

reviews extant research about brand equity and relevant key concepts. Specifically, the researcher draws on discussing employee-based brand equity (EBBE) as a promising research area and generates an inclusive and comprehensive working definition. This also sheds light on reviewing EBBE as a complex process. Based on Chapter 2, **Chapter 3** portrays an overview of the conceptual framework of the EBBE development process in a CP-related context. Notably, the building blocks and critical components of this EBBE framework will be articulated in this chapter.

Chapter 4 concerns the overall research philosophy and design. This chapter discusses philosophical considerations pertinent to the current research topic, addressing the appropriate ontological and epistemological positions, and briefly portrays a mixed-methods research design. **Chapter 5** explains the qualitative phase's research methodology, including developing the interview guide, the sampling, and the data analysis and management. Following this, **Chapter 6** presents the results of the qualitative phase, elaborating on identified key themes and their relevance to the components of the EBBE model and research propositions. Next, **Chapter 7** directs attention to the explanation of research methodology for the quantitative phase, comprising details relating to measurement selection, questionnaire design and quantitative data preparation and analysis. This is followed by **Chapter 8**, in which the key findings from the quantitative phase will be displayed. This chapter provides detailed narratives for findings centred around research propositions.

Chapter 9 provides an in-depth discussion of the most exciting and important findings and their interactions with the existing literature. Specifically, the findings from Study 1 link the understanding of CP with the EBBE development process, enriching the knowledge of the critical concepts, informing uncovered themes, and eliminating problematic items from the initial proposed framework. By synthesising the findings from Study 2, the core causes or conditions occur in the given causal 'recipes' in building up EBBE. The integration of the findings helps identify the EBBE process's critical conditions and illustrate how CP impacts EBBE, supporting the research propositions. Finally, **Chapter 10** is dedicated to highlighting the significant contributions of this thesis. It delves into the theoretical and other advancements made by this research and then provides a diagnostic summary of practical and managerial implications. The chapter concludes by acknowledging the limitations of the present study and suggesting interesting and promising research avenues.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction to the systematic literature review of corporate philanthropy

Philanthropy is a traditional phenomenon with a long history that can be traced back to Ancient Greece, referring to the 'love of mankind; good nature' (Sulek, 2010). Much literature has been published on philanthropy in general, regarding philanthropy as an unconditional and voluntary offer without asking for a return (Godfrey, 2005; Harvey et al., 2020). Even though it is a traditional phenomenon, philanthropy is still noticeable in modern society. Meanwhile, the complex health, education and social service fields within which philanthropy functions have changed dramatically (Harrow et al., 2021). This change in philanthropy has been amplified by the marked growing trends of corporate philanthropy (CP), which has stood at the interface between firms and the outside world in virtually all organisations (Gautier and Pache, 2015).

As a fascinating phenomenon at the crossroads of business and society, philanthropy in corporations is significant as organisations develop increasing concerns and face dilemmas about interacting with social issues to benefit critical stakeholders (Park et al., 2023). Notably, growing stakeholders, e.g., consumers and employees, are increasingly considering and expecting social and environmental inputs in their consumption, investment, and employment decisions (Wang et al., 2008; Raub, 2017). In this vein, more and more corporations respond to these heightened pressures by devoting substantial resources to promoting relevant social welfare (Choi and Wang, 2007).

Prior research has established new opportunities to explore the desirable outcomes of CP, i.e., the 'warm glow' effects, such as the willingness to pay and customer loyalty (Habel et al., 2016). By contrast, Eagle and Dahl (2015) highlighted severe potential implications for organisations when their insincerity in corporate philanthropy is exposed. CP-related focus and relevant practice are even prominent during the uncertainty and dynamics. Muller and Kraussl (2011) proved the value of corporate philanthropy during times of crisis. Similarly, Bhattacharya et al. (2020) indicated that managers want to adopt socially relevant activities to increase brand value, especially during economic recessions. This trend is reflected in practical examples during the global pandemic. For instance, through the 100x100 Programme, Barclay invited UK charities to apply for one of 100 donations

of £100,000 each to help them deliver impactful on-the-ground support (Barclays, 2021). HSBC UK raised £1.1m for BBC Children in Need through extensive customer and colleague engagement channels, including digital fundraising, paid social activity and advertising (BBC, 2021a). The glimpse of theoretical and practical examples of CP in business and management has displayed its potential for further exploration.

Nevertheless, the current haziness surrounding CP remains. As exemplified in extant unclear CP conceptualisation, e.g., Porter and Kramer (2002) and Wang et al. (2008), whether taking CP as an altruistic contribution, a form of public relations or advertising or a component of corporate social responsibility has been open to debate during the past two decades. The awareness of corporate philanthropy is now widespread in large multinationals as well as in small- and medium-sized enterprises across the globe (Gautier and Pache, 2015). However, the ambiguity of its conceptualisation (such as the interchangeable uses between the concept of CP and CSR) and the contradictions in the actual meaning of giving and taking something back remain unsolved. Most companies still feel compelled to engage in philanthropic activities in this dilemma. It is challenging to justify philanthropic expenditures regarding the bottom-line benefit of generating financial returns for shareholders (Porter and Kramer, 2002; Aguinis and Glavas, 2013). Additionally, the potential for philanthropy-related studies to embed in business studies, such as marketing constructs and theories, and vice versa, has yet to be explored adequately (Thorne McAlister and Ferrell, 2002). Although the shift to business-oriented philanthropy and the strategic application of market methods and motives for philanthropic purposes has been under discussion (Graham Saunders and Borland, 2013; Haydon et al., 2021), there is a lack of in-depth systematic knowledge about the role of CP in generating meaning and impacts for corporations and their brands.

As shown above, current CP-related conceptualisation and research have not provided a fine-grained explanation of the phenomenon in the management and business context. There is little agreement on what is included in CP. Given the existing haziness surrounding CP, the study adopts a systematic literature review exploring the conceptual clarity of CP, distinguishing it from other similar concepts, elaborating on its various forms and discussing its potential effects through a critical lens. This review synthesises the growing literature and displays how the mature field of philanthropy can be applied to the prolific business management context. It will complement extant studies and encourage constructive dialogue to address CP's knowledge gaps at the interface between

business and society.

It is essential to address these gaps with a systematic literature review (SLR), a review of formulated questions that uses comprehensive, transparent, and explicit methods to identify, select, and critically appraise relevant research. This study follows a three-stage systematic review process (Tranfield et al., 2003). A review protocol with inclusion and exclusion criteria was developed during Stage One (see Table 2.1).

Table 2. 1 Review protocol with inclusion and exclusion criteria

	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Database	Web of Science; Business Source Premier (EBSCOhost)	All others
Doc. types	Academic papers and books (in English)	All others (e.g., book reviews or working papers)
Quality	Proxy: peer-reviewed 3-4* journals in AJG (ABS) list	Articles published in lower-ranked journals
Article types	Theoretical and empirical papers	Practitioner-oriented and self-reported/no data sources
Timeframe	From 2002: a seminal work by Porter and Kramer (2002)	All before 2002
Subject area	Focus: business, management, and economics	Unrelated subjects/topics

According to the inclusion and exclusion criteria, both empirical and conceptual studies were considered under the topic of corporate philanthropy. Meanwhile, peer-reviewed journal articles (in English) and some books were included, while other document types (e.g., book reviews, conference papers and working papers) were excluded. All articles in the business field were embraced. Further restrictions were imposed based on the journals' quality. Some studies arguably set quality criteria through the retrieval process by looking exclusively at peer-reviewed articles (Lee et al., 2015) or articles published in journals with a minimum 1.5 impact factor and authoritative institution (Wang et al., 2016) or prestigious journal guide and list (Rosado-Serrano et al., 2018). The Academic Journal Guide (AJG)'s rating by the Chartered Association of Business Schools is the standard in this study because it encompasses a broad set of reputable journals from the business and management academic field. In addition, the search period will start from 2002 to December 2021, considering the seminal article by Porter and Kramer (2002) as the base. Additionally, the search should be conducted based on the inclusion and exclusion of criteria in two different exhaustive scientific databases (Siddaway et al., 2019). Web of Science and Business Source Premier (EBSCOhost) was selected as the key database.

Relevant Boolean search string - (Business* OR corporat* OR compan*)NEAR/3 (philanthrop* OR charit* OR donat*) AND ("corporate social responsibility" OR CSR) relating to the key concept of Corporate Philanthropy was used during the initial search from this process yielded 346 and 335 items, respectively, in the above two databases. To maintain the topic's relevance and the article's quality, most articles published in journals not featured in the 3-4* AJG rating and articles that do not substantiate corporate philanthropy were excluded. The above process yielded a useful sample of 82 academic papers and 17 monographs. In Stage Three, the researcher examined the above items in detail, selected their core definitions, and displayed the breakdown of structural components of core definitions.

This SLR is guided by four research questions to fill the above gaps: (1) How is CP different from general philanthropy and other relevant concepts like CSR? (2) What is the working definition/conceptualisation of CP in the business and management context? (3) How to classify CP? (4) What are the potential effects of CP in the business context? This research could inform and incrementally improve the existing knowledge base and the conceptualisation of CP. The upcoming sections will display and elaborate on the results of this systematic literature review.

2.2 Philanthropy in general contexts

Literature on philanthropy has delved into many aspects of the phenomenon. The complexity of the philanthropic phenomenon has also led to a proliferation of concepts. As philanthropic practice flourished, the scholarly community relevant to philanthropic studies developed some working definitions. One of the most widely used of these is the one employed by Salamon and Anheier (1992), who defines philanthropy as the private giving of time or valuables (money, security, property) for public purposes. Like most existing conceptualisations, this one clarified philanthropy as giving and transferring wealth, revealing philanthropy's essence. Similarly, Jung et al. (2016) define philanthropy as using private resources - time, treasure and talent - for public purposes. Because the above definitions define philanthropy as applying private means to public ends, they distinguished philanthropy from government taxation and market exchange. By contrast, government and public initiatives are described as utilising public means to public ends,

e.g., focusing on providing public services (McCully, 2008). Market exchange, defined as applying private means to private ends, concentrates on material gain (McCully, 2008). As such, private initiatives for the public good are identified as one of philanthropy's essences.

Other researchers, including Godfrey (2005) and Harvey et al. (2020), specify and portray the essence of philanthropy by adding key features like 'voluntary' and 'unconditional'. Similarly, the Financial Accounting Standards Board [FASB] provides a robust operational definition of philanthropy: *A philanthropic contribution is an unconditional transfer of cash or other assets to an entity or a settlement or cancellation of its liabilities in a voluntary nonreciprocal transfer by another entity acting other than as an owner.* This definition uses 'nonreciprocal' as a crucial characteristic, revealing that philanthropy is an unconditional offer without asking for a return.

The development of the concept of philanthropy is also tightly linked with the appearance of foundations. In 1889, Andrew Carnegie appealed to the timely millionaires to devote their wealth to the public good from America to worldwide. Besides, Andrew Carnegie's doctrine offered mitigation for the worst excesses of 'winners take all' capitalism (Acs, 2013). At the same time, a professional class of philanthropists and social welfare activists began to enact change at the community level (National Philanthropic Trust 2016). Based on these, modern philanthropy can also be conceptualised as a viable system for recycling wealth and creating opportunity.

A new insight into the concept of philanthropy differentiates it from charity. It is increasingly common for researchers and practitioners to reckon philanthropy as distinct from charity (Taylor et al., 2014). Charity is identified as seeking to alleviate the suffering of people experiencing poverty by giving money and time. In contrast, philanthropy focuses on providing money and time to address the root causes of poverty and societal ills and bring permanent solutions to them more strategically and systematically (Taylor et al., 2014). Gradually, people have used words such as 'corrective, rebuilding and problem-solving' to describe philanthropy. By contrast, 'palliative, rescue and relief' is about charity (Payton and Moody, 2008). It is noticeable that the key features of modern philanthropic practice contain 'systematic' and 'promotional' attributes. The above discussion explains why this research will use the term philanthropy rather than charity.

To conclude, philanthropy is a profound concept with a long history and tradition related to but distinct from charity based on the detailed review of relevant core definitions (see Table 2.2). Based on the discussed literature, general philanthropy is recognised as a collection of voluntary, unconditional, nonreciprocal, and problem-solving giving and actions from private resources to the public good.

Table 2. 2 Key definitions of philanthropy

Studies	Definition	Meaning/ Essence	Aspects/ components	Purpose	Drivers	Practice	Outcomes
Jon Van Til (1990, cited in Sulek 2010)	the voluntary giving and receiving of time and money aimed (however imperfectly) toward the needs of charity and the interests of all in a better quality of life	voluntary giving	voluntary time and money giving to meet charitable needs	the interests of all in a better quality of life	the needs of charity	-	could be imperfect
Salamon and Anheier (1992, cited in Sulek 2010)	the private giving of time or valuables (money, security, property) for public purposes and one form of income of private non-profit organisations.	applying private means to the public end	private giving of time or valuables	public purposes	-	one form of income for private non-profit organisations	private non-profit organisation income
Financial Accounting Standards Board (1993)	an unconditional transfer of cash or other assets to an entity or a settlement or cancellation of its liabilities in a voluntary nonreciprocal transfer by another entity acting other than as an owner	an unconditional voluntary nonreciprocal transfer	unconditional transfer of cash or other assets	-	-	-	cancellation of liabilities in a voluntary nonreciprocal transfer
Schervish (1998, cited in Sulek 2010)	a social relation governed by a moral obligation that matches a supply of private resources to a demand of unfulfilled needs and desires that are communicated by entreaty	a social relation governed by moral obligation	a supply of private resources to a demand of unfulfilled needs	to fulfil needs and desires that are communicated by entreaty	moral obligation to meet expressed needs	-	a social relation and a need-resources match
Payton and Moody (2008)	philanthropy is to address the causes of problems in a more preventative way than charity. It could be regarded as giving that directly manages to affect opportunities for social progress by influencing the causes of the problems and issues of concern to donors. People tend to use words including 'corrective, rebuilding and problem-solving' when they describe 'philanthropy'	giving that directs to social progress by influencing the causes of the problems and issues of concern to donors	corrective, rebuilding and problem-solving	to address the causes of problems in a more preventative way	preventative	-	social progress
Sulek (2010)	to describe a relation, movement, organisation, or other such social entity larger than the individual that embodies an explicitly defined charitable cause or good	a social entity that embodies an explicitly defined charitable cause or good	charitable cause or good	charitable	-	can be a relation, movement, organisation	-

(Table 2.2 continued)

Taylor et al. (2014)	Philanthropy focuses on giving money and time to address the root causes of poverty and societal ills and bring permanent solutions to them more strategically and systematically	giving money and time	-	to address the root causes of poverty and societal ills and bring permanent solutions to them		-	strategic and systematic
Jung et al. (2016)	Philanthropy is the use of private resources—time, treasure and talent—for public purposes	the use of private resources	time, treasure and talent	for public purposes	-	-	-
Harvey, Maclean, and Suddaby (2019)	Philanthropy as voluntary giving by households or corporate bodies to promote charitable causes, projects, and organisations or, alternatively, as "voluntary action for the public good.	voluntary action for the public good	-	to promote charitable causes, projects, and organisations	-	the promotion of charitable causes, projects, and organisations	-

2.3 Conceptualising corporate philanthropy

2.3.1   Distinguishing corporate philanthropy from general philanthropy: The debate of pure altruism vs reciprocity

When corporate philanthropy is discussed and applied in business research, its essence has become more diverse and complicated than when discussing philanthropy in the general context. Many researchers follow the tradition of the conceptualisation of philanthropy and define corporate philanthropy as voluntary giving and commitment to the public common good (Gautier and Pache, 2015). Researchers and practitioners still consider the nonreciprocity condition as the 'acid test' of philanthropic activities (Godfrey, 2005). Regarding the form of CP, scholars also agree that the ordinary forms are direct contributions of gifts, grants and donations with the allocation of time, money, or goods (Kotler and Lee, 2005; Wang et al., 2008; Muller et al., 2014). Meanwhile, altruistically contributing to human welfare, goodwill, social needs, and charitable causes is also identified as the purpose of corporate philanthropy (Carroll, 1991; Wang and Qian, 2011; Muller et al., 2014). Interestingly enough, although there are diverse definitions of CP covering various aspects, the drivers and outcomes of corporate philanthropy are always omitted from the existing definitions (see Table 2.3), with only a few researchers shedding light on the belief that 'doing better by doing good' (Porter and Kramer, 2002; Gautier and Pache, 2015).

Concerning the primary goal of for-profit corporations, which is to sell goods and services and generate profits (which can be appropriated by shareholders) (Gautier and Pache, 2015), there is a line of critique that could lay here. Even if the purpose of corporate philanthropic initiatives is suggested to be purely altruistic, which is giving without concern for reward, communicating or disclosing these activities will lead to unintended benefits, such as promoting a company's image, increasing company visibility and boosting loyalty (Porter and Kramer, 2002; Peloza and Shang, 2011). Therefore, unintentional reciprocity comes from philanthropic activities' viable communication and promotion (Lichtenstein et al., 2004). The above discussion briefly explains why and how corporate philanthropy is born. Still, it differs from traditional altruism as 'unintentional reciprocity' is more easily observed in the case of companies with a for-profit orientation.

Articulating this 'unintentional reciprocity' may help companies justify philanthropic expenditures regarding the bottom-line benefit (Porter and Kramer, 2002). Friedman (1970) argues that personal altruism should not play a role in managers' decision-making: corporations' responsibility is to maximise profits and shareholder value while conforming to the rules of law. In other words, through corporate philanthropy, managers divert scarce organisational resources toward social causes that do not directly link with firm performance and reduce shareholder wealth, causing the agency problem. Thus, bringing the identification of 'unintentional reciprocity' into corporate philanthropy may cause the settlement of the above concern and better justify corporate philanthropy and its potential outcomes as good deeds in return.

The mechanism of reciprocity in philanthropy can be explained and isolated from the concept and theory of gift by Marcel Mauss. In his book *The Gift*, Mauss challenged the traditional view that gifts should be free and pure while recipients are exempt from giving back. On the opposite, the author argued that gifts are never truly free. Mauss (2002) described *"to give, to receive and to reciprocate"* as the threefold nature of the gift-giving cycle (i.e., give-get-repay). Similarly, when reviewing elite philanthropy, Maclean et al. (2021) admit that philanthropy at scale pays dividends to donors as much as it brings sustenance to beneficiaries. Besides, according to Mauss (2002), tension leads to reciprocity.

Regarding how the mechanism of reciprocity operates, to be specific, Mauss and other researchers reckon that receiving gifts could build tension because of implicit recognition of dependence on the gift-giver and the need to sustain their sources. The desire to reduce this tension and maintain desirable relationships forces a receiver to reciprocate what was provided. Due to the tension, charitable organisations must somehow 'repay' the gift-giving. Furthermore, this tension appears due to the bond between the giver and the gift. It is what Gregory (1982) and Gregory (1997) call 'inalienability'. Mauss (2002) believes that the giver does not merely give an object but also part of himself because this object represents the giver: The objects are never completely separated from the men who exchange them. In other words, giving creates a gift debt that needs to be repaid in particular ways. The above arguments clarify the 'unintentional reciprocity' by explaining why and how recipients repay the gift-giving.

The existence of cause-related marketing (CRM) is strong evidence of 'unintentional reciprocity' for corporate philanthropy. The term cause-related marketing was coined in 1983 by the American Express Company for an operation aimed at renovating the Statue of Liberty. The funds are extracted from a small percentage of each business transaction (Varadarajan and Menon, 1988). Regarding outcomes of this cause-related marketing practice, with increased visibility and prestige, this campaign helped differentiate the brand from other bankcard competitors (Welsh, 1999), which is proof of unintentional reciprocity.

Notably, another aspect of reciprocity means behaviour that cannot be justified regarding selfish and purely outcome-oriented preferences (Falk and Fischbacher, 2006). Therefore, it is reasonable to consider reciprocity as an unintentional purpose of CP, distinguishing it from purely commercial activities like sponsorship, where an exchange of value between two parties is explicit (Godfrey, 2005) and where reciprocity is planned, expected, and has particular anticipated outcomes (Gautier and Pache, 2015). To sum up, Table 2.3 condenses existing key definitions of corporate philanthropy, which significantly suggests that embracing enlightened 'unintentional reciprocity' as a core characteristic of corporate philanthropy is meaningful.

Based on the discussed literature as illustrated in Table 2.2 and Table 2.3, general philanthropy is characterised by voluntary, unconditional, nonreciprocal giving from private resources for the public good. However, corporate philanthropy differs by embracing a concept of 'unintentional reciprocity'. Corporate brands engage in corporate philanthropy without the primary intent of receiving direct benefits but still end up gaining positive outcomes, such as enhanced reputation and employee engagement, as a result of their actions. This nuanced reciprocity distinguishes corporate philanthropy from the pure altruism of general philanthropy, aligning it with both social and commercial objectives. Table 2.4 further compares general philanthropy and corporate philanthropy in the business context with real-life examples and explanations.

Table 2. 3 Key definitions of corporate philanthropy

Studies	Definition	Meaning/ Essence	Aspects/ components	Purpose	Drivers	Practice	Outcomes
Porter and Kramer (2002)	Philanthropy is used as a form of public relations or advertising, promoting a company's image or brand through cause-related marketing or other high-profile sponsorships. (P.57)	a form of public relations or advertising led by corporations	-	promoting a company's image or brand	-	cause-related marketing or other high-profile sponsorship	-
Wang, Choi, and Li (2008)	Corporate philanthropy is generally considered a component of the larger domain of corporate social responsibility. It is defined as gifts given by corporations to social and charitable causes, such as support for education, culture, or the arts; minorities or health care; or for relief funds for victims of natural disasters.	a component of CSR; gifts given by corporations to social and charitable causes	support and relief	for social and charitable causes	-	-	-
Wang and Qian (2011)	Corporate philanthropy involves gifts or monetary contributions given by corporations to social and charitable causes, such as those associated with education, culture, the arts, minorities, health care, and disaster relief	gifts or monetary contributions given by corporations to social and charitable causes	associated with education, culture, the arts, minorities, health care, and disaster relief	-	-	-	-
Muller et al., (2014)	A type of organisational social engagement that involves the allocation of time, money, or goods aimed at addressing a social need	organisational social engagement	allocation of time, money, or goods	addressing a social need	-	time, money, or goods aimed at addressing a social need	-

(Table 2.3 continued)

Gautier and Pache (2015)	1) Corporate philanthropy is a multifaceted, multi-stakeholder phenomenon whose drivers and outcomes are difficult to measure. 2) Rationales for corporate philanthropy: commitment to the common good, community investment and marketing; The evolution of corporate philanthropy: from 'voluntarily doing good' to 'mandated social responsibility' to 'doing better by doing good'. 3) Strategic philanthropy is not altruistic; it also features closer relations between corporate donors and their beneficiaries.	from 'voluntarily doing good' to 'mandated social responsibility' to 'doing better by doing good'	Multifaceted with multi-stakeholder	commitment to the common good, community investment and marketing	difficult to measure	-	doing better by doing good
Zhao and Zhang (2020)	Corporate philanthropy is an integral and typical component of corporate social performance, and it is often defined as the voluntary donation of firm resources to society. Recently, scholars have regarded corporate philanthropy as a strategy to achieve synergistic social and economic performance.	a typical component of corporate social performance; voluntary donation of firm resources to society; a strategy	-	to achieve synergistic social and economic performance	-	-	corporate social performance; synergistic social and economic performance

Table 2. 4 Comparison: general philanthropy and corporate philanthropy in the business context

Comparison	The key differences and examples	Meaning/ Essence	Aspects/ components	Purpose	Drivers	Practice	Outcomes
General philanthropy	Most researchers define philanthropy as 'giving' and a transfer of wealth. Most scholars believe philanthropy is voluntary. In contrast to them, researchers argues that it is based on a moral obligation. **The British Heart Foundation (BHF, 2024)** exemplifies **general philanthropy**, focused purely on altruistic goals like funding heart research and raising awareness about cardiovascular diseases. Unlike corporate philanthropy, the Foundation operates without any expectation of business-related benefits, driven solely by the desire to improve public health.	Philanthropy is regarded as the voluntary application of private means to public ends.	The form of giving such as cash, time and other valuables is one important aspect of philanthropy. Those giving are from private resources to satisfy unfulfilled need and deal with charitable cause	Public purpose, such as to satisfy the social needs, to offer the better quality of life, to realise the social progress.	Many believe philanthropy is voluntary, which means the driver is intrinsic	Cash or product dotation is the most frequent practice	Satisfying needs, realising social progress through a transfer a wealth, although some outcomes can be imperfect.
Corporate philanthropy	Corporate philanthropy is linking commercial practices with social needs. Therefore, it is a multifaceted and multi-stakeholder phenomenon. The evolution of this concept shows that philanthropy transfers from being voluntary and altruistic, to being responsible and finally to being strategic. Being conducted by corporations, it can be organisational and strategic, even be regarded as a tool of public relation and advertising. An example of **corporate philanthropy** is **HSBC's teams-up initiative with BBC Children in Need (HSBC, 2020)**, where employees volunteered 82,000 hours in 2020, creating educational content and running workshops on finances and money management for young people for boosting financial literacy. This initiative benefits the community while enhancing HSBC's reputation and employee engagement, showcasing the 'unintentional reciprocity' of corporate philanthropy, where both social and business goals are achieved.	Varied across researchers, from voluntary and altruistic, to being responsible and finally to being strategic: voluntary donation of firm resources to society; organisational social engagement; a form of public relations or advertising; an important category of CSR activities.	Transfer of firm resources to society; allocation of time, money, or goods for causes including education, culture, the arts, minorities, health care, and disaster relief	Corporate philanthropy is designed to address a social need OR promote a company's image or brand OR both	The drivers exist both outside and inside which is difficult to measure	Gifts or monetary contribution/ cause-related marketing	Ideally, it should be the synergistic social and economic performance

2.3.2 Distinguishing corporate philanthropy from CSR

To conceptualise corporate philanthropy precisely, it is also vital to delineate it from other extant concepts in literature. Notably, another concept, corporate social responsibility (CSR), has already enjoyed a central role in plenty of research with extensive discussions and diverse concepts (see Table 2.5). The following explanation focuses on the existing arguments about how corporate philanthropy mutates, merges with or dissolves into CSR and tells the similarities and differences between these two concepts.

As CSR initiatives have been well established in marketing literature, academics have been striving to build an agreed-upon definition of CSR for years. According to Carroll (1991), in 1960, Keith Davis suggested that social responsibility refers to businesses' decisions and actions taken for reasons at least partially beyond the firm's direct economic or technical interest. Similarly, Habel et al. (2016) define CSR as a collection of actions that appear to advance some social good beyond the firm's interests and beyond what is required by law. A defining feature appears here: the consideration of CSR is over and above some compulsory criteria. Nowadays, societal expectations provide a normative grounding of CSR, turning it into a responsibility. Fundamentally, firms still shoulder the responsibility voluntarily. By contrast, when defining corporate philanthropy, Ricks (2005) argues that a firm's discretionary responsibility involves choosing how it will voluntarily allocate resources to charitable or social activities for which there are no clear social expectations as to how the firm should perform. Thus, one common point between CP and CSR is revealed as they are often discussed as a voluntary rather than mandatory approach, being considered as something that institutions go beyond day-to-day expectations of running their business.

Meanwhile, although the concept of philanthropy was coined long before the universal use of CSR, researchers like Ricks (2005), Wang et al. (2008), Peloza and Shang (2011), and Kotler and Lee (2016) all agree that corporate philanthropy is generally considered as a category that belongs to the domain of CSR. This opinion may derive from the CSR pyramid, in which Carroll (1979) has provided a widely accepted framework for academia and argued that the social responsibility of business encompasses four dimensions: the economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of organisations. The latest research also extends the core dimensions to six by identifying the following:

economic, ethical, social, stakeholder, sustainability, and discretionary (Kumar and Srivastava, 2022). Other latest research also indicates more dissimilar aspects of CSR. For example, Pfajfar et al. (2022) place an emphasis on employee-focused CSR, which is defined as diversity and inclusion in the workplace, while Eisingerich et al. (2023) offer a specific focus on environment-based CSR.

However, setting the connotation of CSR as equal to CP or putting CP under the umbrella of CSR may cause ambiguities. It is significant to reveal that the first distinction between them is that CP should always be related to the contribution of corporate resources. Specifically, examples of corporate philanthropy include business contributions of financial resources or executive time, such as charitable donations or employee voluntarism (Carroll, 1991). By contrast, most CSR dimensions, such as the economic or legal aspects - generating a respectable profit or adhering to the laws and regulations are not necessarily related to resource giving.

Another distinction between CSR and CP lies in the discretion levels. Philanthropy is located at the top of the CSR pyramid, according to Carroll (1991), which is more discretionary for businesses, even though there is always the societal expectation that companies provide it. Therefore, researchers could argue that philanthropy is highly desired and prized as the 'icing' on the pyramid (Carroll, 1991). CP is considered as only one form, dimension or 'discretionary manifestation' of CSR (Godfrey, 2005). In other words, doing philanthropy will enjoy a higher level of being discretionary than others. In later research, Schwartz and Carroll (2003) excluded philanthropic responsibilities from the pyramid. They updated a three-domain approach, in which only three core domains of economic, legal, and ethical responsibilities are depicted. The researchers, therefore, indicate that it may be inaccurate or a misnomer to call philanthropic activities 'responsibilities' due to their apparent discretionary nature.

In conclusion, although corporate social responsibility (CSR) and corporate philanthropy (CP) share the voluntary feature, CP is closely related to but different from CSR according to two criteria. The first criterion to distinguish them is whether there is a resource contribution from the firm to the public. CP is always linked with resource contribution, while other CSR aspects may not require it. Another criterion is the discretion levels. CP represents a more discretionary aspect than CSR's economic, legal, or ethical responsibilities and its broader set of expected commitments and actions. Therefore, this

research strengthens the distinction to offer a new perspective on the CP's concept and highlights the importance of further exploring it individually to avoid ambiguity. Table 2.5 syntheses key relevant CSR concepts and their evolutionary trends for review.

Table 2. 5 Key definitions of CSR

Studies	Definition	Meaning/ Essence	Aspects/ components	Purpose	Practice	Outcomes
Schwartz and Carroll (2003)	Going beyond the traditional responsibilities, including economic, legislative, ethical, and philanthropic responsibilities, provides an alternative approach to conceptualising CSR - a three-domain approach is presented in which the three core domains of economic, legal, and ethical responsibilities	A three-domain approach	three core domains with economic, legal, and ethical responsibilities	-	-	-
Godfrey (2005)	CSR is defined as actions that are not required by law, but that appear to further some social good and that extend beyond the explicit transactional interests of the firm	not required by law	actions extend beyond the explicit transactional interests of the firm.	To further some social good	-	potential outcomes on corporate financial performance
Kotler and Lee (2005)	Providing a spectrum of CSR initiatives consisting of six activity types: corporate social marketing; cause promotion; cause-related marketing; corporate philanthropy; community volunteering; and socially responsible business practices	Initiatives and activities	six activity types	-	corporate social marketing, cause promotion, cause-related marketing, corporate philanthropy, community volunteering, and socially responsible business practices.	-
Peolza and Shang (2011)	a business organisation's configuration of principles of social responsibility, processes of social responsiveness, policies, programs, and observable outcomes as they relate to the firm's social relationships.	social responsibility; implicit offer of something of value	configuration of principles of social responsibility, processes of social responsiveness, and policies, programs, and observable outcomes	-	-	-
SAGE Brief Guide to Corporate Social Responsibility (2012)	modern businesses have a responsibility to society that extends beyond the stockholders or investors in the firm.	a responsibility to society	responsibility that extends beyond the stockholders or investors in the firm.	-	corporate contributions, employee volunteerism, community relations and so on.	-

2.3.3 Defining corporate philanthropy

Corporate philanthropy's conceptualisation is diverse but still fragmented and inconclusive based on the reflection of the extant literature findings. The explanation of the debate regarding reciprocity in corporate philanthropy has distinguished it from general philanthropy. Meanwhile, the unique contribution from corporate resources and the different levels of discretion tells the distinction between CP and CSR. The above discussion leads to a more nuanced understanding of the concept and its working definition. Here is the working definition of CP in this research with its usefulness and superiority:

> *Corporate philanthropy can be viewed as the **discretionary** voluntary contribution of **corporate resources to the public good**, which seeks more **permanent solutions to root causes** of social problems and tends to **bring about indirect and unintended reciprocal** outcomes to the organisation.*

Drawing on the comparison between traditional charity and modern philanthropy, the above definition highlights the need to move beyond the traditional charitable view and embrace the idea of philanthropy as 'problem-solving' and seeking to 'address the root causes.' (Taylor et al., 2014). It facilitates firms to take a long-term approach and systematic, sustainable view when organising corporate philanthropic activities.

The extended conceptualisation provides a unique opportunity for companies to fully understand how corporate philanthropy links with 'unintended reciprocal outcomes' and better apply it to business practices and research. Containing the implication of the promotion and communication of CP may bring subsequent unintentional benefits to a corporate brand and shed light on the gift theory (i.e., give-get-repay) (Mauss, 2002) as well as the possibility of 'doing better by doing good' (Porter and Kramer, 2002; Gautier and Pache, 2015), this proposed definition of CP builds up its rationale for the for-profits and, at the same time, does not betray its original philanthropic principle.

By describing the difference between CP and CSR (Ricks, 2005), this new definition of CP reveals its uniqueness in corporate resources distribution and its high discretion level. Understanding CP's discretionary features allows managers to uncover CP's usefulness

more creatively and under less pressure. Meanwhile, emphasising companies' role in distributing resources in this definition prioritises the possibilities of using corporate resources and covering various contexts, such as corporate contributions of financial resources and executive time through employee voluntarism (Carroll, 1991).

Taken together, the above definition provides a richer picture of the notion of CP in the context of business research. It offers a superiority for marketers to get involved in corporate philanthropy effectively and efficiently.

2.4 Classifying and elaborating corporate philanthropy

The papers reviewed reveal the existence of multiple types of corporate philanthropy. Once corporate executives engage in philanthropy, there are many different routes to allocate their funds to meet their goals (Gautier and Pache, 2015). For example, Peloza and Shang (2011) systematically review and rank the most common forms of philanthropy according to the frequency of being approached in literature. Cause-related marketing, donations of cash, statements of support for charities, community involvement, and employee volunteerism were the top 5 most popular research topics (Peloza and Shang, 2011), while other types (such as donations of products and customer donations) only drew little attention in academic discussions.

Reflecting on the findings in corporate philanthropy conceptualisation, although the classification system from Peloza and Shang (2011) is widely acknowledged, it needs to be revisited and enriched. First, licensing and event sponsorship will be excluded from the classification because both have particular anticipated commercial outcomes (Gautier and Pache, 2015) and, therefore, are inconsistent with the unintentional reciprocal feature of corporate philanthropy. Meanwhile, other forms proposed by Peloza and Shang (2011), including statements of support for charities, community involvement, promoting a social issue and non-specific support for charities, will also be removed because of their inadequate indication and blurred boundaries. Then, due to the scarcity of literature on CP's classification and forms, additional efforts based on case studies from 28 selected brands from different industries (see Appendix A) were made to enrich and broaden Peloza and Shang (2011)'s classification system.

2.4.1 Types of corporate philanthropy

The following classification standard derives from the working definition of corporate philanthropy, the suggested types from Peloza and Shang (2011), and the latest case studies. In Table 2.6, CP forms have been classified according to the different levels of philanthropic contribution. Most one-off monetary and one-off in-kind donations are considered the primary forms of corporate-level philanthropic contribution (Peloza and Shang, 2011), which indicates that the donations occur directly from the corporate level. Meanwhile, Bloomberg distinguishes cash and in-kind donations if given in a monetary value from employee contributions and money raised through events in practice. This sets a reminder for carefully treating those philanthropic activities and notes the difference between corporate donations and employees' contributions.

Similarly, according to the latest research from Kumar and Srivastava (2022), the focus on primary stakeholders such as owners and managers, customers, employees, and supply chains has shed light on whom the corporation is responsible. In the same vein, Pfajfar et al. (2022) also confirm the importance of maximising relationship quality when corporations organise activities towards social benefits by targeting specific stakeholders (customers and employees) instead of society at large. As such, in this research, corporate philanthropy is suggested to be classified as a **corporate-level philanthropic contribution, employee-involved corporate philanthropy, and customer-involved corporate philanthropy** (see Table 2.6). Specifically, apart from corporate-level charitable contribution, which tends to derive directly from the company or brand, employee-related and customer-related corporate philanthropy is also considered the primary form of CP. Employee fundraising, employee volunteerism, employee matching gift programmes, and payroll giving will be regarded as the primary forms of corporate philanthropy, which are indirect corporate contributions because employees could influence them. Cause-related marketing, customer-matching gift programmes and customer donations are determined or influenced by corporations' customers. The details of this classification with real-life cases and definitions of the sub-types are displayed and summarised in Appendix A with some descriptive and analytical features.

Table 2. 6 Classification of corporate philanthropy

Types	Sub-types	Definitions and explanations
Corporate-level philanthropic contribution	•Monetary Donation	Direct monetary donations on a corporate level.
	•In-kind Donation	Direct in-kind donations on a corporate level.
Employee-related corporate philanthropy	•Employee Nomination of Target Causes	An opportunity for employees to nominate and vote for target partner charity (Hammerson, 2021).
	•Payroll Giving	Payroll Giving is a way of making donations from their wages without paying taxes (Pembridge, 2021; GOV.UK, 2021).
	•Employee Volunteering	Employees voluntarily provide time, knowledge, or expertise to target charitable causes. Some of them are entitled to paid volunteer time. Some employee volunteering is called Pro bono work, which can provide a way for charities to access invaluable professional skills and knowledge from companies free of charge.
	•Employee Fundraising	Raising money for target charitable causes with individually organised regular commitments or one-off team efforts by employees (Pembridge, 2021).
	•Employee Matching Gift Programmes	Matched giving (known as match funding) allows employees to boost their fundraising since their corporation matches the money they've raised.
Customer-related corporate philanthropy	•Customer Nomination of Target Causes	An opportunity offered by companies for customers to nominate and vote for target local community initiatives or projects.
	•Cause-related Marketing	Cause-related marketing happens when a charity donation is tied to a commercial exchange that can support others in need (Peloza and Shang, 2011).
	•Customer Fundraising	Raising money for target charitable causes with individually organised regular commitments or one-off team efforts by customers (Pembridge, 2021).

2.4.2   Key features of corporate philanthropy

Following the identification of the main types of corporate philanthropy, the reviewed papers, such as Gautier and Pache (2015), Harvey et al. (2020), Taylor et al. (2014) and Ricks (2005), also demonstrate the existence of multiple characteristics of corporate philanthropy, which are from the following four main lines (resource availability, organisation, timing, and strategy congruence).

Organisation Structures of Corporate Philanthropy

The papers reviewed reveal that the organisational structure of corporate philanthropy could be different. Horvath and Powell (2016) use 'contributory' and 'disruptive' as two criteria to portray different corporate philanthropy. Similarly, Harvey et al. (2020) divide corporate philanthropy into customary and entrepreneurial philanthropy. According to these researchers, customary (or contributory) philanthropy targets established institutions and social practices in the ancient tradition of almsgiving to relieve the suffering of the poor and disadvantaged and nurture valued organisations and institutions (Bell et al., 2012). By contrast, entrepreneurial or disruptive philanthropy is seen as more revolutionary because it strives to transform society by solving social problems through concentrated investment behind radical theories of change (Harvey et al., 2020). According to Maclean et al. (2013), most customary philanthropists always consider their connection with the communities from which they emerged and to which they express the desire to give back. Those philanthropists have a high degree of providing resources to familiar and valued institutions like churches, universities, hospitals, museums, and galleries. Entrepreneurial philanthropists, in contrast, claim that funding established causes and institutions is insufficient. They are motivated by more ambitious and transformational goals, applying business methods to solve social problems and supporting market-based reforms (Dietlin, 2009). Regarding practice, contributory corporate philanthropy tends to provide direct donations to target charitable organisations. It differs from the disruptive one, which is about establishing and organising a corporate foundation and distributing resources to the beneficiary. To conclude, the differences between 'contributory' and 'disruptive' philanthropy are outlined for further investigation.

Resources Availability of Corporate Philanthropy

Furthermore, the reviewed papers demonstrate how corporate philanthropy contributes different resources from corporations to target charitable causes. For example, Taylor et al. (2014) reckon that grant, managerial, venture, and entrepreneurial philanthropy have different attributes. Specifically, traditional or grant philanthropy (donative philanthropy) refers to the approach characterised by the entrepreneur's investment of only financial capital, usually in the form of grants or monetary gifts. By contrast, managerial philanthropy usually refers to the approach characterised by the entrepreneur's investment of only expertise or intellectual capital (and no money). Finally, venture and entrepreneurial philanthropy are simultaneously related to investing in financial and human capital. While the former is about significant expertise advising the recipient organisation, the latter is about direct, hands-on, and even day-to-day work in the recipient organisation (Ibid.). In practice, cash donations can be featured as donative philanthropy, while some employee volunteerism is identified as managerial philanthropy due to its contribution to intellectual skills or knowledge. Thus, investigating resource availability is also crucial for further portraying different features of corporate philanthropy.

Timing of Corporate Philanthropy

The reviewed studies suggest that the timing for launching corporate philanthropic initiatives can differ with the 'proactive' and 'reactive' features, e.g., Ricks (2005). Proactive philanthropy is designed to increase visibility or enhance corporate image instead of occurring due to any environmental event or social mishap that pressures the company to respond. However, the reactive one is to respond to some negative events in a hindsight way (Dawar and Pillutla, 2000). For example, typical reactive philanthropy is disaster relief. However, some nuance could be opened here based on the COVID-19 circumstances in which substantial philanthropic activities have been organised in response to this pandemic and increased visibility for the brand. Therefore, there is no need to draw a conclusion on whether being 'proactive' or 'reactive' is superior to a CP activity; instead, the timing of corporate philanthropy is open for further discussion.

Strategic Congruence of Corporate Philanthropy

The degree of being strategic is another significant characteristic of distinguishing different philanthropic activities according to the review in terms of how corporate philanthropy can be connected to a firm's core strategy or be peripheral (Gautier and

Pache, 2015). Strategic philanthropy is a term that indicates that giving firms resources to deal with non-business community issues can also benefit the corporate strategic position. For example, existing studies have underlined the resonating effect between corporate philanthropy and firms' core values (Saiia et al., 2003; Ricks, 2005). Therefore, examining the strategic feature is significant for further discussion about whether and how philanthropy can be taken as a compelling route to achieving corporate goals.

To conclude, corporate philanthropy can be further elaborated by identifying different vital features. These features may influence the intensity and diversity of corporate philanthropy. Thus, carefully examining this fine distinction is also crucial for researchers and practitioners in the business context.

2.5 Critically reviewing CP relevant effects

The papers reviewed demonstrate that researchers discuss different aspects of the effects caused by corporate philanthropy. Godfrey (2005) generally informs that corporate philanthropy can generate positive moral capital within stakeholders and communities, further building a firm's relationship-based intangible assets by providing shareholders with insurance-like protection. Researchers such as Lichtenstein et al. (2004) even make more radical arguments by portraying corporate philanthropic practice as more influential than immediate purchase behaviour when employing it as a viable promotional strategy that leads to broader company benefits. Regarding the economic effects, authors such as Patten (2008), Su and He (2010), and Wang and Qian (2011) have mainly been interested in verifying financial performance as an outcome of corporate giving and have offered a positive relationship. Peloza and Shang (2011) also conclude that increased loyalty, willingness to pay premium prices, and decreased attributions of blame in the face of a crisis are typical marketing outcomes that support enhanced firm financial performance. However, according to Raub (2017), some other studies have revealed that corporate philanthropy can backfire, damaging employee commitment by causing scepticism and suspicion. Based on the papers reviewed, the different aspects of CP-related effects are illustrated in line with the various forms and features of corporate philanthropy.

Corporate-level philanthropic contributions include monetary and in-kind donations. Although these contributions are plentiful examples, their amount and density may be diverse. The finding of Brammer and Millington (2005) indicates that higher levels of philanthropic expenditures lead to better reputations. Furthermore, building on achievement attribution theory, Jin and He (2018) have verified that consumers have different perceptions when a firm adopts an amount- or frequency-focused strategy. The authors show that an amount-focused donation strategy leads consumers to generate more resource- and capability-related associations about the firm's endeavour to help charities. By contrast, a frequency-focused donation strategy leads consumers to produce more commitment- and persistence-related associations.

Interestingly, the existing literature also differs in the effects of employee-related and customer-related philanthropic contributions. For instance, Brammer and Millington (2005) reckon that cash donations cause more favourable outcomes and better reputational payoffs than indirect giving, such as donation matching or volunteering. By contrast, Porter and Kramer (2002) argue that cause-related marketing will likely create more impact than unfocused and diffuse corporate giving by concentrating funding through deliberate selection. The review, therefore, highlights the importance of distinguishing between the effects of different types of corporate philanthropy.

According to the review, a criticism of disruptive philanthropy is that the sources of professional foundations always come from wealthy (high net worth) people and corporations who seek tax shelters to protect their wealth (Payton and Moody, 2008). Fiscal incentives such as tax deductions on gifts are arguably superior drivers of corporate philanthropy than tax rates (Gautier and Pache, 2015). In other words, when assessing the sources of donation and wealth, a question has been raised: should 'good' be funded by questionable and contentious sources? Similarly, Reich (2020) reckons philanthropy is an exercise of power that transfers private assets into public influence. What is worse, the generous tax breaks on charitable giving foster private foundations to become unaccountable, opaque, and powerful (Reich, 2020).

Furthermore, both contributory philanthropy and disruptive philanthropy are open to ideological criticism. Acs (2013) reckon that philanthropy has been powered and sustained by bourgeois values. Philanthropy manifests neo-liberal political ideology that has held sway over Western countries since the 1980s (Harvey, 2007). Neo-liberal political

ideology assumes that the state should only interfere minimally in society. Meanwhile, individual initiatives should address those social issues. Harvey et al. (2020) criticise entrepreneurial or disruptive philanthropy as an efficacious instrument of social justice on the surface. According to these researchers, through powerful philanthropy, the wealthy entrepreneurs' suzerainty inevitably extends from the economic domain to the social and political. In other words, the 'empowerment gap' is widening. Specifically, philanthropists can directly profit from their 'generosity' by expanding the reach of markets, creating new profit opportunities, and legitimising the existence of extreme inequalities in income and wealth (Aschoff, 2015). The examination of the above criticism sheds light on exploring the mechanism of the 'holding-back' attitudes towards corporate philanthropy.

The reviewed literature also indicates varied effects regarding CP's timing, considering CP being either reactive or proactive. Chen et al. (2008) found that companies with poor records in product safety and environmental issues were likelier to engage in philanthropic giving, revealing that reactive corporate philanthropy is a legitimisation tool. Other researchers have noticed that reactive philanthropy is more likely to attract criticism or be ineffective. For example, Kim and Austin (2019) reveal some adverse consumer outcomes led by the thoughts of some CP practices that could be a reaction to external pressure rather than being spontaneous. Similarly, Lee and Heo (2009) argue that consumers can become sceptical when they perceive the reactive motive in corporate philanthropy. Ricks (2005) believes that when corporate philanthropy acts as part of a proactive recovery strategy, it may be effective for corporate or brand image objectives but ineffective for brand evaluation and purchase objectives.

The discussion about the effects of corporate philanthropy with different levels of strategic congruence also differs. According to Porter and Kramer (2011), philanthropy must be strategic to create shared value. Social enterprises would be another persuasive example of 'strategic' philanthropy with a dual social and commercial mission. Social and environmental purposes are at the heart of what they do, and their profits are reinvested towards achieving these. Moreover, 'strategic' philanthropy realigns the budget and leverages recourses to create a joint company and community value (Porter and Kramer, 2011). Meyvis and Janiszewski (2002) show that irrelevant information can be counterproductive in consumer decision-making. Similar effects appear in corporate philanthropy. For instance, Porter and Kramer (2002) suggest that congruence between causes and the corporate is essential. Similarly, Saha et al. (2023) argue that managers

should consider the fit between the company/brand and the target cause and cause involvement of the consumer while designing a prosocial campaign. Meanwhile, researchers like Godfrey (2005) claimed that strategic philanthropy can also be weak and fragile when a firm's 'strategic objectives' never fit any pressing social issues. Interestingly, when it comes to practice, the incongruence between causes and the corporate image always exists and can impress consumers; for example, Ford Motor Company launches an initiative called Ford Warriors in Pink to help the breast cancer community through actions that inspire those affected by the disease and offer transportation solutions for patients in need (Ford, 2024), stimulating the reflection of the irrelevant but impressive narrative between a motor company and one of the most common types of cancer in women: Ford, Put the Brakes on Breast Cancer.

Another controversy surrounds the concept of 'philanthrocapitalism', which is understood at its broadest as 'the growing role for private sector actors in addressing the biggest social and environmental challenges facing the planet' (Bishop and Green, 2010), and therefore, indicates employing business principles while searching for social progress and measuring outcomes of philanthropic activities. Supporters of 'philanthrocapitalism' contend that commercial and business techniques and principles will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of philanthropy. Criticisms arise when people realise corporate philanthropy can be too 'strategic' to hurt social justice or non-profit principles and even entrench and accentuate wealth and power inequalities through embracing neoliberal ideals (Haydon et al., 2021). Similar critics also expand to elite philanthropy, which is intimately bound up with the exercise of power by elites (Maclean et al., 2021). Therefore, the above examination of the effects highlights the power and inequalities that are tied to CP and its different relevant features. It also sheds light on the discussion relating to whether and how corporate philanthropy locks in or remedies inequalities and whether CP can strategically direct towards those most in need of aid and generate practical business-relevant effects.

2.6 Prospects of linking CP with brand equity

The synthesised review results have helped clarify the conceptualisation of CP, emphasised its core for 'unintentional reciprocity', and embraced the diverse and complex CP types

and effects from the extant literature. As a result, this research sheds light on the CP's unique roles in a business research context. Specifically, this research builds upon the baseline assumption that 'giving results in getting' by Mauss (2002). It aligns corporate philanthropy with the threefold nature of the gift-giving cycle (i.e., give-get-repay). This baseline sets the foundation and rationale for exploring CP-related effects from a business research perspective by embracing its 'unintentional reciprocity' core and considering how the 'giving leads to getting' for a corporate or organisational brand.

Interestingly, the classification of CP reveals envisioning blueprints of setting CP under the perspectives of various stakeholders and exploring relevant effects. The multiple stakeholders around corporate philanthropy also set a reminder that the potential impact of corporate philanthropy could be diverse and vast. Therefore, to investigate corporate philanthropy better, this research needs to focus on its specific benefits relating to a particular group of stakeholders. Moreover, it is essential to note that corporate philanthropic activities are usually led by a corporate brand, which represents the firm that will deliver and stand behind the offering that the customer will buy and use (Aaker, 2004). It was argued by Aaker (1996) that over a long period, irreversible deterioration of the value of the brand was led by several short-sighted managers who were desperate for short-term financial results and unconsciously damaged their brands through price promotions and unwise brand extensions, which calls for the creation of brand equity as a strategy for differentiating a product from competing brands. Nowadays, brand equity has been regarded as a key, valuable intangible asset for the corporate brand (Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010), a key marketing performance indicator, a source of competitive advantage, and a significant component of business success (Christodoulides et al., 2015). Keller and Lehmann (2006) also identified brand equity and its measurement as an essential research topic for setting up the future research agenda for brand management. Additionally, brand equity may be derived from various stakeholders, such as firms, consumers, and employees (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2016). Accordingly, a promising research direction is taking corporate philanthropy as part of the corporate brand-building efforts and considering how it can link with brand equity, focusing on a specific stakeholder's perspective.

Embracing the stakeholder perspective into the CP classification has helped identify those who play a dominant and meaningful role in corporate philanthropic activities. On the one hand, employees can be donors and volunteers in corporate philanthropy (Porter and

Kramer, 2002). On the other hand, CP strategies have an impact on employees' attitude (Arco-Castro et al., 2018). Meanwhile, as suggested by Falk and Fischbacher (2006) in a theoretical model of reciprocity, there are two aspects of how people evaluate kindness of action - first, the consequences of an action, and second, the actor's underlying intentions. While actively involved in corporate philanthropic initiatives, employees also understand and appreciate the consequences and implications of corporate philanthropic activity and the corporate brands' underlying philanthropic-related intentions of organising this. Employees may, therefore, raise morale, develop positive attitudes and advocate for the corporate brand under this reciprocity logic. The examination of employees' perspectives can offer a unique insight into how corporate giving leads to getting through an internal process. Existing literature, such as Zhao and Zhang (2020), has effectively explained the underlying mechanisms between corporate philanthropy and firm performance by focusing on the organisation-level citizenship behaviours of employees. The following review builds upon the extensive literature to better advance the conceptual understanding of brand equity. It prepares for facilitating the idea and rationale of connecting corporate philanthropy with brand equity. The next stage of this research follows the prospect of linking corporate philanthropy and brand equity by exploring specific perspectives.

2.7 Defining brand equity

The historical background of branding and brand equity has been reviewed by Farquhar (1989), indicating that the history of branding can be traced back to brickmakers' behaviours in ancient Egypt, which involved placing symbols on their bricks to identify their products. Then, trademarks are utilised to assure consistent quality and legal protection and for identification and prevent substitution (Farquhar, 1989). When it comes to brands in the modern context, a brand is any distinctive feature like a name, term, design, or symbol that identifies goods or services (AMA, 2023). Brands are one of the most valuable organisational intangible assets (Veloutsou and Guzman, 2017) that intend to create distinctive images and associations in the minds of stakeholders, thereby generating economic benefit. This value of brands is commonly measured through the concept of brand equity (Veloutsou and Guzman, 2017). Successful brands, in turn, are considered to have high brand equity (King and Grace, 2010). For customers, brands can simplify choice,

guarantee a particular quality level, limit risk, and/or generate trust (Keller and Lehmann, 2006).

Researchers such as Aaker (1991) and Keller (1993), have spent decades conceptualising brand equity and reviewing elements to demonstrate its consequences. Aaker (1991) is one of the pioneers who define brand equity as *"a set of assets and liabilities linked to a brand, its name and symbol, that add to or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and/or that firm's customers."* (p.15). Meanwhile, Srivastava and Shocker (1991) provide a more outcome-oriented definition of brand equity: *"a set of associations and behaviours on the part of a brand's consumers channel members and parent corporation that enables a brand to earn greater volume or greater margins than it could without the brand name and, in addition, provides a strong, sustainable and differential advantage".* Farquhar (1989) argues that one consensus of brand equity is about the value-added brand name to an offer relative to an identical but unbranded offer. The typical features of these definitions are that they all focus on the relationship between brands and customers/consumers and clarify the main benefits or outcomes of brand equity, which are about the differential effects. Some researchers also believe that brand equity compares brand value between the past and the future. This value can serve as a bridge that connects what was the situation of the brand in the past and what should happen to the brand in the future (Keller, 2003). To conclude, the concept of brand equity is well-established and acknowledged in the marketing literature. Although there is no universal definition for brand equity, researchers reach an agreement when defining brand equity as the incremental value added to a product or product portfolio that is attributable to a brand name, brand logo or other branding devices (Aaker, 1991; Farquhar, 1989; Keller, 1993; Yoo and Donthu, 2001).

2.8 Examining brand equity from various stakeholders' perspectives

A considerable amount of literature on brand equity also showcases various perspectives for reviewing this. As an influential marketing asset, brand equity engenders a unique and favourable relationship, differentiating the bonds between the firm and its stakeholders (Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010; Veloutsou et al., 2013). Existing research has examined brand equity from the side of consumers, firms, or other stakeholders

(Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2016). Specifically, literature has proposed different perspectives to approach brand equity, such as corporate-based, employee-based, financial-based and consumer-based brand equity according to internal and external needs.

The perspective on financial-based brand equity (FBBE) discusses the financial value brand equity creates for business. Papers in this area develop techniques for estimating a firm's brand equity based on the firm's financial market value. The definition of FBBE is about the incremental cash flows which accrue to branded products over unbranded products (Simon and Sullivan, 1993). However, Farquhar (1989) identifies that uncertainties are difficult to quantify in brand valuation studies. A significant limitation of the financial value of brand equity is that it is only the outcome of consumer response to a brand name (Christodoulides and de Chernatony, 2010).

Consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) focuses on the differential effect that brand knowledge has on customer response to marketing activity (Keller, 2001). Researchers believe that the value of a brand - and thus its equity - is ultimately derived from the words and actions of consumers (Keller and Lehmann, 2006). In other words, CBBE is the differential effect and the co-creation of brand value between consumers and the brand. Although brand equity may derive from multi-stakeholders, dense research on CBBE dominates the pertinent literature because consumers are key external stakeholders around whom actionable strategies can be devised (Keller, 1993).

Although focusing on customer-based outcomes is undoubtedly important, it may not be a complete description of brand value that understates the accurate contributions of brands to the firm (Tavassoli et al., 2014). Boukis and Christodoulides (2020) reveal that researchers have just paid scant attention to perceptions of the brand asset from internal stakeholders, such as employees. Hence, employee-based brand equity (EBBE) research is currently under-represented in the field of internal brand management (Burmann et al., 2009a; King and Grace, 2010). However, reflecting on employees' perceptions and interpreting brands from the employee's point of view is necessary as how employees perform their roles as brand ambassadors and how their interpretation translates to brand and customer-related behaviours is crucial for branding success (Helm et al., 2016). In this vein, customers' experience with the brand promise will remain ineffective without internal stakeholders' alignment with the company's values. Being defined as the differential effect that brand knowledge has on an employee's response to internal brand management (King et al.,

2012), EBBE also proves significant for the enhancement of customer-oriented behaviours (Boukis and Christodoulides, 2020) and contributes to the organisation's overall effectiveness and success ultimately (King and Grace, 2010). To conclude, the current paucity in the literature with respect to EBBE is regarded as not only a significant oversight for research but also an obstacle for organisations to adopt an internal brand management strategy (King and Grace, 2009).

2.9 CBBE: A prevalent research area

There is a commonly held view that consumer-based brand equity is dominant in marketing research (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2016) and even typically viewed as synonymous with overall brand equity (Tavassoli et al., 2014). Thus, it is essential to portray this primary brand equity perspective before further exploration. There are multiple definitions of CBBE. Keller (1993) defined it through the consumer psychology perspective, which is well-acknowledged: the differential effect of brand knowledge on consumer response to brand marketing. After providing a systematic review of the literature on brand equity conceptualisation and measurement, Christodoulides and de Chernatony (2010) define brand equity from cognitive psychology and information economics as "a set of perceptions, attitudes, knowledge, and behaviours on the part of consumers that results in increased utility and allows a brand to earn greater volume or greater margins than it could without the brand name." These definitions highlight the role of consumers and their positive effect on brand equity formulation, and they can be regarded as the most precise product so far.

Despite the merits of existing research, current studies on consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) mainly view it as a construct. Research like that by Pappu et al. (2005) and Iglesias et al. (2019) et al. (2019) suggest that CBBE is an outcome of its dimensions and linearly associates numerous dimensions with overall CBBE. Yet, seeing CBBE as a simple, static construct could simplify this complex phenomenon and lead to distorted interpretations (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2016). Meanwhile, a dominant stream of research has been grounded in cognitive psychology, focusing on memory structure (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). In this vein, CBBE was examined as a memory-associative network in abundant research, including brand information as 'nodes' (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2016).

Following a hierarchical structure, i.e., a 'brand pyramid', or 'branding ladder', each building block's success depends on the previous block's success (Keller, 2001). Importantly, each block includes closely interrelated brand concepts as shortcuts of information or 'nodes' about consumers' brand perceptions, evaluations, and feelings. Specifically, it is argued that the complex nature of the CBBE phenomenon suggests the simultaneous existence of various interrelated brand-related concepts at different points throughout the process, such as consumer perceptions, emotions, connections, and dynamic engagements in a cognitive-affective-conative sequence (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2016). In line with the above arguments, a recently proposed model of CBBE has taken it as a complex system that includes brand building, brand understanding and brand relationships as separate development stages under which a sub-system of closely interrelated concepts exists (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2016; Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019). Centred on complexity and configural theory, researchers can take CBBE as a dynamic and evolving process that moves away from the logic that CBBE is a static and monolithic construct and reveal the causal complexity, asymmetry, and equifinality (more than one pathway to explain the particular outcome) as significant characteristics of CBBE (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2016).

2.10   EBBE: A promising research area

Consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) dominates the pertinent literature (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019). Nevertheless, not only is branding an occasion to shape consumers' perceptions towards the organisation but also it offers a chance to influence employee perceptions as well (King and Grace, 2008). The power of a brand also resides in the minds of its employees. The ability to measure brand equity from the internal perspective is essential for internal brand management, which aims at affecting employee behaviours to deliver the organisation's brand promise or in 'operationalising' the brand (King and Grace, 2009; King et al., 2012). It is believed that all employees have a chance to be involved in branding as it relates to their roles so that they, in turn, can deliver the brand promise (King and Grace, 2010). Meanwhile, it is recognised that employees play the role of an indispensable stakeholder group as the 'insider witnesses' with more access to the company's information (Rupp et al., 2006) and also constitute the original source of brand equity (Burmann et al., 2009a). Informed employees generate an inherent power to

commit to delivering the brand promise (King and Grace, 2008). Moreover, employees are the bridge, which can affect both internal (i.e., other employees) and external (i.e., customers) stakeholders through their interactions (Boukis and Christodoulides, 2020).

The importance of EBBE has been reflected in a chain reaction that starts from high-quality internal support services and policies and impacts upon employee satisfaction and loyalty, customer satisfaction and loyalty, and leading to organisational profit and growth (King and Grace, 2009). This indicates that there is a mirror effect between employees and consumers, as well as EBBE and CBBE, suggesting that the branding success of a firm can be influenced by how the brand is understood and interpreted by its employees and consumers. As a result, examining the role of employees is becoming increasingly critical when they can consistently demonstrate positive organisational behaviours for organisations to perform effectively (King and Grace, 2010).

2.10.1 Defining EBBE

The extant literature has provided several definitions of employee-based brand equity (EBBE). One influential definition of EBBE was given by King and Grace (2009): *"The differential effect that brand knowledge has on an employee's response to their work environment".* In their later research, EBBE is encapsulated as the benefits that are derived from internal brand management (King and Grace, 2010), which particularly articulates the role of internal brand management. After that, when developing a scale for EBBE, King et al. (2012) provide a combination of former definitions and specify EBBE as "the differential effect that brand knowledge has on an employee's response to internal brand management". Later researchers, e.g., Xiong et al. (2013), also adapted the definition from King et al. (2012) to their study. In the same vein, Wilden et al. (2010) define EBBE as *"the effect of brand knowledge on potential and existing employees of the firm"* by emphasising the status of brand knowledge again. According to Baumgarth and Schmidt (2010), another similar concept, internal brand equity, is conceptualised as *"the incremental effect of branding on employee behaviour".* Thus, according to these definitions from different camps, one of the most common arguments is concluding EBBE as the differential effect. Some of them mentioned the role employees play in the formulation of EBBE. Notably, it is also evident that researchers such as King et al. (2012) and Wilden et al. (2010) are concerned about brand knowledge as a key defining component in EBBE. Although later researchers agreed that the effect of EBBE lies on

employees, they tend to describe the essence of EBBE as 'value' or 'perceived added value'. For example, according to Tavassoli et al. (2014), EBBE is about the value a brand provides to a firm through its effects on the attitudes and behaviours of its employees. Similarly, Boukis and Christodoulides (2020) state that *"EBBE captures the perceived added value that employees receive as a result of employee-based brand-building efforts."* Meanwhile, the role played by employees is also mentioned in these two definitions.

As straightforward as the above definitions seem, EBBE can be a complex concept to grasp. Meanwhile, as a newborn concept, the inclusive definitions of EBBE are relatively scarce in the literature. Previous studies show some inconsistencies when defining EBBE (see Table 2.7). Therefore, there is growing confusion about what EBBE really means. The following arguments will explain why there is a lack of an inclusive definition for EBBE and provide some suggested critical viewpoints.

Table 2. 7 Key definitions of employee-based brand equity (EBBE)

Studies	Definition	Core and antecedents of EBBE	Involvement of employees	Cognitive, affective, or behavioural	Efforts from firms	Comments: limitations	Comments: good points
King and Grace (2009)	The differential effect that brand knowledge has on an employee's response to their work environment. It requires the translation of the brand identity in a way that is meaningful to the employee in the context of their roles and responsibilities.	The differential effect brought by brand knowledge	√ Employee's response to their work environment	From (cognitive) knowledge to response (but not specific)	√ translation of the brand identity	Need to clarify how to accumulate brand knowledge, the components, or elements of the work environment, and why this requires the translation of the brand identity.	Introduce brand identity as a critical element-Meaningful translation of the brand identity in the employees' roles and responsibilities context; the role of employees is active
King and Grace (2010)	EBBE is encapsulated as the benefits that are derived from internal brand management.	Benefits from internal brand management	-	-	√ Internal brand management	The contents or components of internal brand management should be confirmed. The role of employees is not apparent. EBBE is equivalent to the internal brand management effect	A crisp and simple definition
Baumgarth and Schmidt (2010)	Internal brand equity is conceptualised as the incremental effect of branding on employee behaviour	Incremental effect of branding	√ Employee's behavioural outcome	Behavioural	√ Branding	This needs more clarification: How can this be incremental? The elements of branding.	It indicates that the effect lies in employee behaviour
Wilden et al., (2010)	The effect of brand knowledge on potential and existing employees of the firm.	Brand knowledge effect	√ Influence both for potential and existing employees	-	-	It only points out employees as objects of EBBE but neglects to clarify how employees obtain brand knowledge.	Consider both potential and existing employees

(Table 2.7 continued)

King et al. (2012) and following researchers like Xiong et al. (2013)	Employee-based equity is defined as 'the differential effect that brand knowledge has on an employee's response to internal brand management'.	The differential effect brought by internal brand management through brand knowledge	√ Employee's response to internal brand management	Response (but not specific)	√ Internal brand management	Still do not know what kinds of differential effects and employees' responses are.	A crisp and simple definition
Tavassoli et al., (2014)	EBBE is about the value a brand provides to a firm through its effects on the attitudes and behaviours of its employees.	Value brought by a brand to a firm	√ Employees' attitudes and behaviours about a brand's effects	Attitudes and behaviours		Lack of explanation about how to provide value	Cover both attitudes and behaviours of employees
Boukis and Christodoulides (2020)	EBBE captures the perceived added value that employees receive as a result of employee-based brand-building efforts	Perceived added value brought by brand-building efforts	√ Employees as receivers of value	-	√ Employee-based brand-building efforts	Employees are viewed as passive receivers - lack of agency; do not mention what kind of perceived added value.	Mention the interaction between brands and employees.

The existing controversial antecedents of EBBE in its definition

First, several studies provide a restricted research agenda because they frame a specific antecedent for employee-based brand equity (EBBE) in definitions. Researchers such as Boukis and Christodoulides (2020), have argued that EBBE derives from internal branding efforts when defining EBBE. These sorts of definitions could also provide an implication of simply taking EBBE as an outcome of internal brand management. In turn, this will limit the discussion of brand equity within the research stream of internal branding.

Talking through the causes of EBBE within its definition can be controversial with respect to the following aspects. On the one hand, as introduced before, although EBBE is a well-acknowledged term that is used in diverse studies, Baumgarth and Schmidt (2010) use another term, internal brand equity (IBE), by pointing out that IBE is the incremental effect of branding on employee behaviour. However, the concept of internal brand equity is easily recognised as the outcome of internal branding, and this will limit the discussion of brand equity within the research stream of internal branding. On the other hand, in most cases, internal branding or internal brand management is being used interchangeably as the only cause or trigger of EBBE (King and Grace, 2010; King et al., 2012; Boukis and Christodoulides, 2020), which limits the discussion of brand equity within the research stream of internal branding and brings some misleading effects. To be specific, EBBE is encapsulated as the benefits that are derived from internal brand management by King and Grace (2010). Moreover, King et al. (2012) define EBBE as the differential effect brand knowledge has on an employee's response to internal brand management. Similarly, Boukis and Christodoulides (2020) also reckon that EBBE derives from employee-based brand-building efforts.

By contrast, various studies show that EBBE can be generated not only from internal branding. King and Grace (2009) reckon that employees do not live and work within a bubble that enables them to separate external information from internally generated information. Similarly, Punjaisri and Wilson (2017) also suggest that looking at internal branding in isolation is unsuitable because, for instance, internal branding is unlikely to be effective if the work environment is not conducive to the employees and the brand values. Therefore, it is essential to consider employees in a broader context of existing externally formed general corporate branding (King and Grace, 2009). For example, EBBE can be influenced by other HR practices (recruiting, rewarding, and retaining staff), leadership

styles, and corporate culture. As such, taking EBBE as more complex than what results from internal branding enables researchers to see EBBE in a broader range of contexts.

To conclude, although brand equity has been identified as the final consequence of internal branding, it is controversial to set internal branding as the only antecedent in the definition of EBBE. Other factors, which are worthwhile exploring later, could shape EBBE without being the result of internal brand management. Furthermore, an endless list of antecedents or other conditions could lead to EBBE. Therefore, it is better to provide a clear picture of the concept of EBBE itself without also saying what triggers or promotes it in the definition. Instead of articulating the exclusive antecedent of EBBE in its definition, this research will not specify any antecedents to provide more possibilities for further discussion.

The problem of EBBE definitions with a limited explanation power on employees' roles

Secondly, most studies provide an abstract or general definition of EBBE with limited power of explanation. Some researchers have not provided enough details about employees' involvement during the generation of EBBE. For example, King and Grace (2010) explain EBBE as the benefit of internal brand management, but the employee role is absent in this definition. Although several existing studies have recognised the multidimensional nature of EBBE and the role of employees in formulating EBBE, the number of dimensions they covered is still limited. For example, some of them solely focus on the behavioural ones to measure EBBE, e.g., Baumgarth and Schmidt (2010). Therefore, an inclusive definition with more explanation power is waiting to be provided in this research.

When defining EBBE, some researchers point out the core of EBBE is the effects of employees' brand knowledge on their response (King and Grace, 2009; Wilden et al., 2010; Xiong et al., 2013). King and Grace (2009) directly transplant the concept of brand knowledge from the CBBE research context. The applicability of this concept in this definition is also questionable because the generation process of brand knowledge would differ between the group of customers and employees when employees stand at the interface between firms and customers. Furthermore, EBBE could also be one of the original sources of CBBE. In short, directly transplanting the brand knowledge concept may be problematic. Moreover, EBBE could be more than just a mechanism based on

brand knowledge with a cognitive focus; instead, the multidimensions of EBBE should be displayed in the definition. For example, Baumgarth and Schmidt (2010) take brand equity as the employee's behavioural outcome. Tavassoli et al. (2014) reckon that EBBE has an effect on employees' attitudes and behaviours, which means they provide possibilities to include both the 'attitudes' and 'behaviours' of employees as key EBBE aspects. The above attempts prove that EBBE ultimately and significantly depends on what resides in employees' minds and actions.

Although the above researchers display how employees are involved in their definitions, these definitions still lack explanation power to some extent. This is because when articulating employees' involvement as the requirement for fulfilling EBBE, there is a need to highlight employees' active agency. Although overemphasising the role of brand knowledge, King and Grace (2009) take the initiative to point out the agency of employees in the formulation of EBBE. Specifically, King and Grace (2009) note that "the differential effect … requires the translation of the brand identity in a way that is *meaningful* to the employee in the context of their roles and responsibilities". Instead of taking EBBE as unconditional or accidental, they argue that the requirement for fulfilling it lies in the congruence between brand identity and employees' roles and responsibilities. According to the research by Kahn (1990) about the psychological conditions of personal engagement at work, psychological meaningfulness is also experienced by people who get rewarding interpersonal interactions. The word *'meaningful'* implies employees' indispensable involvement and agency in EBBE.

As a result, to offer a sufficient explanation power of how the brand equity can be 'employee-based', future research needs to clarify the multidimensions of EBBE and emphasise the agency of employees when defining EBBE, which is about employees' subjective nature of the motivation and desire to act. The engagement theory could be helpful in terms of this explanation. As the first to conceptualise workplace engagement, Kahn (1990) set a premise that people can apply various degrees of their selves, physically, cognitively, and emotionally in work role performances. Similarly, according to Byrne (2015), the points-of-parity of the previous academic definition of employee engagement is about the investment and the display of three components of the self: affective, cognitive, and behavioural. It means the combination of them indicates the investment of an individual's complete self. Furthermore, the synergistic mix of these aspects of oneself is directed toward a transformation of tasks or activities into accomplishments that are

meaningful to the individual. To be specific, while the cognitive component is about knowledge or beliefs about something, the affective component deals with feelings or emotions brought to the surface. Finally, behavioural engagement indicates individuals acting a certain way towards something. Therefore, this research suggests that a multidimensional mechanism with cognitive, affective, and behavioural components could help examine EBBE through a more complete view. This point of view also echoes the latest research about the complex nature of the CBBE in which consumer perceptions, emotions, connections, and dynamic engagements have been portrayed in a cognitive-affective–conative sequence (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2016).

Existing employees vs potential employees

The final concern about the EBBE definition is the exact explanation of the employee group's range. In another definition of EBBE which is generated by Wilden et al. (2010), they consider both the potential and existing employees' roles in creating EBBE. On the one hand, it could be innovative because they add potential employees as a source of EBBE, which may bring further discussion. However, they fail to give the reason why they include potential employees in this definition. According to Foster et al. (2010), potential employees are reached through corporate branding, which is mainly about ensuring that an organisation recruits the right people in the first instance. Nevertheless, it is likely to suffer from identifying and confirming who those potential employees are when researchers introduce prospective employees in the EBBE definition. Thus, in view of the operationalisation of the definition, only considering current employees could be more reasonable.

To conclude, the disagreement and unclearness of the existing working definitions of EBBE cause potential problems in future research on the subject. As a result, this research will offer constructive suggestions for enacting a more convincing EBBE working definition.

2.10.2 The working definition of EBBE

According to the latest research by Chatzipanagiotou et al. (2023), employee-based brand equity (EBBE) represents "a set of employees' perception, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours toward the organisational brand ensuring employees' and organisational efficiency and effectiveness". This can be explained as the overall EBBE based on the evolutionary cognitive-affective–conative chain. It suggests that a series of employees' reactions lead to the ultimate effect of organisational efficiencies and effectiveness. The consideration of cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions may successfully give a broad hint of the active agency of employees in the EBBE process. Meanwhile, it will enrich the explanation power of the EBBE definition and decrease the conceptual noise. As argued above, it is better not to use the antecedents leading to a particular phenomenon to define EBBE. The exclusion of antecedents of EBBE in the definitions helps decrease the conceptual noise.

Thus, this research will be in line with the latest development of EBBE conceptualisation and define EBBE as:

a set of employees' perceptions, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours toward the organisational brand, ensuring employees' and organisational efficiency and effectiveness.

2.11   Chapter summary

To conclude, this chapter provides literature reviews for the two key concepts of this research: corporate philanthropy (CP) and employee-based brand equity (EBBE). The chapter began by identifying corporate philanthropy research in the business context as a growing and ongoing endeavour. The systematic literature review of CP aims to revisit, critique, clarify and enhance the CP concept and provide an extensive synopsis of its presence in business research. Reflecting on the findings of the extant literature, the explanation of the inclusive working definition of CP detailed above leads to a more nuanced understanding of the concept. It is argued that highlighting the 'unintentional

reciprocity' as a core of CP is worthwhile from a business perspective. In most reviewed papers, assumptions are generated based on the traditional views of taking philanthropy as purely altruistic or arranging CP under the umbrella of CSR. By contrast, this research set a reminder that CP and other similar concepts like CSR should not be used interchangeably because of the outlined uniqueness of CP's concept. This research has also identified a multi-layered classification of CP from multi-stakeholder perspectives, which indicates that CP today is more organised, professional, diverse, and interactive than ever before. This broader view of corporate philanthropy can provide a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of the phenomenon. This research critically examines CP's complex effects by building on the existing body of literature. Further, it indicates the possibility of linking CP with another promising research topic, brand equity. This, therefore, further informs the next stage of this research.

Next, this chapter also offers an overall picture of brand equity and relevant research areas to set up the cornerstone for discussing the promising linkage between corporate philanthropy and brand equity. After reviewing brand equity and relevant key concepts, this research draws on the discussion of employee-based brand equity (EBBE) as a promising research area and clarifies its working definition. Former researchers tend to set internal branding as the only antecedent in the definition of EBBE, which can be controversial. What makes the EBBE working definition distinct from the others is it provides a clear picture of the concept of EBBE itself without also saying what triggers or promotes it. This exclusion of antecedents of EBBE is one of the distinguishing differences between this definition and most others.

Moreover, the unifying and inclusive working definition moves productively forward by generating more explanations of how brand equity can be 'employee-based'. This definition of EBBE is similar to existing definitions in terms of the incorporation of behavioural outcomes. Incorporating the emotional and cognitive self into a definition of EBBE gives it a complete view. This change also highlights the agency of employees in the concept of EBBE. Applying this working definition can make academics and practitioners understand EBBE as a process for employees to employ and combine varying levels of their emotional and cognitive selves as they transform their work, tasks, and specific activities into meaningful accomplishments. This working definition of EBBE successfully covers employees' cognitive, affective, and behavioural perspectives with a solid explanation power. It also sheds light in terms of reviewing EBBE as a complex

process.

After providing this working definition of EBBE, the following chapter further elaborates on brand equity's cognitive, affective, and behavioural aspects to build a robust conceptual framework incorporated into the context of corporate philanthropic activities.

Chapter 3: Incorporating CP into the EBBE conceptual framework

3.1 Linking CP and EBBE

After the above review, this study has set a cornerstone for exploring the complexity of two emerging phenomena: corporate philanthropy (CP) and employee-based brand equity (EBBE). Meanwhile, as discussed, there are some limitations and gaps in current research on CP and EBBE, respectively. The following discussion helps synthesise the gaps and subsequent opportunities together.

For one thing, most studies around the above subjects have only restricted the discussion of CSR or financial- and customer-based approaches. Specifically, the research on the subject has been mostly limited to the general debate of CSR without pointing out the uniqueness of CP (Kim et al., 2010; Hur et al., 2014). Even among the CSR-related research, according to the result of a meta-analysis by Aguinis and Glavas (2013), only 4% of the CSR outcome-related studies were conducted at the individual level of analysis. In terms of the studies focusing on CP, they still neglect the importance of individuals' CP involvement and especially seldom recognise employees as critical stakeholders (Ricks, 2005). Some authors, such as Patten (2008), Su and He (2010) and Wang and Qian (2011), have mainly been interested in verifying financial performance as an outcome of corporate giving from the corporate and organisational levels. It has been reported that corporate philanthropy's impact may be positive but also harmful, neutral, and curvilinear when studying the operationalisation of specific programmes with different focuses. For example, researchers prove that the amount of corporate charitable giving has an inverse U-shaped relationship with the firm's financial performance (Brammer and Millington, 2005; Wang et al., 2008). Other researchers like Peloza and Shang (2011) tend to evaluate the CP outcomes from consumers' perspectives and conclude that increased loyalty, willingness to pay premium prices, and decreased attributions of blame in the face of a crisis are the main benefits of CP. Studies also suggest that investment in corporate philanthropic-related activities has a positive relationship with multiple and various individuals and organisational outcomes (Caligiuri et al., 2013), including increasing competitiveness, improving reputation, attracting and retaining employees, enhancing goodwill, and benefiting a firm's financial performance. However, the existing accounts fail to value employees' role in CP.

For another, although some researchers highlighted the complexity of the brand equity phenomenon, they still needed to follow the recent advances in CBBE research stream development from Chatzipanagiotou et al. (2016) and Chatzipanagiotou et al. (2019), to examine the development process of brand equity. For instance, researchers such as Wei (2022), fail to provide a robust and dynamic process-based view of EBBE. Most previous researchers believe in the logic that brand equity is a static and monolithic construct and treat this undoubtedly complex phenomenon as linear, which might lead to simplistic or distorted interpretations (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2016).

Drawing from existing theoretical bases, the prospect of linking corporate philanthropy and EBBE has its roots in stakeholder theory and, more pertinent and recently, the theory of shared value (Porter and Kramer, 2011). These theories share a common core, implying that by making strategic decisions that satisfy diverse stakeholders, both the benefits of stakeholders and the value of the organisation will be reinforced and created simultaneously (Caligiuri et al., 2013). Besides, it is also suggested that social exchange theory (SET) and social identity theory (SIT) work as the overall mechanisms and basic premise that help explain the CP-EBBE linkage by examining employee responses to CP-related branding efforts. Farooq et al. (2014) take the initiative to turn to social identity and social exchange theory to explain employees' reactions in related research when examining the main effects of CSR. According to their study, social identity-based theories imply that CSR can cause prestige and, therefore, induce employees' desire to identify with their organisation (Farooq et al., 2014). Social identity indicates an individual's sense of belonging to certain social groups, together with some emotional and value significance of that membership (Tajfel, 1978). Specifically, mechanisms derived from social identity theory are prevalent when focusing on relational-status discussion. When employees reckon that they are members of an organisation, they tend to direct their attitudes and behaviours toward achieving that organisation's goals. Nevertheless, along with the organisational identity, this social identity-based mechanism also occurs at the level of the corporate brand. On the other hand, the social exchange theory suggests that socially responsible actions convey to employees that the image of their organisation is caring, kind, and benevolent. A basic tenet of social exchange theory is the rule of reciprocity, which turns the focus to rewards and returns stimulated by external motivation. In this way, employees would feel obliged to offer reciprocal good deeds in return. Meanwhile, social exchange theory is among the most influential conceptual paradigms for examining workplace behaviour (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005), which argues that obligations are

built through a series of interactions between parties in a state of reciprocal interdependence. Therefore, the SET and SIT work together to explain why and how employees will react to CP-related branding practices and how this benefits brand equity. The coexistence and interaction of these theoretical foundations could enrich the depth and reliability of the explanation.

Therefore, to address the need and to answer the possibility of reviewing the potential impact of corporate philanthropy from the employees' perspective, this study examines how it links with employee-based brand equity (EBBE). To be consistent with the above lines of reasoning, the research also witnesses a fundamental shift in the discussion of examining EBBE as a dynamic and evolving process. The following discussion provides a valuable account and a series of propositions on cautiously assessing CP effects in the EBBE process. Exploring the linkage between CP and EBBE will further decode CP's 'unintentional reciprocity' core and explain how the 'giving leads to getting' for a corporate or organisational brand through the significant employees' perspectives.

3.2 Types of employee-related corporate philanthropy

Reviewing the types of corporate philanthropy from the perspective of how it can be employee-related helps better understand the rationale and the context of the linkage between CP and the EBBE. Nowadays, increasing numbers of firms and brands tend to generate related policies and strategies to involve employees in their giving campaigns. It is concluded that more than 75% of companies report offering employee giving programmes as part of their overall corporate and approximately 60% of companies display information about their volunteer programme during recruitment (Stangis and Smith, 2017). For example, St. James's Place announced that 90 % of their employees were involved in supporting communities and good causes in 2022 (SJP, 2023). These practices also shed light on reviewing the classification of corporate philanthropy by leveraging and highlighting the role of employees and their agency in these activities.

Attention is therefore paid to employee-related corporate philanthropy in this research. Focal Employee-related Corporate Philanthropy occurs when employees are provided with programmes to get directly involved in and lead activities aimed at providing a voluntary contribution to the public good and charitable causes based on corporate resources and

structured by the corporate entity. By contrast, Peripheral Employee-related Corporate Philanthropy occurs when employees are provided with programmes in which employees can perceive but are not directly involved in activities aimed at providing a voluntary contribution to the public good and charitable causes based on corporate resources and structured by the corporate entity. In short, Focal and Peripheral Employee-related Corporate Philanthropy is launched, sponsored, and supported by firms but staffed or involved by employees at different levels.

Employee fundraising, employee volunteering, employee matching gift/nomination programmes, and payroll giving are identified as the most common philanthropic activity types that can involve employees and, therefore, can be regarded as Focal Employee-related Corporate Philanthropy. The differences between them can be revealed through decoding employees' different types of involvement. Specifically, the most well-acknowledged practices are that employees can contribute through monetary giving and (or) time contribution through payroll giving, volunteering, or fundraising. Employees can influence the corporate philanthropic decision-making stage by nominating the targeted charitable organisation or charity of the year. Plus, organisations may add more efforts to support these employees' nominated causes or initiatives through matching gifts. Descriptions and practical examples for each type of Focal Employee-related Corporate Philanthropy are encapsulated in the following discussion.

Employee fundraising and volunteering. Specifically, fundraising activities and volunteering can include anything from sponsored runs to employee lotteries, and volunteering or pro bono work can contain individually organised regular commitments and one-off team efforts (Pembridge et al., 2021). For example, it is declared that over 33,000 volunteer hours were dedicated by Burberry employees to impactful community projects (Burberry, 2022). In April 2020, the global investment management company, Schroders (2021) released an impact report of its #CollectiveAction campaign, which saw £4.3 million raised by employees worldwide for 95 charities. Another case of employee fundraising is that the BBC Children in Need programme announced that their BBC weather presenter, Owain Wyn Evans, completed a 24-hour drumming challenge, raising more than £2.5 million (BBC, 2021b).

Payroll giving. In terms of payroll giving, it allows employees to make donations from their wages tax-efficiently. One of the famous schemes of payroll giving in the UK is the

Charities Aid Foundation's Give As You Earn (GAYE) scheme (Pembridge et al., 2021). According to Investec's sustainability and ESG report, over £359,000 in employee charity donations were contributed through payroll giving in FY 2020/21 (Investec, 2021). To conclude, the above first-hand experiences that employees got from direct involvement in corporate philanthropy activities can make employees realise how these activities make a difference for the recipients (Raub, 2017).

Employee matching gift and nomination programmes. According to Stangis and Smith (2017), matching employee gifts when possible and increasing investments in causes supported or nominated by employees is a common way to encourage employee engagement. The Schroders (2021) corporate responsibility statement also identifies that matching schemes are distinctive because these firms support their employees in their charitable efforts. For instance, the Movement for Good Awards is the annual programme of giving for the Benefact Group. In 2023, they gave over £ 1 million to charities and good causes – with help from employees and the public, to nominate a registered charity, not-for-profit organisation or community interest company for a £1,000 award (Benefact, 2023).

Regarding peripheral employee-related corporate philanthropy, the most common cases would be corporate-level philanthropic contributions without the apparent involvement of employees (both monetary and in-kind). Furthermore, some customer-focused or customer-faced corporate philanthropic activities can also be peripheral for employees, such as customer donations, fundraising, cause-related marketing, and customer-nominated causes. To sum up, a comparison between the Focal and Peripheral Employee-related Corporate Philanthropy has been listed in Table 3.1. Given the degree of involvement of employees among the different types of CP, this research will mainly focus on Focal Employee-related Corporate Philanthropy, as this is the primary type that employees can be involved in and contribute to.

Table 3. 1 Focal VS peripheral employee-related corporate philanthropy

Types	Sub-types	Definitions
Focal Employee-related Corporate Philanthropy	•Employee Nomination of Target Causes	An opportunity for employees' nominations and votes for their target partner charity which will have the greatest impact with their support (Hammerson, 2021).
	•Payroll Giving	Payroll Giving is a way of making donations from their wages without paying taxes on it (Pembridge, 2021; GOV.UK, 2021).
	•Employee Volunteering	Voluntarily providing time, knowledge, or expertise to target charitable causes. Also called Pro bono work, which can provide a way for charities to access invaluable professional skills and knowledge from companies free of charge.
	•Employee Fundraising	Raising money for target charitable causes with individually organised regular commitments or one-off team efforts by employees (Pembridge, 2021).
	•Employee Matching Gift Programmes	Matched giving (also known as match funding) gives employees the chance to boost their fundraising since their corporation matches the money they've raised.
Peripheral Employee-related Corporate Philanthropy	•Monetary Donation	Direct monetary donations are made on a corporate level.
	•In-kind Donation	Direct in-kind donations made on a corporate level.
	•Customer Nomination of Target Causes	An opportunity for customers to nominate and vote for their target local community initiatives or projects which will have the greatest impact with their support.
	•Cause-related Marketing	Cause-related marketing happens when a charity donation is tied to a commercial exchange that can support others in need (Peloza and Shang, 2011).
	•Customer Fundraising	Raising money for target charitable causes with individually organised regular commitments or one-off team efforts by customers (Pembridge, 2021)

3.3 Proposing an EBBE conceptual framework in a CP-related context

3.3.1   The configural nature of the EBBE process

Corresponding to the working definition of employee-based brand equity (EBBE), which reveals the importance and complexity of employees' perception, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours in forming EBBE, this research builds up a model utilising the central tenets of complexity theory, e.g., Ragin (1987), to explain the complex functioning of the EBBE process in a CP-related context. Specifically, it is vital to examine brand equity as a complex, idiosyncratic, and dynamic phenomenon with an evolutionary 'branding ladder' that includes closely connected brand concepts (Keller, 1993; Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2016). Specifically, this study identifies employee-based brand equity as an overall system with four major blocks or sub-systems: brand building, brand assimilation, brand affinity and brand enactment. Different interrelated brand concepts coexist in each sub-system (Keller, 1993). By embracing individual employees' differences in perceptions, assimilation, emotional connection, and enactment, this proposed model, therefore, reveals and decodes the conjunctural causation, equifinality and asymmetry that characterise EBBE (Ragin and Fiss, 2008; Woodside, 2013; Woodside, 2014).

The notion of **multiple conjunctural causation** emphasises a combination (configuration) of causes that can predict the outcome of interest in the next stage (Rihoux and Ragin, 2009; Ragin, 2009; Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019). For example, in this research context, employees could combine multiple conditions of their cognitive brand assimilation to form different emotional reactions, which formed together the next block - employee brand affinity. The interdependence of multiple conditions is critical for this research.

Centred on the idea of **equifinality**, in which *"a system can reach the same final state from different initial conditions and by a variety of different paths"* (Katz and Kahn, 1978, p. 30), this research believes that there are different combinations or 'recipes' leading to a given outcome (Ragin, 2009). For instance, with inevitable variations in the CP context, the existence of more than one configuration in explaining how employee affinity conditions lead to brand enactment is possible.

The **asymmetry** principle (i.e., how models of the negation of Y are not the mirror opposites of models of high Y) (Fiss, 2011; Woodside, 2014) is also necessary and

applicable to the rationale of this model. Specifically, this research believes that the causes of employees' positive brand perceptions may differ substantially from the causes of the negative ones. Based on the above extant key literature, this research will further justify and examine employee-based brand equity as a complex, idiosyncratic, and dynamic phenomenon.

Therefore, the configural nature and operationalisation of the EBBE model represent the inevitable variations that emerge from employees, corporate brands, and the CP-related context. The development process of EBBE cannot solely be attributed to those powerful brand concepts alone; instead, it is also influenced by how these brand ingredients are interconnected to provide diverse routes and explanations, reflecting on variations and idiosyncrasies.

3.3.2   Employee Brand Building Block (BBB)

The first block in this EBBE model is formed by structurally interrelated components of the brand-building efforts relating to corporate philanthropy (CP). Importantly, this block considers how brand managers use corporate philanthropic initiatives as tools for brand building to create brand functional attributes.

Management Support for CP. Drawing on existing EBBE research, researchers tend to believe EBBE can derive from internal brand management and employee-based brand-building efforts (King and Grace, 2009). However, they have yet to reach an agreement about the components or meaning of these efforts. King and Grace (2009) identify that information generation, knowledge dissemination, openness, and the 'H' factor are critical components of internal brand management, which are also included in their EBBE framework. In their succeeding research, they further articulate that the contents of openness are employee involvement, employee attitude towards their jobs, organisational socialisation, and management support (King and Grace, 2010). However, they combine the organisational efforts and employee responses in their conceptualisation. What is more, some concepts in their arguments are abstract (e.g., knowledge dissemination and organisational socialisation). Among them, the 'management support' concept could be more applicable because of its precise meaning. King and Grace (2010) articulate it as the extent to which an employee perceives that the organisation acknowledges and supports employee effort. Regarding management support for CP, this concept can be set with a

more specific focus and defined as 'the extent to which employees perceive that the organisation acknowledges and supports employee involvement in corporate philanthropy'. The existence of this concept implies that apart from launching the initiatives or activities of corporate philanthropy themselves, the subsequent management support from the corporate level is also considerable. Thus, 'management support for corporate philanthropy' is extracted as a potential aspect of the brand-building block.

Supervisors' Brand Leadership for CP. Boukis and Christodoulides (2020) recognise that supervisors' leadership plays an indispensable role in interpreting and arranging the company's values and vision. In general, leadership encapsulates the ability to influence people toward the attainment of organisational goals (Daft and Marcic, 2013). Supervisors' leadership can help develop a brand from within through supportive instead of controlling behaviours. According to Boukis and Christodoulides (2020), supervisors are more influential in boosting employees' brand-building, compared with the general leadership at the senior management level. To be specific, a clear understanding of an organisation's brand can be provided through supervisors' role-modelling behaviour and then foster the pro-organisation behaviour of employees. Therefore, supervisor brand leadership indicates frontline employees' perceptions of their supervisor's behaviour with brand congruence (Boukis and Christodoulides, 2020). It can be regarded as a human resources practice that encourages employees to produce positive attitudes and behaviours toward the brands. As such, the supervisor brand leadership for CP is incorporated into the brand-building block and is defined as the extent to which employees perceive the supervisor's supportive role-modelling brand-related behaviour in corporate philanthropy.

Internal Communication for CP. Both information generation and knowledge dissemination are identified by King and Grace (2009) as key determinants of EBBE. These two components can work together to formulate the concept of internal communication. Internal communication in the context of corporate philanthropy could mainly cover the story of a brand strategically communicating its donation efforts to employees. In this research, instead of including the whole range of communication, the internal communication relating to corporate philanthropy enjoys a more relevant focus. Meaning is a core concept in communication. As discussed in the CP chapter, organisation (Harvey et al., 2020), resources (Taylor et al., 2014), timing (Ricks, 2005), and strategic congruence (Porter and Kramer, 2002) are key features of corporate philanthropy. Therefore, effective internal communication would include all these elements as the

primary content. In terms of the choice of means or channels, they may be passed on in writing (e.g., notice boards, news, social media posts, reports), verbally (e.g., during a meeting, briefing or informal conversations) or even visually (e.g., through pictures or videos on social media or websites), with combinations of these methods typically being used. Meanwhile, it has commonly been assumed that a greater frequency of communication is likely to increase the similarity of employees' perceptions (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001). At this stage, internal communication for CP is framed as the extent to which employees understand the delivered internal information of CP with practical contents, channels, and frequency.

'H' factor in Corporate Culture. Daft and Marcic (2013) contend that corporate culture surfaces as highly significant as a determinant of the internal environment. However, a recent study by Boukis and Christodoulides (2020) suggests that organisational culture needs to be examined more as one of the contextual drivers of EBBE. Burmann and Zeplin (2005) define corporate culture as 'the totality of basic assumptions, values and norms shared by the organisation's members and transferred to new members, and that determine their perception, interpretation patterns, thinking, decision making and behaviour'. Based on this research context, it is better to shed light on a specific focus instead of considering the whole corporate culture. King and Grace (2010) take the initiative of incorporating a contextual, cultural element when examining brand equity, mainly focusing on the 'H' factor or Human factor (the extent to which organisations treat employees like human beings). Generally, the incompleteness of scientific management in human factors led to its decline, although many of its basic principles are still in use today. In other words, Scientific Management only dominated the first half of the 20th Century because this theory failed to account for the human perspective. Because corporate philanthropy activities might be perceived as caring in the social aspect, employees, therefore, attribute a prosocial identity to the organisation - they come to see their organisation as an institution that cares (Grant and Ashford, 2008). Drawing on the above discussion, this research will take the 'H' factor in corporate culture as another key condition of this brand-building block. This study defines the 'H' factor in corporate culture as 'the extent to which employees perceive their organisation treats them like human beings with respect and care.'

To conclude, four critical interrelated conditions are identified in the study: **Management Support for CP, Supervisor Leadership for CP, Internal Communication for CP, and the 'H' factor in Corporate Culture).** The Brand Building Block (BBB) encapsulates

these aspects and sets them as the starting point for employee-based brand equity development.

According to the discussion about brand equity conceptualisation based on consumers' perspectives, researchers, e.g., Chatzipanagiotou et al. (2016), have empirically proved that individuals respond to the brand building in a cognitive-affective–conative sequence and generate the overall brand equity. Meanwhile, existing literature has suggested that proper management of brand characteristics shapes consumers' opinions (Keller, 2001). It is reasonable to follow the rationale and infer that the high levels of employee cognitive assimilated understanding could be evoked when employees recognise and conceive the corporate brand building with a set of characteristics. Therefore, there is a research proposition (RP) about the underlying process from the brand-building block to the brand assimilation block (BAsB).

RP1: Sufficient combinations of the components constituting the BBB (Management Support for CP, Supervisor Leadership for CP, Internal Communication for CP, and the 'H' factor in Corporate Culture) will lead to high scores in the individual components of BAsB.

3.3.3 Employee Brand Assimilation Block (BAsB)

The following discussions reveal relevant potential cognitive conditions as an explanation of the Brand Assimilation Block (BAsB), which encompasses employee cognitive assimilated understanding of brands.

Employee Brand Knowledge Clarity. Researchers recognise obtaining brand knowledge as an essential cognitive stage. According to Keller (1993), with the ultimate effect on consumers' perceptions and behaviours towards the brand, brand knowledge is made by a brand node in the memory with various associations linked to it. King and Grace (2009) argue that brand knowledge is equally relevant to the employee. Employees are identified as brand-related information carriers in any successful brand (Vallaster and De Chernatony, 2006). According to the latest research by Boukis and Christodoulides (2020), brand knowledge is the most important cognitive aspect of EBBE antecedents. At the same time, a significant number of researchers point out the core role of brand knowledge or other

similar concepts when formulating their EBBE definition, which also implies its irreplaceable role as a cognitive factor (King and Grace, 2009; King et al., 2012; Wilden et al., 2010; Xiong et al., 2013). To be specific, King et al. (2012) pay attention to the importance of role clarity for employees. Later, Xiong et al. (2013) offer a more complete view with three items in their framework: employee-perceived brand knowledge, employee-perceived brand importance, and employee-perceived brand role relevance. They also define them as the three factors of employee brand understanding. However, there is a lack of agreement on these cognitive factors' choices and meaning. Moreover, the above research did not include some other essential aspects. As a result, a more solid and complete version will be provided for further discussion. This research will adapt the definition from Xiong et al. (2013) of employee-perceived brand knowledge (i.e., the employee understands what the brand stands for and how to deliver the brand promise). Two layers of this definition need to be differentiated. For one thing, they reckon that brand knowledge is related to understanding brand meaning. In addition, they believe that brand knowledge is also about employees' understanding of brand promise delivery. King and Grace (2010) indicate that how to deliver brand promise is related to role clarity, which is about the level of clarity an employee has in their role. In other words, reducing their role conflict and ambiguity also means that employees can better understand the brand strategy and the rationale behind management decisions. Therefore, role clarity is embedded in the existing definition of employee-perceived brand knowledge. Finally, this research will use the term brand knowledge clarity to portray this two-layer meaning better. In this research, employee brand knowledge clarity is included in the brand assimilation block. It is defined as 'the extent of clarity to which employees understand what the brand stands for and how to deliver the brand promise'.

Employee Perceived Fit. Employee brand knowledge clarity is discussed as the cornerstone of EBBE's cognitive factors. In contrast, employee-perceived fit further explores the deeper cognitive mechanism created by the actual link between the brand and the employees. Xiong et al. (2013) prove that although perceived brand knowledge can contribute to employee brand equity, it is also based on the premise that employees must see the brand as meaningful and relevant to embrace their role as brand ambassadors. When it comes to the psychological field, value congruence effects have been identified as a vital research field, which is about the subjective fit, involving the match between employees' values and their perceptions of the organisation's values (Edwards and Cable, 2009). In the business field, it is argued that highlighting employees' perception of a fit or

congruity between employees and brands is central to understanding 'how the people make the brand' (Hurrell and Scholarios, 2014). Congruence can also be found as one of the HR outcomes of the Harvard Model of HRM (Beer, 1984). Thus, in this research, it is essential to consider employee-perceived fit as one of the brand assimilation components, measuring the extent to which employees perceive the value of brands fit with their own values.

Employee Perceived Benefits. Another significant cognitive factor in EBBE is employee perceived benefits. Schlager et al. (2011) supported the idea that benefits exist as one of the most apparent factors of attractiveness in a person's choice of workplace. The rationale for introducing this factor is the reciprocal interactions between the corporate brand and employees based on social exchange theory (SET) (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Meanwhile, it is widely believed that being strategic when doing philanthropy is beneficial for creating shared value with economic and socioemotional benefits (Porter and Kramer, 2011). Employee-perceived benefits can easily be identified in the context of CP. For example, Bartel et al. (2001) argue that community service experiences are developmental for participants by improving community learning (knowledge of social, cultural, or economic issues) and personal learning (self-awareness of managerial attitude and abilities). Specifically, when it comes to the perceived benefits of volunteerism, employees tend to feel 'good' when they volunteer. What is more, a partnership with a charity can also help with skill development and networking opportunities for employees (Stangis and Smith, 2017). Thus, perceived benefits can range widely from developmental benefits (i.e., personal growth opportunities for employees) to psychological benefits (i.e., psychological safety, energies, motivations, and inspiration) to social benefits (e.g., improved status). Those benefits derived from CP-related efforts could be the driver of subsequent positive behaviours of employees. Therefore, the employee perceived benefits, defined as the extent to which employees perceive that they will personally benefit from corporate philanthropy, could be another cognitive factor of the Brand Assimilation Block.

To sum up, the above discussion provides important insights about employee brand knowledge clarity, employee perceived fit, and employee perceived benefits in the Brand Assimilation Block (BAsB). As employees respond to the brand's efforts in a cognitive-affective–conative sequence, clarifying the components of cognitive factors leads to the discussion to the next stage. Researchers have recognised the essential roles of feelings and emotional bonds in building brand equity (Lehmann et al., 2008). This research will explore how the above cognitive assimilation components shape a series of interrelated

emotional-related concepts, i.e., brand affinity block (BAfB). The brand assimilation block (BAsB), including **brand knowledge clarity, perceived fit and perceived benefits**, could be regarded as the physical resources that contribute to EBBE. Meanwhile, it is argued that emotional or affective indicators ensure employees have a genuine desire to contribute to brand equity (King and Grace, 2010). Thus, a new proposition is focusing on the underlying process between cognitive and affective factors:

RP2: Sufficient combinations of the components constituting the BAsB (Employee brand knowledge clarity, employee perceived fit and employee perceived benefits) will lead to high scores in the individual components of BAfB.

3.3.4   Employee Brand Affinity Block (BAfB)

The following discussions reveal some closely interrelated brand concepts, capturing employees' emotional reactions to and personal feelings about the brand as an explanation of the Brand Affinity Block (BAfB).

Employee Pride (Based on CP or Brand). Generally, pride is framed as a positive, self-conscious emotion resulting from the appraisal that one is responsible for a socially valued outcome or for being a socially valued person (Helm et al., 2016), which is relevant for employees within the organisational context. With increased interest in recent studies in social psychology but as a novel concept for the business world, brand pride has been vastly neglected in previous research (Helm et al., 2016). Compared with the concept of identification, while identification emphasises commonalities one possesses with an in-group, pride enhances distinction by demonstrating how one is different from out-groups. Following the tenets of social identity theory, when employees attribute a positive prosocial emotion to their organisation, this will increase their self-esteem and pride in being members of the organisation (Greening and Turban, 2000). Specifically, Gouthier and Rhein (2011) revealed two types of organisational pride. First, it is about short, persistent affective emotions of pride based on the perception of a successful event related to the organisation. Second, it can also be a cognitive and durable attitude of pride resulting from the general perception of the organisation. This above typology discloses that brand pride is not unidimensional. In the context where employees are involved in

corporate philanthropy, they would enjoy the pleasure of being associated with the successful corporate philanthropic activity and the corporate brand. Furthermore, Lea and Webley (1997) highlighted that 'proper pride' is associated with genuine achievements. Therefore, in this research, employee brand pride is incorporated into the framework and is divided into two levels: the extent to which employees perceive a positive emotion when being associated with the CP activity or the brand itself.

Employee Trust (Based on CP or Brand). Researchers have long been interested in trust as a critical component within the affective discussion. Brand trust is defined as a psychological state when one party has confidence in an exchange partner's reliability and integrity (Garbarino and Johnson, 1999; Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Focusing on intra-organisational trust, Dietz and Den Hartog (2006) underline trust's three necessary constituent parts: 'an expectation, a willingness to be vulnerable and a risk-taking act'. The overlaps between the CP context and employees' trust are promising. Cited in the interdisciplinary review of social exchange theory by Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005), trust is portrayed as an identifying outcome of favourable social exchanges. In particular, trust (a particularistic benefit) is developed due to successful reciprocal exchanges (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). As mentioned above, branding efforts and positive perceptions have the potential to be a source of trust generation. For example, Becerra and Gupta (2003) explain how the proper communication frequency would create a moderating impact on perceived trustworthiness within the organisation. Based on the above arguments, the framework can potentially incorporate trust as a critical component. In this research, employees' trust is defined as two levels: examining the extent to which employees build confidence in the CP activity or brand's reliability and integrity.

Employees Brand Commitment. Most researchers admit brand commitment is inextricably linked to EBBE (Baumgarth and Schmidt, 2010; King and Grace, 2009; Xiong et al., 2013). The conceptualisation of commitment has been treated as a three-dimensional construct in previous research involving affective, continuous, and normative components. It is defined as 'an emotional attachment to, identification with, and involvement in the organisation'. (Meyer and Allen, 1997). King and Grace (2010) define it as the psychological attachment or the feeling of an employee belonging to an organisation. By contrast, a series of research by Burmann clarifies this concept in more detail. Burmann and Zeplin (2005) define brand commitment as the psychological processes that lead employees to show brand citizenship behaviour. In other words, they believe brand

commitment will influence employees' willingness to exert extra effort toward reaching the brand goals. Similarly, Saks (2006) also finds that brand commitment displays a tendency to be voluntary and perform extra roles. Burmann et al. (2009a) explain it further as the psychological processes exploring what it means for employees to 'live the brand'. By comparing and adapting former definitions, brand commitment is brought into this research and defined as 'the extent to which employees generate a tendency or willingness to be voluntary to exert extra effort to deliver brand promise'. Therefore, **employee pride (based on the brand and CP), employee trust (based on the brand and CP), and employee brand commitment** are suggested as promising aspects of the brand affinity block concerning their prominent positions.

Following the discussed cognitive-affective–conative sequence and the above-identified vital concepts regarding employees' feelings, it is argued that the next critical stage in the EBBE development process should be formed as the Brand Enactment Block (BEB). This block encapsulates the behaviours of employees, which are in line with the arguments that 'people make the brand' (Hurrell and Scholarios, 2014; Sirianni et al., 2013). Based on the sequential rationale, this research proposes an underlying process explaining how the affective factors in the Employee Brand Assimilation Block (BAsB) lead to behavioural outcomes.

RP3: Sufficient combinations of the components constituting the BAfB (employee pride - based on the brand and CP, employee trust - based on the brand and CP, and employee brand commitment) will lead to high scores in the individual components of BEB.

3.3.5   Employee Brand Enactment Block (BEB)

The following discussions reveal relevant key concepts as an explanation of the Brand Enactment Block (BEB). King and Grace (2010) propose that brand citizenship behaviour, employee satisfaction, employee intention to stay, and positive employee word-of-mouth are positive behavioural outcomes of EBBE. Following this, King et al. (2012) conceptualise EBBE as representing present behaviour and future behavioural intentions and is operationalised by three dimensions: brand consistent behaviour, brand endorsement and brand allegiance. These dimensions encapsulate what employees do, say, and intend to

do in the future (King et al., 2012). Therefore, this research highlights this multi-dimensional behavioural EBBE feature and decodes its appropriate dimensions.

Employee Brand Citizenship. The concept and dimensions of brand citizenship behaviour were coined by Burmann and Zeplin (2005). They portray brand citizenship behaviour as the outcome of psychological brand commitment, which encapsulates the behavioural process employees get involved in with the meaning of employees to live the brand. Specifically, three determinants reflect brand citizenship behaviour: helping behaviour, brand enthusiasm and self-development (Burmann et al., 2009a). However, later researchers emphasise that brand citizenship behaviour should also contain employee behaviour that is nonprescribed or 'above and beyond the norm', yet consistent with the brand values of the organisation (King and Grace, 2010). It implies that this term mainly describes discretionary behaviour. When turning to the conceptualisation of brand citizenship behaviour, it is noticeable that there are some overlaps between the concept of brand citizenship behaviour and brand consistent behaviour. King et al. (2012) and Xiong et al. (2013) consider brand-consistent behaviour as employees going beyond the call of duty to deliver the brand promise, similar to one of the explained dimensions of brand citizenship behaviour. Those discussions reveal that rather than only working according to the job description, advancing the brand by exhibiting extra-role behaviours is also essential. Therefore, instead of directly absorbing both concepts, this research picks the concept of brand citizenship behaviour as one of the dimensions of behavioural EBBE and defines it as 'the extent to which employees go beyond the norm and call of duty to deliver the brand promise' to avoid potential conceptual confusion.

Employee Brand Endorsement. Meanwhile, researchers coined the concept - of employee brand endorsement - to capture employees' positive external communication as a critical dimension of behavioural EBBE. King and Grace (2010) pay attention to employee-level word of mouth and define it as 'the extent to which an employee is willing to say positive things about the organisation and readily recommend the organisation to others.' It is similar to the concept of brand endorsement, which captures employees' role as spokespersons presenting positive external communication (Xiong et al., 2013) and verbal behaviours. Therefore, in this research, brand endorsement is defined as 'the extent to which employees say positive things about the brand and readily recommend the brand to others' and is picked as one of the dimensions of the brand enactment block to summarise employees' verbal behaviours in EBBE.

Employee Brand Development. Furthermore, when exploring behavioural-related outcomes, researchers like Piehler et al. (2016) further emphasise the importance of those discretionary behaviours connected to the consumer perspective. Employee brand development is illustrated as the behaviours actively affecting brand development to improve customers' brand experience (Piehler et al., 2016). Similarly, Burmann et al. (2009b) sheds light on the importance of examining employees' propensity for further development in their research. Incorporating this dimension into this EBBE framework is meaningful. It is because employees, especially customer-contact employees, who are active participants in brand development (e.g., by internally passing on branding-relevant customer feedback from customer touchpoints), would offer a brand with high-quality input for its brand management (Morhart et al., 2009). Therefore, employee brand development is considered in the framework for embracing and illustrating the employees' roles as brand representatives. Thus, in this research, brand development is picked as another dimension of employees' behaviours in EBBE. **Employee Brand Citizenship, Employee Brand Endorsement and Employee Brand Development** are mapped into the EBBE process and form the Brand Enactment Block. Based on the evolutionary feature of the EBBE process, it is proposed that having behavioural outcomes possibly leads to the overall strength of a brand and employees' overall preference for the brand, i.e., overall EBBE (OBE).

RP4: Sufficient combinations of high scores in BEB components (Employee Brand Citizenship, Employee Brand Endorsement and Employee Brand Development) will lead to high scores in the OBE.

3.3.6   Overall EBBE

As discussed in the previous chapter, according to the latest research by Chatzipanagiotou et al. (2023), EBBE is "a set of employees' perception, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours toward the organisational brand ensuring employees' and organisational efficiency and effectiveness." The concluding block of this EBBE framework is set as the overall EBBE (OBE), which holistically represents the strength of a brand and employees' overall preference for the brand. It has also corresponded with literature in the general marketing area focusing on CBBE, in which the overall brand equity has already been

included in the conceptual frameworks (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2016; Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019; Veloutsou et al., 2013; Yoo et al., 2000).

Finally, based on the above discussion of EBBE's configural, dynamic and evolutionary nature, more research propositions can be generated. Major components of the brand building, brand assimilation, brand affinity and brand enactment blocks could also generate cross-block connections. For example, employee brand assimilation could directly influence brand enactment. If employees internalise the brand values, they are more likely to be engaged in the brand as well as to diffuse their own brand experience successfully across the organisation (Boukis and Christodoulides, 2020). Therefore, more propositions are generated as follows:

RP5: Sufficient combinations of the components constituting the Brand Building Block (BBB) will lead to high scores in the individual components of the Brand Affinity Block (BAfB).

RP6: Sufficient combinations of the components constituting the Brand Building Block (BBB) will lead to high scores in the individual components of the Brand Enactment Block (BEB).

RP7: Sufficient combinations of the components constituting the Brand Assimilation Block (BAsB) will lead to high scores in the individual components of the Brand Enactment Block (BEB).

The dynamic nature of EBBE also indicates that each building block contributes to the formulation of the overall employee-based brand equity (OBE). Therefore, the final set of propositions are generated:

RP8: Sufficient combinations of the components constituting the Brand Building Block (BBB) will lead to high scores in overall employee-based brand equity (OBE).

RP9: Sufficient combinations of the components constituting the Brand Assimilation Block (BAsB) will lead to high scores in overall employee-based brand equity (OBE).

RP10: Sufficient combinations of the components constituting the Brand Affinity Block (BAfB) will lead to high scores in overall employee-based brand equity (OBE).

3.4 Chapter summary

To sum up, this chapter provides an overview of the conceptual framework of the EBBE process in a CP-related context. Specifically, the reasons for linking CP and EBBE by referring to theories like the social exchange theory (SET) and social identity theory (SIT) have been discussed. At the same time, it is possible to build the link between CP and EBBE by elaborating on the different types of employee-related corporate philanthropy. Following the configural nature and the promising dimensions of EBBE that emerge from existing literature, an EBBE model has been built in a cognitive-affective-behavioural sequence. Figure 3.1 depicts this conceptual framework using Venn diagrams to demonstrate the configural nature of the conditions within the different blocks; the arrows indicate the major flows of proposed relationships among them. This framework here sheds new light on why and how EBBE is examined as a dynamic process in a CP-related context. In the following chapters of this thesis, empirical evidence will be provided for a deeper insight into a better understanding, potential modification, finalisation and the implication of this framework and its relevant proposed relationships.

Figure 3. 1 Initial conceptual framework - corporate philanthropy driven employee-based brand equity
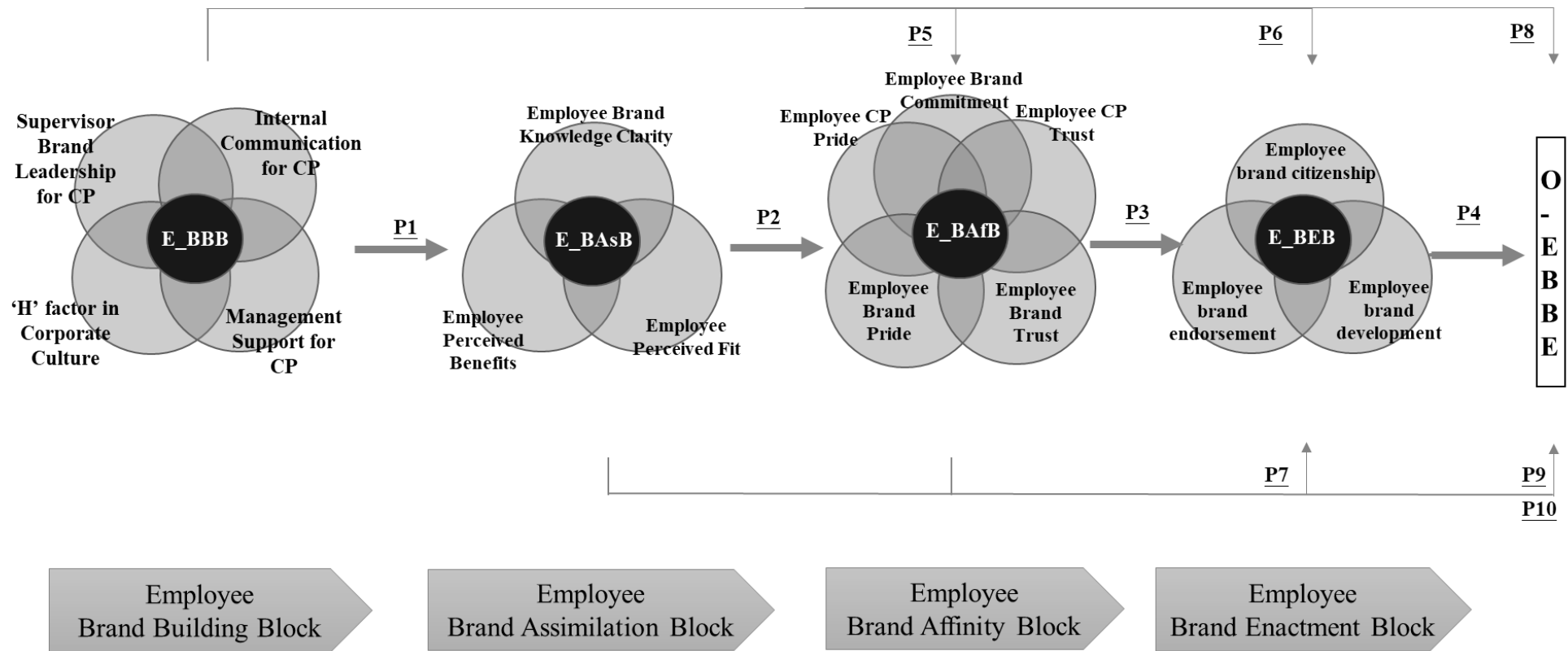
Notes: P1-P10 represents research propositions 1-10.

Chapter 4: Research philosophy and overall research design

4.1 Research philosophy

This chapter focuses on the research philosophy embedded in this research and the corresponding research design. The following discussion helps elaborate on how the selected research philosophy and methodological approach is the most appropriate in addressing the research objectives, especially in exploring the conditions for achieving employee-based brand equity under the context of employees' corporate philanthropic involvement.

The term research philosophy refers to a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge (Saunders et al., 2019). Researchers make different types of assumptions at every stage in the research, including ontological assumptions that pertain to the nature of reality, epistemological assumptions that concern the nature and scope of human knowledge, and axiological assumptions about the nature of value (Easterby-Smith et al., 2021; Blaikie and Priest, 2019; Saunders et al., 2019). A well-thought-out and consistent set of assumptions forms the bedrock of credible research philosophy, shaping the research questions and the research design, underpinning the selection of methodological approaches, and the interpretation of research findings (Crotty, 1998).

Researchers such as Saunders et al. (2019) and Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010) have summarised dominant research philosophies within business management: positivism, interpretivism, postmodernism, pragmatism and critical realism.

Specifically, **positivism** posits a real, external, and independent ontology, adhering to social entities as real in the same way as physical objects and natural phenomena are real. Epistemologically, the positivists believe that only the observable and measurable facts and regularities would lead to credible and meaningful data production (Crotty, 1998). Meanwhile, positivism advocates for value-free research, wherein the researcher remains detached and neutral.

Compared with positivism, **interpretivism** emphasises that humans are distinctive from physical objects and natural phenomena because of meaning creation (Saunders et al., 2019). Thus, it presents an ontology of complexity and richness, viewing reality as socially constructed. Its epistemology focuses on narratives, stories, perceptions, and interpretations, aiming for new understandings and worldviews. Interpretivism is value-bound, with researchers recognising their integral role in the research and their interpretations being key to the contribution.

Postmodernism goes even further than interpretivism in terms of the critique of positivism, rejecting the realist ontology of things and advocating the chaotic importance of fluidity and change (Saunders et al., 2019). Its epistemology is about challenging and 'deconstructing' the established notions of truth and knowledge (Kilduff and Mehra, 1997), which are determined by dominant ideologies. The axiology in postmodernism views research as value-constituted, embedded in power relations, with researchers being radically reflexive about their position and influence in the study.

Pragmatism focuses on the practical consequences of ideas, asserting a complex and rich ontology where reality is the valuable outcome of ideas, processes, experiences, and practices (Saunders et al., 2019). Its epistemology values theories and knowledge that facilitate successful action, emphasising problem-solving and practical solutions (Kelemen and Rumens, 2008). Pragmatism is value-driven, with research initiated by the researcher's doubts and beliefs, guided by the research problem and questions, emphasising the 'pluralistic approach' can be utilised at different times if necessary and applicable (Creswell, 2015).

Critical realism is also seen as taking up the middle ground between positivism on the one hand and interpretivism on the other, thus introducing a more nuanced version of realist ontology (Zachariadis et al., 2013). Like positivism, critical realists accept there are objective realities and agreements about those realities but argue that human knowledge of the physical, social, and psychological world is partially shaped by interpretive understanding. For critical realists, a structured and layered ontology is key (Fleetwood, 2005), seeing reality as external and independent but not directly observable and accessible through people's observation and knowledge of it. As such, critical realism synthesises elements from both positivism and constructivism and works as an open and alternative term that encourages creativity and flexibility (Mukumbang, 2023). The axiology of

critical realism accepts research as value-laden, with researchers acknowledging their biases influenced by socio-cultural experiences, striving to minimise bias and errors to maintain objectivity (Saunders et al., 2019).

After comparing five research philosophical positions in business and management research, critical realism is deemed appropriate for this research. As argued in Edwards et al. (2014), the interest of realists in empirical research is typically exploratory, which is generically to identify, discover, and uncover structures, blocks, and causes and the particular sequences, combinations, and articulations of them at work in specific times and places. In this research, one of the key objectives is to explore the conditions for the process of achieving employee-based brand equity under the context of employees' corporate philanthropic involvement. The relevant framework of this research linking corporate philanthropy (CP) and employee-based brand equity (EBBE) is complex but remains unexplored to date. Given critical realism's illustration of social reality as complex, differentiated, and where causal powers are contextually dependent (Bhaskar, 2008), it is particularly appropriate for this research, guiding the exploration of the EBBE development process in the specific CP-related context.

Furthermore, the critical realist notions of causality cannot be simplified to statistical correlations and quantitative methods, and a range of methods is acceptable (Saunders et al., 2019). Guided by critical realism, this research focuses on employee-involved corporate philanthropic activities as observational organisational events, looking for underlying causes and mechanisms through which deep social structures shape everyday organisational life (Saunders et al., 2019). The research process in this thesis involves two phases of studies. The first phase initially explores the research topic by collecting and analysing qualitative data through semi-structured interviews, in which the researcher is aware that the linkage between CP and EBBE is social conditioning. Informed by the results of this first phase, the second phase measures or tests it quantitatively to understand the relationship between socially constructed knowledge and possible underlying causal structures and processes. Critical realism is considered one of the significant philosophical positions often associated with mixed methods designs (Saunders et al., 2019). This is because critical realism provides a philosophical stance compatible with the essential methodological characteristics of both qualitative and quantitative research, and it can facilitate communication and cooperation between the two and constitute a productive stance for mixed methods research (Maxwell and Mittapalli, 2010). Based on the above

discussion, the next session explains how a critical realism position influences the research process, choice of methods, and data analysis, focusing on how research methods are mixed and combined.

4.2 Mixed methods research with a sequential exploratory design

Mixed-method is an approach in social sciences in which the investigator combines elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches, integrates the two and then draws interpretations with rich insights based on the combined strengths of both sets of data to understand research problems (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2017). Rather than assuming that the current conceptualisation and framework are appropriate for understanding the novel and complex phenomenon, the qualitative phase is essential for the researchers to hear, in employees' own words, how they experience and understand corporate philanthropy and build up on the development of employee-based brand equity. The qualitative phase, therefore, can inform the quantitative follow-up. This is in line with arguments by Grayson and Martinec (2004) about the reasons for using both types of data and providing strengths that offset weaknesses in both qualitative and quantitative research. Specifically, this research adopts the **sequential exploratory design**, which is one of the basic mixed methods designs that is best suited for exploring a phenomenon (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2017). Exploratory designs are suitable for exploring relationships when study variables are unknown, developing new instruments based on initial qualitative analysis, generalising qualitative findings, and refining or testing a developing theory (Harrison and Reilly, 2011). Using the sequential exploratory design, after collecting and analysing qualitative data, these findings will be used to inform subsequent quantitative data collection (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2010). This sequential timing allows for collecting and analysing the qualitative data and offers the basis for the quantitative study. Meanwhile, qualitative and quantitative methods have an equal priority as both play an equally important role in addressing the research problem (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2017) and work together for the broad purpose of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration (Johnson et al., 2007)

In this research, through semi-structured interviews, Study 1 gathers qualitative data and detailed information from interviewees while allowing the flexibility to explore topics in

depth. Qualitative interviewing is essential to obtain rich, detailed and evocative information; Plus, it is also critical for understanding complex phenomena and is especially valuable for exploring how and why particular outcomes occur (Rubin and Rubin, 2004). Specifically, using semi-structured interviews in this research helps elicit views and opinions from the participants (Creswell, 2017). It will reveal the unexplored nature of the complex employee-based brand equity development process under a novel CP-related context. Undertaking semi-structured interviews is significant because it balances predetermined questions with the flexibility to explore respondents' answers in more depth. In a mixed-method design, such an initial exploration is typically conducted when some measures are unavailable, or some variables are unknown or unrevealed (Creswell, 2017). It is necessary to collect and analyse qualitative data before measuring or testing it quantitatively. The semi-structured interviews are guided by an interview guide. Still, the results cannot be tightly prescribed, making it a suitable approach for studying the linkage between CP and EBBE, a relatively unknown research topic and learning some potential 'bottom-up' broad patterns from the qualitative data. Specifically, it helps gain a deep understanding of the meaning of the EBBE components from front-line employees and managers, informs uncovered themes, and eliminates problematic and less-relevant components from real-life employees' CP involvement.

This research has a severe integration and 'mix' of the data sets. Integrating quantitative and qualitative findings can provide valuable insights that researchers could not otherwise discover (Bryman and Bell, 2007). The examination of the initial qualitative results helps better develop the measurement instrument before collecting quantitative data (Morgan, 1998). Specifically, during this development phase, the identified quotes, codes, and themes from the qualitative phase can inform the selection and modification of the items, variables, and scales of the measurement instrument for a survey in a quantitative phase (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2017). It implies that the quantitative strand's design and conduct depend on the qualitative strand's results and are grounded in the participants' perspectives (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2017). The integration comprehensively helps refine and reinforce the proposed EBBE conceptual model and complement the measurements and design of surveys. Next, through an online survey in Study 2 with a representative sample of people who participated in corporate activities in their workplace, the quantitative phase is robustly helpful for studying a larger group of individuals and for generalising results from the study sample to broader groups (Creswell, 2017). Then, its results can be analysed through the Fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA).

The analysis helps identify different combinations of conditions relating to employees' attitudes, beliefs, feelings, and relevant behaviours about how CP involvement produces a specific outcome building upon the EBBE development. Taken together, it is appropriate and necessary to use the exploratory sequential mixed methods design to research the unexplored nature of the linkage between CP participation and the EBBE process.

Nevertheless, mixed methods research has its limitations and weaknesses. For example, the unbalanced competence of researchers in utilising different methods and possible contradictions between the paradigms underlying those methods will hinder the research process (Saunders et al., 2019; Bryman, 2007). Moreover, the different paces of quantitative and qualitative components can result in misaligned timelines and substantial time and effort for data collection, complicating the integration of findings (Bryman, 2007; Passey, 2020). Plus, both qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys rely on self-reported responses, with the potential for recall bias (Passey, 2020), which is about a participant who cannot remember or accurately recall an event or situation they are being asked to describe. By considering these weaknesses and minimising the risk, the research will be transparent about the challenges and limitations faced in integrating findings and provide context and clarity to the research community and stakeholders. Training and opportunities to develop skills in both quantitative and qualitative methods have been taken to reduce biases and improve integration. Significantly, treating the integration of findings as an iterative process that evolves throughout the research can help identify and address challenges as they arise (Bryman, 2007). Both qualitative and quantitative research were conducted after gaining the required ethical approval from the Ethics Committee at the University of Glasgow. The ethical approval letter can be found in Appendix B.

The overall research design has been summarised in Table 4.1. The subsequent chapters of this thesis elaborate on the research methodology and the mixed methods and present the key findings of the two studies (Study 1 and Study 2). Specifically, Chapters 5 and 6 discuss the qualitative phase's research method details and findings, while Chapters 7 and Chapter 8 are for the quantitative phase. Chapter 9 integrates the key results of two studies, providing a comprehensive discussion of this overall research.

Table 4. 1 Overall research design

Research objectives	a) To conceptualise corporate philanthropy in a business-related context b) To conceptualise employee-based brand equity as a development process	c) To advance the understanding of the linkage between corporate philanthropy and employee-based brand equity	d) To empirically assess the employee-based brand equity formation process in a CP-related context	
Purpose of this study	To clarify the conceptualisation and classification of corporate philanthropy and employee-based brand equity, construct their working definitions, and identify potential linkages	To further confirm, inform and provide insights for the components in developing the proposed EBBE model in a CP-related context	To examine and test the proposed EBBE model and relevant research propositions	**Interpret the connected results:**
Data collection	**Systematic literature review** Collect key papers and monographs according to six inclusion and exclusion criteria (see Table 2.1)	**Study 1** Semi-structured interviews with UK employees involved in corporate philanthropy in their workplace. (snowball sampling) *(N=21)* →	**Study 2** Pre-screening survey for a representative and qualified sample ↓ An online survey at Prolific was conducted with UK employees involved in corporate philanthropy in their workplace. (quota sampling -representative sample) *(N=263)* →	- Summarise and interpret how CP links with EBBE based on Study 1 - Synthesise the core conditions in the EBBE development process based on Study 2
Data analysis	**A three-stage systematic review process**	**Thematic analysis**	**fsQCA analysis**	

Chapter 5: Research methodology - qualitative phase

5.1 Semi-structured interviews and the development of the interview guide

In Study 1, semi-structured interviews are designed for employees who work in the UK and are eligible for CP activities in their workplace. By using semi-structured interviews, this stage aims to uncover new insights from real-life employees' CP involvement and relevant perceptions, feelings, and behaviours that can build up to employee-based brand equity that may not have been apparent within the current literature. During the semi-structured interviews, participants are encouraged to talk freely about specific pre-determined topics. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. This study contributes significantly to further informing the proposed EBBE conceptual model in the CP-related context and complementing the survey measurements in the following phase.

The semi-structured online or face-to-face interviews were designed to last 45-60 min to uncover the meanings and interpretations that employees attach to corporate philanthropy and branding. The interview guide consists of some prior questions based on existing literature and the conceptual framework, but each question is adapted to the interviewee. The interview guide offers a focused structure for the discussion during the interviews but should be adjusted accordingly and not be followed strictly (Kallio et al., 2016). Meanwhile, another fundamental principle of this interview guide development is to ensure that interview questions are open-ended so that the respondent is not unconsciously trying to seek out answers they think the researcher may want to hear. The interviews are also organised and adjusted according to the participants' background (i.e., whether they are managers or general employees and whether they have expertise in CP). The quality of the interview guide fundamentally influences the results of the semi-structured interviews (Kallio et al., 2016). The sequencing, constructing, and wording of questions, prompts and probes are also considered to build rapport and signal a shift to a new topic during the interviews (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Several revisions on these questions were conducted and checked by the researcher and supervisors until the interview guide (see Appendix C) was decided for the interviews to start. The main parts of the interview guide are elaborated on below.

In the introductory session, the researcher briefly introduces this research's basic setting and context and confirms with participants that they have read through the participant

information sheet and signed the consent form. In the warm-up stage, participants are invited to reflect on the last time they were involved in corporate philanthropic activities and provide a brief introduction to the activity. The interview guide's central questions are regarding participants' perceptions, attitudes, feelings, and relevant actions concerning the CP activities organised by the corporate brand. Participants are also encouraged by the interviewer to elaborate more insights during the follow-up questions, such as explaining why they would perceive those philanthropic-related aspects as essential efforts of the organisation and sharing their ideal corporate philanthropic activities. At the end of the interview, space is provided to check if the interviewees have any final viewpoints to convey or ask questions to the interviewer.

5.2 Sampling for interviews

The idea behind qualitative research is to select participants purposefully (Creswell, 2017). The researcher recruited participants through snowball sampling, a non-random, small, and purposeful sample selected and recruited according to specific criteria, with a set of respondents who can help identify more people to include in the study (Hair et al., 2021). According to the research context, the participant must work in the UK. Meanwhile, the participant must be eligible to participate in and have experienced corporate philanthropic activities at their workplace. Existing industrial reports provide context and directions for identifying participants from the industries which are the most active in organising or involving corporate philanthropic activities. The Giving in Numbers Survey report by Chief Executives for Corporate Purpose® (CECP) indicates that 230 companies took part in the 2021 *Giving in Numbers* Survey on their contributions in 2020. Within all industries, financials, health care, technology, industrials, consumer staples, and consumer discretionary are identified as being more active in philanthropic contributions than others. Meanwhile, according to the guide to UK company giving (2021/22), the top ten givers are dominated by companies from the financial sector (including Lloyds Banking Group, NatWest Group Ltd, Santander UK plc and Ecclesiastical Insurance Group plc) and retailers from the consumer staples sector (including Marks and Spencer Group plc, Co-operative Group Ltd and Asda Stores Ltd). As such, it is more possible to find people from the above sectors who have experienced corporate philanthropic activities than others. The above evidence suggests similar criteria of purposively searching for potential individuals

from the above industries as participants for this research. Following the given criteria and direction, the researcher contacted participants via snowball sampling. Specifically, the snowball sampling began with identifying relevant participants from the researcher's existing network and according to the individuals' job titles/positions and their LinkedIn posts relating to philanthropic activities. After a successful initial connection, a poster advert, and a brief introduction, as well as an information sheet and consent form (see Appendix C), were offered via email to help potential participants understand the research context. The researcher also asked for recommendations from the existing participants to identify more people to include in the study. In the end, 21 participants were successfully recruited.

Thus, the above process can ensure that the selected participants meet the unique criteria and are insightful regarding the research questions. Finally, when considering the sample size in this qualitative phase, the literature contains a variety of perspectives. From a review of many qualitative research studies, Creswell (2017) argued that sample size depends on the qualitative design used. Baker and Edwards (2012) suggest that the interview sample size can range from 12 to 60 interviews. Meanwhile, theoretical saturation is the essential standard for judging when to stop sampling. Saturation means that gathering fresh data no longer sparks new insights or reveals new properties (Glaser and Strauss, 1968; Charmaz, 2007). This implies the researcher could not explore new information from new interviews. Thus, interviews were concluded when data saturation was determined (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The saturation level in this research was reached when 21 interviews were finished. The interviewees' profiles are displayed below in Table 5.1.

Table 5. 1 Profiles of interviewees

No.	ID	Industry group	Job Title/Responsibility	Expertise in CP	General employee (E) or senior manager (M)	Working experience with the corporate brand (in years)
1	M1	Information and communication	Consulting manager	YES	M	19
2	F1	Accommodation and food services	Account manager	YES	M	4
3	M2	Accommodation and food services	Handyman and engineer	/	E	n/a
4	M3	Accommodation and food services	Receptions	/	E	n/a
5	M4	Accommodation and food services	Scheme manager	/	M	1
6	F2	Financial and insurance activities	Communications director	YES	M	10
7	F3	Professional, scientific, and technical activities	Former account manager	/	M	1
8	F4	Arts, entertainment, and recreation	Entrepreneur	/	E	n/a
9	M5	Financial and insurance activities	Loans Officer	/	E	1
10	F7	Financial and insurance activities	CSR and Sustainability manager	YES	M	5
11	F5	Financial and insurance activities	CSR Team	YES	E	12
12	M6	Other service activities	Networks Programme Development Manager	/	M	3
13	F6	Wholesale and retail trade	Foundation Secretary	YES	E	6
14	F8	Wholesale and retail trade	Community Champion	/	E	0.5
15	F9	Financial and insurance activities	Head of Corporate Responsibility & Charity Partnerships	YES	M	3
16	M7	Financial and insurance activities	Service Delivery Manager	/	M	17
17	M8	Financial and insurance activities	Head of Community Trust	YES	M	30
18	M9	Information and communication	CSR leader	YES	M	1
19	M10	Wholesale and retail trade	Community pioneer and shop assistant	/	E	n/a
20	F10	Wholesale and retail trade	Community pioneer	/	E	4
21	F11	Accommodation and food services	Customer Service Associate	/	E	3

Table 5.1. summarises respondents' profile. Specifically, there are ten males and eleven females. Eleven of them are senior managers, while ten of them are general employees at their organisation. The financial, insurance and banking industries dominate the industries they work for. Other common industries in this sample are retailers, accommodation, and food services. The interview duration ranges from 25 - 56 min, and most of them (17) were finished online via Zoom or Teams meeting, and four were face-to-face interviews in Glasgow.

5.3 Data management and data analysis

The data management process is depicted below, and the way of organising the data analysis is explained. Interviews were recorded via Zoom or a recorder on the researcher's mobile phone. Then, the data was transcribed verbatim using Otter.ai, which converts the voice conversations into written transcripts using artificial intelligence and machine learning. Given the size of the dataset, NVivo - a Qualitative Data Analysis Software, was used for the transcripts' storage and for facilitating data organisation and visualisation, but all analyses were conducted manually. The transcripts generated by Otter.ai were reviewed in NVivo by the researcher to ensure accuracy. The review process also helped with familiarisation with the data. A series of procedures, including coding, generating initial themes, developing and reviewing themes and refining, defining and naming themes, as well as summarising the overarching theme (Braun and Clarke, 2022) were fulfilled in NVivo.

The interview results are analysed through thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), which is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. It also refers to forms of qualitative data analysis that principally focus on identifying, organising and interpreting themes in textual data (King and Brooks, 2018). As a foundational method for qualitative analysis, thematic analysis can work both to reflect reality and to unpick or unravel the surface of 'reality' (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Coding is an important process in thematic analysis, exploring the diversity and patterns of meaning from the dataset and relevant quotes. Specifically, codes represent the smallest elements used to identify significant aspects within the data potentially connected to the research inquiry. These codes serve as the foundation for identifying broader themes, encapsulating

overarching patterns of meaning rooted in a central concept. Themes offer a structure for organising and presenting the researcher's analytical insights (Clarke and Braun, 2017). Themes or patterns within data can be identified in one of two primary ways in the thematic analysis: in a theory and literature-driven 'top-down' way or in a data-driven 'bottom-up' way (Clarke and Braun, 2017). Specifically, there are two types of codes: A priori codes (e.g., concept-driven codes derived from existing theory and literature before data analysis) and In vivo codes (i.e., codes that emerge and develop through the interpretation of the data) (Saunders et al., 2019). Moreover, axial codes are higher-order codes for further linking specific ideas to the original data and other concepts to explore the research topic's conditions, context, and consequences. This stage focuses on the construction of patterns and relationships. The identified patterns and relationships were grouped around a core category. An example of thematic analysis coding can be found in Appendix D.

The prior theory informed the coding and subsequent theme development and interpretation through the above process. In addition, some In vivo codes were identified which bear little relation to the elements in the conceptual framework and specific questions that were asked of the participants. Therefore, they offer new essential insights for the conceptual framework revision and finalisation as well as the survey instrument development. In vivo codes provide key insights and form themes emerging from the data rather than imposing preconceived notions. Taken together, the qualitative phase enriches insights that explain how employees generate perceptions, feelings, and behaviours related to CP and the corporate brands through the 'micro-level'. This process helps identify valid quotes, codes, and themes that can inform modification of the conceptual framework and the selection of critical items and scales with the quantitative feature, which makes the quantitative measure more specific and accurate. Based on the above principles and process, the thematic analysis coding frame of Study 1 is displayed in Table 5.2.

Finally, by reflecting on the limitations of this qualitative phase, social desirability bias should be highlighted as when individuals or groups portray themselves and their environment in a manner that aligns with social norms and expectations rather than ultimately reflecting their actual circumstances (Bergen and Labonté, 2020). This might result in the interviewee giving an incomplete account that portrays them or their organisation in a favourable light or in a way that aligns with the 'socially desirable' expectations (Saunders et al., 2019). Meanwhile, response bias can arise when an

interviewer's words, tone, or body language influence interviewees' answers. This may be because the interviewer/researcher might attempt to impose their own beliefs and frame of reference through the questions that are being asked (Saunders et al., 2019). The above bias might appear in this research, especially considering the specific research topic of corporate philanthropy, which could be naturally linked with social desirability. Moreover, as a non-native English speaker, the researchers' profile may also cause potential bias. As such, strategies including establishing rapport, clarifying the research purpose, ensuring privacy, and adopting specific questioning techniques (Bergen and Labonté, 2020) have been considered for refining these approaches and minimising bias, thus enhancing research quality and interpretation of findings.

Table 5. 2 The thematic analysis coding frame

Axial Codes	Codes (A priori & In vivo codes)	Descriptions
Employee-perceived brand-building efforts	<u>Brand heritage</u>	Employees, especially those who have worked for a long time for a specific brand, displayed evident familiarity with the brand and its CP's history and track record.
	<u>Brand vision</u>	Employees can appreciate the articulated overall picture and envisioned future of the brand, which indicates a possible intertwined linkage with corporate philanthropic thinking.
	Management support for CP	Organisations can acknowledge and support employee CP-related involvement through incentives and awards.
	Supervisors' leadership in CP	Employees appreciate the timely help and guidance from their supervisors in CP and emphasise the role of a transformational leader in empowering their followers to think and work independently and creatively and to feel valued.
	Internal communication for CP	Effective internal communication for CP that cares about employees' needs and offers meaningful storytelling and narratives for employees.
	The 'Human' factor	Linking with the corporate philanthropy or giving culture and the industrial background, employees observed the importance of the 'Human' factor or the 'people-centred' cultural change in their organisations.
Employee brand assimilation	Employee brand knowledge clarity	Employees can understand how CP is linked with brand purpose delivery and determine how to deliver the brand promise further through CP participation.
	Employee perceived fit: <u>Employee-brand congruence, Employee-CP congruence, and Brand-CP congruence</u>	There is a threefold perceived fit between the philanthropic cause, the corporate brand, and the individual employee in a CP-related context.

	Employee perceived benefits: <u>Brand-related and CP-related</u>	Employee-perceived benefits are identified as twofold in a CP-related context: brand-related and CP-related.
Employee brand affinity	CP-related pride	Employees' CP-related pride is sourced from CP activities 'genuine' achievements.
	Brand-related pride	Employees' brand-related pride is sourced from the longevity of a brand's CP involvement and the brand's honoured charitable partnership.
	CP-related trust	Employees could build up friendliness within the organisation and, therefore, identify the whole team as reliable due to CP participation.
	Brand trust	The perceived sincerity of the corporate brand persuaded employees to believe their brand is reliable and trustworthy.
Employee brand enactment	Brand citizenship behaviour	Employees' extra efforts beyond the call of duty can be more easily identified in the CP-related context due to corporate philanthropy's voluntary and discretionary nature.
	Employee brand endorsement	Employees can genuinely promote the brand due to their enthusiastic and positive feelings about the corporate brands' values and have 'goal-oriented' endorsement in a CP-related context.
	Employee brand development	Employees displayed brand development behaviours that actively affect brand development to improve customers' brand experience.
Overall employee-based brand equity		Employees can capture the ultimate branding effects on employees' and organisational efficiency and effectiveness in a CP-related context.

Notes: the <u>underlined</u> codes are In vivo codes. The rest are A priori codes that link with the initial proposed conceptual framework.

Chapter 6: Findings - qualitative phase

6.1 Themes about linking CP with EBBE

6.1.1   Involving in corporate philanthropy

During the kick-off stage of the interview, participants briefly introduced the CP involvements and the corporate brands. Regarding the types of CP, nearly all of them spoke of employee volunteering programmes. Some organisations also organise group volunteering or actively broker volunteering opportunities for their employees. Notably, they also pointed out that employees could enjoy autonomy and the time-off policy and get paid as usual while volunteering. However, the time off varies in the hours offered, ranging from 6 to 70 hours in varied brands. In several organisations, employees are entitled to autonomy. They can nominate and vote for causes that resonate with them, which means these employees can participate in CP-related activities from the early sketching stage.

Meanwhile, according to interviewees, financial assistance towards charitable partners, including one-off monetary donations and grants, is typical for some large-scale firms. Within them, some have specific preferences towards long-term generous partners, target causes and themes. However, offering financial assistance is not preferred for most small and medium-sized enterprises. According to participants, some organisations also play a pivotal role in expanding the diversity of CP. For example, some of them cover in-kind donations (providing facilities and space as a platform for charitable organisations and causes), and others involve employees in this process through payroll giving and employee matching gifts programmes. Brands belonging to customer-faced industries like hotels and retailers always involve cause-related marketing, i.e., raising money for charitable causes during a commercial exchange.

Importantly, not all participants focused on explaining specific types of corporate philanthropy. A few participants discussed a more integrated and embedded philanthropy model in their organisations. For example,

> *"...the project I am on is about how we use those donations to grow our business so that we can make more money to give back to charity. So, we call it the virtuous circle"* (M7) [Service delivery manager- insurance - 17 years with the corporate

brand]

During the interviews, participants covered diverse ways corporate brands carry out CP activities at multiple levels. Besides this, interviewees emphasised several ways employees can get involved in CP at work. Most participants commented that their corporate brand offers volunteer opportunities for employees with varied time-off policies. Notably, the importance of this initiative is revealed, especially when some corporate brands are generous in their time-off policies:

"...we allow colleagues to go and support it within some time there during the pandemic...it is still available now; we offer 70 hours for colleagues to volunteer during the year ... And that way, we hope to be able to encourage colleagues to support their communities, and make sure that they feel that we are also giving them the opportunity to do and things for causes that they care for." (F7) [CSR and Sustainability manager - bank - 5 years with the corporate brand]

However, one of the participants expressed that the main differentiator is not the specific voluntary related policy but the corporate brand's position as a volunteer brokerage to associate suitable employees with suitable charitable partners. The following quotes explain this concern:

"...The team can broker all manner of volunteering opportunities that we almost put on a plate for our employees to take up. The reason we get such a high percentage of people volunteering is because we make it extremely easy for them to volunteer." (M8) [Head of Community Trust - insurance - 30 years with the corporate brand]

Several participants gave specific examples of the opposing views caused by their perceived participation barriers and dilemmas, including the difficulties of finding appropriate voluntary opportunities and the lack of time to do this. These could explain why the corporate brands' mediating role can be confirmed as a critical component for accessible and successful employee volunteering involvement:

"...we were given those eight hours, but nobody really gave us any ideas of, you know, where we could use them...to be honest with you, I only joined once since I

worked with them because the job was quite demanding. So, I kind of felt like I was doing my own volunteering stuff on the side; whatever the company kind of committee suggested, I sometimes didn't have time for it... It is too time-consuming to arrange it myself." (F3) [Former account manager - eCommerce agency - 1 year with the corporate brand]

"In practice, only a small proportion of the overall colleagues here get involved in things like that. ...We also try to identify opportunities within the company to do that. Because sometimes it's hard for individuals to find an opportunity to do that voluntary service." (M1) [Consulting manager - software - 19 years with the corporate brand]

Another potential way to fix the absence of employees' active voluntary participation, according to interviewees, is enriching the organised volunteering from the corporate level, i.e., corporates could organise a giving day or giving month to mobilise employees:

"Because we've grown so much in the last three years. We were about 2000 employees about three years ago. And we are now like 12,000 and growing. We have decided to move it to a whole month, so the whole of May will be global giving month, so people have more opportunities and more time to put on things to get everybody involved." (F5) [CSR team manager - insurance - 12 years with the corporate brand]

In addition, several participants suggested that employees should have the opportunity to utilise their skills while volunteering, which could bring meaningfulness and resonance for employees. For example, voluntary auditing or monitoring for charitable organisations are common choices offered in financial industries:

"I think it helps colleagues to feel more passionate that what they're doing is part of their day jobs can be reflected in how we go about partnering with charities...it's a lot about how can we use all of the skills and energy of our colleagues so that they're involved in things that they feel comfortable and passionate about getting involved in...it resonates more with our employees..." (F9) [Head of Corporate Responsibility & Charity Partnerships - investment management - 3 years with the corporate brand]

As demonstrated above, when participants described employee participation in CP activities, they revealed employee volunteering as a salient type. While most acknowledged the necessary association between volunteering and time-off policies, other in-depth considerations are related to how corporate brands play meaningful roles in linking employees with charitable activities and how employees best use their skills in those volunteering initiatives. Although most organisations are satisfied with the primary setting, an ideal deployment may need to be contained to engage employees in volunteering better.

Employees' nomination of charitable causes is also frequently mentioned during interviews. This initiative highlights that employees are entitled to autonomy and can nominate and vote for causes that resonate with them during their CP participation. The openness of employee philanthropic nomination is the epitome of corporates' supportive gestures from the early sketching stage of CP. From managers' perspective, the consideration of creating resonance is also linked with the strategic business agenda, which was underlying the motivation of launching employee nomination initiatives:

> *"[...] We have three charities that were shortlisted and put out for colleagues to vote. So, for them to vote on the charities close to their hearts...you have a mix of both strategic but also emotional." (F7)* [CSR and Sustainability manager - bank - 5 years with the corporate brand]

> *"We asked employees to nominate whom they wanted to choose as a charity partner ... They want to find things that resonate with them...It gives them more autonomy to go off and do what they want... That's quite different because it fits into our own agenda regarding how the business is run. So, it looks at how we can help bring in talents into the organisation, as well as other partners." (F5)* [CSR team manager - insurance - 12 years with the corporate brand]

Additionally, gift matching is another widespread practice that displays how the corporate brand stands with its employees and financially supports and incentivises the causes they care for. For example,

> *"...we also support matched donation activities. If you're doing it individually, they can match funds up to 500 pounds for the activity. If you are doing a group of*

five or more people, we can match them up to 2500 pounds.” (F7) [CSR and Sustainability manager - bank - 5 years with the corporate brand]

“…we knew we had to incentivise people. One of the things was that for every person that donated through the platform, their first donation, whatever the amount would be matched with $100 from the brand.” (M9) [CSR leader - IT infrastructure services - 1 year with the corporate brand]

“…if you run the marathon or fundraise for a bake sale, the company will match 100% of your fundraising; we also have personal grants of 100 pounds, which employees can give to a charity of their choice. And that is doubled to 200 pounds if you also volunteer for that charity.” (F9) [Head of Corporate Responsibility & Charity Partnerships - investment management - 3 years with the corporate brand]

In this way, there was an intersection between employee nomination and gift matching. They ensure that employees and the brands are on the same page and at the same pace in CP activities. On the one hand, the frequent discussions of these two CP types demonstrate corporate brands' open and caring attitudes to equip CP activities closer to employees. On the other hand, manager participants also proved that the strategic consideration for the brands is embedded behind these CP initiatives.

After getting an overview of the employees' CP participation context, the following sections elaborate on the core themes relating to the development process of employee-based brand equity. Essential quotations from general employees and senior managers participants are displayed to support the results.

6.1.2   Perceiving imagery- and performance-related brand building efforts

When interviewees were asked to reflect on their CP involvement, they displayed some thoughts which link corporate philanthropic initiatives with the corporate brand building's functional, performance-related considerations, as Keller and Swaminathan (2020) indicated, which is the evidence of the brand-building block. Interestingly, some codes centred on abstract or imagery-related considerations also emerged during the interview.

Brand heritage. One of the recurring themes expressed by employees was brand heritage. Surprisingly, although participants were not asked about the history of the corporate brand and relevant CP activities, some spontaneously mentioned and discussed relevant topics such as track record and longevity. This could link back to the concept of brand heritage, which indicates that there is an organisational belief that a brand's history is important (Urde et al., 2007). Several interviewees offered special attention to and displayed evident familiarity with the history track record for their philanthropic programmes. For example,

> *"... and they were already doing a lot of charitable work as a business leading up to the establishment of the foundation in 1987... there was a program for over 20 years now."* (F6) [Foundation secretary - food retailer corporate foundation - 6 years with the corporate brand]

> *"... we were set up in 1999, by some kind of forward-thinking bankers, so it was looking to give back to the community in a sense and doing some good with the monies that we provide."* (M5) [Loans Officer- bank-funded charity - 1 year with the corporate brand]

Furthermore, apart from the time and longevity, the relevant establishment stories and ethos were also underscored and articulated. This phenomenon is in line with existing branding literature, which highlights the importance of certain noteworthy events in the brand's history, e.g., Keller and Swaminathan (2020). It is evident from the data that a historical record is not merely a piece of memorable information for employees. Besides, employees could internalise the in-depth meanings behind the philanthropic historical and traditional stories. For instance:

> *"...I'll give you a little story to start with. I always described to people that we have got a bit of a connection to Nelson Mandela. [...] We kept in touch with him very much through our history. So, it's got quite a fascinating story in terms of the background. That's how long we've been going."* (M8) [Head of Community Trust - insurance - 30 years with the corporate brand]

Interestingly, employees working with a brand for over ten years typically emphasised their clear perceptions of brand heritage. One of the interviewees argued that employees familiarise themselves with the brand's history because they have worked for the brand for

a long time:

> *"...this year is our 50th year; we were set up on the 31st of December 1973 ...The average length of service of our UK employees is about ten years. So, people are very familiar with this."* (M8) [Head of Community Trust - insurance - 30 years with the corporate brand]

Meanwhile, most interviewees who have worked for more than ten years for the brand regarded themselves as witnesses and participants in the organisation's history. As they observed the change and progress of the corporate brands, they became grateful for the organisation that they work with:

> *"... when I first joined the organisation, we didn't really give much money to charity; it's only been in the last sort of 10 years... So, the organisation has changed ... I think it's also in the last five or ten years I've started to appreciate the organisation I work for and its unique purpose. So, it's the opportunity to work for an organisation like this and make the most of it."* (M7) [Service delivery manager- insurance - 17 years with the corporate brand]

Furthermore, those long-served employees also confidently pointed out the values and historical significance behind the long-standing charitable work, such as how it would have a long-lasting influence on employees themselves and the communities even on attracting new talents:

> *"...the business has been supporting this financially for 50 years, proving that they can see the value of this, that as a business entity that we can bring to communities, but then also the value that our employees can bring to the communities... People feel great pride in working for us in the UK because of what we do in the community. So, increasingly, certainly what I have seen over the last 20 years is that graduates joining our business now are absolutely looking to join an employer that has the right ethical and moral credential ... then it's very sensible for the business, to be continuing to support us to be able to attract and recruit the best talent."* (M8) [Head of Community Trust - insurance - 30 years with the corporate brand]

However, it is essential to point out that others, like freshers or newcomers who do not share past experiences, may not be able to perceive in the same way. According to Pecot et al. (2018), informational asymmetry of brand heritage exists for consumers as most do not have direct access to a company's corporate identity. This may apply to employees and set a reminder for corporate brands to revisit brand heritage as an essential intangible branding and expand access to brand heritage for employees with different backgrounds and experiences.

The above discussion reveals a clear observation of brand heritage as a significant branding intangible in a CP-related domain. Although it is an emergent element from the interview results, it has the theoretical underpinning as one of the crucial aspects of building brand imagery, which unifies the past with the present and future in a unique way (Balmer and Burghausen, 2019). Its appearance is also consistent with the arguments of taking brand heritage as one of the brand intangibles which can differentiate the brands (Keller and Lehmann, 2006). Thus, it is crucial to include brand heritage as a key element in this research.

CP, brand values and envisioned future. Besides the reinforcement of long-held traditions about the corporate brand and its philanthropic activities, some participants also presented several forward-looking viewpoints during the interview. Significantly, some of them articulated the overall picture and envisioned the future of brands, which condensed as a set of guiding principles for brands (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001):

> *"Our overall picture is to promote the message that everyone deserves to live in a safe and healthy world of work."* (M6) [Networks Programme Development Manager - chartered Institute - 3 years with the corporate brand]

Importantly, employees reflected on how the envisioned future is embedded in CP programmes. In other words, employees perceived how the brand is considering its route forward relating to CP, which indicates a possible intertwined linkage between the brand and CP in terms of the overall guiding principles and the envisioned future. For example,

> *"It is not something we as an organisation considered previously, this idea of 'giving to grow and growing to give' and the virtuous circle. So that makes it different."* (M7) [Service delivery manager- insurance - 17 years with the

corporate brand]

"...we would want to make sure whatever the intervention is that we fund, or we actually get involved in ourselves, will have a tangible benefit, and a long-lasting benefit to people involved in that from the community..." (M9) [CSR leader - IT infrastructure services - 1 year with the corporate brand]

Moreover, according to some participants' observations, their organisations are attempting to make changes and progress from the past and to embrace and benefit multiple stakeholders over a long-time horizon. All this evidence reveals the importance of *brand vision*, which portrays the fundamental purpose of a brand - its reason for being and its core values (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001). Employees themselves are involved in reflecting on their roles in achieving and pursuing the brand vision, especially by linking with some philanthropic thinking:

"it's trying to see how we can create real change or society and become a better bank for customers, investors or colleagues." (F7) [CSR and Sustainability manager - bank - 5 years with the corporate brand]

"... I think it's great because not only can we make a big impact externally, but we can now look inwards and say: How can we make a positive impact internally? What are some of the areas where people feel, you know, we haven't taken seriously in the past that we can now really start to address." (F9) [Head of Corporate Responsibility & Charity Partnerships - investment management - 3 years with the corporate brand]

Taken together, it is essential to highlight that the concept of brand vision emerges from the interview results, which resonates well with previous literature and should be included as a critical aspect of imagery brand-building intangibles in this context of corporate philanthropy.

Management support for CP. Under the context of corporate philanthropy, participants revealed multiple and comprehensive ways in which their CP involvement was supported and acknowledged from the organisational level. These results appear to be in line with King and Grace (2010), who have articulated the importance of management support and

defined it as 'the extent to which an employee perceives that the organisation acknowledges and supports employee efforts'. Moreover, management support has been indicated to be the source of employee-based brand equity (King and Grace, 2009; King and Grace, 2012; Boukis and Christodoulides, 2020). Specifically, several respondents mentioned that organisations can acknowledge and support employees' CP-related involvement through incentives and awards. For example, employees can go home an hour earlier if they contribute to CP activities that day. Several brands award their employees to praise and acknowledge their efforts in CP participation:

> *"I create an incentive. I believe that people like to be motivated through incentives... One of the things that I've done is the people that go and do litter picking for an hour, which means you can finish early, and you can go home an hour earlier."* (M4) [Scheme manager - student accommodation - 1 year with the corporate brand]

> *"We also always tried to recognise and praise the efforts that people were making. So, they will feel motivated to continue to do it."* (F7) [CSR and Sustainability manager - bank - 5 years with the corporate brand]

> *"...we got this Diamond Award, which is awarded to employees who achieved 30% or more employee participation."* (F2) [Communications director - private equity firm - 10 years with the corporate brand]

Therefore, after reviewing the evidence about the employees' perceived management support in a CP-related context, it can be inferred that it is essential for corporate brands to know, care for, and acknowledge their employees' input in CP. The above evidence aligns with previous literature and provides new insights about linking the discussion of management support with the context of corporate philanthropy.

Supervisors' transformational leadership in CP. Several interviewees mentioned leadership concerning CP and were praised when they perceived their supervisors' leadership and their encouraging and passionate attitudes towards CP initiatives. These results appear to be in line with Boukis and Christodoulides (2020), who have recognised that supervisors' leadership is more influential and indispensable in interpreting and arranging the company's values and vision and therefore boosting employees' brand-

building, compared with the general leadership at the senior management level. Specifically, some respondents working for retailing brands mentioned how they were timely helped and guided by their supervisors when they just started the job involving CP:

> *"... my store manager wants to get involved with what I'm doing and encourage new themes as well... And my manager is huge on that, and she wants to get colleagues to talk about it, she wants to encourage it... this is because she's passionate about community and engagement via community...she's very supportive...she makes it happen."* (F8) [Community champion - retailer - 0.5 years with the corporate brand]

> *"...I just didn't know about local funding; I didn't know about how to present the brand to the local community… I was a bit stressed about it. And my boss is happy to come down [...] So my manager was quite there to help me out to understand the brand."* (M10) [community pioneer and shop assistant - retailer]

Interestingly, some senior managers occasionally reflected on their leadership styles throughout the CP activities. In the following cases, the manager described how other colleagues were entitled to have leadership during CP participation and reckoned that it would create involvement. Meanwhile, there are several positive evaluations of the 'transformational' leadership styles from employees' points of view:

> *"... I tried to get somebody else to be the lead in an activity or relating to that organisation. Sometimes that works. Sometimes, I have to take the lead in order to get something done. But yes, I tried to involve other colleagues all the time."* (M1) [Consulting manager - software - 19 years with the corporate brand]

> *"...you are asked if you would like to do that; rather than: 'Go out! Do this'. And I was very happy to be involved... It was pretty much the manager's initiative. But he does like to work collaboratively…It's very good because you feel involved very early in the process."* (M3) [Receptionist - student accommodation]

> *"...we get that support from an adoption point of view; our senior directors will try the things that we're recommending. And then behind us, they're on board to do these things. We also got a lot of time with the senior directors to interview them and ask them what they think we need to do for this 'give to grow - grow to give'*

circle..." (M7) [Service delivery manager- insurance - 17 years with the corporate brand]

In the above cases, managers were playing the role of transformational leaders. Therefore, they focused on empowering their followers to think and work independently and creatively and to feel valued and motivated. These results are in line with what has been proved that having a transformational leader who seeks to meet the higher-order needs of followers (Banks et al., 2016), is related to the willingness to comply with soft (but not harsh) power bases (Pierro et al., 2013). A better involvement in CP is satisfying employees' higher-order needs, which is why senior managers and general employees emphasised this simultaneously. Thus, the above evidence indicated the importance of the 'transformational' core of supervisors' leadership in a CP-related context. Instead of emphasising the supervisor's general role-modelling behaviours with brand congruence (Boukis and Christodoulides, 2020), the above results are more in line with the notion from Morhart et al. (2009) about brand-specific transformational leadership, which examines a leader's approach to motivating their followers to act on behalf of the corporate brand by appealing to their values and personal convictions. Thus, the evidence informs a focus on supervisors' transformational leadership in the CP research context.

Internal communication for CP. Another crucial aspect of branding efforts is that many participants perceived and discussed the different platforms and approaches used to promote CP activities and opportunities internally, including emails, posters, newsletters, and social media platforms. For example, they argued that the intranet and other communication mediums are critical in putting those volunteering opportunities in front of people. The brands tend to synthesise all the relevant information on all the accessible internal channels regularly. They also use the workplace as a medium for communicating CP-related information with their employees through on-site events, flyers, or networks. These results appear to be in line with Harris and de Chernatony (2001) and King and Grace (2009) regarding the importance of information generation and knowledge dissemination, as well as the diversity of communication forms as Burmann and Zeplin (2005) suggested. Specifically, participants mentioned how the brands synthesise CP-relevant information and create diverse internal communications, such as intranet, events, and network:

"We have an intranet... I will regularly put charitable news on there, saying,

'Here's an update on this charity; read a case study from the different charity we're supporting'. If we support a new charity, we do email our staff and say, 'Look, we'd like to let you know we've started a new charitable partnership with this charity. This is what they do'.... for our London staff, we have a 'charity day' ...We do this each year, and we support three partners each year. So, we put some fliers up and told them about that charity on that day." (F2) [Communications director - private equity firm - 10 years with the corporate brand]

"We also have another network, which we call sustainability business partners, our colleagues that are a bit more senior than the community champions. They have a direct connection with that team's executive leader and director, and they can also help us disseminate and engage colleagues." (F7) [CSR and Sustainability manager - bank - 5 years with the corporate brand]

Furthermore, participants highlighted how newcomers can get CP-related information during the induction, onboarding, and training sessions. They believed that it is also related to making people express better of the brand image. This also implies that CP initiatives and relevant communication have been embedded purposefully at the starting point of an employee's journey:

"When new people join, they have a 'join us' fair. We go down as a team to the fair and talk to people about the platform. What also happens is as soon as people are enrolled, they are introduced to where the training time to be talked through the benefits platform." (F5) [CSR team manager - insurance - 12 years with the corporate brand]

"we'll look to improve on our induction process until make people talk better about who we are and express who we are. We have some training support as well." (M7) [Service delivery manager- insurance - 17 years with the corporate brand]

Interestingly, more managers also highlighted that internal communication is needed to help employees better understand the CP's involvement and the brand. It is crucial to make employees feel relevant to the CP initiative through communication by telling employees former and exemplar stories, sharing 'real outcomes' and displaying relevant benefits. For example,

"...we try to empower our colleagues with information about the challenge that we are supporting. So, they can help their family and friends. And they can also take that knowledge to their personal lives as well." (F7) [CSR and Sustainability manager - bank - 5 years with the corporate brand]

"The main way that we can convince anybody to do it is to give some examples of what people have done before and that they enjoyed it and that there was a real outcome for the people who received the work, the money, the time, or whatever it was. That's the main way that you can motivate people to do something they haven't done before, which is to tell them some stories about how good it was last time." (M1) [Consulting manager - software - 19 years with the corporate brand]

By contrast, a few interviewees attributed the inactive participant rate of CP to the blocked communication channel. This result is in line with previous research from Harris and de Chernatony (2001), which admitted that communication plays a significant role in forming congruent perceptions, while an unfavourable image could result from the mismanagement of communication. One typical answer illustrated that the employee felt disappointed and became reluctant to join CP activities because employees did not get enough recommendations and ideas about how and where to use their volunteering time off. This participant, therefore, suggested a more organised approach to communication:

"... I think the company overall should announce this a bit more to its employees in the sense of the research, and in the city where the company is based, what kind of volunteering activities are available, and what employees can take part in. So, I think this would be a more organised approach." (F3) [Former account manager - eCommerce agency - 1 year with the corporate brand]

The lack of proper internal communication would cause a vague understanding of the meaning of corporate philanthropy. When referring to the meaning of communication, Harris and de Chernatony (2001) proposed that it should encompass the sending, receiving, and understanding of messages. The results align with the above definition by highlighting that internal communication needs to be meaningful for employees as recipients. Reflecting on the dilemma mentioned above, internal communication should not only inform employees about CP-related information; Instead, caring about the needs of employees and tailoring meaningful storytelling and narratives are also part of effective

communication. The above evidence, therefore, provides essential insights for linking internal communication with CP and branding.

CP and the 'Human' factor.   Interestingly, the evidence revealed that philanthropy has been identified as inherent or supplementary in different brand cultures. For some brands, the whole culture around the brand of giving back to the community is extremely strong. Corporate philanthropy or giving culture has already been embedded in corporate culture. Employees believe that this inherent culture, combined with human factors in the organisation, helps attract people to work there and nourishes the employees' natural passion for CP activities. For example,

> *"I think giving it's part of our business model; it is inherent to who we are...it runs to the core of the group… I think everyone that joins the group has that sort of charitable awareness and sort passion for working in their communities within them… we are quite lucky that we don't really need to convince people to support the initiatives that we run; it is part of why people come to work here… we're quite lucky in that we don't have to drag people to volunteering days, they'll come willingly..."* (F9) [Head of Corporate Responsibility & Charity Partnerships - investment management - 3 years with the corporate brand]

However, for most participants, the overall brand culture is more influential than the philanthropic culture. It is because they are already equipped with a powerful and precise brand culture, which is a general guideline for everything. Therefore, for these organisations, CP activities need to be aligned with this existing culture:

> *"We have our brand behaviours, which kind of guide the way that we support all different types of initiatives. We call that TEAMs. So, the first thing is about thinking customers are so that the T, the E is embracing change, and the A is acting now. And the M is moved together. So those are the guidelines for everything that we do within the organisation. When we think about philanthropy and sustainability, those behaviours are really well aligned as well."* F7 [CSR and Sustainability manager - bank - 5 years with the corporate brand]

In this situation where philanthropy becomes a peripheral attachment of a brand, several participants offered examples of some negative perceptions. Specifically, in the following

statement, it becomes challenging and impractical for employees to take time off and attend charitable events, especially for employees in different cities. It indicates that although philanthropic activities exist in several brands, philanthropic relevant culture is still peripheral, which may lead to superficial and inadequate employee engagement and could be a potential risk for a brand:

> *"Head office does a lot of like auction night; then they invite employees to join it from different cities... most people are invited. It's difficult to go down when you're working...it's impractical..."* (F11) [Event coordinator - student accommodation - 3 years with the corporate brand]

Meanwhile, it is inevitable that the culture in a particular industry will also powerfully influence their attitudes and practices regarding CP. For example, people working for a private equity firm argued that they had to pay more attention to revising the traditional negative perceptions of the public. It may seem like a reactive initiative based on the transformative society norm. Still, it can also be regarded as proactive because it was established on the consideration of building a corporate branding with an inclusive and friendly culture for prospective employees:

> *"... I think it's important to have that sort of corporate branding for prospective employees. If it's an inclusive and giving culture rather than a very aggressive culture [...], private equity is a bit like investment banking, but it sometimes has a bit of a negative reputation. People think ...it's very financial. And we have had people, sometimes politicians, sometimes journalists, say, oh, this brand is the more friendly face of private equity. They're not the aggressive types."* (F2) [Communications director - private equity firm - 10 years with the corporate brand]

Similarly, participants mentioned that factors like high turnover rate in the hotel industry also caused internal differences between momentum and giving culture in different hotel branches. It sets a reminder of being aware of the challenges of maintaining a consistent culture within industries like hotels due to high staff turnover, which makes it difficult to sustain momentum and continuity for CP involvement:

> *"there's a different culture in each hotel. You know, if there was already quite a strong culture [...] already in place, then it was quite easy to sort of keep the*

momentum going. But obviously, hotels are the kind of industry where there's quite a large staff turnover. In some places, it was quite difficult to keep momentum going because people would come in, and they would go out." (F1) [Account manager - Hotel corporate foundation - 4 years with the corporate brand]

There are also dynamic changes in brand culture and giving culture in several organisations, with more people-centred consideration and more focus on the real impact on people. Furthermore, there is a shift in organisational culture where corporations are increasingly held accountable for maintaining the happiness and satisfaction of their employees and creating positive, long-lasting impacts for people around them rather than solely focusing on financial growth or charitable contributions. The philanthropic context also offers more rationale for discussing the 'people first' or 'people-centred' culture. The following arguments provide clear empirical evidence:

"The pillar for giving back is part of our business directive of 'people first'. It is about putting people at the heart of the company to help drive engagement. So, the giving back pillar that makes sense to us as to how we can get employees to engage with our local communities." (F5) [CSR team manager - insurance - 12 years with the corporate brand]

"[...] And humans are people and not just access. So, helping to have a healthy and safe environment at work means that you're keeping the people at the core of it happy and safe. And it means it should positively impact the rest of your business. [...] I think the culture has shifted to where now corporates answer to their employees like they have a responsibility to maintain happy employees..." (M6) [Networks Programme Development Manager - chartered Institute - 3 years with the corporate brand]

"[...] there's a long-term change that I see as a real change of our culture ...what we should be talking about is the impact we've had on people. Because it's not about money. It's about changing people's lives." (M7) [Service delivery manager- insurance - 17 years with the corporate brand]

Notably, the above results are in line with the concept of the 'H' factor (the extent to which organisations treat employees like human beings), which has been incorporated as a crucial

element when examining brand equity (King and Grace, 2010). As one of the most recurring themes expressed by employees, it is vital to highlight the distinctiveness of the 'H' factor in this CP-related context.

To summarise, brands could adopt different CP-related practices based on their inherent or supplementary philanthropic culture. Importantly, employees also observed the importance of the 'Human' factor or 'people-centred' caring cultural change from their CP involvement. These results provide insightful viewpoints which are not only in line with the 'benevolent halo' of philanthropic giving (Chernev and Blair, 2015) but stress the importance of sustaining a solid corporate brand by changing the organisational culture to one which is more 'people-oriented' (Papasolomou and Vrontis, 2006).

6.1.3 Assimilating the brand values

A key stage of the interviews is to probe employees to discuss their awareness, associations, and attitudes towards the corporate brands in a CP-related context, which is in line with the concept of brand assimilation in the existing literature on branding and brand equity (Keller and Lehmann, 2006). Although the literature has suggested some potential cognitive dimensions, it is necessary to use empirical evidence to develop an in-depth understanding of the relevant concepts relating to CP and how they are embedded into the employee-based brand equity development process.

Employee brand knowledge clarity. During the interviews, evidence indicates that employees understand more about their organisations and what the corporate brand stands for throughout their CP involvement and, therefore, work as brand-related information carriers as Vallaster and De Chernatony (2006) suggested. For example,

> *"It's that impression that doing all of this philanthropic activity, getting the employees involved, really caring about this, doing it for years and years out, shows us a culture that we have that isn't just making money at all costs."* (F2) [Communications director - private equity firm - 10 years with the corporate brand]

> *"I think it is a safe, well-respected brand down to earth. […] it's a good place to*

work with good values. [...] So that's really what motivates me at work. And I'm really lucky in my role that I can do that." (F6) [Foundation secretary - food retailer corporate foundation - 6 years with the corporate brand]

"[...] And it shows me how important the community aspect as to the core, sort of supermarkets and business are like have some form of community aspects within them. [...] working in here and seeing how much they put into the community… how much care they give about and in a huge flag of honour [...]" (F10) [Community pioneer - retailer - 4 years with the corporate brand]

The above arguments are similar in how these employees can portray and even internalise some positive corporate brand image, i.e., 'isn't just making money at all costs', 'well-respected', and 'with good values.' Notably, the results also revealed that employees' cognition towards their brand and philanthropic or social-related activities are not independent but synergic and intertwined. Respondents have attributed some CP-related features to the positive aspects of the overall brand knowledge. Moreover, some respondents could clearly describe their roles at the workplace and how to deliver brand promise concerning CP-related elements:

"… my job is to liaise, you know, to liaise people with a community, to liaise them with the people from home." (M10) [community pioneer and shop assistant - retailer]

"… to see the incredible work our beneficiaries are all doing, and to play even a small part in bringing our Group's purpose to life [...] and inspiring us to tell our story more effectively." (F9) [Head of Corporate Responsibility & Charity Partnerships - investment management - 3 years with the corporate brand]

"... So, those philanthropic initiatives and community engagement empower people and make them feel more engaged to be part of the company, and that helps us continue to drive forward within our mission." (F7) [CSR and Sustainability manager - bank - 5 years with the corporate brand]

To summarise, it is revealed that employees can understand how CP is linked with brand purpose delivery and figure out how to further deliver the brand promise through CP

participation. These results appear to be in line with the concept of brand knowledge in terms of the distinctiveness, robustness, and positive nature of the associations (Keller, 1993). It is important to stress the distinctive, robust, and positive associations between CP involvement and employee knowledge clarity. The evidence indicates that employees become effective brand knowledge carriers when CP-related efforts are intertwined with corporate brands. The clarity of employee brand knowledge is thus suitable for inclusion in this research context.

Employee perceived fit. At the cognitive level, one of the recurring themes expressed by employees during the interviews was employee perceived fit, which has the theoretical underpinning such as person–organisation fit, with an emphasis on the match between employees' values and their perceptions of the organisation's values (Edwards and Cable, 2009). Notably, the dimensions of employee perceived fit have been expanded due to the dynamic interaction between employees and brands in this philanthropic setting. It is evident from the data that employee-brand congruence, employee-CP congruence, and brand-CP congruence are the threefold employee-perceived fit. This result appears to be in line with the sub-dimensions of perceived fit between consumers, brands and charitable causes, which has been underscored by Deng et al. (2023) in a consumer context study. The following evidence supports the emergence of the multi-dimensions of employee perceived fit in a CP-related context.

Employee-brand congruence. Many participants elaborated on the match between their personal values and corporate brands in the context of workplace philanthropic involvement. Specifically, participants highlighted the importance of having consistency between organisational ethos and personal beliefs and passions in their workplace:

> *"I wouldn't want to do this role for a business that perhaps operated in a way that I felt less aligned with personally."* (F9) [Head of Corporate Responsibility & Charity Partnerships - investment management - 3 years with the corporate brand]

> *"...I think everybody should have access to the arts. And I don't think it should be for just the privileged people. [...] I think part of the reason they wanted to employ me was because they could see that I connected with their ethos [...] I think there were many things about me personally that connected with the organisation. [...] And it's just something that I've always been really passionate about doing."* (F4)

[Project manager - art entrepreneurship]

"...prior to joining the Trust, I always been involved in charity activity, and that was always something that I was very, very passionate about as far back as I can remember. So, when the opportunity came to actually turn this into a job, and get paid to do this, then even better." (M8) [Head of Community Trust - insurance - 30 years with the corporate brand]

In the above case, the charitable feature serves as a meaningful occasion for employees to explain the rationale behind working for a brand or organisation that aligns with their personal ethos. Some employees noticed a mutual choice between the individuals and the corporate brands. In contrast, others were more determined to ensure that they work for a corporate brand with the alignment of their values, indicating the necessity of employee-brand congruence nowadays. Furthermore, the actual impacts that the corporate brand created through CP serve as another critical, credible source leading to values congruence between employees and the brand, which was stated explicitly:

"For me, that's one of the drivers that make me feel excited about the work that we're doing within something there. Because it's not just about creating fundraising initiatives or volunteering activities, it's actually trying to see how we can create real change or society and become a better bank for customers, investors or colleagues." (F7) [CSR and Sustainability manager - bank - 5 years with the corporate brand]

The above insight is important as it elaborates that a 'real impact' or positive influence caused by corporate philanthropy is critical in enhancing the congruence between employees and brands. By contrast, importantly, the absence of belief in CP's real impacts may lead to a low fit between employees and corporate brands. A few participants spoke of their interest in charitable work (e.g., the experience of working or volunteering for a charity in their spare time) as more meaningful than corporate philanthropic activities. Specifically, these participants believed that their self-organised philanthropic involvement is embedded as 'part of the DNA' and is more impactful than workplace philanthropic involvement:

"I would say my personal volunteering has probably been a bit more has been

more impactful than my work volunteering. [...] I think that's just part of my DNA is, just want to do a good job at supporting people and making things better for people. That's where I come from." (M9) [CSR leader - IT infrastructure services - 1 year with the corporate brand]

To sum up, employees may particularly value the ethos congruence between themselves and the brand in a CP-related context and care about the 'real impacts' of the CP initiatives. These ways, in turn, account for the fit between the employees and corporate brands, which are central to understanding 'how the people make the brand' (Hurrell and Scholarios, 2014). Furthermore, the appearance of a low fit between employees and corporate brands highlights the employees' subjective importance. It sets a reminder to explore further the effectiveness of employee-brand congruence in a CP domain.

Employee-CP congruence. Apart from the person–organisation fit, there was a keen interest in discussing the congruence between personal values and philanthropic causes or issues in this CP context. Specifically, according to manager interviewees who organised CP activities, most target causes of CP fall into the topics or categories that employees can relate to. The congruence between individuals' values and causes happens when people can put forward or contribute to something they care about. During the interviews, some managers commented on why they picked a particular cause by highlighting its resonance with their employees and how people can easily relate. They also decoded that ownership helps build the perceived fit between employees and causes, especially when some employees had a say in the target cause decision through a vote, giving them a sense of ownership and involvement in philanthropy-related topics. For example,

"We thought for people to be successful at our brand and the entrepreneurs we're backing. They will all have benefited probably from, you know, education to a certain extent. [...] helping elderly people ... felt like a good area and probably an area everyone can relate to." (F2) [Communications director - private equity firm - 10 years with the corporate brand]

"...it was decided that young people were the desired focus...So that was all sort of decided by a sort of a big vote like an employee referendum. People felt quite a lot of ownership over that... I think that the ownership made a big difference." (F1) [Account manager - Hotel corporate foundation - 4 years with the corporate brand]

Furthermore, it was evident that for many participants, contributing and making a difference in the local community is always their concern. Specifically, if the location of a CP activity is near people's workplaces or homes, then it could be the reason most people get involved and, in turn, make a tangible and immediate impact with passion for the local community. Some key arguments are exemplified in the following extracts:

> *"My community is important to me... and that makes me more passionate. I just want to work in a local community with people that are linked with and make a difference to... And that makes me more passionate. Because this is where I live, and I want to make a difference."* (F8) [Community champion - retailer - 0.5 years with the corporate brand]

> *"So, all of that volunteering activity is all local. It's what happens in your street, in your borrower, in your city, your town, your village, that for me is really, really important to that feeling of pride."* (M8) [Head of Community Trust - insurance - 30 years with the corporate brand]

Overall, the findings delineate that the fit between employees and philanthropic causes is important and lies upon employees' ownership, accessibility, and proximity in involvement in CP activities. In particular, this phenomenon is in line with the outlined donor-beneficiary proximity effect that donors typically favour helping those in need who are proximally close to the employees (Al-Ubaydli and Yeomans, 2017), proving the importance of the employee-CP congruence.

Brand-CP congruence. Interviewees also discussed the nexus between the corporate brands and their choice of philanthropic causes, which appears to be in line with the revealed importance of the perceived congruence between a social issue and the company's business (Du et al., 2010). According to recent research by Schaefer et al. (2019), the more employees perceived an alignment between CSR engagement and the brand culture, the more likely they were to think that their company has sincere CSR. Most respondents have justified the need for an elevated level of fit between the brand and the target CP causes. Interestingly, it is important to note that their attitudes are different regarding the congruence level. Specifically, some emphasised that charitable giving is part of their established business model, while others highlighted that the remit of their focal charitable causes is logically linked with their brand's mission or the industry background. For

example,

> *"And we feel it is quite important that we are supporting local charities and finding charities that tie in with our investment themes. [...] Giving, for us as it's really part of our business model, it is inherent to who we are."* (F9) [Head of Corporate Responsibility & Charity Partnerships - investment management - 3 years with the corporate brand]

> *"...to make sure that food is at the heart of the community. So that is what we as a foundation think is important for the communities that we serve. So, any work that we do is around that area."* (F6) [Foundation secretary - food retailer corporate foundation - 6 years with the corporate brand]

> *"So, if you take education, for example, it's in our interest to help support the pipeline of diverse talent into the tech industry, because one, it's not a diverse industry, in terms of gender, ethnicity, or socio-economic background as well. [...] we need to align with the priorities of the business..."* (M9) [CSR leader - IT infrastructure services - 1 year with the corporate brand]

In contrast to the above positive stance that supports creating a good fit between the brand and the cause, one participant discussed the drawbacks of the disconnection. Remarkably, without the excellent fit and connection, the symbolic power of a brand would fail to draw public attention to the target causes and vice versa, indeed diluting or even blocking the potential for 'real impact':

> *"...because you need to use your brand, and the brand is what gets people's attention. But then, if you delete it by giving in fundraising and partnering with charities that are completely opposed to your brand, then the brand gets diluted, and it becomes less powerful in order to do fundraising and to do other charitable work."* (F1) [Account manager - Hotel corporate foundation - 4 years with the corporate brand]

In most cases, practitioners suggest that CP should be part of the business model or at least be in line with the brand's mission. Participants also shared some observations of the comparison between one-off charitable giving and strategic long-term charitable partners

and highlighted the change from the former to the latter. It is evident from the interview data that employees tend to believe that strategic alignments can boost 'real impact':

"...we've kind of moved away from that model for charity giving on the strategic partner line; that's quite different because it fits into our own agenda as to how the business is run." (F5) [CSR team manager - insurance - 12 years with the corporate brand]

"That's one look of the process about making sure that you have charities that are aligned from a strategic point of view, that as a corporate, you can create real impact more than just philanthropic." (F7) [CSR and Sustainability manager - bank - 5 years with the corporate brand]

There are some cynical attitudes towards the discordant resonance between brands and causes. According to the informant, although CP is a socially valuable thing, some people take corporate philanthropy almost like a 'box-ticking exercise' and an 'add-on'. With respect for passionate and motivated individuals when contributing to their community, however, mixed feelings came to the interviewee. This interviewee revealed that the corporate brand did not pay enough attention to the philanthropic core of CP. To be specific:

"[...] There were some hotels where I definitely got the impression that the spectacle was more important than the fundraising. [...] It [CP] was seen as being important for the brand rather than inherently important in social benefit itself. [...] Sometimes their passion was being taken advantage of, you know, for a brand's needs or a brand's wants." (F1) [Account manager - Hotel corporate foundation - 4 years with the corporate brand]

Thus, the evidence suggests that brands should take this seriously when organising CP activities while keeping a genuine fit between the brand and the target causes. To summarise, sharing the same vital leitmotifs and matters of concern in brand missions and charitable causes, particularly over a long-term strategic partnership, is usually valued by employees. By contrast, taking CP as a 'box-ticking exercise' or doing CP just for 'looking good' would cause employees' sceptical attitudes.

As demonstrated above, it is reasonable to infer that it takes efforts to simultaneously

achieve congruence between the employees, the philanthropic causes, and the corporate brands. The following evidence indicates a high congruence between philanthropy, the corporate brand, and the individual employee. Notably, this status is not easy to achieve because the corporate brand needs to embed philanthropy as an integral part of what the brand does on a daily basis and genuinely stimulate employees' personal passion:

> *"I wouldn't want to do this role for a business that perhaps operated in a way I felt less aligned with personally. And it means that when I'm talking about my job with my family, or my friends, or people in my network, I feel I can genuinely sort of promote the brand.... And I think it's definitely improved my sense of loyalty and commitment to the brand. I'm really proud to work here. And I think it would be very, very difficult to be tempted to move elsewhere in the future. [...] So, I feel quite lucky to work for a company that has a core business of investing responsibly, which I think is, the right way of investing, and that's something that I feel passionate about."* (F9) [Head of Corporate Responsibility & Charity Partnerships - investment management - 3 years with the corporate brand]

The congruence between employees, philanthropic causes, and corporate brands is integrated but complex. This threefold employee-perceived fit could be a critical enabling condition for brand assimilation for further employee reactions.

Brand-related perceived benefits. Apart from the cognitive fit, interviewees also valued the benefits they got from their CP involvement, which appear to be in line with the proposed conceptualisation of the unintentional reciprocal CP. This finding also aligns with existing literature where the functional, economic, and psychological benefits that employees can obtain from the daily operations of organisations have been highlighted (Schlager et al., 2011; Stangis and Smith, 2017). Specifically, several participants identified that one of the benefits of CP is that it helps them to win a good brand reputation from public *recognition*. For example,

> *"The amount and recognition...is always about how can we contribute in a way that makes a difference and will benefit our companies as well, you know, if we're hiring great talent from the charities that we've worked with, or we're able to sort of further an investment theme, then it's kind of mutually beneficial... if you've seen the directory of social changes guide to UK company giving, it has the top 10*

corporate donors to charity, and we are number [x]." (F9) [Head of Corporate Responsibility & Charity Partnerships - investment management - 3 years with the corporate brand]

The term 'mutually beneficial' was mentioned in the above quote, and it is detailed as attracting talent, furthering investment, and reaching a top corporate brand ranking. These enrich the insights into the reciprocal feature of corporate philanthropy and how it can benefit a business brand, as well as how people can clearly identify it. It is worthwhile to note that the above informant is in a senior position, which may be why they attributed to the benefits at the organisational level. Another branch of perceived benefits is related to personal *developmental benefits*, i.e., acquirement of opportunities or improving skills at the workplace. These participants valued the benefits, which included exploring new routes and working with new people. For instance, the following illustrative quotes from the interviews point out this feature:

"It's been a great change in terms of working with different people of all levels. […] So, it's broadened my role." (F9) [Head of Corporate Responsibility & Charity Partnerships - investment management - 3 years with the corporate brand]

"...because this is a community role, and it's allowed me to go out and speak to many different people. it's improved my confidence personally." (F10) [Community pioneer - retailer - 4 years with the corporate brand]

"The more you get involved in different activities, the more you develop your knowledge of people and the knowledge of the community. I believe that knowledge is power. The more you know, the more power you have." (M4) [Scheme manager - student accommodation - 1 year with the corporate brand]

Thus, it is evident that both general employees and senior managers mentioned benefits they perceived personally from the corporate brand regarding knowledge development, confidence-building, and personal empowerment. Employees were especially entitled to their space and possibilities when working for the brand in the CP context, which led to proper developmental benefits.

CP-related perceived benefits. Interestingly, a more salient topic is that many interviewees compared CP with their daily work and commented that joining philanthropic-related activities makes them *do something different*. Importantly, these typical comments display that people have an open attitude to take philanthropic involvement as a beneficial occasion to step out of their bubble and reach out to the external, know each other and try new things:

> *"I suppose, you know, having different elements to your job is always good [...] it's quite a different part to my normal job, so I just find it interesting as just to be able to do something different. Make my mind work differently. [...] I think that the charitable element for me makes me feel keep that connection with the real world."* (F2) [Communications director - private equity firm - 10 years with the corporate brand]

Reflecting on the above argument, the importance of connecting with the 'real world' through philanthropic involvement has been emphasised, which appears to be in line with the concept of *social connectedness* (Brown and Leite, 2023; Dury et al., 2020). Specifically, the above participant instinctively situated social connectedness when the CP involvement brought them out of the vacuum of their workplace and working context to the outside 'real world'. Meanwhile, *connectedness* is also sourced from attachments and a sense of belonging within the workplace via the CP involvement. Here are some more representative quotes about this tendency and detailed descriptions of the benefits:

> *"I think when you're participating in philanthropic initiatives, you create a sense of community within colleagues. You reinforce cooperation, you reinforce a sense of belonging, you reinforce inclusion to all of this is quite important for us to be able to deliver and implement day-to-day activities... it empowers people, makes them feel more engaged to be part of the company, and that helps us continue to drive forward within our mission. Help people prosper."* (F7) [CSR and Sustainability manager - bank - 5 years with the corporate brand]

> *"you're also networking as well [...] it was an opportunity for more senior staff, and junior staff to come together and to and to build networks."* (M9) [CSR leader - IT infrastructure services - 1 year with the corporate brand]

The above CP-related benefits are also insightful regarding how perceived benefits are centred on connectedness at the internal organisational level, highlighting cooperation, networking, and engagement as essential aspects.

Taken together, notably, interviewees emphasised social recognition and developmental opportunities as key benefits linked with their corporate brands. Interestingly, others also highlighted that joining CP makes them do something 'different' and value social connectedness as a benefit. As such, employees identified how CP-related perceived benefits stand out from the general brand-related benefits. These insights, therefore, enrich the dimensions of employee brand assimilation in a CP-related context.

6.1.4   Having an affinity with the brand

After going through the journey from perceiving brand-building efforts to cognitive assimilation, individuals' emotional responses may emerge, which further indicate successful exchanges between employees and organisations and are essential to ensure employees have a genuine affinity with the brand and have the desire to deliver the brand promise (King and Grace, 2010; King and Grace, 2012).

CP-related pride. When participants were prompted to share their emotional feelings about the CP involvement during interviews, many mentioned different brand affinity concepts. The word 'pride' often comes up in the discussion. Interestingly, participants indicated multiple underlying reasons from diverse levels regarding why they felt a sense of pride. Generally, pride is framed as a positive, self-conscious emotion resulting from the appraisal that one is responsible for a socially valued outcome and, therefore, demonstrating how one is different from out-groups (Helm et al., 2016). In this research, employees generated values that fit with the corporate brand while perceiving the 'real impact' of making changes in society and contributing to the local community through CP involvement. This perceived fit might then upgrade to brand pride when employees feel the appraisal of socially valued outcomes. In other words, the results indicate that the perception of socially beneficial outcomes of CP involvement would evoke employees' emotions. It appears to be in line with the existing arguments about the significant effect of the 'genuine' achievements leading to the 'proper pride' as Lea and Webley (1997) indicated. Evidence is espoused in the following extracts:

"[...] when colleagues understand that what they're doing is not only fundraising, but they are actually making changes in people's lives that are most in need. They become prouder to be an employee. [...] We had over 3000 callers responding to that survey, and 95% of them said they were prouder to be our employee because of the partnership." (F7) [CSR and Sustainability manager - bank - 5 years with the corporate brand]

"[...] I felt the proudest was at that event that we had in June at the service of Thanksgiving. Because it's not about giving much money to charity, it's about what that money has achieved." (F9) [Head of Corporate Responsibility & Charity Partnerships - investment management - 3 years with the corporate brand]

"All of that volunteering activity is all local. It's what happens in your street, in your borrower, in your city, your town, your village, that for me is really, really important to that feeling of pride." (M8) [Head of Community Trust - insurance - 30 years with the corporate brand]

According to the above evidence, CP involvement is a crucial occasion for developing brand pride, while knowing 'what that money has achieved' such as in terms of 'making actual changes for the local' is the necessity and the core to build up the 'proper pride' among employees.

Brand-related pride. The sense of pride is also based on a brand level. For example, participants highlighted the history and heritage of their corporate brands' philanthropic involvement as a source of pride. Specifically, the following response underscored the longevity of a brand's CP involvement as well as this brand's role as a pioneer in taking the initiative to support corporate philanthropy from 50 years ago. It is also compelling evidence of how people are full of pride because of the nourished brand heritage in a CP-related context:

"It continues to fill me with an immense sense of pride. The UK business has been supporting this for 50 years when this was set up, back in 1973. Corporate Philanthropy wasn't that widespread. There's great pride that I have in the belief that (my organisation) could do this for the right reasons. This isn't some modern-day Corporate Responsibility fad we just decided to do." (M8) [Head of

Community Trust - insurance - 30 years with the corporate brand]

Interestingly, one of the interviewees also identified the reputation of their charitable partners as a source of pride. Therefore, this organisational partnership, cooperation, and collaboration lead to brand-related pride. Specifically,

> *"[...] It gives me a sense of pride that the company is working, you know, with what such a good reputable charity. And that we are."* (M3) [Receptionist - student accommodation]

This is insightful and appears to align with the fact that pride not only emerges from an individual's self-evaluation but can also be connected to relationships with others (Helm et al., 2016). Employees are proud when their organisation receives recognition in the outside world for being a worthwhile member of society (Helm et al., 2016). Contributing to and working with this honoured and famous charity helps employees find recognition for the company's brand.

To sum up, the above discussions elaborate on potential sources of CP-related and brand-related pride, which is in line with Gouthier and Rhein (2011)'s arguments about pride can be based on the perception of a successful event related to the organisation and the general perception of the organisation. Specifically, CP's positive real impact, heritage, and reputable partnerships generate pride from different levels and help distinguish the nuance between CP-related pride and brand pride. Moreover, it is essential to note that the emotional feelings throughout the process could also be affected by the dynamic and intertwined nature of the relationship between employees, corporate brands, and charitable organisations.

CP-related trust. Another significant feeling concerning CP involvement expressed by interviewees is trust. Some participants explicitly articulated that CP activities allow people from different departments to work together for a common charitable target. As such, employees accumulate trust and build a bond with other colleagues. These feelings are particularly evident in the following response:

> *"...So next time you have a project with that person, you might see them on different lines or know you can count on them. Because when we did that challenge*

> *together. So, it kind of breaks that organisation silos a little bit creates some more tweaks and a little bit of friendliness across the team and makes people feel that they can count on each other more likely."* (F7) [CSR and Sustainability manager - bank - 5 years with the corporate brand]

In the above CP participation scenario, employees could achieve common targets and missions together, build up friendliness within the organisation, and therefore, identify the whole team as reliable. This appears to be in line with trust being regarded as essential to any positive exchange relationship (Gould-Williams and Davies, 2005) and explains how people generate trust from their CP participation.

Brand trust. Some respondents also identified their corporate brand as trustworthy with features of being 'safe', 'down to earth' and 'well-respected', which appears to align with the argument that brand personality and sincerity can foster brand trust (Rampl and Kenning, 2014). These employees derived trust due to their belief in the brand's sincerity. For instance,

> *"...It has a good reputation, but particularly in the low piece is very well known. Because this is like, it grew up as a business. And it's a safe, well-respected brand down to earth […]. So yes, it's a good place to work."* (F6) [Foundation secretary - food retailer corporate foundation - 6 years with the corporate brand]

Taken together, CP-related trust could be nourished when employees go through CP-related engagement together. The perceived sincerity also persuaded employees to believe their corporate brand is reliable and trustworthy. All of these imply the mechanism for generating trust from different levels and are in line with the argument from Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) that successful reciprocal exchanges could develop trust.

6.1.5 Taking actions for the brand

During the interviews, participants also described present behaviours and future behavioural intentions considering their CP participation and the corporate brand. These descriptions are always in line with existing literature, which centres on positive brand enactment behavioural dimensions (King and Grace, 2010), where employees engage in the brand and diffuse their brand experience across the organisation (Boukis and

Christodoulides, 2020).

Brand citizenship behaviour. Specifically, in a CP-related context, some employees displayed behaviours that are nonprescribed or 'above and beyond the norm' as King et al. (2012) and Xiong et al. (2013) outlined. For example, one of the interviewees mentioned that they voluntarily took responsibility and engaged in the initiatives for promoting philanthropic activities in their organisation even when there was no specific position for them:

> *"That it's not my job to do that. But it's something I enjoy doing, so I have voluntarily taken responsibility for promoting philanthropic activities and STEM support. And I've been doing that for at least 15 years, probably closer to 20 years."* (M1) [Consulting manager - software - 19 years with the corporate brand]

This phenomenon may reveal a lack of proper formal CP organisation for certain corporate brands. Notably, the above description also exhibited the enjoyment of the voluntary help and the persistence of the helping behaviour, which appears to reflect the three determinants of brand citizenship behaviour: helping behaviour, brand enthusiasm and self-development (Burmann et al., 2009a).

Meanwhile, some senior managers also generated ideas and initiatives on specific aspects of CP while mentioning how these ideas link with their corporate brands' situation, such as promoting voluntary mentoring programmes and investing more employees' skills to support communities. As such, these employees go the extra mile in terms of making sure the branding and organisational considerations are always embedded in their CP initiatives:

> *"[...] I started doing some mentoring because of my job... I'm actually one of the mentors on that because I thought, well, this is a great thing we can do as a corporate."* (F2) [Communications director - private equity firm - 10 years with the corporate brand]

> *"One thing that we would like to do is use the skills of our colleagues like marketing skills, financial skills, and IT skills in order to provide support for our communities. So, try to expand our projects to use the knowledge of our colleagues to support our communities."* (F7) [CSR and Sustainability manager - bank - 5 years with the

corporate brand]

Interestingly, although one interviewee complained that they did not get enough support to access CP involvement in their previous workplace, they would still be open to relevant future opportunities in the upcoming workplaces. This implies that the willingness to take action for CP might be transferred to the following workplace when turnover happens:

"... it did kind of encourage me. You know, to do more of that in all my coming workplaces. I do feel like I'm more like, inspired and encouraged to kind of, you know, organise something like this myself, or like, even implemented on my team or, like, in my own company, if this ever becomes an option." (F3) [Former account manager - eCommerce agency - 1 year with the corporate brand]

The above cases exemplified how employees go beyond the norm and call of duty to deliver the brand promise when embracing philanthropic initiatives. Due to its voluntary and discretionary nature, corporate philanthropy may naturally link with the employees' extra efforts beyond the call of duty. This CP-related context provides a momentous occasion to examine the mechanism of employees' extra-role behaviours in delivering the brand promise.

Employee brand endorsement. Interviewees also reflected on the actions of posting and promoting CP-related topics on their social media and during their daily life in a positive way. Some even mentioned that they encouraged family and friends to sponsor their CP initiatives via social media and events. These actions appear to be in line with the existing concept of employee-level word of mouth as well as similar concepts such as verbal behaviours and employee endorsement (King and Grace, 2010; Xiong et al., 2013), which embraces the employees' behaviours relating to saying positive things about the organisation and readily recommending the organisation to others.

The interviewees revealed the mechanism and significance of genuine brand endorsement. For example, some of them introduced their corporate brand during events focusing on how the corporate brand is recognised as a massive charity donor. Interestingly, during the endorsement, they would set the priority of talking about and underscoring the philanthropy-related features of their brand rather than mentioning the industrial features like finances or insurance:

"If I was meeting you at a party, and you asked me what my job was, I work in insurance, but I work for an organisation that enriches the lives of thousands of people. And you know, we're a massive charity donator. And that's a much more interesting thing for me to talk about and engage with you. That's something you'd probably be more interested in. And suddenly, that will probably make me feel better." (M7) [Service delivery manager- insurance - 17 years with the corporate brand]

The interview results also indicated that the critical thing for endorsement is that employees can genuinely promote the brand instead of taking this as a task. These genuine endorsements derive from employees' enthusiastic and positive feelings about the values of the corporate brands. Once again, the alignment between personal and organisational values is essential here. These employees would, therefore, encourage others to feel the same way and influence others' attitudes towards this corporate brand. Moreover, they would also recommend others to work for the same brand. The evidence below indicates and explains this point:

"[...] when I'm talking about my job with my family, or my friends, or people in my network, I feel I can genuinely sort of promote the brand...you know, look at the whole picture, it's a really powerful story across the board..." (F9) [Head of Corporate Responsibility & Charity Partnerships - investment management - 3 years with the corporate brand]

"I'm passionate about it... I talk about it to others, outside of work, I hope I give them the confidence to feel that's great." (F8) [Community champion - retailer - 0.5 years with the corporate brand]

"So, whenever I see a vacancy come up, and I know that there's somebody in that area that is looking for a job, I will happily encourage people to take this job; this job has been purely beneficial for me [...] I definitely would encourage people to get that experience [...] I have a Twitter page for my community role. On my personal social media... On LinkedIn, I'm happy to share that I work for the brand... it's a very good job to be proud of." (F10) [Community pioneer - retailer - 4 years with the corporate brand]

Employee brand endorsement mainly captures employees' positive external communication (Xiong et al., 2013), while one of the manager participants provided a hidden premise of this endorsement during the interview. It was pointed out that managers or colleagues already in the CP project may need to communicate and share the unique brand purpose with colleagues internally and then make them share it externally to differentiate the brand. In other words, from a senior manager's perspective, employees' external endorsement is based on adequate internal conversations and understanding as well as genuine passion:

> *"It is the people who aren't on this project, and how can we influence them to have those conversations as well? Because I've been on this project, I'm very engaged and very passionate about our purpose. It's how we do that to share our purpose and our message with our colleagues to share it externally."* (M7) [Service delivery manager- insurance - 17 years with the corporate brand]

Interestingly, another interviewee synthesised three objectives for their brand endorsement attempts, which appears to be in line with Schmidt and Baumgarth (2018)'s arguments about 'goal-oriented' endorsement. Specifically, the first is to raise the profile of the organisation and its employees. Another part of this is raising the profile of partner charities. Finally, it is for sharing ideas and raising individual profiles. This argument also exactly reflects the three key dimensions of employee perceived fit in the context of corporate philanthropic involvement, i.e., employees, the corporate brand, and the charitable partners. As such, it enriches the conversion of this integrated CP-related research context:

> *"The reason I post is primarily to raise the profile. So other people can see the good work its employees are doing. Okay, that's one reason. The other reason is that we are a large name, and we're quite well known. And bear in mind that many of the charities we work with are small. It's a really good profile for those charities. [...] Part of it is raising the profile of our partner charities. Part of it is putting ideas out there that others may pick up on and want to speak to me about. [...] And part of it is raising my profile. [...] It's multifaceted."* (M8) [Head of Community Trust - insurance - 30 years with the corporate brand]

Additionally, it is essential to note that employee brand endorsement may differ in different business models, sectors, or industries. Notably, an interviewee from a B2B organisation tentatively said that they were trying to avoid only using CP-related initiatives to get good publicity. Meanwhile, it is also surprising to find it difficult for employees to raise awareness for corporate foundations. The following evidence may infer that employee brand endorsement is not always applicable to every context:

"When we're B2B, so it's a small audience. [...] You don't want to look like you're overdoing it. You want to show people we're doing this right here, not because we're trying to get good publicity. [...] You don't want to shout too much. [...] We don't want people to think we're doing it just to get the publicity." (F2) [Communications director - private equity firm - 10 years with the corporate brand]

"This is a big challenge for the foundation. Because most people will have heard of the business brand, most people will not be aware of the foundation. We haven't historically shouted about what we do... we do have a road ahead to raise awareness." (F6) [Foundation secretary - food retailer corporate foundation - 6 years with the corporate brand]

Therefore, it is always insightful when highlighting the importance and complexity of creating genuine employee advocacy and the multifaceted purpose and features of brand endorsement based on CP initiatives.

Employee brand development. During the interviews, some individuals, specifically those in customer-facing roles, actively enhance their customer participation engagement, showing a tendency to foster further development with their customers and contribute to the brand's success. These employee brand development behaviours actively affect brand development to improve customers' brand experience (Piehler et al., 2016). For example:

"We developed internally a way for us to flag into the customer profile if the customer has a certain type of vulnerability. So, when that customer would go into a branch or would call the contact centre, we would have that flag on their profile and be able to support them in a more comprehensive and more empathetic way as well…the first thing is about 'Thinking Customer' are so that the 'T'… it's about how we're using those charity initiatives …in order to become a better bank for

our customers and society." (F7) [CSR and Sustainability manager - bank - 5 years with the corporate brand]

The above evidence indicates that employees' brand development occurs alongside philanthropic involvement and considerations. According to the above argument, charity initiatives are the means to achieve the aim of becoming a better bank for customers and society. Similarly, as staff working for student accommodation and having students' groups as their customers, one of interviewees declared, *I would like to offer more mental health support to students*. Therefore, incorporating the brand development dimension into the EBBE discussion is meaningful, especially considering customer-contact employees, who are active participants in brand development (Morhart et al., 2009). It offers the potential to link the analysis of employees' behaviours with customer touchpoints.

6.1.6   Identifying the brand's overall strength

The interview data has shown that the employees can also identify a brand's overall strength. The identification of this overall strength has been noted in the latest literature, e.g., Chatzipanagiotou et al. (2023). The overall employee-based brand equity (OBE) captures the ultimate effects on employees' and organisational efficiency and effectiveness from a set of employees' perceptions, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours toward the organisational brand. For example, some employees mentioned the overall motivating effect of holistically identifying their organisation's charitable involvement. Others even portrayed the overall big picture of how philanthropic initiatives are tied to their overall career aspirations and organisational effectiveness:

> *"Seeing the wide range of charities that we as a business interact with and support has been both refreshing and motivating."* (F9) [Head of Corporate Responsibility & Charity Partnerships - investment management - 3 years with the corporate brand]

> *"I'm now in a role that is even more aligned with my longer-term career aspirations."* (M6) [Networks Programme Development Manager - chartered Institute - 3 years with the corporate brand]

"I'm supporting those causes, and then we have that strategy, and that we have that commitment to communities, makes me want to continue to be part of the [x brand] makes me want to continue to strive forward into helping us continue to build those philanthropic, community, and strategic initiatives so that we can support the brand, but most of all, that we can support society." (F7) [CSR and Sustainability manager - bank - 5 years with the corporate brand]

Therefore, the overall employee-based brand equity is a more condensed concept to understand the vital contribution of employees to brand success, and it could be an essential outcome that also deserves careful consideration and examination.

6.2 Finalised dimensions of the conceptual framework

The interview results uncover and provide insights about employees' CP involvement and perceptions, feelings, and behaviours that can build up employee-based brand equity. The extensive literature review and the qualitative research findings demonstrate that different interrelated brand concepts coexist in various building blocks. Meanwhile, some emerging key themes also provide an update on the previously proposed conceptual framework. The following discussion focuses on a further explanation of the meaning of the EBBE blocks and offers a finalisation of the EBBE development model.

Employee Brand Building Block (BBB) is the starting point of the conceptual framework with corporate brand building's functional, performance-related considerations as Keller and Swaminathan (2020) suggested. The most striking result emerging from the qualitative data is the two new themes of brand building: brand heritage and brand vision.

Brand heritage. As evidenced in the interviews, participants always portray their perception of a CP programme's history and duration as well as the track record and longevity of their corporate brands. Moreover, some employees believe the brand's CP-related heritage can differentiate it. These correspond with the brand heritage scholarship in past research and indicate an organisational belief that a brand's history is important (Urde et al., 2007). As one of the foundational past-related marketing concepts, heritage offers the theoretical bedrock for instrumental and performative marketing categories and phenomena (Balmer and Burghausen, 2019). Brand heritage is also regarded as one of the

brand intangibles and the valuable corporate assets that can differentiate the brands (Keller and Lehmann, 2006; Urde et al., 2007). The interview results also uncovered the potential informational asymmetry of brand heritage and, therefore, are in line with Pecot et al. (2018). Moreover, the results indicate the rich meaning of brand heritage and resonate deeply with the suggested dimensions (longevity, stability and adaptability) as a branded representation of the past (Pecot et al., 2019). Furthermore, the corporate heritage notion is regarded to represent a distinct and meaningful vector of the past by coalescing and transcending the past, present and prospective future (Balmer and Burghausen, 2019). Nevertheless, as corporate philanthropy is embedded with the temporal accumulation of fortune and based on the historical setting, it is inevitably linked to the discussion of brand heritage. Therefore, in this research, corporate heritage is regarded as an essential dimension for brand building in the conceptual framework.

Brand vision. From the qualitative data, it was identified that employees valued the envisioned future of the brand. Meanwhile, some employees proposed that the brand's future is intertwined with themselves and CP activities. The phenomenon is in line with existing brand vision literature, which argues that the fundamental purpose of the brand - its reason for being - and its core values serve as a set of guiding principles for a brand (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001). The possible linkage between employees and brand vision is suggested from past research, which indicates that a well-conceived brand vision enables employees to appreciate better the journey they are undertaking (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001). The results also indicate the importance of three interlinked components that constitute brand vision, which are envisioning a desired future, identifying a brand purpose and making explicit the brand values (de Chernatony, 2010). As evidenced in interviews, employees always care about how the brand could bring about a better world – the unique contribution it can make to society via its distinctive values. In this research, brand vision is defined as the extent to which employees perceive the organisational brand's core purpose and envisioned future and understand how their roles relate to it. In this way, this research incorporates brand vision as another critical factor for the brand-building block of EBBE.

Besides brand heritage and vision, four key concepts have been built into the EBBE conceptual framework according to the existing literature: **management support for CP, supervisor leadership for CP, internal communication for CP and the 'H' factor in Corporate Culture**. The interview results enrich the insights and explanation of these key

branding concepts in the CP-related context.

Management support for CP is confirmed as another significant condition for employees to perceive effective brand building. This concept was detected in the research from King and Grace (2010), in which management support is defined as 'the extent to which an employee perceives that the organisation acknowledges and supports employee effort'. Interviewees' insights signify that employees perceive and value the incentives and awards that the corporate brands created to acknowledge and support employees' CP-related efforts. The results align with relevant research indicating management support is critical for brand management success (Burmann and Zeplin, 2005; de Chernatony, 2010; Piehler, 2018; Punjaisri and Wilson, 2017). Leadership encapsulates the ability to influence people toward attaining organisational goals (Daft and Marcic, 2013). Plentiful prior researchers highlighted that supervisors and managers could support their followers in fulfilling the brand promise through their brand-oriented leadership (Burmann and Zeplin, 2005; Piehler, 2018; Vallaster and De Chernatony, 2006). As evidenced in the above qualitative insights, in the CP-related context, employees particularly valued the 'transformational' leader, who seeks to meet the higher-order needs of followers (Banks et al., 2016) with soft (but not harsh) power bases (Pierro et al., 2013). In this way, including supervisor leadership for CP clearly corresponds with previous literature and contains fresh significant viewpoints about leadership's 'transformational' nature in the CP-related context. Plus, interviewees reflected on how corporate brands use different platforms and approaches (emails, posters, newsletters, intranet, and social media platforms) to internally promote CP activities and opportunities and build up compelling organisational storytelling. They also argued that limited or inappropriate communication would be a discouraged element of CP participation. The above evidence resonates well with existing research, such as King and Grace (2009), Boukis and Christodoulides (2020) and Biedenbach and Manzhynski (2016), relating to the critical effects of internal communication in fostering favourable brand perceptions. Thus, the above arguments support the inclusion of internal communication into the brand-building block. Interestingly, according to the interviewees, philanthropic culture was observed to be inherent or supplementary in different brands and their organisational culture. Nevertheless, a common observation from interviews is that most organisations have recently shifted to a more people-centred culture. This culture shift is applicable in the CP-related context where employees could attribute a prosocial identity to the organisation - they come to see their organisation as an institution that cares (Grant and Ashford, 2008) and appreciate the 'benevolent halo' of philanthropic giving (Chernev and

Blair, 2015). This is in line with the initiative from King and Grace (2010) of incorporating the 'H' or Human factor (the extent to which organisations treat employees like human beings) as a contextual, cultural element when examining brand equity.

To sum up, this study suggested six interrelated concepts as the critical components in the brand building block (see Table 6.1), which is the first stage of the EBBE development process, namely: brand heritage, brand vision, management support for CP, supervisor leadership for CP, internal communication for CP and the 'H' factor in Corporate Culture.

Table 6. 1 Finalised employee brand building block

Brand Building Block (BBB)			
Dimensions	**Definition**	**Key evidence from interview**	**Key relevant literature**
Brand Heritage	The extent to which employees find historical importance and a branded representation of the past	F6 we fall within a hardship program for over 20 years M5 we were set up in 1999, by some kind of forward-thinking bankers M7 in the last five or ten years I've started to appreciate the organisation and its unique purpose M8 we have got a bit of a connection to Nelson Mandela...this year is our 50th year	Pecot et al., (2018); Urde et al., (2007)
Brand Vision	The extent to which employees believe in the organisational brand's core purpose and envisioned future	F7 see how we can create real change or society F9 not only can we make a big impact externally, but we can now look inwards M7 'giving to grow and growing to give' M9 make sure the intervention... will have a long-lasting benefit to people	De Chernatony (2010); Harris and de Chernatony (2001)
Management Support for CP	The extent to which employees perceive that the organisation acknowledges and supports employee involvement in CP	F4 Offered me advice; supportive and flexible F5 Help them find opportunities F7 recognise and praise the efforts that people were making; A network; ambassadors; in-depth training M4 people like to be motivated through incentives M8 The team can broker all manner of volunteering opportunities	King and Grace (2009); King and Grace (2010); King et al., (2012); Boukis and Christodoulides (2020)
Supervisor Leadership for CP	The extent to which employees perceive the supervisor's transformational leadership in CP	F7 my manager/ the leadership is... encouraging, passionate and supportive M1 tried to involve other colleagues M3 work collaboratively...feel involved very early in the process M10 my manager was quite there to help me out to understand the job	Banks et al., (2016); Boukis and Christodoulides (2020); Morhart et al. (2009); Pierro et al. (2013)
Internal Communication for CP	The extent to which employees understand the delivered internal information of CP with effective contents, channels, and frequency	F7 my manager/ the leadership is... encouraging, passionate and supportive F5 Platform, Facebook site, 'join us' fair and newsletter F3 the company overall should announce this a bit more F7 The business partners can also help us disseminate and engage colleagues M1 convince anybody to do it is by giving some examples and real outcomes M7 Improve our induction to make people talk better about who we are and express who we are	Biedenbach and Manzhynski (2016); Boukis et al. (2017); Boukis and Christodoulides (2020); King and Grace (2009); King and Grace (2010)
'H' Factor in Corporate Culture	The extent to which employees perceive their organisation treats them like human beings with respect and care	F2 inclusive and giving culture F5 giving back is part of our business directive of people first F9 Giving is inherent to who we are M6 culture has shifted to where now employers answer to their employees M7 A real change of our culture … is about changing people's lives M9 A real culture of service from day one	Harris and de Chernatony (2001); King and Grace (2009); King and Grace (2010)

Brand Assimilation Block (BAsB) is the next phase following employees' perceptions about the above CP-related brand-building efforts, which is related to a set of employees' cognitive reactions that can be synthesised into the EBBE Model. The interview results suggest that under certain branding efforts, employees could understand the delivery of brand promise, therefore corresponding with Vallaster and De Chernatony (2006)'s illustration of employees' role as brand-related information carriers in successful branding. The interviews also provide insights about brand knowledge clarity is shaped by employees' accumulated prior knowledge and thus becomes a crucial factor influencing EBBE (Baumgarth and Schmidt, 2010). Thus, **employee brand knowledge clarity** is included in the BAsB block.

Interestingly, other cognitive aspects showed a significant interaction between employees, corporate brands, and relevant philanthropic causes. Enriched sub-dimensions arose for the **employee's perceived fit**, for example, in discussions of the different dynamic fits of these three subjects and the reasons behind them. As Deng et al. (2023), Nan and Heo (2007) and Uzunoğlu et al. (2017) suggested in previous relevant research, the fit should be a multidimensional concept because it originates from multiple sources. Specifically, interviewees always emphasise the importance of working for a brand and organisation that aligns with their personal ethos. This phenomenon displays the **employee-brand congruence***,* which indicates the person–organisation fit, with an emphasis on the match between employees' values and their perceptions of the organisation's values (Edwards and Cable, 2009) and is central to understanding 'how the people make the brand' (Hurrell and Scholarios, 2014). Moreover, interviewees also claim that fit between the target philanthropic cause and their preoccupation, as well as the easy access to local philanthropic involvement, are essential preconditions for their active CP participation. This argument sheds light on the **employee-CP congruence***,* which is in line with the literature focusing on a fit between individual self-schema and cause (Chowdhury and Khare, 2011). Finally, the discussion about the fit between corporate brands and their target causes, i.e., **brand-CP congruence***,* is also noticeable. Saiia et al. (2003) and Zhao and Zhang (2020) portray the resonating effect between corporate philanthropy and firms' core value, which is about achieving a synergistic outcome by targeting corporate resources at societal problems or issues that resonate with the core values and mission of the firm. As evidenced in the interviews, sharing similar ethos and sustaining a long-term strategic partnership between charitable causes and business brands are critical for employees to

perceive the positive fit. In summary, multiple previous studies operationalise perceived fit through congruence between the brand, cause, and self-concepts. This research extends the discussion by displaying how employees generate and perceive fit during their CP participation. It also suggests that perceived fit should be included in the EBBE framework, which has multiple dimensions.

Another revision, as evidenced by interviews, is about setting employee-perceived benefits as twofold in a CP-related context: **employee-perceived brand-related benefits and CP-related benefits**. These results tell the difference between brand-related social recognition and developmental benefits and CP-related social connectedness as benefits. At the same time, the inclusion of the twofold perceived benefits also corresponds with the importance of social connectedness indicated by Brown and Leite (2023) and Dury et al. (2020), as well as the economic, developmental, social, diversity and reputation benefits from the organisational brand level suggested by Schlager et al. (2011).

Together, these results provide important insights and supporting evidence into including six interrelated dimensions in the Brand Assimilation Block (BAsB) (see Table 6.2): employee brand knowledge clarity, employee perceived fit (employee-brand, employee-CP, and brand-CP congruence) and employee perceived benefits (from the brand and the CP).

Table 6. 2 Finalised employee brand assimilation block

		Brand Assimilation Block	
Dimensions/ constructs	**Definition**	**Key evidence from interview**	**Key relevant literature**
Employee Brand Knowledge Clarity	The extent of clarity to which employees understand what the brand stands for and how to deliver the brand promise	F2 — Philanthropy....shows us... isn't just making money at all costs F6 — it's a good place to work with good values F10 — they definitely care about their community... F7 — that helps us continue to drive forward within our mission M10 — my job is to liaise people with a community	Boukis et al. (2017); King and Grace (2010); King et al., (2012); Xiong et al. (2013); Vallaster and de Chernatony, (2006)
Employee Perceived Fit (employee-brand, employee-CP, and brand-CP congruence)	The extent to which employees perceive the value of CP are fit with the brand's as well as their personal value	**E-B** F4: Many things about me personally that connected with the organisation M1: People like the fact that the company is not purely profit-driven and is philanthropic. F1: People felt quite a lot of ownership over that **E-C** F2: Helping elderly people ... a good area everyone can relate to F8: my community is important to me F5: it fits into our own agenda as to how the business is run **B-C** F7: charities that are aligned from a strategic point of view	Edward and Cable (2009); Deng et al., (2023); Hurrell and Scholarios (2014); Xiong et al., (2013)
Employee Perceived Benefits (from the brand and the CP)	The extent to which employees perceive that they will personally benefit from CP or the brand	**CP** F2: Make my mind work differently. F7: reinforce cooperation, a sense of belonging and inclusion F5: learning new opportunities and new ideas **B** M4: develop your knowledge of people and the knowledge of the community	Porter and Kramer, (2011); Bartel et al. (2001); Stangis and Smith (2017)

Notes: E-B: employee-brand congruence; E-C: employee-CP congruence; B-C: brand-CP congruence; CP: employee perceived benefits from the CP; B: employee perceived benefits from the brand.

Subsequently, the **_Brand Affinity Block (BAfB)_** delves into the realm of emotional aspects, encompassing employees' genuine affinity with the brand and a desire to deliver the brand promise (King and Grace, 2010; King and Grace, 2012). Pride is framed as a positive, self-conscious emotion resulting from the appraisal that one is responsible for a socially valued outcome or for being a socially valued person (Helm et al., 2016), is an important emotion emerging from employees' corporate philanthropic participation. In line with Gouthier and Rhein (2011), the interview results also identified two forms of pride: one characterised by short-term, intense emotions stemming from specific successful events, and the other as a long-lasting attitude derived from a general perception of the organisation. Specifically, employees derive their **CP-related pride** from the authentic accomplishments of the CP initiatives. The **brand-related pride** stems from the brand's enduring engagement in CP and its esteemed charitable partnerships. Additionally, brand trust is defined as a psychological state that exists when one party has confidence in an exchange partner's reliability and integrity (Garbarino and Johnson, 1999; Morgan and Hunt, 1994). Trust is always natured through reciprocal social exchange relations (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). Due to the reciprocal nature of employee CP involvement, trust can be regarded as a critical component of this emotional block. Specifically, through CP participation, employees foster positive emotions with their colleagues as partners within the organisation, leading them to view the entire team as dependable. Furthermore, the perceived genuineness of the corporate brand convinces employees of its reliability and trustworthiness. Thus, the interview results help tell the difference between employees' **CP-related and brand-related trust**.

A change was made according to the interview results regarding removing employee brand commitment from the proposed framework. Meyer and Allen (1997) point out that affective organisational commitment reflects the extent to which organisational members are loyal and willing to work toward organisational objectives. The concept of brand commitment was initially included as a critical component of EBBE. However, there is no adequate and direct evidence from the interviews that articulates the psychological status of how employees would be willing to exert extra efforts and go the extra mile for the brand promise due to their CP involvement. Instead, people are more likely to discuss what they did or plan to do based on their CP participation experience. These behavioural actions would belong to the next block. Therefore, CP-related and brand-related pride, as well as CP-related and brand-related trust, are finalised as the critical aspects of the brand affinity block concerning their prominent positions (see Table 6.3).

Table 6. 3 Finalised employee brand affinity block

Brand Affinity Block				
Dimensions/ constructs	Definition		Relevant interview results	Key relevant literature
Brand trust and CP-related trust	The extent to which employees build confidence in their corporate brands' reliability and integrity;	**B**	F6 — a safe, well-respected brand down to earth M7 — we could be that organisation for many people	Becerra and Gupta, (2003); Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005); Dietz & Den Hartog (2006); Garbarino and Johnson (1999); Morgan and Hunt (1994)
	The extent to which employees build belief from a particular CP activity's reliability and integrity.	**CP**	F7 — you can 'count on them'	
Brand pride and CP-related brand	The extent to which employees perceive a positive pride emotion when being associated with the brand	**B**	F7 — 95% of them said they were prouder to be our employee because of the partnership. M7 — Sharing that we're a massive donor ...makes me feel better F9 — the proudest ... is about what that money has achieved	Lea and Webley (1997); Greening and Turban (2000); Helm et al. (2016); Gouthier and Rhein (2011)
	The extent to which employees perceive a positive pride emotion when being associated with the CP activity.	**CP**	M8 — volunteering activity is all local... is really important to that feeling of pride	

Next, the ***Brand Enactment Block*** formed by behavioural dimensions relating to employee-based brand equity is also critical for exploration (King and Grace, 2010). Existing literature has encapsulated a set of behaviours relating to how employees engage in the brand and diffuse their brand experience across the organisation (Boukis and Christodoulides, 2020; King and Grace, 2012; Zarantonello and Pauwels-Delassus, 2015). **Brand citizenship behaviour** is a construct that has received much attention in organisational behaviour research; it pertains to voluntary actions by individuals that go beyond their role expectations (non-enforceable functional extra-role behaviours) (Burmann and Zeplin, 2005). Stimulated by corporate philanthropic-related experiences, employees' actions of going beyond the norm and call of duty to deliver the brand promise appeared in our discussions. Previous researchers coined and utilised **employee brand endorsement** to capture employees' positive external communication, e.g., King and Grace (2010) and Xiong et al. (2013). As evidenced in the interviews, several employees said they would say positive things and recommend the organisational brand to others. Specifically, employees would post and promote CP-related topics on their social media and during their daily lives positively for several purposes, such as raising their profile for themselves, for the corporate brand, or partner charitable causes. Meanwhile, their positive words on social media are usually based on their genuine positive feeling towards their involvement. Additionally, when reflecting on the definition of **employee brand development**, which is illustrated as the behaviours actively affecting brand development to improve customers' brand experience (Piehler et al., 2016), the interview results bring considerable evidence suggesting that employees' brand development occurs alongside employees' CP-related involvement. Specifically, some individuals, especially customer-contact employees, directly link their CP involvement with their propensity for further growth with their customers and contribute to brand success.

Thus, according to the interview results and extensive literature review, employee brand citizenship, endorsement, and development are meaningful and should be included in the brand enactment block (see Table 6.4).

Finally, as captured in the latest literature, e.g., Chatzipanagiotou et al. (2023), the ***overall employee-based brand equity (OBE)*** is the overall strength of an organisational brand identified by the employees. The interview data recorded those employees considered and discussed OBE. For example, some employees mentioned the motivating effect of their

charitable involvement and linked the community-relevant role with their overall career aspirations in the corporate brand. Other employees even portray the overall picture of how philanthropic initiatives are tied to supporting the corporate brand. Therefore, the overall employee-based brand equity could be an essential ultimate outcome in the EBBE framework, and it also deserves careful consideration and examination.

Table 6. 4 Finalised employee brand enactment block

		Brand Enactment Block		
Dimensions/ constructs	**Definition**	**Key evidence from interviews**		**Key relevant literature**
Brand citizenship behaviour	The extent to which employees go beyond the norm and call of duty to deliver the brand promise	M9	do stuff which is long term and more sustainable	Burmann et al. (2009); Burmann and Zeplin (2005); King et al. (2012); Xiong et al. (2013); Piehler et al. (2016)
		F4	work extra hours as a volunteer	
		F7	expand our projects to use the knowledge of our colleagues to support our communities.	
		M7	doing this in our part time on top of our normal jobs	
Brand endorsement	The extent to which employees say positive things about the brand and readily recommend the brand to others	F2	don't want people to think we're doing it just to get the publicity	King and Grace (2010); King et al., (2012); Xiong et al. (2013)
		F9	I can genuinely sort of promote the brand	
		F10	I will happily encourage people to take this job	
		M8	is raising the profile of our partner charities	
Brand development	The extent to which employees actively affect brand development to improve customers' brand experience	F7	Developed internally a way for us to flag into the customer profile; the first thing is about thinking customers are so that the 'T'…. So, when we think about thinking customer	Burmann et al. (2009); Morhart et al. (2009); Piehler et al. (2016)
		M3	Would like to offer more mental health support to students	
		M8	bring some fresh blood into the organisation	
		F10	being able to have that role and give them extra help extra support, as has been hugely beneficial.	

6.3 Operationalisation of the model: research propositions

The rationale and possibility for linking CP and EBBE have been discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. As discussed, the model employs complexity theory, e.g., Ragin (1987), to elucidate the dynamics of the employee-based brand equity (EBBE) development process, accounting for individual differences in perceptions, assimilation, emotional connections, and enactment. It leverages three fundamental principles: (i) conjunctural causation, where outcomes of interests result from the interdependence of various conditions (Rihoux and Ragin, 2009; Ragin, 2009; Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019), (ii) equifinality, allowing multiple combinations of conditions to lead to the same outcome (Katz and Kahn, 1978), and (iii) asymmetry, indicating that causally related conditions in one configuration may not be related in another (Fiss, 2011; Woodside, 2014). Based on the principles, EBBE is operationalised as a complex, dynamic, and idiosyncratic phenomenon in this research. Figure 6.1 below visualises the finalised model using Venn diagrams to demonstrate the combinatorial nature of the causes within the different blocks. The arrows indicate the major flows of configural relationships among them.

Figure 6. 1 Operationalisation of the model (after the qualitative phase)
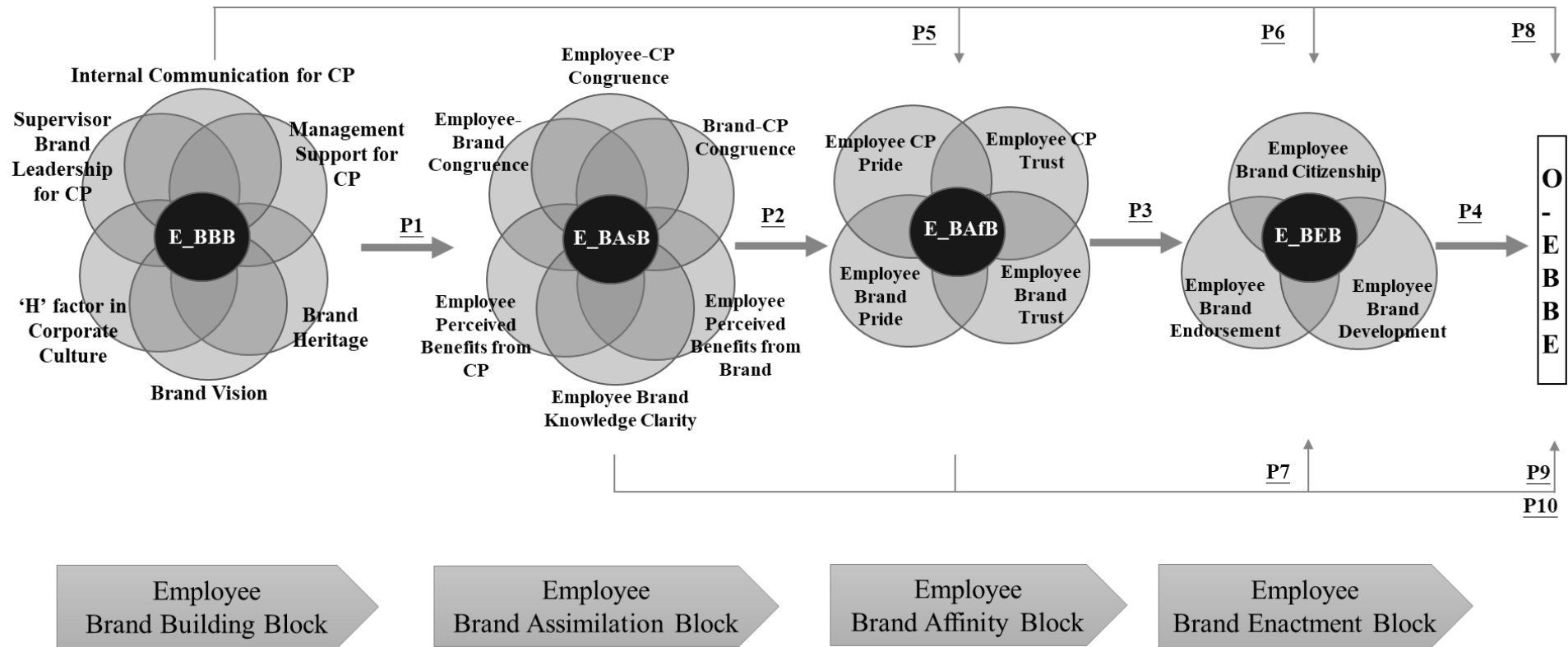
Notes: P1-P10 represents research propositions 1-10.

Based on this model, the research propositions (RP) are discussed as follows. Previous literature has identified potential relationships linking perceived branding efforts with employees' assimilation. For example, Kotter (1990) clarified that management's role is monitoring the results of programmes against plans and policies and, in turn, helping produce order, consistency, and predictability for programmes. This explains how **management support** can lead to the employee's perceived fit. Meanwhile, evidence from interviewees also links **leadership** with employee-perceived benefits. For example, one employee explained how the supervisor helped them achieve developmental benefits in understanding the job better. This is corroborated in the discussion about the benefits brought by leadership, such as psychological safety and inspiration (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2019; May et al., 2004). Previous research, such as Lings and Greenley (2010), indicates that **internal communication** provides the context within which the brand identity is made relevant to each employee Similarly, Harris and de Chernatony (2001) and Burmann and Zeplin (2005) also admitted that communication plays a significant role in forming congruent perceptions and a collective sense of alignment. Importantly, relevant evidence can also be identified from the literature for the emergent themes from the interviews: **brand heritage** and **brand vision**. Brand heritage is 'woven into the fabric of an organisation' and is part of the lives of stakeholders like employees (Urde et al., 2007), while brand vision is essential for guiding employees in their professional journey (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001). Therefore, the above discussion provides a clue about how a combination of attributes in the brand-building block can contribute to the achievements of (the high level of) different dimensions in the brand assimilation block. Therefore, the following proposition is formulated:

RP1: Sufficient combinations of the components constituting the Brand Building Block (Brand heritage, brand vision, management support for CP, supervisor leadership for CP, internal communication for CP, and the 'H' factor in corporate culture) will lead to high scores in the individual components of the Brand Assimilation Block.

Additionally, extensive arguments from previous research have supported the cognitive-affective sequence. For example, when employees perceive those voluntary investments made by the brand for the welfare of their communities, this **brand knowledge** helps develop beliefs that brands could treat employees with the same level of care and benevolence in the future (Farooq et al., 2014). Downey et al. (2015) also identified the

perceptions of diversity practices and inclusion in promoting trust in the workplace. Therefore, diversity practices are important for workplace well-being, and **employee-perceived benefits** can convince employees that the brand is reliable. Another clue of the cognitive-affective connection is the connection between **employee-perceived fit** and brand pride. Recent research has revealed that the congruity between employees and brands is critical for figuring out how people make the brand (Hurrell and Scholarios, 2014). Helm et al. (2016) prove that brand pride is affected by the congruity of the brand with the ideal self. Regarding the CP scenario, the 'real impact' on the local community and the respectable collaborations between the corporate brand and the charitable organisations catalyse employees to perceive the congruity that 'my brand is like I want to be' and be proud of their brands. All in all, the logic of connecting the brand assimilation block to the brand affinity block has been supported by previous literature. A combination of attributes in the cognitive brand assimilation block can lead to the achievements of each dimension in the affective brand affinity block. Therefore, another research proposition is:

RP2: Sufficient combinations of the components constituting the Brand Assimilation Block (Employee brand knowledge clarity, employee-brand, employee-CP, brand-CP congruence, and brand- and CP-related employee perceived benefits) will lead to high scores in the individual components of the Brand Affinity Block.

The next stage of this model discusses how the proposed affective dimensions contribute to employees' behavioural outcomes, i.e., the outcome conditions in the brand enactment block. Some clues of this affective-behavioural linkage have been seen in previous literature. For instance, Helm et al. (2016) suggest that **brand pride** can motivate employees to go the extra mile and become brand champions. Importantly, it is necessary to highlight the 'proper pride' associated with genuine achievements (Lea and Webley, 1997), which sheds light on CP-achievement-related pride and its effects. Moreover, relevant existing research has revealed that confidence and trust towards the brand are the reasons embedded in why employees 'go the extra mile'. Specifically, Downey et al. (2015) demonstrate that a trusting climate offers an underlying mechanism through which diversity practices positively affect employee engagement. Therefore, a combination of attributes in the brand affinity block can contribute to the achievements of multiple dimensions in the brand enactment block. Based on the discussed two-fold nature of the concepts of **pride and trust**, here is the proposition:

RP3: Sufficient combinations of the components constituting the Brand Affinity Block (employee pride - based on the brand and CP, employee trust - based on the brand and CP) will lead to high scores in the individual components of the Brand Enactment Block.

As discussed, the overall brand equity captures the strength of a brand in an aggregated way (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2016; Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019; Veloutsou et al., 2013; Yoo et al., 2000). Existing studies have indicated a need to explore employee actions' effects on the overall employee-based brand equity. For example, when developing a model for internal brand management, Burmann and Zeplin (2005) proposed a linkage between **brand citizenship behaviour** and overall brand strength. Theurer et al. (2018) identified the word-of-mouth, i.e., **brand endorsement** spillover effects to the corporate brand, while Morhart et al. (2009) highlighted employees' active participation in **brand development** for offering high-quality input to brand management. Considering the above-suggested linkage between brand enactments and the overall brand strength, this research, therefore, proposes:

RP4: Sufficient combinations of the components constituting the Brand Enactment Block (employee brand citizenship, employee brand endorsement and employee brand development) will lead to a high overall employee-based brand equity score.

The complexity of the EBBE development process decides that there are more relationships among the blocks. For example, the direct effects of brand building on brand affinity have been suggested by Downey et al. (2015) by focusing on the relationship between building organisational diversity practices and employees' feelings about the trust climate. Downey et al. (2015) have determined the potential for diversity practices to predict employee engagement. Similarly, Harris and de Chernatony (2001) have explored the effects of brand vision (which contains the brand's core purposes and values) and corporate culture in guiding employees' behaviour. The above evidence implies the direct effects of brand building on brand enactment. Plus, the direct impact of brand assimilation on brand enactment has been suggested by research such as Boukis and Christodoulides (2020), in which employees' internalisation of brand values could predict brand engagement and the successful diffusion of their brand experience across the organisation. Thus, the research propositions below discuss these suggested interrelated cross-block effects in the EBBE development process:

RP5: Sufficient combinations of the components constituting the Brand Building Block (BBB) will lead to high scores in the individual components of the Brand Affinity Block (BAfB).

RP6: Sufficient combinations of the components constituting the Brand Building Block (BBB) will lead to high scores in the individual components of the Brand Enactment Block (BEB).

RP7: Sufficient combinations of the components constituting the Brand Assimilation Block (BAsB) will lead to high scores in the individual components of the Brand Enactment Block (BEB).

The final set of research propositions concerns how Brand Building Block (BBB), Brand Assimilation Block (BAsB) and Brand Affinity Block (BAfB) lead to the employee-based brand equity (OBE). Existing studies have supported the idea that contextual organisational concepts such as brand leadership can predict a solid overall employee-based brand equity (Boukis and Christodoulides, 2020). Similarly, Downey et al. (2015) have reviewed diversity practices as organisational efforts and their overall impact, including job performance and organisational growth. These extant studies, therefore, suggested the direct effects of brand-building efforts on brand equity. Researchers such as Boukis and Christodoulides (2020) revealed the cognitive route with key antecedents in predicting an overall solid employee-based brand equity outcome. Finally, overall brand equity can also be expected when employees emotionally attach to the brand. For example, existing studies have discussed the theoretical underpinnings of trust as an essential element of any positive exchange, leading to increased employee and organisational performance (Downey et al., 2015) and overall satisfaction (Garbarino and Johnson, 1999).

Therefore, the final set of propositions is generated as below. The following quantitative stage helps empirically test these research propositions and identify how specific combinations or configurations of elements can predict a particular outcome.

RP8: Sufficient combinations of the components constituting the Brand Building Block (BBB) will lead to a high overall employee-based brand equity (OBE) score.

RP9: Sufficient combinations of the components constituting the Brand Assimilation

Block (BAsB) will lead to a high overall employee-based brand equity (OBE) score.

RP10: Sufficient combinations of the components constituting the Brand Affinity Block (BAfB) will lead to a high overall employee-based brand equity (OBE) score.

Chapter 7: Research methodology – quantitative phase

7.1 Introduction

Following Study 1, Study 2 is designed to examine the EBBE model's research propositions. Study 2, quantitative in nature, is an online survey with self-administered questionnaires designed via Qualtrics and distributed through the Prolific platform to recruit representative samples: employees in the UK who experience corporate philanthropic activities in their workplace. The questionnaire (see Appendix F) was designed and developed based on the existing literature and the relevant results from Study 1. Respondents needed, on average, 10-12 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Well-established measures were employed and adapted when needed to suit the research context. Fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) is employed as uniquely suited to examine the study's research propositions with the configural nature.

7.2 Study's measures

Crafting the main questionnaire involves defining key concepts, turning them into measurable variables, and, crucially, selecting measurement scales that align well with the chosen definitions. The validity of these scales—ensuring they accurately reflect and measure what they are intended to—is vital for the reliability and relevance of the research findings. The semi-structured interview results further inform the meaning of the individual constructs and, therefore, inform the selection of the most appropriate measurement scales for each. Well-established measures from extant literature were employed as this study's measures and adapted when needed. The remainder of this section unpacks the rationale for the measures' selection.

7.2.1 Employee Brand Building Block (BBB) and measurements

Brand heritage is one of the new themes emerging from the qualitative data, capturing the extent to which employees find historical importance and a branded representation of the past. As evidenced in interviews, participants always express appreciation regarding a CP programme's history and duration, their brands' consistency in carrying on their philanthropic-related tradition, and their immunity to radical changes. These aspects

resonate deeply with the dimensions of brand heritage - longevity, stability and adaptability, as stated by Pecot et al. (2019). Based on this, items from Pecot et al. (2019) were selected to ensure that they correspond with the brand heritage scholarship and the qualitative findings.

Brand vision explores the extent to which employees believe in their corporate brand's core purpose and envisioned future and understand how their roles relate to it in this study. Harris and de Chernatony (2001) highlighted the importance of brand vision as a set of guiding principles of brands. Meanwhile, as evidenced in interviews, employees can consistently articulate their corporate brand's overall picture and envisioned future. They care about how the brand could bring about a better world. i.e., making a unique contribution to society via its values. Therefore, this study finally adapted the scale (encompassing four items) from the latest research of Chatzipanagiotou et al. (2023), as it focuses on the measurement of brand vision in an employee-based brand equity context with items that agree with the results of the interviews.

Supervisors' leadership for CP was defined as how employees perceive the supervisor's transformational leadership in CP activities. Morhart et al. (2009) devised measurement scales for brand-specific transformational leadership, which examine a leader's approach to motivating their followers to act on behalf of the corporate brand by appealing to their values and personal convictions. Specifically, five items cover intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, idealised influence (attributes and behaviours) and individual consideration to portray the overall picture of brand-specific transformational leadership. This study finally adapted the measurements from Morhart et al. (2009) and slightly modified the wording to fit the research context of CP.

Management support for CP was detected based on research by King and Grace (2010), in which management support is defined as the extent to which an employee perceives that the organisation acknowledges and supports employee effort. Similarly, the interviewees in this research admitted that they perceive and value the incentives, awards, induction, and general training as support from the organisations, which encourages them to access CP-related activities better. Therefore, the scale was adapted to fit the research context from King and Grace (2010) to measure the management support for CP, which displayed consistency between the theoretical and practical insights.

Internal communication for CP measures the extent to which employees understand the delivered internal information of CP with practical contents, channels, and frequency. The relevant measurement scales were confirmed based on King and Grace (2010)'s scales. These scales about knowledge dissemination offered a clear focus on the relationship between brand promise and organisational storytelling and the interaction between organisations and employees during communication. Meanwhile, two items were removed because they focus more on the manager's behaviours instead of communication and are not appropriate to be adapted into the CP context: 1) My manager regularly reports back to us about issues affecting our work environment; 2) My manager regularly meets with all of their employees to report about issues. Therefore, the final scale to measure the internal communication for CP in this study contains essential items from King and Grace (2010) and has been transferred to the CP context.

The 'H' factor of corporate culture was included in this research, following King and Grace (2010)'s initiative of incorporating the Human factor, i.e., the 'H' factor, as a contextual, cultural element when examining brand equity. In this study, the 'H' factor of corporate culture measures the extent to which employees perceive their organisation to treat them like human beings with respect and care. Eight items from Saks (2006) resonate strongly with the above definition regarding how organisations care about their employees' well-being and interviewees' comments regarding the importance of a people-centred organisational culture. However, one item (help is available from my organisation when I have a problem) in Saks (2006) is regarded as redundant to omit as it overlaps with the meaning of management support for CP. The wording of another two items from Saks (2006)'s original scale is on the reverse side. As this research measures the positive aspect of the 'H' factor, these two items were decided to be dropped. Therefore, the final scale to measure the 'H' factor of corporate culture in this study contains five items.

7.2.2   Employee Brand Assimilation Block (BAsB) and measurements

Employee brand knowledge clarity is defined as the extent to which employees understand what the brand stands for and how to deliver the brand promise. This definition indicates that employees' brand knowledge clarity is related to understanding brand meaning and brand promise delivery. The two layers of this concept have been advocated by research scholarship and supported by relevant interview results. Therefore, evaluating the existing potential scales led to three items being adapted from King et al. (2012)'s

measurement of brand role clarity.

Employee perceived fit has been suggested by researchers like Nan and Heo (2007) as multi-dimensional. The interview results also help identify multiple sources of the employee's perceived fit, displaying a significant interaction of employees, corporate brands, and relevant philanthropic causes. Based on the proposed definition of employee perceived fit, this concept measures how employees perceive the fit between the value of CP, the corporate brand, and the employees themselves. Therefore, the selected measurements are divided into three sub-dimensions, as listed below.

Employee-brand congruence is exploring congruity between employees and brands, which is central to understanding 'how the people make the brand' (Hurrell and Scholarios, 2014). The five-item measurement developed in the latest research of Chatzipanagiotou et al. (2023) is evaluated as the most suitable for assessing and understanding how people make the brand in the employee-based brand-equity research context and, therefore, adopted in this study.

Employee-CP congruence indicates a fit between employees' self-schema and the philanthropic cause they are involved in. The selected measurement scales came from the latest research of Deng et al. (2023), in which they operationalise the perceived fit through congruence between the cause and self-concepts with three items.

Brand-CP congruence is a concept that is in line with the research from Saiia et al. (2003) and Zhao and Zhang (2020), which have underlined the resonating effect between corporate philanthropy and firms' core values and synergistic social and economic performance led by this resonance. Interviewees in this research also observe a similar stance on having this synergistic fit. Items from Deng et al. (2023) were selected to be used as measurements since they are closely related to the narratives from the interviews.

Employee perceived benefits (from the brand and the CP) are evidenced by previous research and interviews, which have unpacked the two-fold dimensions of employee perceived benefits. The employee-perceived benefits can be based on the CP activity or the corporate brand. For example, benefits like social connectedness (Dury et al., 2020) are derived from volunteering participation, while benefits like developmental opportunities (Schlager et al., 2011) are offered by the corporate brand. Regarding the measurement

selection, 15 items were included from Schlager et al. (2011)'s employee role perceived benefits construct to form the employee perceived benefits (from the brand) in this study. Meanwhile, the employee perceived benefits (from the CP) comprise 15 measurement items. They are featured as overall benefits from the CP participation as well as supplemental benefits (e.g., joining CP because it provides something that is missing in a job) (Rodell, 2013), functional benefits (e.g., mastery of knowledge) (Sonnentag and Fritz, 2007) as well as social recognition and guilt mitigation (Graça and Zwick, 2021).

7.2.3 Employee Brand Affinity Block (BAfB) and measurements

Employee brand pride derives from how their organisation receive recognition in the outside world for being a worthwhile member of society (Helm et al., 2016). Employees may also generate **CP-related pride** due to their CP-related contribution on a personal level and have self-consciousness about being a socially valued person. Therefore, this research highlights the necessity of setting the two-fold employee pride measurement scales. Five original items were adapted from Helm et al. (2016) to measure employee brand pride. The five modified items measured CP-related pride and suited the context.

The concept of trust has been portrayed by Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005), who infer that employees can generate greater trust due to reciprocal social exchange relations. This research further distinguishes **employee CP-related trust**, as employees' belief in a particular CP activity's reliability and integrity, from **employee brand-related trust**, which is the confidence in their corporate brands' reliability and integrity. The measures from Rampl and Kenning (2014) were selected to measure employee brand trust and modified to measure employees' CP-related trust since these scales fully capture the meaning of trust in this study.

7.2.4 Employee Brand Enactment Block (BEB) and measurements

Employee brand citizenship is introduced to measure employees' non-enforceable functional extra-role behaviours, i.e., employees' action of going beyond the norm and call of duty to deliver the brand promise (Burmann and Zeplin, 2005). King and Grace (2010) confirmed that employee brand citizenship is about nonprescribed employee behaviour that is still in line with the organisation's brand values. During the interviews, some employees also showed willingness and evidence of putting extra effort into their workplace. Thus, in

agreement with the existing discussion about employee brand citizenship, a six-item scale was adapted from King and Grace (2010) to measure this construct. One of the original items was removed because its content will be covered in the following construct: brand endorsement.

Employee brand endorsement is capturing employees' positive external communication (King and Grace, 2010). Meanwhile, as identified from interviews, employees would post and promote CP-related topics positively on their social media and daily lives. A six-item scale was picked from King et al. (2012) and was considered the most appropriate to measure this phenomenon.

Employee brand development centres on those employee behaviours that actively affect brand development for customers' brand experience improvement (Piehler et al., 2016). Some interviewees, especially customer-contact ones, directly tightened their CP involvement with their propensity for further development with their customers and brand. Moreover, capturing this construct in this employee-focused study provides entrance and interactions with consumer research. Thus, eight-item measurements from Piehler et al. (2016) are used since they are comprehensive and closely related to the interview results.

7.2.5 Overall Employee-based Brand Equity (OBE) measurements

Overall employee-based brand equity (OBE), as suggested by the latest literature, e.g., Chatzipanagiotou et al. (2023), is included in this research as the ultimate effect of employee-based brand equity. Meanwhile, the employees from the interviews identified this overall strength of a corporate brand. In this study, seven items were sourced from Chatzipanagiotou et al. (2023) to measure OBE.

7.3 Questionnaire structure

To identify eligible and qualified participants for this research, a five-question screening questionnaire (see Appendix E) is designed in the Prolific platform. Then, the qualified potential participants were invited to join the primary survey (see Appendix F) through the platform. This e-survey begins with an introductory page, which covers the aim of the study, a brief introduction of corporate philanthropy as the fundamental concept of this

research, the rationale for participant selection and the researcher's contact details for any further inquiries. A link to the participant information sheet was provided in this introductory page. The researcher suggested that participants should read this information sheet before they decided to join the research. This participant information sheet outlines an invitation for UK employees who are familiar with their company's philanthropic activities to join a University of Glasgow PhD study. Participants were told that this research aims to assess how these philanthropic activities impact corporate brand value from the employees' perspective. Participants' participation is voluntary, with an assurance of anonymity and data security. This sheet indicates that the responses may contribute to a doctoral thesis and further publications. Participants are encouraged to contact the researcher or the College of Social Sciences Ethical Review Lead for queries or concerns. After reading this information sheet, participants can determine whether they want to consent. Only those who clicked "I agree to participate in this research" can proceed to the survey's primary questions.

This study used a funnel approach (from questions focusing on the general aspects of corporate brands to specific questions focusing on employees' CP participation) to understand employees' relevant views, thoughts, emotions, and actions. All the relevant scales were measured on a five-point Likert-type scale. The scales used anchors of 1 = 'Strongly disagree' to 5 = 'Strongly agree'. The survey was divided into six main parts, beginning with part one, which asked participants to input general information about their employer, i.e., the corporate brand (by selecting the industry where they work and providing the company name). The name they input will be embedded into the following question stems as a reminder for participants. This was followed by part two, asking them to further reflect on their perception of the corporate brand. Next, participants were invited to display their general view about philanthropy based on some suggested statements from Schuyt et al. (2010) and provide some available information about their corporate philanthropic-related participation (e.g., types and frequency) in part three. This part of the questions ended with allowing participants to choose one of the listed corporate philanthropic activities they have recently participated in and keep the choice in mind, which would prepare them well for the next part (part four) involving evaluations of corporate philanthropic participation. Finally, in part five, participants were encouraged to express an overall picture of deeper feelings and potential actions toward their corporate brands. To avoid the participants feeling threatened, this questionnaire placed more demographic questions concerning employment professional details as part six at the end.

7.4 Pre-test and pilot study

After finishing the initial design of the questionnaire, the researcher invited fourteen experts and employees to comment on the suitability of the questions. Allowing suggestions to be made on the structure, sequence, layout, wording, content, and overall design of this questionnaire will help establish content validity and enable the researcher to make necessary amendments before pilot testing (Saunders et al., 2019). Here, essential suggestions and relevant changes to the questionnaire design based on experts' suggestions are listed for reference. For example, several experts identified some redundant items that should be omitted when discussing scales to measure perceived fit from Deng et al. (2023). One item in the brand heritage construct (the brand won't disappear tomorrow) was also suggested to be removed as many experts found that using this statement for commenting on their corporate brand was inappropriate. Some other minor changes in wording, layout and questionnaire design were also made according to comments to ensure the questions are typically straightforward and understandable, allowing the participants to respond accurately and adhere to the instructions (Saunders et al., 2019).

Next, the questionnaire was further tested through pilot studies or the 'trial run', which helped detect issues the researchers may have missed even after carefully crafting an instrument, according to van Teijlingen and Hundley (2002) and Bell and Waters (2018). Therefore, this research set a pilot test via the platform Prolific with 18 participants, with the administration condition as similar to the final data collection as possible (Czaja and Blair, 2005) to ensure that the questionnaire works before the formal launching. This process helps further identify any inadvertent errors in the questionnaire and provides an estimate of the time needed to complete it. Ultimately, this contributes to improving the research's reliability. Plus, it would help ascertain that the questionnaires generate a range of seamless answers (Buckingham and Saunders, 2004). To refine the questionnaire, the pilot test helps ensure respondents have no problems answering the questions and that the data is recorded smoothly (Saunders et al., 2019). In addition, it enables the researcher to assess the questions' validity and the likely reliability of the data that will be collected for individual questions and, where appropriate (Saunders et al., 2019). A problem revealed from the pilot test is that some respondents might go through the questionnaire without paying enough attention to the questions. These 'speeders' finished the questionnaire

within several minutes and failed one or two attention check questions. To prevent misleading data, the researcher decides to incorporate three attention-check questions in the main body of the questionnaire. These attention check questions assess whether respondents are paying careful attention to the questions they are being asked. These checks help to ensure the reliability and validity of the data collected by identifying and potentially excluding responses from participants who may not be engaging thoughtfully with the survey content. After all these approaches, the screening survey (Appendix E), the main questionnaire (Appendix F), and the selected scales (Appendix G) were ready to work as the data collection instrument.

7.5 Questionnaire sampling and participants' characteristics

Sampling is about selecting a relatively small number of elements from a more extensively defined group of elements and expecting that the information from the small group will lead to accurate judgments about the larger group (Hair et al., 2021). Quota sampling is a nonprobability sampling method to ensure that the population's prespecified subgroups are represented (Hair et al., 2021), was employed in this research for quantitative data collection. The screening survey for this research is designed on the Prolific platform. This screening process (see Appendix E) helps find individuals who have worked for a corporate brand in the UK for over six months. It also helps ensure these individuals have participated in CP activities in their workplace and are interested in joining the primary survey. Notably, the screening survey also helps limit the potential respondents to a population closely related to the research as a representative sample, which has strong external validity in relationship to the target population the sample is meant to represent. As such, the survey findings can be generalised confidently to the population of interest. Although the samples in this research are nonprobability samples, they are considered representative of the target population because they are drawn based on relevant demographic quotas, which can be referred from the Office for National Statistics' latest record about employment by age in 2019 (ons.gov.uk, 2020).

The sample size was also determined and guided by (a) the number of questions on the questionnaire and (b) the rule of thumb of having five participants per question (Hair, 2007). Meanwhile, the sample size does not constitute a concern with the proposed

analysis technique, fsQCA, as it is uniquely suited for small and extensive samples (Pappas and Woodside, 2021; Ragin, 2009).

Regarding the data collection process, participants were recruited from Prolific, one of the world's largest crowdsourcing communities that explicitly caters to researchers. Researchers can post studies and recruit the right participants using this platform quickly. The study set quotas for age and gender in this platform to ensure that the sample was representative. Finally, after multiple rounds of screening through the Prolific platform and going through the quality check, 263 participants were recruited. This sample is representative in terms of age, as it has the same distribution as the UK census - Employment by age (ons.gov.uk, 2020). The detailed characteristics of participants are displayed in Table 7.1.

Table 7. 1 Characteristics of survey participants

Demographic and professional characteristics (N=263)		Frequency	Percentage
Working experience	6 months – 2 years	42	16.0%
	over 2 – 5 years	71	27.0%
	over 5 – 10 years	63	24.0%
	over 10 – 15 years	38	14.4%
	over 15 – 20 years	20	7.6%
	more than 20 years	29	11.0%
Direct contact time with customers	<20%	58	22.1%
	20-50%	88	33.5%
	50-80%	59	22.4%
	>80%	58	22.1%

(Table 7.1 continued)

Demographic and professional characteristics (N=263)		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	132	50.2%
	Female	131	49.8%
Age	18-29	60	22.8%
	30-54	149	56.7%
	55+	54	20.5%
Education	Less than high school	3	1.1%
	High school graduate	71	27.0%
	Degree, or degree level equivalent	121	46.0%
	Higher degree and postgraduate	60	22.8%
	Doctorate	6	2.3%
	Others	2	0.8%
Industries	Computer and Electronics Manufacturing	10	3.8%
	Wholesale	2	0.8%
	Transportation and Warehousing	10	3.8%
	Real Estate, Rental and Leasing	6	2.3%
	Hotel and Food Services	6	2.3%
	Retail	31	11.8%
	Finance and Insurance	30	11.4%
	College, University, and Adult Education	20	7.6%
	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	9	3.4%
	Health Care	28	10.6%
	Telecommunications	6	2.3%
	Government and Public Administration	32	12.2%
	Manufacturing	19	7.2%
	Others	54	20.5%

According to the above table, the sample is representative in terms of age based on the employment statistics of the UK Census and has a balanced gender distribution. Many of the participants (more than 70%) have a degree or higher record regarding their educational background. Participants work in various industries, with notable representations in retail (11.8%), finance and insurance (11.4%), and government/public administration (12.2%). Work experience varies from less than two years to over 20 years, with a substantial number having over 2-5 years (27%) and over 5-10 years (24%). Participants also have various modes in terms of their direct contact time with customers, with 44% spending more than half of their working time with customers, while 56% are on the contrary.

In terms of the patterns and trends of participants' philanthropic involvement, as specified in Figure 7.1, the results reveal that Monetary Donation (70%), Employee Volunteering (65%), and Corporate Matching Gifts (60%) are the top three types of CP activities selected by the participants that their corporate brands have ever organised. By contrast, when participants were asked to choose only *one* representative CP activity they had recently participated in, most participants went for Monetary Donation, Employee Volunteering, and Employee Fundraising (see Figure 7.2).

Figure 7. 1 Distribution of CP activities organised by the corporate brand

Distribution of CP activities organised by the corporate brand (multiple choices)
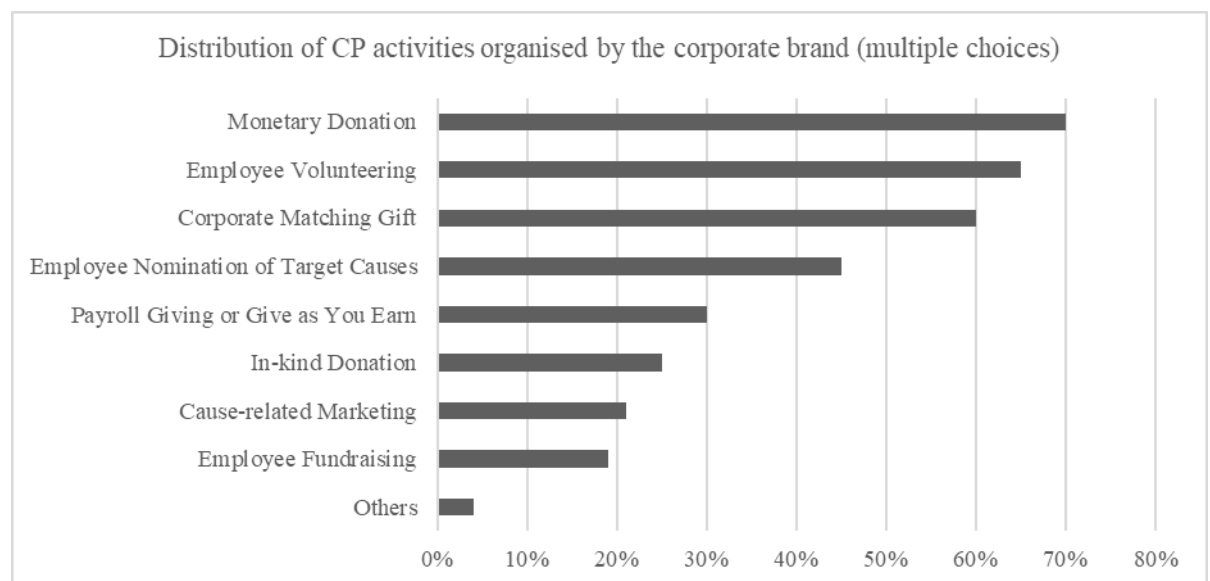
Figure 7. 2 Distribution of employees' choice of ONE recently participated CP activity

Distribution of employees' selection of ONE recently participated CP activity
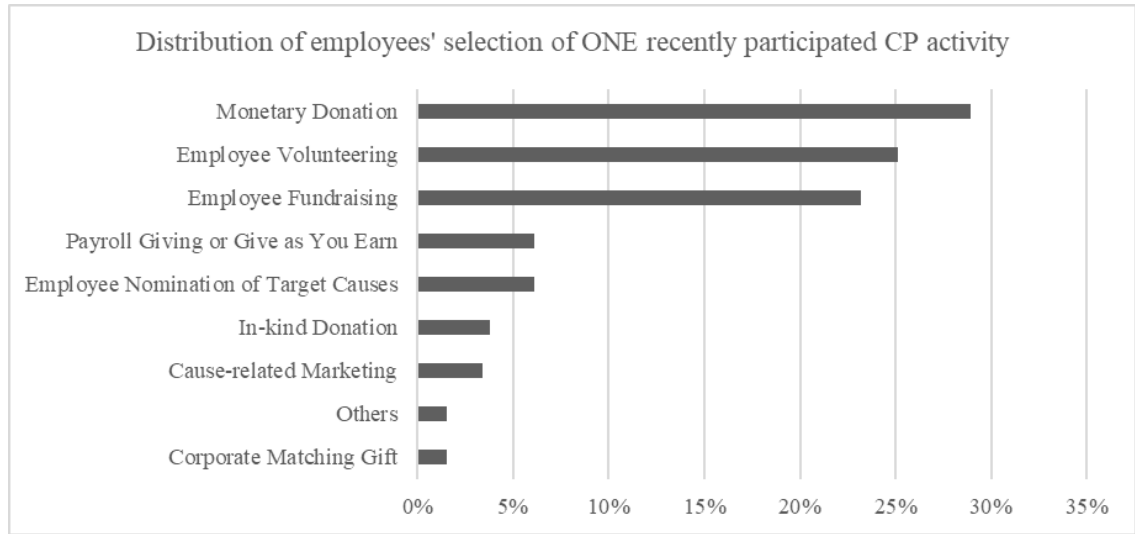
Regarding the frequency of these activities, Figure 7.3 displays how corporate brands varied in different types of corporate philanthropic activities, ranging from always to rarely. For example, employees perceived that most brands often or sometimes *organised* monetary donations. Meanwhile, employees indicated different frequencies regarding their participation in corporate philanthropic activities, according to Figure 7.4. For instance, the results reveal that although some employees noticed that their corporate brands organised Payroll Giving or Give-as-you-earn and Corporate Matching Gifts, they never *participated* in these activities.

Figure 7. 3 Distribution of the frequency of CP activities organised by the brands

Distribution of the frequency of CP activities organised by the brands
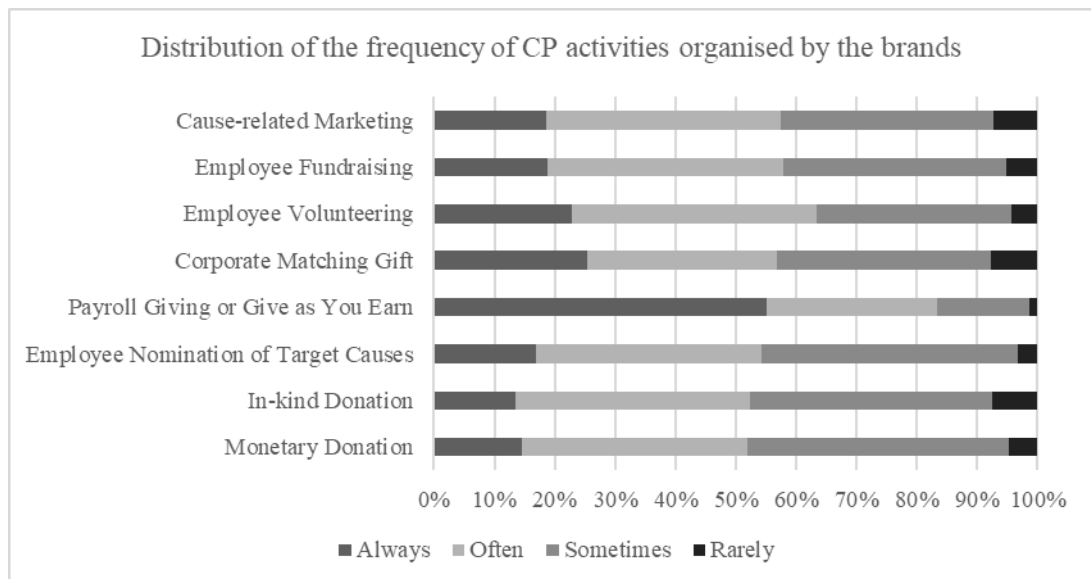
Figure 7. 4 Distribution of the frequency of CP activities participated by employees
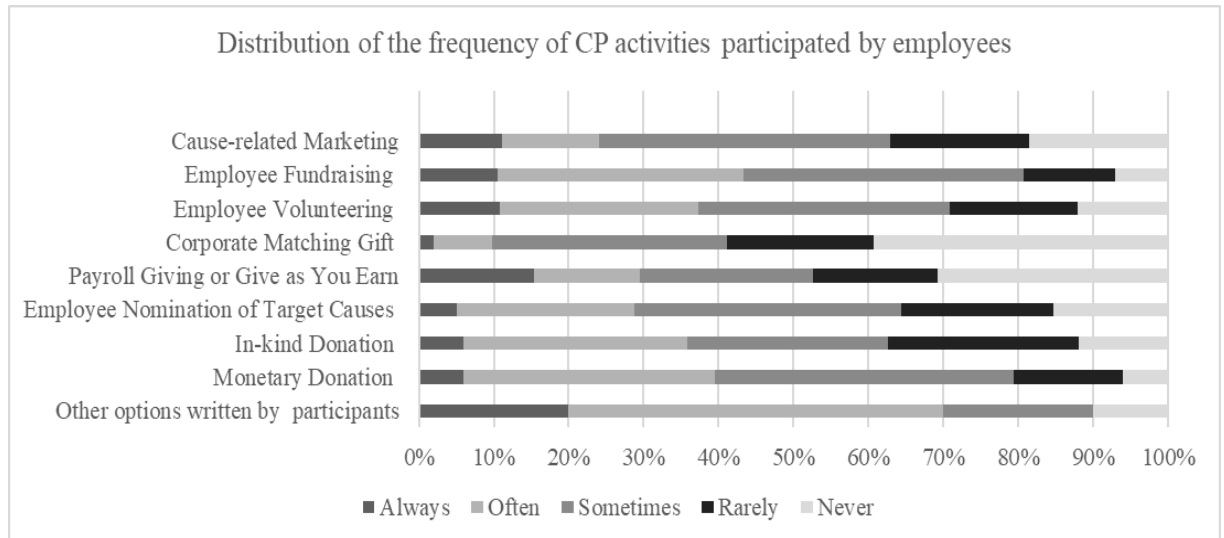
7.6 Psychometric properties checking

7.6.1   Reliability

Before conducting fsQCA analysis, it is necessary to check the quality of the psychometric properties applied to questionnaires, referring to the validity and reliability of the measurement tool. The reliability of all scales was tested in IBM SPSS Statistics, and the results indicated that the Cronbach alpha of all the constructs is > 0.7 (threshold), except for the **CP-related trust (CP_T)** construct (0.664) and the general attitude towards philanthropy (GPA) construct (0.372). The 'α if the item is deleted' was also checked; however, deleting any items from these constructs would not increase the reliability. Considering the experts' advice, it was suggested that these problematic constructs be dropped. Meanwhile, when referring to 'the α if the item is deleted' for the construct brand heritage (BH), the reliability will increase from 0.73 to 0.90 if we delete BH1 (item: the brand knows how to reinvent itself). After a further investigation of the inter-item correlation matrix of this construct, it was found that the correlation between BH1 and BH4 is negative, which is not appropriate. Thus, the item of BH1 was considered problematic and was dropped as well. Plus, when referring to 'the α if the item is deleted' for the construct overall EBBE (OBE), the reliability will increase from 0.86 to 0.90 if deleting OBE7 (I would be prepared to give up my job only if another employer offered me a significantly better deal). Therefore, OBE7 was dropped in this stage. To sum up, 12

items were deleted from this stage for reliability.

7.6.2 Validity

After reliability testing, the validity of the measures is checked in the process of evaluating the measurement model, which concerns the evaluation of convergent and discriminant validity. Convergent validity is assessed by analysing the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR). AVE signals the overall amount of variance in the indicators accounted for by the latent construct (Hair, 1992). Fornell and Larcker criterion is one of the most popular techniques for checking measurement models' discriminant validity. According to this criterion, the square root of the average variance extracted by a construct must be greater than the correlation between the construct and any other construct. Recently, a new method has emerged for establishing the discriminant validity assessment through heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio (Ab Hamid et al., 2017), which is an alternative approach based on the multitrait-multimethod matrix with superior performance (Henseler et al., 2015).

After building the overall measurement model in SPSS Amos 28 Graphics, with the help of an AMOS Plugin 'Master Validity Tool' by Gaskin and Lim (2016), the results of Validity Analysis and HTMT Analysis were generated (see Table 7.2 and Table 7.3). After each round of analysis and calculation, the Plugin tool offered suggestions for researchers to remove certain items for AVE improvement. Meanwhile, the factor loadings were checked during this stage as well. MacCallum et al. (1999) suggest that all items in a factor model should have communalities of over 0.60 or an average communality of 0.7 to justify performing a factor analysis with small sample sizes. After four rounds of iteration, the final measurement model with all qualified scales was finalised. Taken together, all constructs have satisfactory levels of CR and AVE. Specifically, all the AVEs go beyond 0.55 (ranging between 0.556 and 0.859), signalling convergent validity. Thresholds are 0.850 for strict and 0.900 for liberal discriminant validity, with no HTMT Warnings. Thus, it can be concluded that the measurement scales of this research (with 19 constructs and 81 items) are acceptable for analysis (see Table 7.4). Before fsQCA analysis, Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed to identify potential factor structures of one variable (Employee perceived brand-related benefit). Then, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was applied to test a pre-specified model against the data. The details of the above analysis can be found in Appendix H.

Table 7. 2 The validity analysis results

	Construct	CR	AVE	MSV	MaxR(H)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
1	Brand Vision	0.907	0.709	0.712	0.92	**0.842**																		
2	Brand Clarity	0.839	0.634	0.374	0.84	0.550***	**0.796**																	
3	Brand Heritage	0.904	0.759	0.223	0.915	0.370***	0.420***	**0.871**																
4	Overall EBBE	0.903	0.609	0.629	0.912	0.691***	0.473***	0.390***	**0.78**															
5	Employee-Brand Congruence	0.851	0.594	0.712	0.889	0.844***	0.609***	0.352***	0.692***	**0.771**														
6	H Factor	0.898	0.64	0.871	0.914	0.761***	0.584***	0.421***	0.692***	0.793***	**0.8**													
7	Brand-CP Congruence	0.811	0.682	0.57	0.818	0.544***	0.411***	0.305***	0.447***	0.597***	0.545***	**0.826**												
8	Brand Endorsement	0.948	0.859	0.79	0.952	0.758***	0.598***	0.358***	0.745***	0.785***	0.765***	0.525***	**0.927**											
9	Leadership about CP	0.935	0.743	0.626	0.938	0.588***	0.448***	0.262***	0.465***	0.517***	0.557***	0.434***	0.532***	**0.862**										
10	Brand Pride	0.947	0.782	0.79	0.952	0.802***	0.611***	0.396***	0.793***	0.807***	0.764***	0.551***	0.889***	0.587***	**0.884**									
11	CP Pride	0.915	0.684	0.399	0.922	0.404***	0.394***	0.269***	0.339***	0.437***	0.334***	0.520***	0.463***	0.454***	0.495***	**0.827**								
12	Internal Communication	0.87	0.573	0.792	0.874	0.628***	0.533***	0.374***	0.504***	0.640***	0.709***	0.634***	0.624***	0.791***	0.658***	0.525***	**0.757**							
13	Brand Citizenship	0.883	0.602	0.579	0.886	0.574***	0.606***	0.294***	0.549***	0.694***	0.627***	0.544***	0.761***	0.484***	0.700***	0.543***	0.619***	**0.776**						
14	Management Support	0.917	0.612	0.792	0.923	0.648***	0.429***	0.357***	0.515***	0.636***	0.700***	0.643***	0.686***	0.638***	0.674***	0.555***	0.890***	0.628***	**0.782**					
15	Brand Development	0.837	0.563	0.313	0.839	0.407***	0.479***	0.179*	0.309***	0.428***	0.449***	0.351***	0.494***	0.373***	0.519***	0.348***	0.437***	0.559***	0.424***	**0.75**				
16	Perceived Benefit from brand	0.882	0.555	0.871	0.892	0.769***	0.585***	0.415***	0.724***	0.789***	0.934***	0.509***	0.783***	0.538***	0.796***	0.397***	0.683***	0.651***	0.709***	0.526***	**0.745**			
17	Perceived Benefit of CP	0.909	0.715	0.326	0.913	0.404***	0.386***	0.262***	0.380***	0.369***	0.403***	0.365***	0.435***	0.571***	0.451***	0.461***	0.501***	0.319***	0.480***	0.327***	0.439***	**0.846**		
18	Brand Trust	0.813	0.597	0.744	0.872	0.774***	0.582***	0.472***	0.734***	0.787***	0.801***	0.565***	0.838***	0.508***	0.863***	0.409***	0.703***	0.670***	0.675***	0.467***	0.843***	0.359***	**0.773**	
19	Employee-CP Congruence	0.894	0.808	0.57	0.895	0.401***	0.344***	0.216**	0.339***	0.472***	0.386***	0.755***	0.461***	0.315***	0.493***	0.632***	0.500***	0.542***	0.529***	0.428***	0.463***	0.322***	0.470***	**0.899**

Table 7. 3 The HTMT analysis results

	Construct	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
1	Brand Vision																			
2	Brand Clarity	0.488																		
3	Brand Heritage	0.339	0.355																	
4	Overall EBBE	0.616	0.395	0.332																
5	Employee-Brand Congruence	0.76	0.563	0.31	0.573															
6	H Factor	0.669	0.521	0.358	0.593	0.707														
7	Brand-CP Congruence	0.489	0.345	0.267	0.365	0.494	0.473													
8	Brand Endorsement	0.725	0.529	0.319	0.669	0.726	0.711	0.466												
9	Leadership about CP	0.546	0.413	0.231	0.429	0.473	0.506	0.392	0.514											
10	Brand Pride	0.754	0.547	0.358	0.715	0.74	0.703	0.483	0.848	0.564										
11	CP Pride	0.374	0.356	0.245	0.304	0.378	0.313	0.434	0.439	0.431	0.466									
12	Internal Communication	0.566	0.465	0.326	0.434	0.566	0.624	0.543	0.576	0.721	0.605	0.475								
13	Brand Citizenship	0.523	0.516	0.253	0.46	0.621	0.552	0.464	0.693	0.442	0.638	0.494	0.542							
14	Management Support	0.607	0.378	0.337	0.45	0.583	0.631	0.553	0.643	0.604	0.636	0.512	0.803	0.558						
15	Brand Development	0.359	0.401	0.134	0.254	0.375	0.388	0.288	0.437	0.332	0.458	0.311	0.372	0.48	0.361					
16	Perceived Benefit from brand	0.677	0.5	0.361	0.633	0.707	0.833	0.435	0.714	0.503	0.726	0.364	0.596	0.565	0.639	0.459				
17	Perceived Benefit of CP	0.367	0.342	0.236	0.328	0.329	0.356	0.324	0.403	0.529	0.418	0.438	0.446	0.288	0.452	0.289	0.396			
18	Brand Trust	0.647	0.482	0.414	0.594	0.671	0.704	0.463	0.727	0.453	0.745	0.385	0.605	0.595	0.591	0.381	0.731	0.3		
19	Employee-CP Congruence	0.369	0.292	0.187	0.287	0.406	0.354	0.636	0.427	0.292	0.452	0.575	0.442	0.491	0.471	0.366	0.417	0.301	0.427	

Table 7. 4 Study's measurement scales after the psychometric properties checking

Constructs	Items		Factor loadings	Cronbach's Alpha (α) (> 0.7)	CR (>0.7)	AVE (>0.5)
Brand vision (4 items)	BV1	The values of this brand are really strong	0.747			
	BV2	Every colleague in this brand shares the values of the organisation	0.911	0.905	0.907	0.709
	BV3	Every colleague in this brand vigorously pursues the values of the organisation	0.871			
	BV4	This brand's vision reflects convincingly the values of the organisation	0.831			
Brand heritage (3 items)	BH2	The brand has a sense of tradition	0.889			
	BH3	The brand reinforces and builds on long-held traditions	0.915	0.904	0.904	0.759
	BH4	The brand has a strong link to the past	0.807			
Brand Clarity (3 items)	BC1	Information about my organisation's brand improved my basic understanding of my job	0.766			
	BC2	I understand what is expected of me because I have information about my organisation's brand	0.809	0.837	0.839	0.634
	BC3	I know how to make specific decisions for my job because I have information about my organisation's brand	0.813			
Employee-brand congruence (4 items)	EBC1	My professional values perfectly match the brand's values	0.887			
	EBC2	My personal values perfectly match the brand's values	0.861	0.842	0.851	0.594
	EBC3	I know exactly what the brand stands for	0.655			
	EBC5	The brand doesn't pretend to be something it isn't	0.647			
Brand-CP congruence (2 items)	BCPC1	This brand and this CP activity is a match-up	0.792			
	BCPC2	The philanthropic activity is appropriate to the brand's values	0.858	0.809	0.811	0.682
Employee-CP congruence (2 items)	ECPC1	I really support the core values of this CP activity	0.91			
	ECPC2	My values are in line with this philanthropic activity	0.887	0.894	0.894	0.808
Brand perceived benefits (6 items)	B_PB1	Good mentoring culture	0.694			
	B_PB3	Empowering environment	0.853			
	B_PB4	Good recognition for individual work	0.774			
	B_PB5	Respectful environment	0.71	0.881	0.882	0.556
	B_PB7	Strong team spirit	0.675			
	B_PB10	"People first" attitude	0.752			
H factor (5 items)	HF1	The brand really cares about my well-being	0.859			
	HF2	The brand strongly considers my values	0.844			
	HF3	The brand cares about my opinion	0.869	0.895	0.898	0.64
	HF4	The brand is willing to help me if I need a special favour	0.787			
	HF5	The brand would forgive an honest mistake on my part	0.613			

Table 7.4 (continued)

Constructs	Items		Factor loadings	Cronbach's Alpha (α) (> 0.7)	CR (>0.7)	AVE (>0.5)
Management Support of CP (7 items)	MS1	The brand values my contribution in this CP activity	0.824			
	MS2	The brand strongly considers goals and values of this CP activity	0.854			
	MS3	The brand provides help regarding this CP activity	0.758			
	MS4	The brand tries to make this CP activity interesting	0.708	0.915	0.917	0.612
	MS5	The brand is willing to help me perform the best I can in this CP activity	0.834			
	MS6	The brand understands my problems about this CP activity	0.732			
	MS7	The brand acknowledges my effort in this CP activity	0.753			
Internal communication of CP (5 items)	IC1	The brand communicates well how this philanthropic activity contribute to the brand values	0.723			
	IC2	The brand make skill and knowledge development of employees happens as an ongoing process	0.785			
	IC3	The brand helps us learn why we should do this activity and not just how we should do this	0.808	0.869	0.87	0.573
	IC4	The brand communicates the importance of my role being the face of our brand	0.724			
	IC5	The brand provided helpful information about this philanthropic activity during onboarding	0.742			
Leadership in CP (5 items)	L1	The brand gets me to look at how my job can link to the philanthropic activity	0.857			
	L2	The brand articulates a compelling vision of this CP activity	0.895			
	L3	The brand displays a sense of confidence when talking about this CP activity	0.84	0.935	0.935	0.743
	L4	The brand specifies the importance of having this activity in our brand	0.886			
	L5	The brand effectively coaches me on CP-related issues	0.83			
Perceived Benefits from CP (4 items)	CP_PB4	I learn new things	0.825			
	CP_PB5	I seek out intellectual challenges	0.838	0.909	0.909	0.715
	CP_PB6	I can do things that challenge me	0.892			
	CP_PB7	I broaden my horizons	0.826			

Table 7.4 (continued)

Constructs	Items		Factor loadings	Cronbach's Alpha (α) (> 0.7)	CR (>0.7)	AVE (>0.5)
CP pride (5 items)	CP_PR1	It makes me proud when others notice that I participate in philanthropic activity	0.738			
	CP_PR2	The philanthropic activity stands for values that make me proud	0.793			
	CP_PR3	I am proud of how this philanthropic activity is perceived by the public	0.871	0.913	0.915	0.683
	CP_PR4	When I tell others what the philanthropic activity stands for, I do that with a sense of pride	0.858			
	CP_PR5	Joining in the philanthropic activity makes me proud	0.865			
Brand pride (5 items)	B_PR1	It makes me proud when others notice that I belong to the brand	0.895			
	B_PR2	The brand stands for values that make me proud	0.899			
	B_PR3	I am proud of how this brand is perceived by the public	0.797	0.946	0.947	0.782
	B_PR4	When I tell others what this brand stands for, I do that with a sense of pride	0.919			
	B_PR5	Working for this brand makes me proud of the brand	0.908			
Brand trust (3 items)	B_T1	I trust this brand	0.91			
	B_T2	I rely on this brand	0.761	0.807	0.813	0.597
	B_T3	Working for this brand is safe	0.619			
Employee brand citizenship behaviour (5 items)	B_CTI2	I demonstrate behaviours that are consistent with the brand promise of the organisation I work for	0.72			
	B_CTI3	I consider the impact on my organisation's brand before communicating or taking action in any situation	0.767			
	B_CTI4	I show extra initiative to ensure that my behaviour remains consistent with the brand promise of the organisation I work for	0.793	0.883	0.883	0.602
	B_CTI5	If given the opportunity, I pass on my knowledge about my organisation's brand to new employees	0.781			
	B_CTI6	I am always interested to learn about my organisation's brand and what it means for me in my role	0.816			
Employee brand endorsement (3 items)	B_EN1	I say positive things about the organisation I work for to others	0.926			
	B_EN2	I would recommend the organisation I work for to someone who seeks my advice	0.904	0.947	0.948	0.859
	B_EN4	I talk positively about the organisation I work for to others	0.95			
Employee brand development (4 items)	B_DE2	… passes on customers' feedback directly to the person in charge	0.741			
	B_DE4	… communicates problems in customer service directly to the person in charge	0.751	0.837	0.837	0.563
	B_DE5	… constantly strives to develop expertise in serving the customers better	0.789			
	B_DE8	…makes constructive suggestions on how to improve the customer's brand experience	0.718			
Overall EBBE (6 items)	OBE1	It makes more sense to work for this brand than any other firm	0.859			
	OBE2	I prefer working for this brand, although other organisations may be as good employers as this brand is	0.832			
	OBE3	Even if this brand is no different in any way from other organisations, it seems smarter to work for this brand	0.803	0.906	0.903	0.609
	OBE4	It makes sense to work for this brand even if another organisation would offer me a higher salary	0.774			
	OBE5	If another organisation offered me a more attractive remuneration package I would be reluctant to quit my job at this brand	0.691			
	OBE6	It makes sense to work for this brand even if I have to work harder and longer than in other organisations	0.708			

7.7 Fuzzy set qualitative comparative analysis (fsQCA)

Fuzzy set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) is a 'synthetic' methodological approach that bridges qualitative and quantitative research (Cragun et al., 2016). It integrates the 'best features of the case-oriented approach with the best features of the variable-oriented approach' (Ragin, 1987), and therefore maximise the advantages and minimise both drawbacks (Ragin, 2009). Meanwhile, fsQCA helps identify specific combinations or configurations of elements to predict a particular outcome (Ragin and Fiss, 2008). It is particularly suited for exploratory investigations as it entails a configurational way of identifying and theorising the complexity inherent in causation among management and organisational phenomenon (Misangyi et al., 2017).

Compared to traditional analysis techniques, such as structural equation and regression modelling, which are only suitable for investigating symmetric causal correlations (Fiss, 2011), fsQCA is well-suited to studying complex, non-linear relationships between variables (Schneider and Wagemann, 2010). fsQCA is applied when an asymmetrical relationship is present. In other words, the occasion for using this analysis is when substantial numbers of cases display relationships contrary to an antecedent's main effect on an outcome variable (Woodside, 2014). The pilot study of this research identifies several groups of asymmetrical relationships, proving the necessity of employing this method. Another advantage of using fsQCA is that it allows multiple explanations for a specific target outcome, which helps better display the organisational phenomena's complexity and appreciate the possibility of the standardisation and adaptation strategies that depend on the set of circumstances in which firms operate (Theodosiou and Leonidou, 2003). By applying fsQCA, the combination of conditions works as a causal 'recipe' in producing an outcome (Ragin, 2009). It can be context-specific when identifying if and how a condition works differently in different cases. Moreover, multiple studies in the branding context have employed this method (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2016; Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019; Saridakis et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2023). Therefore, fsQCA is an appropriate analysis method for this research.

7.8 Preliminary results: Asymmetric relationships checking

Before performing fsQCA analysis, the correlation test is used to evaluate the association

between the constructs and for the asymmetric relationships checking. Correlation values above 0.8 are deemed to indicate a strong positive linear relationship between the variables. The results of the correlation among the constructs were not above the 0.80 threshold (see Appendix I) at conventional levels, which means non-linear relationships exist and symmetrical relationships do not occur. As such, these constructs are apt for subsequent analysis (Woodside, 2013). Quintile analysis via SPSS then performed a fine-grained examination of the relationships among the different pairs of constructs. It is an easy and quick way to examine how many cases in the sample do not align with the primary effects. The results indicate that negative and positive contrarian or outlier cases do occur (see Table 7.5).

These examples display the existence of contrarian cases in the relationship between perceived benefits from CP & brand development as well as the relationship between CP-related leadership & brand pride. Specifically, negative contrarian cases indicate $\sim$A (low perceived benefits from CP) $\rightarrow$ O (high employee brand development), while positive contrarian cases indicate A (high perceived benefits from CP) $\rightarrow$ $\sim$O (low employee brand development). The levels of appearance of these contrarian cases are outlined in Table 7.5. Thus, focusing solely on the main effect between these variables could result in a misleading understanding and a distorted picture of their interplay. In contrast, fsQCA allows the inclusion of the negative and positive contrarian cases, with the goal of identifying the configurations of the antecedent conditions that can produce the outcome of interest (Woodside, 2013; Ragin, 2009).

Table 7. 5 Examples of contrarian case analysis results

		Brand Development					
		1	2	3	4	5	
Perceived Benefits from CP (Phi = 0.457, p<.001)	1	very high	very low	low	**high**	very low	Negative contrarian cases indicating $\sim$A$\rightarrow$ O
	2	very high	medium	high	**high**	very low	
	3	medium	medium	high	very high	low	
	4	**medium**	very low	low	very high	medium	
	5	low	very low	low	very high	high	

Positive contrarian cases indicating A$\rightarrow$ $\sim$O

Table 7.5 (continued)

		Brand Pride					
		1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	
	1	very high	medium	medium	low	very low	Negative contrarian cases indicating ~A→ O
	2	medium	high	medium	**high**	low	
Leadership (Phi = 0.671, p<.001)	**3**	very low	medium	high	low	low	
	4	very low	**very high**	high	high	very high	
	5	very low	low	low	very high	very high	

Positive contrarian cases indicating A→ ~O

7.9 Calibration

Before running fsQCA, it is important to perform data calibration as it is where the original dataset can be transformed into fuzzy sets with values ranging from 0 to 1 (Ragin, 2009). Specifically, a case with a fuzzy set membership score of 1 is a full member of a fuzzy set, while a case with a score of 0 is a full non-member of the set. The membership score of 0.5 is known as the intermediate set (Pappas and Woodside, 2021). Thresholds need to be chosen to transform the data into the log-odds metric, with all values being between 0 and 1 (Pappas and Woodside, 2021). In general, it is recommended to use direct calibration, as it increases the research's reproducibility and generalizability. The choice of thresholds is justified and reported accordingly (Pappas and Woodside, 2021). The values 0.95, 0.50 and 0.05 are three thresholds to calibrate the data. The percentiles approach is used to find which values in the dataset correspond to 0.95, 0.50 and 0.05. The percentile analysis in SPSS was used to compute thresholds. As such, 95%, 50%, and 5% of the measures can be calculated, and the corresponding values can represent the three thresholds. However, it shows that our data do not have a normal distribution but are skewed and asymmetrical (see Table 7.6). In this situation, the 80%, 50%, and 20% can be considered as appropriate choices (Pappas et al., 2017). Table 7.6 presents the original values that correspond to each threshold. In detail, taking BV (brand vision) as an example, 80%, 50%, and 20% are the values 4.5, 4, and 3. Since this is a construct measured with a five-point Likert scale, if using 20%, it means that respondents with scores of 3 or lower are fully out of the set. However, this would be an inaccurate representation of those cases, as participants who

chose 3 are nearer to the neutral point rather than the lower point in the scale. Thus, a more accurate representation of the sample should be identified.

Table 7. 6 Compute thresholds using percentiles

		BV	BH	BC	EBC	BPB	HF	MS	IC	L	BCPC	ECPC	CPPB	CPPR	BPR	BT	BCTI	BEN	BDE	OBE
N	Valid	263	263	263	263	263	263	263	263	263	263	263	263	263	263	263	263	263	263	263
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Percentiles	5	2.0000	1.6670	2.0000	2.0000	2.0334	1.8000	2.2860	2.0000	1.0000	2.5000	3.0000	1.0000	2.2000	1.6400	2.0666	2.6000	1.6670	2.5000	1.1670
	50	4.0000	4.0000	4.0000	4.0000	4.0000	3.8000	4.0000	3.8000	3.4000	4.0000	4.0000	3.5000	4.0000	4.0000	4.0000	4.0000	4.0000	4.0000	3.5000
	95	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000	4.8000	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000	5.0000	4.6670

		BV	BH	BC	EBC	BPB	HF	MS	IC	L	BCPC	ECPC	CPPB	CPPR	BPR	BT	BCTI	BEN	BDE	OBE
N	Valid	263	263	263	263	263	263	263	263	263	263	263	263	263	263	263	263	263	263	263
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Percentiles	20	3.0000	3.0000	3.3330	3.2500	3.1336	2.8000	3.2860	3.0000	2.0000	3.5000	4.0000	2.5000	3.4000	3.0000	3.3330	3.4000	3.3330	3.5000	2.5000
	50	4.0000	4.0000	4.0000	4.0000	4.0000	3.8000	4.0000	3.8000	3.4000	4.0000	4.0000	3.5000	4.0000	4.0000	4.0000	4.0000	4.0000	4.0000	3.5000
	80	4.5000	5.0000	4.6670	4.5000	4.5000	4.6000	4.4290	4.4000	4.0000	5.0000	5.0000	4.3000	4.6000	4.6000	5.0000	4.8000	5.0000	4.7500	4.1670

Meanwhile, previous studies suggest that for a five-point Likert scale, the thresholds could be the values of 4, 3, 2 (Pappas and Woodside, 2021). Specifically, the Likert scale values of the variables were transformed into fuzzy membership scores through the direct method to show whether and how much a case belongs to a specific set (Pappas and Woodside, 2021). By comparison, using the previous percentiles approach would be an inaccurate representation of most cases in the sample. Therefore, this study adopts the direct approach for calibration and selects the five-point Likert scale values 4, 3, and 2 as anchor values to calibrate all the conditions to provide a more accurate representation of the sample. Specifically, the full membership threshold was fixed at the rating of 4, the full non-membership threshold was fixed at the rating of 2, and the crossover point/ intermediate set was fixed at 3. The calibration was processed using the fsQCA Software.

Once the calibration process is finished, an additional step is necessary. Due to the crossover point's value of 0.50 representing maximal ambiguity and, therefore, not clearly indicative of set membership, configurations containing any condition at this point are typically excluded from the analysis (Wagemann et al., 2016). To prevent this occurrence, after the calibration, researchers usually add a constant of 0.001 to the original fuzzy scores, as seen in works like Pappas and Woodside (2021).

The next step is running the fuzzy-set algorithm and generating the truth table in the Software. The truth table calculates all possible configurations (or combinations), with each row depicting every potential combination. The number of rows in the truth table denoted as 2^k, represents the logically possible combinations. Here, '2' signifies the two states (presence or absence) of conditions, and 'k' represents the count of antecedent

conditions. Additionally, the table includes the frequency, indicating how many cases in the dataset are accounted for by each configuration.

Based on the truth table, the following step involves 'sorting' by frequency and consistency (Ragin, 2009). The rule of thumb for determining a frequency threshold is 2 for small samples (N < 150), and for samples larger than 150 cases, the frequency threshold may be set at 3 (or higher) as long as at least 80 per cent of the cases are retained (Fiss, 2011; Ragin, 2009).

Along with removing configurations with low frequency, the truth table should be sorted by 'raw consistency'. A consistency threshold needs to be set at this point, with the minimum recommended value being 0.75 (Rihoux and Ragin, 2009). Meanwhile, models with consistency above 0.80 are useful and can serve theory advancement (Woodside, 2014). PRI (Proportional Reduction in Inconsistency) is an additional indicator for the consistency of subset relations in social research. It is only relevant to fuzzy sets, which is helpful to avoid simultaneous subset relations of configurations in both the outcome and its absence. PRI needs to be possibly close to consistency scores, while the configurations PRI scores below 0.5 indicate significant inconsistency (Greckhamer et al., 2018). This study followed the approach employed by recent studies, e.g., Chatzipanagiotou et al. (2019) and Pappas and Woodside (2021) and uses 0.80 as the minimum consistency threshold for consideration and 0.50 for PRI. Only the configurations with a minimum of three cases are in a truth table for further analysis. Therefore, this study set the cutoff value at 3 for frequency, 0.80 for consistency, and 0.50 for PRI. The fsQCA analysis then generated three solutions, complex, parsimonious, and intermediate, for the sufficiency analysis (Fiss, 2011). The complex solution fully excludes counterfactuals from the analysis. A parsimonious solution includes all simplifying assumptions regardless of whether they are based on easy or difficult counterfactuals, while an intermediate solution only includes simplifying assumptions based on easy counterfactuals. Then, this research adopts the rationale and notation from Fiss (2011) about the core and peripheral causal conditions. Whether causal conditions belonging to core or peripheral configurations are based on these parsimonious and intermediate solutions: core conditions appear in both parsimonious and intermediate solutions, and peripheral conditions only appear in the intermediate solution. Core causal conditions are the conditions with solid evidence of a causal relationship to the outcome of interest. Peripheral conditions also contribute to the outcome, but their role is weaker (Ragin and Fiss, 2008).

7.10   Robustness checks

As a follow-up step, sensitivity analyses are performed to assess the robustness of the results after generating and reporting the solutions. This stage is necessary because fsQCA relies on guidelines and recommendations to determine thresholds, and, accordingly, it is vital to control whether changing various parameters and cut-offs can notably alter the results. In terms of the steps, Skaaning (2011) summarised three types of robustness checks to be addressed concerning fsQCA, namely, (1) changes in thresholds related to the calibration of raw data into set memberships, (2) the frequency of cases linked to the configurations, and (3) the consistency of configurations. The above anchors should be picked based on theoretical principles (Ragin, 2009).

Therefore, to ensure the solidarity of solutions, the study employs two alternative checks according to Skaaning (2011): (1) The different frequencies of cases, from three (the baseline) to four cases (the alternative) and (2) the different levels of consistency in solutions, from 0.80 (the baseline) to 0.90 (the alternative). After the alternative was performed, although some of the alternative results provide indications for slightly different interpretations, the results obtained have limited differences in coherence and coverage and are similar to the original results. The number of the derived solutions did not warrant substantively different interpretations. Appendix J recorded details about the extent of the change from the baseline to the alternative anchoring values.

Chapter 8: Findings – quantitative phase

8.1 Overview of research propositions

Ten research propositions (RP) were addressed using the fsQCA analysis method. Specifically, RP1- RP4 examine the direct relationships leading from the brand building block (BBB), brand assimilation block (BAsB), brand affinity block (BAfB), and brand enactment block (BEB) to overall employee-based brand equity (OBE). RP5-RP7 explore other relationships among these blocks. For RP8- RP10, they examine how each BBB, BAsB, and BAfB block predicts the overall employee-based brand equity (OBE). Table 8.1 below provides an overview of these ten research propositions. The following solution tables state the outcomes of the fuzzy set analysis for the EBBE development process. The solution table offers information about the level of set-theoretic consistency for configurations and the entire solution. The overall solution consistency and the overall solution coverage are presented in the tables. The consistency values exceed the predefined threshold of greater than 0.80 in all recorded cases. Consistency measures how closely a subset relation has been approximated, while the overall coverage describes the extent to which the configurations may explain the outcome of interest and is comparable with the R-square reported on regression-based methods (Woodside, 2013). To conclude an informative model, researchers can focus on those solutions with raw coverage between 0.25 to 0.65 (Woodside, 2013). Based on the elaborated rationale and principles, all the relevant results regarding the propositions will be reported accordingly.

Table 8. 1 List of research propositions

List of research propositions
Relationships between blocks and OBE
RP1: Sufficient combinations of the components constituting the BBB will lead to high scores in the individual components of the BAsB.
RP2: Sufficient combinations of the components constituting the BAsB will lead to high scores in the individual components of the BAfB
RP3: Sufficient combinations of the components constituting the BAfB will lead to high scores in the individual components of the BEB.
RP4: Sufficient combinations of the components constituting the BEB will lead to a high OBE score.
Relationships among blocks
RP5: Sufficient combinations of the components constituting the BBB will lead to high scores in

the individual components of the BAfB.

RP6: Sufficient combinations of the components constituting the BBB will lead to high scores in the individual components of the BEB.

RP7: Sufficient combinations of the components constituting the BAsB will lead to high scores in the individual components of the BEB.

Other relationships lead to OBE

RP8: Sufficient combinations of the components constituting the BBB will lead to a high OBE score.

RP9: Sufficient combinations of the components constituting the BAsB will lead to a high overall OBE score.

RP10: Sufficient combinations of the components constituting the BAfB will lead to a high overall OBE score.

Notes for abbreviations: Brand Building Block (BBB); Brand Assimilation Block (BAsB); Brand Affinity Block (BAfB); Brand Enactment Block (BEB); Overall employee-based brand equity (OBE).

8.2 Core-periphery models of BBB predicting high scores in BAsB outcomes (RP1)

Research proposition 1 (RP1) explores the relationship between two key blocks: the Brand Building Block (BBB) and the Brand Assimilation Block (BAsB). The former encompasses the imagery and functional elements sufficient for creating and maintaining a strong brand in a CP-related context, including brand heritage and vision, management support related to CP, effective internal communication, leadership, and the 'Human' factor. The latter, BAsB, focuses on the outcomes of these efforts as perceived by employees, specifically their clarity about the brand, the benefits they perceive from the brand and CP initiatives, and the alignment they feel between themselves, the brand, and CP efforts. Table 8.2 provides empirical evidence supporting RP1, illustrating the crucial role of foundational internal branding efforts in achieving effective brand assimilation among employees.

Table 8. 2 Core-periphery models of BBB predicting high scores in BAsB outcomes (RP1)

BBB	Brand Clarity				Employee-brand Congruence				Brand-CP Congruence				Employee-CP Congruence				Perceived Benefits from CP			Perceived Benefits from Brand		
	1a	1b	1c	2	1a	1b	1c	2	1a	1b	2a	2b	1a	1b	2a	2b	1	2	3	1a	1b	2
Management support about CP	●	●	●	●	·	·	·	·	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	·	·	·	·	·	●
Internal communication of CP	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	·	●	●	·	·	·	●
Leadership in CP		·				·				·				·				●	●		·	
The 'H' factor	·					·	·			·			·		·		·			·		·
Brand heritage		·	·				·				●	●			●	●		·				●
Brand vision	●	●	●		●	●	●	·	·	·	·		·	·		·	●	●		●	●	
Consistency	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.96	0.97	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.98	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.98	0.98	0.97	0.97	0.83	0.86	0.89	0.99	0.98	0.96
Raw coverage	0.69	0.61	0.65	0.65	0.71	0.62	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.58	0.61	0.62	0.63	0.56	0.59	0.6	0.74	0.68	0.59	0.73	0.62	0.68
Unique coverage	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.03	0.01	0.04	0.04	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.03
Overall solution coverage	0.83				0.86				0.83				0.81				0.83			0.85		
Overall solution consistency	0.91				0.94				0.95				0.96				0.81			0.93		

Note: The black circles (●) indicate the presence of a condition - the large circles indicate core conditions; the small circles indicate peripheral conditions. Blank spaces in a pathway indicate 'don't care'.

The first focus delved into the core branding aspects of fostering **brand clarity** among employees. The results reveal two solutions that lead to high employee brand clarity scores, with high overall coverage = 0.83 and consistency = 0.91. These solutions indicate that almost 85% of employees agree that CP-related management support and internal communication play a key role in developing a solid perception of their brand. Specifically, solution 1, unfolding in three modes (1a-c), demonstrates management support for CP, internal communication, and brand vision as core conditions towards developing high scores in employees' perceived brand clarity. Thus, solution 1 indicates that for employees to have brand clarity, management support plays a vital role, as it helps produce order, consistency and predictability in the workplace (Kotter, 1990). Meanwhile, solution 1 signals that internal communication is central to employees' brand clarity. Solution 1 also highlights that brand vision, which involves the fundamental purpose of a brand, significantly influences employee-perceived brand clarity. It is consistent with the research by Harris and de Chernatony (2001), who argued that a well-conceived brand vision enables employees to appreciate their journey better. Thus, these factors collectively function as cornerstones, shaping and clarifying the brand's identity and purpose for employees. In addition, solution 2 (raw coverage=0.65, consistency=0.96) again indicates the substantial role of supportive CP-related management and effective internal communication. This demonstrates how these key factors can work together to predict employee brand knowledge clarity.

Two distinct pathways emerged to achieve the formation of **employee-brand congruence** (with high overall coverage=0.86 and consistency=0.94). One is where CP-related internal communication and brand vision synergistically and strongly align employees with the brand, and another is where internal communication is an exclusive key catalyst to achieve employee-brand congruence. This indicates more than 85% of employees reckon that CP-related internal communication and brand vision are essential in formulating employee-brand congruence. Solution 1, revealed in three modes (1a-c), suggests that the strong combinations of CP-related internal communication and brand vision make employees build a fit between the corporate brand and themselves. Alternatively, CP-related internal communication can also work alone, playing a pivotal role in reaching the alignment of employees' and brands' values (solution 2, raw coverage=0.66 and consistency=0.96). Therefore, these results suggest brand vision, which is envisioning a desired future, identifying a brand purpose and generating explicit brand values (de

Chernatony, 2010) and CP-related internal communication both play vital roles in communicating better for the corporate brand and achieving the employees' congruent perceptions with their organisational brand.

Two solutions are generated to achieve high scores in the **congruence between brand and CP** (overall coverage=0.83, overall consistency=0.95). Almost 85% of employees agree that CP-related management support is key in developing a solid congruence between their brand and the CP activity. Specifically, solution 1, unfolding in two modes (1a & 1b), demonstrates that CP-related management support is the only core condition for developing high brand-CP congruence scores. In addition, solution 2 (featured as 2a & 2b) again indicates the critical role of management support and the vital role of brand heritage in creating brand-CP congruence. Taken together, management support of CP activities could alone lead to high scores in employees' perceptions of brand-CP congruence. In addition, management support emphasising the CP activities as part of the corporate brand heritage could also substantially enhance employees' perceptions of the harmonising match between brand-CP activities.

Next, to reach high scores in **congruence between employee and CP**, there are two solutions with high overall coverage=0.81 and consistency=0.96. Interestingly, the pattern of solutions is the same as the result concerning the above brand-CP congruence, pointing out that support from management for CP and long-standing brand heritage significantly influence brand-CP and employee-CP congruence in the same manner. These results again confirm the integrated importance of corporate brands in cultivating brand heritage and offering support for employees when organising CP activities.

Three different combinations of high scores in brand-building elements sufficiently explain high scores in **employees' perceived benefits from CP**, with overall coverage=0.83 and consistency=0.81. Solution 1 portrays the first route, which centres on robust internal communication of CP and a clear brand vision in persuading employees to perceive relevant CP-related benefits. Solution 2 provides the second pathway that combines strong internal communication, clear brand vision, and strong supervisors' leadership in CP. Solution 3, the third pathway leading to employee-perceived CP-related benefits, hinges upon strong leadership in CP alone, indicating leadership's important transformational function in a CP-related context. Thus, these results show that employees take different paths to receive benefits from their CP participation.

Two solutions were suggested to predict high scores in **employees' perceived benefits from the brand** (overall coverage=0.85, overall consistency=0.93). Although solution 1 (featured as 1a & 1b) is equipped with different peripheral constructs, both suggest that the brand needs to tap into its strong brand vision for employees to find benefits from the corporate brand. By contrast, solution 2 combines CP-related management support, internal communication, and brand heritage as core factors for employees to perceive benefits from the brand level. These results indicate that supportive and functional CP-related efforts and the intangible nourishment from brand vision and heritage are vital for generating employees' brand-related perceived benefits.

To sum up, when reviewing these solutions predicting high scores in the individual components of BAsB, except the overall 'Human' factor, all BBB components (e.g., internal communication for CP and brand vision) play core causal roles, albeit in different combinations. Interestingly enough, the caring and humane factor plays a peripheral role in almost all solutions, leading to employees' absorption of the brand's corporate philanthropic activities. In other words, the 'H' factor contributes to setting a work environment where employees can perceive their organisation to treat them like human beings with respect and care, generating positive brand assimilation outcomes. The above evidence proves that employees 'live' the brand under this particular CP-related condition by appreciating meaningful and supportive brand-building efforts and developing relevant knowledge, perceiving congruence and benefits.

8.3 Core-periphery models of BAsB predicting high scores in BAfB outcomes (RP2)

Exploring and clarifying the relationship between the Brand Assimilation Block (BAsB) and the Brand Affinity Block (BAfB) is crucial for understanding how employees assimilate and subsequently develop an affinity towards brands. The former BAsB captures employees' cognitive journey when integrating brand information into their perceptions. Then, this BAfB block includes emotional and relational components, i.e., brand trust, brand pride, and CP-related pride. The research proposition (RP2) suggests a cognitive-affective sequence where the employees' rational understanding and assimilation of a brand lead to emotional outcomes. The following results with core-periphery models provide support to RP2 (Table 8.3).

Table 8. 3 Core-periphery models of BAsB predicting high scores in BAfB outcomes (RP2)

BAsB	Solutions predicting high scores in BAfB (RP2)										
	Brand Trust				Brand Pride			CP Pride			
	1	2a	2b	3	1	2	3	1a	1b	2	3
Brand Clarity	•		•	•		•	•			•	•
Employee-brand Congruence	●	●	●		●		●	•		•	•
Brand-CP Congruence	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	●	●	●	
Employee-CP Congruence	•	•	•	•	•	•		●	●		●
CP Perceived Benefit	●			●	●	●	●	•	•		•
Brand Perceived Benefit	•	•			•		•			•	•
Consistency	0.97	0.96	0.95	0.95	0.94	0.95	0.96	0.94	0.97	0.98	0.98
Raw coverage	0.62	0.81	0.78	0.65	0.84	0.69	0.65	0.82	0.7	0.6	0.6
Unique coverage	0.01	0.05	0.02	0.03	0.06	0.04	0.01	0.15	0.04	0.01	0.01
Overall solution coverage	0.88				0.91			0.92			
Overall solution consistency	0.93				0.92			0.93			

Note: The black circles (●) indicate the presence of a condition - the large circles indicate core conditions; the small circles indicate peripheral conditions. Blank spaces in a pathway indicate 'don't care'.

Regarding the pathways leading to **brand trust**, the results reveal three solutions that lead to high scores in brand trust with high overall coverage=0.88 and consistency=0.93. Solutions 1 and 2 state that employee-brand congruence is a core condition in developing brand trust. Solution 1 also demonstrates that if employees perceive congruence with the brand and realise benefits from their involvement with the CP activities, they will develop strong trust in the corporate brand. Solution 3 further indicates that taking benefits from CP activities can alone significantly lead to high scores in brand trust. This aligns with Farooq et al. (2014), who argue that when employees perceive those CP-related benefits from the brand (e.g., the welfare of their communities), they believe that brands could treat employees with the same level of care and benevolence. Trust results from a successful reciprocal bond and exchange between employees and their brands. To sum up, these three distinct solutions contribute to high brand trust scores, emphasising the significant role of employees' perceived benefits from CP and employee-brand congruence, coupled with other peripheral cognitive conditions.

Next, the results display that employees follow three alternative pathways to generate **brand pride** (with high overall coverage=0.91 and consistency=0.92) in which specific brand assimilation components play core causal roles, albeit in different combinations. Solution 1 highlights that the congruence between employees and their organisational

brands can stand alone as a core condition leading to high scores in brand pride. Similarly, solution 2 confirms that perceiving benefits from CP activities can also significantly make employees proud of their corporate brands. By contrast, solution 3 (raw coverage=0.65, consistency=0.96) indicates that employee-brand congruence and perceived benefits from CP should co-exist to achieve brand pride. These results resonate with Greening and Turban (2000), who highlighted the link between prosocial benefits and employee pride. As such, when employees attribute positive prosocial emotional benefits to their organisation, it will increase their self-esteem and pride in being members (Greening and Turban, 2000). Helm et al. (2016) also prove that brand pride is affected by the congruity of the brand with the ideal self. In a nutshell, the harmony between employee and brand and perceiving CP-related benefits serves as core conditions in different solutions. For employees to be proud of their corporate brand, the brand managers must have helped establish employee-brand congruence provided benefits from CP activities to employees or set up both mentioned core conditions at the same time.

The results concerning high scores in **CP-related pride** reveal three solutions, with high overall coverage=0.92 and consistency=0.93. This means that more than 90% of employees value the situation when philanthropic activities match up with the values of their company and with their own personal values. Specifically, solution 1, unfolding in two modes (1a-b), demonstrates that when employees feel that their company's philanthropic actions match the company's brand and their own values, they develop a strong sense of pride based on CP. Meanwhile, even just seeing that the philanthropic initiatives fit well with what the company stands for can significantly make employees proud of the CP initiatives (Solution 2). Moreover, even if employees personally connect with the CP-related activities, they feel a deep sense of pride from these actions (Solution 3). In essence, the results underscore the importance of a harmonious relationship between CP, the brand, and employees to foster a sense of pride.

To sum up, the above results prove that employees trust and take pride in their brand more when they see a good match between what they value and what the brand stands for and when they benefit from the CP activities. Feeling a strong sense of pride from CP participation specifically happens when employees see that these CP initiatives fit well with both the organisational brand and their personal values. Interestingly enough, understanding the brand and seeing benefits from the brand level can help, but these factors only play peripheral roles. In other words, these two factors may create a cognitive

foundation for employees to build emotional connections when participating in CP activities in their workplace.

8.4 Core-periphery models of BAfB predicting high scores in BEB outcomes (RP3)

The results clearly demonstrate that high scores in the Brand Affinity Block (BAfB) can effectively explain the corresponding high scores in the Brand Enactment Block (BEB), lending robust support to Research Proposition 3 (RP3). Specifically, the close affinity between employees and corporate brands is critical as it translates into tangible behaviours captured under the BEB, including employee brand citizenship, brand endorsement, and brand development.

Table 8. 4 Core-periphery models of BAfB predicting high scores in BEB outcomes (RP3)

BAfB	Solutions predicting high scores in BEB (RP3)					
	Brand Citizenship		Brand Endoresement		Brand Development	
	1	2	1a	1b	1	2
Brand Trust	●			•	●	
Brand Pride		●	●	●		
CP Pride		•	•			●
Consistency	0.94	0.97	0.98	0.98	0.92	0.91
Raw coverage	0.89	0.81	0.85	0.87	0.87	0.9
Unique coverage	0.12	0.04	0.04	0.05	0.1	0.1
Overall solution coverage	0.93		0.91		0.97	
Overall solution consistency	0.93		0.97		0.9	

Note: The black circles (●) indicate the presence of a condition - the large circles indicate core conditions; the small circles indicate peripheral conditions. Blank spaces in a pathway indicate 'don't care'.

The analysis identifies two effective routes of high **employee brand citizenship**, with high overall coverage and consistency (0.93). According to Table 8.4, the first pathway, Solution 1, highlights brand trust as essential for fostering brand citizenship, indicating that employees' confidence in the brand encourages supportive behaviours going for the 'extra mile'. The second route, Solution 2, with a raw coverage of 0.81 and consistency of 0.97,

emphasises brand pride. This suggests when employees feel an intense sense of pride in the organisational brand, they are more likely to support it actively. These two solutions suggest that helping employees develop trust and pride in their organisation is crucial for encouraging them to go beyond for their brand.

Next, the analysis reveals one effective solution for achieving high **employee brand endorsement** scores, which unfolds through two variations (1a & 1b), both centred on brand pride. Notably, Solution 1b, with a raw coverage of 0.87 and a consistency of 0.98, is identified as the most empirically significant. This indicates when employees are proud of their organisational brand, they are more likely to speak highly of it.

Moreover, two solutions are identified for driving **employee brand development**, with high overall coverage (0.97) and consistency (0.90). Solution 1 shows that when employees trust their brand, they can help brand development to make customers' experiences with the brand better. Interestingly, Solution 2, on the other hand, highlights the core role of employees' pride associated with their CP activity participation. By cultivating a sense of pride among employees during their CP involvement, companies can effectively encourage employees' developmental behaviours that contribute to customers' brand experience improvement. These findings illustrate distinct approaches to enhancing brand development through brand trust and CP-related pride.

In a nutshell, when employees feel a sense of trust and pride towards their company's brand and when they take pride in the company's CP activities, these feelings significantly influence how actively they support and promote the brand. This can show up in different pathways: they might go out of their way to represent the brand positively, endorse it to others, or help develop the brand further. Each of these actions is influenced by a different mix of trust and pride, showing that the relationship between how employees feel about the brand and how they act on behalf of it is complex and interconnected.

8.5 Core-periphery models of BEB predicting high scores in OBE (RP4)

Research proposition 4 (RP4) focuses on the relationships between employee behavioural performance and overall brand strength, and it is supported by one solution that manifests in two modes (1a & 1b), showing high overall coverage (0.95) and relatively low

consistency (0.75). Previous research has concluded that the model can be informative when consistency is above 0.74, and coverage is above 0.25 (Woodside, 2013). Thus, the current model is still acceptable. This solution (see Table 8.5) confirms that brand endorsement is a core condition of high **overall employee-based brand equity (OBE)**. These findings highlight the importance of the support and advocacy employees actively express for their company's brand and its significant impact on its overall strength. Interestingly, either employee brand citizenship in Solution 1a or employee brand development in Solution 1b can peripherally impact the overall brand equity.

Table 8. 5 Core-periphery models of BEB predicting a high score in OBE (RP4)

Solutions predicting high scores in OBE (RP4)		
BEB	**OBE**	
	1a	**1b**
Brand Citizenship	•	
Brand Endorsement	●	●
Brand Development		•
Consistency	0.76	0.76
Raw coverage	0.93	0.91
Unique coverage	0.04	0.02
Overall solution coverage	0.95	
Overall solution consistency	0.75	

Note: The black circles (●) indicate the presence of a condition – the large circles indicate core conditions; the small circles indicate peripheral conditions. Blank spaces in a pathway indicate 'don't care'.

8.6 Core-periphery models of BBB predicting high scores in BAfB outcomes (RP5)

Moving to explore the relationships among those blocks, the individual conditions in Brand Building Block (BBB), e.g., management support for CP, are identified to influence employees' trust and pride towards their corporate brand and employees' pride in the CP activities that embraced in the Brand Affinity Block (BAfB), thereby supporting Research Proposition 5 (RP5). This finding demonstrates that strong foundational brand-building efforts influence employees' affinity among brands.

Table 8. 6 Core-periphery models of BBB predicting high scores in BAfB (RP5)

BBB	Solutions predicting high scores in BAfB (RP5)										
	Brand Trust				Brand Pride			CP Pride			
	1a	1b	2a	2b	1a	1b	2	1a	1b	1c	2
Management support about CP	●	●	●	●	·	·	●	●	●	●	●
Internal communication of CP	·	·	·	·	·	·	●	●	●	●	●
Leadership in CP				·		·				·	
The 'H' factor	·		·		·			·			·
Brand heritage	●	●					●		·		·
Brand vision		·	·	·	●	●		●	●	●	
Consistency	0.98	0.97	0.98	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.95	0.95	0.97	0.96	0.96
Raw coverage	0.66	0.66	0.7	0.61	0.73	0.65	0.68	0.66	0.6	0.63	0.62
Unique coverage	0.03	0.01	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.04	0.2	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.04
Overall solution coverage	0.87				0.87			0.82			
Overall solution consistency	0.93				0.92			0.94			

Note: The black circles (●) indicate the presence of a condition - the large circles indicate core conditions; the small circles indicate peripheral conditions. Blank spaces in a pathway indicate 'don't care'.

Table 8.6 displays two solutions that predict a strong **trust in their corporate brands** among employees (with high overall coverage=0.87 and consistency=0.93), with the findings applicable to nearly 90% of employees. Specifically, Solution 1 (1a & 1b) demonstrates when brands actively provide management support for employees' CP involvement and display their historical legacy and long-standing values, it significantly helps in building trust in the brand among employees. In addition, solution 2 (2a & 2b) highlights that just having management support for CP alone influences how much employees trust their brand. This solution confirms that supportive management efforts in a CP-related context can directly enhance trust, even without adding brand heritage as a core element.

Next, the study identifies two distinct solutions that successfully foster high **employee brand pride** with strong overall coverage (0.87) and consistency (0.92). Solution 1 (Modes 1a & 1b) demonstrates the crucial role of brand vision as a guiding principle of the organisation in cultivating employee brand pride. The two modes demonstrate how different peripheral conditions work together with a clear and inspiring brand vision to enhance the sense of brand pride among employees. Solution 2 combines three core elements: the backing and encouragement from management for CP activities, the clear and efficient information related to CP activities for all employees and the long and valued

brand history. This solution underscores how these core imagery and performance branding conditions contribute significantly to forming employees' perceptions and leading to strong brand pride.

The study also presents two effective solutions for fostering **employee CP-related pride**, evidenced by substantial overall coverage (0.82) and high consistency (0.94). Solution 1 (1a-1c) underscores the combined impact of support from management for CP, effective internal communication, and a cohesive brand vision. These core elements are integral in cultivating employees' pride based on CP, demonstrating how a multi-faceted approach involving supportive management practices, clear messaging and vision can enhance a sense of honour and esteem employees derive from their association with their corporate philanthropic involvement. Solution 2 (with a raw coverage of 0.62 and consistency of 0.96) highlights a more straightforward yet highly effective combination of CP-related management support and internal message in driving high levels of CP-related pride.

In summary, the findings (in Table 8.6) highlight how important it is for companies to have a strong brand heritage and good support from management for CP to increase trust in their brand among employees. To improve employees' pride in their brand, organisations should have a clear and strong brand vision, a well-established brand heritage, effective communication, and management support for CP. The critical elements for making employees feel proud of their company's CP activities include target CP-related support from management, good internal communication, and a strong brand vision. Even though less central, the peripheral role of leadership and the human factors in the workplace are still there. They help set a positive tone in the company and make the work environment feel respectful and human-focused, affecting how emotionally connected employees feel to their brand. This approach shows that managing the brand's image and performance characteristics is essential for creating a positive connection between employees and organisations.

8.7 Core-periphery models of BBB predicting high scores in BEB outcomes (RP6)

The following results prove that high scores in Brand Building Block (BBB) elements can sufficiently explicate high scores in employee behavioural outcomes, i.e., Brand Enactment Block (BEB), providing support to research proposition 6 (RP6).

Table 8. 7 Core-periphery models of BBB predicting high scores in BEB outcomes (RP6)

BBB	Brand Citizenship				Brand Endorsement				Brand Development			
	1a	1b	2a	2b	1a	1b	1c	2	1a	1b	1c	2
Management support about CP	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Internal communication of CP	·	·	·	·	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Leadership in CP			·			·				·		
'H' factor	·		·		·		·		·			·
Brand heritage	●	●					·	·			·	·
Brand vision		·	·	·	●	●	●		●	●	●	
Consistency	0.98	0.97	0.98	0.98	0.99	0.98	0.97	0.98	0.96	0.97	0.95	0.95
Raw coverage	0.63	0.63	0.67	0.59	0.71	0.62	0.66	0.66	0.65	0.58	0.61	0.61
Unique coverage	0.03	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.03
Overall solution coverage	0.84				0.85				0.82			
Overall solution consistency	0.94				0.95				0.93			

Note: The black circles (●) indicate the presence of a condition - the large circles indicate core conditions; the small circles indicate peripheral conditions. Blank spaces in a pathway indicate 'don't care'.

As indicated in Table 8.7, two approaches significantly enhance **employees' brand citizenship**: nearly 85% of employees recognise the crucial role of CP-related management support. In the first approach, identified through two sub-modes (1a-b), both CP-related management support and awareness of brand heritage are pinpointed as necessary prerequisites for achieving high levels of brand citizenship among employees. Similarly, the second approach unfolds in two sub-modes (2a-b), suggesting that CP-related management support alone is a core causal factor in predicting robust brand citizenship. These approaches show that CP-related management support is indispensable in leading employees to voluntarily engage in actions not explicitly required by their job roles but significantly benefit the brand.

Meanwhile, the study reveals that two distinct approaches lead to high levels of **brand endorsement** among employees, with significant overall coverage (0.85) and consistency (0.95). Notably, 85% of employees recognise the essential role of CP-related management support and effective internal communication in fostering vital endorsement behaviours. Solution 1, unfolding through three modes (1a-c), shows that CP-related management support, internal communication, and a clear brand vision are all crucial for enhancing employees' brand advocacy. This indicates that when these brand performance and

imagery elements are aligned, they significantly boost the employees' willingness to support and advocate for the brand. By contrast, solution 2 (with coverage=0.66 and consistency=0.98) suggests that even just the combination of CP-related management support and internal communication alone can effectively lead to a strong brand endorsement. Each pathway involves different combinations of brand-building elements but ultimately leads to employees actively supporting and promoting their brand. Brands should recognise and leverage these pathways to cultivate a strong and endorsing workforce.

Interestingly, the study identifies a notable similarity in the solutions that successfully enhance both employees' brand citizenship and **employee brand development**. Two distinct methods have been found to significantly improve scores in brand development, achieving an overall coverage of 0.82 and a consistency of 0.93. Impressively, over 80% of employees recognise the crucial importance of management support related to corporate philanthropy and effective internal communication in fostering vital employee brand development behaviours. The same combination of elements that boosts brand endorsement - management support related to corporate philanthropy, informative internal communication, and well-defined brand vision - also effectively promotes employees' brand development in delivering exceptional customer experiences. This 'recipe' proves consistently beneficial across both areas.

To sum up, the above insights from Table 8.7 focus on how branding efforts influence employees' support, advocacy, and development behaviours. These solutions reveal that support from management for CP programmes and a strong brand heritage are key in encouraging employees to go beyond their job requirements in ways that greatly benefit the brand. Additionally, support from management for these CP programmes, effective communication within the company, and a clear brand vision are all essential for increasing employees' promotion of the brand. The elements that enhance brand promotion also play a significant role in helping employees contribute to exceptional customer experiences.

8.8 Core-periphery models of BAsB predicting high scores in BEB outcomes (RP7)

Research Proposition 7 (RP7) findings demonstrate that high scores in the Brand

Assimilation Block (BAsB) sufficiently explain high scores in the Brand Enactment Block (BEB), indicating that effective integration of employees' cognitive reactions leads to active brand-supporting behaviours.

Table 8. 8 Core-periphery models of BAsB predicting high scores in BEB outcomes (RP7)

BAsB	Solutions predicting high scores in BEB (RP7)										
	Brand Citizenship				Brand Endorsement			Brand Development			
	1a	1b	2	3	1	2	3	1a	1b	2	3
Brand Clarity			•	•	•	•				•	
Employee-brand Congruence	•		•	•	●		●	•		•	•
Brand-CP Congruence	●	●	●		•	•	•	●	●	●	
Employee-CP Congruence	●	●		●	•	•		●	●		●
CP Perceived Benefit		•				●	●	•		•	•
Brand Perceived Benefit			●	●	•		•			●	●
Consistency	0.95	0.96	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.97	0.98	0.94	0.96	0.97	0.97
Raw coverage	0.82	0.67	0.59	0.59	0.81	0.66	0.62	0.81	0.67	0.58	0.59
Unique coverage	0.16	0.03	0.004	0.01	0.1	0.04	0.005	0.15	0.03	0.004	0.01
Overall solution coverage	0.92				0.88			0.89			
Overall solution consistency	0.94				0.95			0.92			

Note: The black circles (●) indicate the presence of a condition - the large circles indicate core conditions; the small circles indicate peripheral conditions. Blank spaces in a pathway indicate 'don't care'.

As synthesised in Table 8.8, the study identifies three distinct approaches that lead to high scores in **employee brand citizenship**, with a high overall coverage of 0.92 and a consistency of 0.94. The first approach, divided into parts 1a and 1b, highlights the importance of aligning the values that CP activities represent with brand values and employees' personal values in fostering employees actively and voluntarily supporting and promoting their corporate brands. The other two approaches, Solutions 2 and 3, achieve notable consistency and focus on the perceived benefits employees gain from the brand as the primary driver of employees' brand citizenship. However, they differ slightly in their secondary focuses: Solution 2 emphasises the alignment of brand values with corporate philanthropic topics, while Solution 3 points to the alignment of employees' values with

these CP causes as a core factor. These approaches demonstrate that show that aligning values across the organisation and enhancing employees' perceptions of the brand's benefits are crucial for encouraging robust brand-supportive actions among staff.

Then, the analysis reveals three effective approaches for achieving high scores in **employee brand endorsement**, each demonstrating substantial effectiveness and reliability. Solution 1 stands out as the most empirically significant (with raw coverage =0.81 and unique coverage = 0.1), focusing primarily on how well employees' and the corporate brand's values align. In Solution 2, the core factor is the benefits employees perceive from their involvement in philanthropic activities, which plays a crucial role in their advocacy of the brand. Solution 3, also noted for its high consistency, integrates two key conditions: it emphasises the alignment between employee values and the corporate brand, as well as the benefits employees perceive from engaging in corporate philanthropy. These factors create a robust foundation for employees to engage with and advocate actively and positively for their corporate brand.

The study identifies three solutions that significantly enhance **employees' brand development**, with overall coverage (0.89) and consistency (0.92). These solutions mirror those observed in enhancing brand citizenship, emphasising similar core elements. Specifically, the perceived benefits employees derive from the brand, the congruence between the brand's values and CP activities, and the alignment between employees' personal values and CP are highlighted as core factors. This demonstrates that a holistic approach with various configurations, which includes aligning values and highlighting perceived benefits, is key to enhancing employee development and elevating customer experiences.

To sum up, the above findings focus on three core conditions: ensuring employees perceive clear benefits from the brand, aligning the brand's values with its philanthropic efforts, and ensuring these efforts resonate with employees' personal values. Achieving these conditions is vital for brands looking to foster employee 'go for an extra mile' and develop for customers' experience. Additionally, strengthening the connection between employees and the brand, coupled with maximising the benefits employees derive from participating in these CP activities, is crucial for boosting their positive endorsement of the brand.

8.9 Core-periphery models of BBB, BAsB, and BAfB predicting high scores in OBE (RP 8, 9 & 10)

The final table of this section below (Table 8.9) summarises and illustrates the results of the models predicting high scores in overall employee-based brand equity (OBE). It shows that brands can encourage employees to take different pathways to boost the overall brand strength.

Table 8.9 Core-periphery models of BBB, BAsB, and BAfB predicting high scores in OBE (RP 8,9,10)

Solutions predicting a high score in Overall Employee-based Brand Equity (OBE) (RP8,9,10)							
BBB	OBE			BAsB	OBE	BAfB	OBE
	1a	1b	2		1		1
Management support about CP	•	•	•	Brand Clarity	•	Brand Trust	●
Internal communication of CP	•	•	•	Employee-brand Congruence	●	Brand Pride	●
Leadership in CP			●	Brand-CP Congruence	•	CP Pride	
The 'H' factor	●	●		Employee-CP Congruence		Consistency	0.8
Brand heritage		•	●	CP Perceived Benefit	●	Raw coverage	0.91
Brand vision	•		•	Brand Perceived Benefit	●	Unique coverage	0.91
Consistency	0.84	0.84	0.86	Consistency	0.85	Overall solution coverage	0.91
Raw coverage	0.77	0.73	0.61	Raw coverage	0.69	Overall solution consistency	0.8
Unique coverage	0.08	0.04	0.03	Unique coverage	0.57		
Overall solution coverage		0.86		Overall solution coverage	0.74		
Overall solution consistency		0.82		Overall solution consistency	0.84		

Note: The black circles (●) indicate the presence of a condition - the large circles indicate core conditions; the small circles indicate peripheral conditions. Blank spaces in a pathway indicate 'don't care'.

The first part of Table 8.9 compares two models of Brand Building Block (BBB) conditions, illustrating how different conditions contribute to achieving high **Overall Employee-based Brand Equity (OBE)**, thereby supporting research prediction RP8. In the first model, the overall caring and humane factor is identified as the crucial element, influencing the overall brand strength through two sub-configurations, 1a and 1b. In contrast, the second model highlights a combination of CP-related transformational leadership and the overall perceived heritage of the brand as key to driving high overall brand strength. These findings demonstrate the variety of ways in which brands can

successfully build up their overall power by focusing on different functional or imagery aspects of their branding.

The results also shed light on the components in the Brand Assimilation Block (BAsB) that predict high OBE effectively, supporting another research proposition, RP9. This model is reliable, with an overall coverage of 0.74 and a consistency of 0.84, indicating a robust predictive capability for high brand strength. Three core conditions drive this success: the alignment between employees and the brands' values as well as the benefits that employees identify from the brand and their involvement in CP activities. Together, these cognitive-related factors form a robust foundation for directly enhancing the overall brand strength.

The findings also demonstrate that high scores in the Brand Affinity Block (BAfB) elements effectively predict high OBE, corroborating research proposition 10 (RP10). Specifically, the single solution presented, with an impressive overall coverage of 0.91 and a consistency of 0.8, reveals that more than 90% of employees consider brand trust and pride the core drivers for achieving overall employee-based brand equity. This indicates that when those working within the organisation deeply trust and take pride in the corporate brand, it significantly boosts the brand's overall strength.

To effectively enhance the overall strength of brand equity among employees, brands must implement various tailored solutions based on their unique objectives. One approach involves leveraging brand-building efforts that underscore the brand's longstanding heritage, the human aspects of the business, and leadership's role in guiding CP initiatives. Another solution focuses on aligning the brand's values with those of the employees and offering employees the benefits associated with both the brand and its CP activities. This helps to shape employees' cognitive understanding and appreciation of the brand and, therefore, fosters the overall strength of the brand. Alternatively, cultivating trust and pride in the brand is essential for deepening employees' emotional connection and strengthening overall brand equity. This rich tapestry of research propositions illustrates that high overall brand equity does not result from a singular factor. Instead, it comes from building the brand, helping employees understand and embrace it, fostering a positive connection, and encouraging actions supporting it.

Chapter 9: Discussion

9.1 Introduction

The previous chapters have presented the study's findings from both qualitative and quantitative perspectives. This discussion chapter builds on those findings, focusing on key results and their implications in conjunction with existing knowledge and pertinent literature. While previous research has provided valuable insights into the conceptualisation and implications of corporate philanthropy (Gautier and Pache, 2015), and employee-based brand equity (King and Grace, 2009; Tavassoli et al., 2014), this discussion chapter will explain how these two concepts intersect in order to build on and extend existing research and contribute to new knowledge. Moreover, recent studies have shifted away from viewing brand equity as a static construct (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2016; Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019). Building on recent studies, this research significantly contributes to branding theory and practice by proposing and testing a dynamic and comprehensive employee-based brand equity development model, highlighting the influences of active corporate philanthropic activities on enhancing brand equity.

The main body of this chapter is divided into two main sections: (a) explaining the key insights revealed by interviews with employees and managers from Study 1 about how philanthropic activities can link with and shape employees' attitudes, feelings, and actions toward their corporate brands as well as the overall perception of the brand strength; (b) synthesising the core conditions or essential 'recipes' in building up the employee-based brand equity development model that assessed in Study 2.

This discussion chapter, therefore, synthesises the critical results from Study 1 and Study 2. Specifically, the following sections will further explain the dynamic cognitive-affective-behavioural EBBE process concerning the unique context offered by employees' philanthropic involvement in the workplace. Moreover, this chapter will illuminate core conditions (such as the transformational leadership for guiding employees in CP involvement, the caring and humane support from companies and the long-standing brand heritage for brand building) throughout the entire EBBE building process that can predict the end goal of the overall strength of the brand.

9.2 Linking CP with EBBE development process

9.2.1   Linking CP with employees' brand perceptions

The literature review chapters focus on conceptualising corporate philanthropy (CP) and employee-based brand equity (EBBE). Specifically, the systematic literature review of CP critiques and refines its concept, highlighting its unique aspects and implications relating to the 'unintentional reciprocity' and arguing against its interchangeable use with similar concepts like CSR. The chapter also defines and clarifies EBBE, distinguishing it from other definitions by focusing on the dynamic process of employees' cognitive, affective, and behavioural evolution in forming the brand's overall strength. These insights set the stage for linking CP with brand equity, creating an initial conceptual framework for the research.

One of the primary purposes of Study 1 (qualitative research with semi-structured interviews) was to confirm the critical conditions of the framework that build up employee-based brand equity in a corporate philanthropic environment. After exploring how CP links with employees' brand perceptions through interviews, the results reveal several key conditions that further inform knowledge and understanding of the conceptual framework's initially proposed conditions. These conditions correspond with the literature on consumer-based brand equity (CBBE), in which the experiential (the brand's imagery) and functional perceptions of brand performance and quality were featured as the two aspects of outcomes of the company's brand-positioning efforts (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2016; Keller, 1993; Keller and Swaminathan, 2020). The following discussion explains the importance of brand imagery characteristics (brand heritage and brand vision) and performance-related brand characteristics (management support, leadership, internal communication, and the 'H' factor) that allow employees to form the brand meaning, in which CP plays a critical role as part of the company's effort to communicate the brand to both external and internal stakeholders.

Specifically, **brand heritage**, emerging from the interview results, is considered one of the crucial aspects of building brand imagery. This significant finding resonates with the brand heritage scholarship and its conceptual innovation mentioned by Balmer and

Burghausen (2019), Keller and Lehmann (2006) and Urde et al. (2007). Notably, the findings of Study 1 reveal that many employees value the track record and longevity of corporate brands and are familiar with relevant brand establishment stories and ethos. This phenomenon is consistent with previous studies, e.g., Urde et al. (2007), supporting that brand heritage is centred on an organisational belief that a brand's history is essential. More importantly, the results also inform how employees particularly value the historical significance behind the long-standing charitable work. For instance, employees mentioned that the brand's philanthropy heritage would have a long-lasting influence on employees and the communities, as well as a potential effect on attracting new talents. Therefore, the findings help advance the concept of brand heritage by illustrating how it unifies the past with the present and future in a unique way (Balmer and Burghausen, 2019) within a CP-related context. The inclusion of this concept also adds new knowledge to the branding research about exploring how brands transform their heritage into valuable corporate assets (Urde et al., 2007). The new knowledge is significant because it reveals how brand heritage can be closely intertwined and enrich employees' perception of corporate philanthropy's track record. Interestingly, the findings also document the phenomenon of informational asymmetry relating to brand heritage, which has been unexplored from the employees' perspective. Pertinent literature offered an insightful viewpoint about informational asymmetry about the brand heritage that exists for consumers. Specifically, most corporate heritage is unknown to the average consumer because they do not have direct access to the company's identity and only perceive what is communicated externally (Pecot et al., 2018). Similarly, according to the findings from interviews, most employees who have worked for the corporate brand for more than ten years perceive corporate philanthropy's track record, while the freshers or newcomers may not be able to generate the perception of brand heritage due to the lack of or limited access. This finding is significant because it advances the existing knowledge about brand heritage by completing and revealing that its informational asymmetry problem also applies to employees. Consequently, it is vital to incorporate brand heritage as an intangible brand-building imagery characteristic in a CP-related context and carefully consider its possibilities for linking with different employees' perceptions based on informational asymmetry.

Next, **brand vision** appears from the interview results and resonates with previous literature, which is included as a critical imagery aspect of internal brand-building efforts. Specifically, consistent with previous studies, the findings of Study 1 confirm that brand vision is irreplaceable in portraying the fundamental purpose of a brand - its reason for

being and its core values (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001). Notably, the findings advance the arguments that thoughtfully crafting a brand vision is essential for guiding employees in their professional journey (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001) while significantly increasing their interest and participation in CP activities. Furthermore, this study contributes to the field of internal branding by providing insights about the components of brand vision, i.e., the envisioned desired future, the identification of a brand purpose and the explicit brand values (de Chernatony, 2010), especially in a CP-related context. The findings further suggest that the brand's vision offers employees meaning and direction, enabling them to positively influence the organisation over a long-term horizon through engaging with various stakeholders, including colleagues and the community. Taken together, incorporating brand vision as a significant internal brand-building component is meaningful.

The findings highlight that **management's active recognition and support of CP** is a significant internal brand-building component since it enables and increases employees' appreciation, engagement, and participation in CP activities. This phenomenon resonates well with the existing literature on EBBE, e.g., King and Grace (2010), where an employee perceives that the organisation acknowledges and supports employee effort is essential. The importance of management support has been stressed in previous research, indicating that management support as needed workplace antecedents for employees' reactions leading to brand management success (Burmann and Zeplin, 2005; de Chernatony, 2010; Piehler, 2018; Punjaisri and Wilson, 2017). What is curious about the interview results is that some managers highlighted that they would award employees and offer non-financial incentives (e.g., employees can go home an hour earlier if they contribute to CP during that day), while some employees insisted that they have intrinsic motives to participate in CP and do not care whether they would be provided any incentives. This advantageous finding reinforces the importance of supporting and including individuals from all backgrounds in the workplace (Downey et al., 2015). This is essential in understanding potential differences and similarities among employees' CP-related experiences. It thus advances insights to investigate better tailored and effective management support in this CP-related context for internal brand-building.

Conversely, the findings also indicate that the lack of management support, such as difficulties finding appropriate voluntary opportunities at the workplace and the contradiction between excessive work demands and CP activities, would cause perceived

barriers and dilemmas in employees' CP participation. This identification of lacking management support holds some relevance to emerging conversations in the employee disengagement literature that argue that disengagement from work can be triggered by stress and a lack of resources (Afrahi et al., 2022). This finding could help inform understanding of how the stressful, inappropriate CP initiatives and the lack of resources for CP can damage employees' dedication to work and thus highlight the importance of embracing the compound 'management support for CP' as a critical condition for brand building. Therefore, the inclusion of management support for CP as an essential internal brand-building effort is supported by streams of literature from both positive and negative perspectives. It offers the richness of the substance of the 'management support' concept by illustrating it as a crucial HR intervention and its particularity in the CP-related context.

Supervisors' brand leadership for CP is incorporated as a critical condition in internal brand building, which resonates well with Wallace and De Chernatony (2009) and Daft and Marcic (2013), in which leadership is promoted as a condition for employees to live the brand and attain organisational goals. Specifically, the findings from Study 1 reveal that leadership from senior managers or supervisors is influential and sometimes even decisive in pushing employees to get involved in CP. This result corresponds with the classic opinion of French et al. (1959) about the basis of social power, in which leaders' formal organisational position and charisma generate legitimate and referent power. Additionally, in line with previous calls to shed light on transformational leadership, e.g., Pierro et al. (2013), this research further helps advance understanding of the mechanism of transformational leadership in empowering employees to have the autonomy to lead CP activities independently and generate CP initiatives creatively with brand-oriented consideration, and through this process, meeting employees' higher-order needs (Banks et al., 2016). At the same time, the findings of this research challenge the existing studies that take transformational leadership as a tool for influencing followers' willingness to 'comply with' soft power bases, e.g., Pierro et al. (2013). In this way, this research goes beyond those traditional views of leadership. It points to the importance of promoting the leadership's transformational feature in empowering employees within an internal brand-oriented social context like corporate philanthropic involvement.

This research identifies **internal communication for CP** as a condition of internal brand building. The importance of internal communication has been proved by previous research, indicating communication is essential as it cultivates consistent and congruent perceptions

among individuals (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001), strengthens employees' sense of belonging to the organisation (Biedenbach and Manzhynski, 2016), results in brand values being comprehended, accepted and internalised by employees to shape future behaviour (King and Grace, 2012).

Additionally, apart from supporting the importance of internal communication for brand building, the results from Study 1 also suggest that a successful internal communication initiative for CP is typically achieved through assorted communication mediums (e.g., emails, posters, newsletters, and social media platforms) from diverse occasions. In particular, the induction session and the 'outcome displaying' about corporate philanthropy are identified by employees as influential occasions for internal communication in Study 1. These findings support previous research, e.g., Burmann and Zeplin (2005), which has revealed the advantages of using different forms of communication - central communication (distributed by a central communication department), cascade communication (top-down through the hierarchy) and literal communication (informal transmission of information through peers). However, this research further contributes by going beyond the focus on the different forms of communication and emphasising that the core of internal communication for CP is organisational storytelling and narratives, in which the organisation spells out the fundamental mission and vision of the brand and specific goals and benefits of the CP activities at the same time. Revealing the importance of narratives in internal communication for CP advances the existing knowledge in two distinct ways. First, it reaffirms the narrative as a significant resource for formulating individuals' internal and private sense of the self and is all the more a considerable resource for conveying that self to and negotiating that self with others (Burmann and Zeplin, 2005; Harvey et al., 2020). Secondly, it holds significant implications for researchers and practitioners in promoting employees to effectively communicate with the former and exemplar stories, the meaning, the 'real outcomes', and the benefits of CP to build employees' collective sense and alignment. Collectively, the above discussion underscores the uniqueness of Internal Communication for CP and why it should be incorporated as a significant component of brand building in a CP-related context.

The 'H' factor in corporate culture is identified as a critical element for internal brand building in this research, which resonates well with the literature in which the 'H' factor (the extent to which organisations treat employees like human beings) has been

incorporated as a crucial element when examining EBBE (King and Grace, 2010). Moreover, incorporating this factor into the framework aligns with a recent call to investigate contextual drivers of EBBE better (Boukis and Christodoulides, 2020). The findings from Study 1 shed light on a particular aspect of an essential contextual concept - corporate culture, which is formed by the totality of basic assumptions, values and norms that the organisation's members share that can significantly determine employees' perception, thinking, decision making and behaviour in the internal environment, as argued in existing literature, e.g., Burmann and Zeplin (2005) and Daft and Marcic (2013). Highlighting the importance of the 'H' factor allows researchers and practitioners to focus more clearly on the people-oriented perspective when exploring corporate culture. Specifically, the findings suggest that employees appreciate that the organisations have shifted to a more people-centred culture. This phenomenon corresponds with previous research, which has discovered the importance of building and sustaining a solid corporate brand by changing the organisational culture to one which is more 'people-oriented' (Papasolomou and Vrontis, 2006). More importantly, including the 'H' factor as a critical brand-building element helps advance understanding of the linkage between CP and EBBE. Previous research has identified that the natural 'benevolent halo' of charitable giving (Chernev and Blair, 2015) as well as how corporate philanthropy activities naturally intrigue employees to see their organisation as an institution that cares (Grant and Ashford, 2008). Building upon these, this research leads to a more nuanced understanding of the philanthropic, 'caring' and 'benevolent' features of CP. By providing an underlying mechanism, this research confirms the Human factor as the inherent essential for brand building in the philanthropy-related research context. Therefore, the yields in Study 1 and the relevant literature indicate that the 'H' factor is an essential attribute of contextual branding-building efforts, especially in employees' corporate philanthropic involvement.

In conclusion, by linking CP with employees' brand perceptions, this research informs and identifies that the brand imagery (Brand Heritage and Brand Vision) and performance-related brand characteristics (Management Support for CP, Supervisor Leadership for CP, Internal Communication for CP, and the 'H' factor in Corporate Culture) constituting as the first set of the components capable of predicting high levels of EBBE. Therefore, this research pervades the importance of brand building in offering employees meaning, purpose, direction, and the opportunity to start 'living the brand'.

9.2.2   Linking CP with employee brand assimilation

A focus on brand assimilation appears after discussing the linkage between corporate philanthropy and employees' perceptions of brand building. This sequence resonates well with the previous seminal literature on brand equity study, which depicts five aspects that form a bottom-to-top chain as follows: awareness, associations, attitude, attachment, and activity (Keller and Lehmann, 2006). Following this stimulus-response chain, employees' awareness, associations, and attitudes towards the brand-building efforts should be considered the cornerstone for the upcoming attachment and activity, leading to the cognitive-affective-conative rationale. This research identifies and incorporates employee brand knowledge clarity, congruence between the brand, employee, and philanthropic causes, as well as employee perceived (brand- and CP-related) benefits as critical conditions for employee brand assimilation. Thus, it points to the importance of portraying how employees actively know, understand, and appreciate the features of a strong brand as part of the overall cognitive-affective-conative process. Additionally, the emerging focus has captured employees' active and primary role in a range of mainstream marketing processes, such as internal branding (King and Grace, 2008). However, employees' active role in the context of corporate philanthropy has not yet received close attention (Arco-Castro et al., 2018). Therefore, linking CP with employee brand assimilation makes this research contribute to the field by providing insight into employees' cognitive responses at the interactive interface between the brands and corporate philanthropic activities.

This research includes **employee brand knowledge clarity** as an essential element of brand assimilation, supporting the previous studies by Keller (1993), King and Grace (2009), Vallaster and De Chernatony (2006), Xiong et al. (2013) and Boukis and Christodoulides (2020), in which the consideration of employees' clear understanding of brand knowledge and role relevance is highlighted. The findings from Study 1 (qualitative semi-structured interview) also support that brand knowledge is a fundamental aspect of brand equity, mainly due to the distinctiveness, robustness, and positive nature of the associations linked to the brand's specific attributes (Keller, 1993). The findings from Study 1 point to the importance of two layers of distinctive, robust, and positive brand knowledge clarity in the CP-related context, which is about (a) how CP is linked with brand purpose delivery and (b) how to deliver brand promise through CP participation.

These results support the research by King and Grace (2010) and Xiong et al. (2013), who discovered two vital aspects of making brand clarity, i.e., the employee understands what the brand stands for and how to deliver the brand promise. Moreover, the inclusion of this concept is also consistent with Vallaster and De Chernatony (2006)'s illustration of employees' role as capable brand-related information carriers in successful branding, thereby amplifying employees' active and dominant role in the brand equity development process and challenging other existing research which views employees as information receivers. Therefore, Employee Brand Knowledge Clarity is included as an essential condition of brand assimilation that resonates with the relevant literature and the findings from Study 1.

'Congruence' is a critical aspect of brand assimilation that aligns with social identity theory, suggesting that people always strive to achieve or maintain a positive social identity (Farooq et al., 2014). The focus on the interaction between individuals and brands is embedded within existing consumer research, which suggests that consumer-brand relationships can vary based on the self-concept connection (Keller and Lehmann, 2006). Moreover, relevant concepts have also been stressed in employee-related research, in which successful exchanges are premised on cultivating shared goals between employees and their corporate brands (King and Grace, 2012). Plus, the focus on congruence in this CP-related context also resonates well with the research from Farooq et al. (2014), who argued that corporate social responsibility can cause prestige and induce employees' identification with their organisation. The findings expand the breadth of prior research that has traditionally been narrower in scope by underscoring the importance of multi-dimensional 'congruence'. The multifaceted is crucial as it successfully documents the interaction between the critical constituents, as suggested by Park et al. (2023), Deng et al. (2023) and Nan and Heo (2007), in the context of philanthropic activities happening in the workplace, namely, (a) beneficiary organisations and the target causes, (b) firms involved in the CP initiative, and (c) employees who participated in the initiatives. Therefore, the findings of this research contribute to the field by providing a richer picture of the congruence between employees, brands, and CP activities.

The inclusion of the **brand-employee congruence** reflects one of the multi-dimensional aspects. In particular, the findings help advance the understanding of establishing Brand-Employee Congruence in the CP-related context. Specifically, the results from Study 1 suggest that the congruence is more outstanding when employees recognise the

consistency between their organisation ethos and personal beliefs regarding benevolence and reckon that they are genuinely cared for by the corporate brand. Previous research has mentioned the role of brand-employee congruence in helping understand 'how people make the brand' (Hurrell and Scholarios, 2014) and its potential to stimulate employees' job satisfaction, organisational satisfaction and intention to stay (Edwards and Cable, 2009). Building upon the existing studies, this research highlights the uniqueness of Brand-Employee Congruence in the CP-related context. The findings suggest that the CP-related context can be related to the organisations' prestigious image, as Tajfel and Turner (2004) indicated according to the social identity theory, which enhances employees' self-worth and meets their need for self-enhancement. Moreover, the idea of brand-employee congruence may hold some relevance to other branding concepts like 'brandscapes', which refer to the process of using brands as symbolic recourses to produce personal narratives that construct and express individual identities and values (Thompson and Arsel, 2004). When linking CP with a brand, the symbolic resources of this brand could be enriched by the CP setting, leading to more space for employees' self-expression. Consequently, it is essential to incorporate Brand-Employee Congruence as a key condition for brand assimilation, which echoes well with existing research and the latest developments.

Apart from the brand-employee congruence, the findings also suggest the inclusion of **employee-CP Congruence** to form brand assimilation. The results support and advance relevant knowledge sourced from the consumer-focused research domain. For example, Chowdhury and Khare (2011) and Deng et al. (2023) have discovered the existence of fit, compatibility and match between consumer self-schema or self-concept and cause. This research advances the existing knowledge by revealing the importance of considering that employees also vary in their values and priorities regarding social issues and charitable causes. For example, the findings indicate that most employees are actively involved in the nomination and voting process for the target causes when there is an alignment between the cause and their preoccupations. Some would spontaneously join a CP activity if the locations were near their workplace, home, and community, and even rejoin CP activities if they can witness the positive impacts from previous involvement. Notably, the findings emphasise that employees have a sense of ownership in the 'meaningful' philanthropy-related topics and, therefore, advance understanding of how this meaningful congruence drives potential advantages. The findings are in line with a growing body of employee-focused research in which achievement and meaningfulness are considered essential factors for positive consequences like employee engagement (Allan, 2017). Therefore, the

current study positions employee-cause congruence as another core aspect of brand assimilation, which further decodes the employees' active role in developing brand equity.

The findings also indicate that considering the fit between corporate brands and their chosen philanthropic causes (**brand-CP congruence**) is critical to fully understanding the multi-dimensional congruence in a CP-related context. This consideration aligns with existing research, emphasising that a firm would seek to create synergistic results by directing its resources towards societal challenges that resonate well with its core values and mission (Saiia et al., 2003). Moreover, this brand-CP congruence has been noted in the 'strategic corporate philanthropy' to achieve synergistic social and economic performance (Zhao and Zhang, 2020). However, the so-called synergistic results are still too broad to achieve. The findings from Study 1 advance insight by decoding brand-CP congruence as employees' belief and perception that an alignment between the business brand and the charitable cause should not be a temporary 'marketing ploy'; instead, it needs to boost 'real impacts' within a long-term partnership. Thus, this research adds new knowledge by offering a clear focus for practitioners and researchers to reflect on and achieve Brand-Cause Congruence and the accompanying synergistic results.

The above findings support and advance the latest research by using the CP-related research context and ultimately portraying the threefold intertwined relationship between employees, brands and target charitable causes. These relevant findings also change the traditional stances that neglect employees' self-worth, self-expression, self-enhancement, and perceptions about meaningfulness and critique those actions that take corporate philanthropy as a 'marketing ploy'.

Furthermore, the findings unpack the underlying multiple aspects of employee-perceived benefits from the workplace, such as developmental, psychological, and social benefits from both intrapersonal and interpersonal perspectives. These findings therefore suggest the inclusion of employee-perceived **brand-related benefits,** which corresponds with relevant branding literature such as Schlager et al. (2011). Previous literature has identified the functional, economic, and psychological benefits provided by employment from daily operations and corporate branding as the critical determinants for attracting potential employees and retaining employees (Schlager et al., 2011; Stangis and Smith, 2017). However, this research helps advance existing understanding by emphasising the non-monetary benefits of employees' CP participation at their workplace and

demonstrating the novel existence of **CP-related benefits.** One of the most prominent findings emerging from the analysis is that people appreciated the connectedness as a benefit of philanthropic participation. This finding adds considerable support to the latest research regarding community involvement and social psychology that has positioned social connectedness and associational networks for health and well-being as a crucial need during the pandemic and lockdown (Brown and Leite, 2023), especially among older adults (Dury et al., 2020). In this way, the above findings lead to a more nuanced understanding of detecting those employees perceived brand-related benefits as distinct from CP-related ones, which is especially significant in the post-pandemic era. Consequently, this study builds on subsequent research by including both employee perceived (brand- and CP-related) benefits as critical conditions for brand assimilation.

In summary, the above discussion underscores the meaningfulness and importance of six cognitive factors, i.e., brand knowledge clarity, threefold perceived congruence, and twofold perceived benefits in shaping EBBE. These interrelated factors capture brand equity from employees' cognitive understanding and form together as the brand assimilation, a vital part of the entire EBBE development process, and therefore build on the cognitive-affective-conative rationale (Aaker, 1996; Keller, 2003).

9.2.3 Linking CP with employee brand affinity

After clarifying the employees' cognitive reactions during their CP involvement, this section will turn to the discussion related to affective aspects. The consideration of employee brand affinity aligns with the argument that while cognitive factors enable employees to deliver the brand promise, emotional or affective indicators are essential to ensure employees have a genuine desire to do that (King and Grace, 2010). Moreover, relevant research, such as King and Grace (2012), emphasises the importance of including affective dimensions, which stresses that trust, attachment or bonding, respect/reciprocity or empathy are critical factors for successful exchanges between employees and organisations. Thus, in line with existing studies, this research underscores the importance of the emotional bond between brands and their employees and captures trust and pride as key aspects of employees' feelings.

The findings demonstrate that **pride** is positioned as an emotion provoked by one's achievements or others' and closely tied to self-esteem and a positive self-image, which

significantly resonates with previous research such as Lea and Webley (1997). The linkage with the CP-related context provides a unique opportunity to align with the idea proposed by Helm et al. (2016), who consider pride a self-conscious, positive emotion from being associated with a socially valued outcome. The findings are linked with a social identity theory perspective, e.g., Greening and Turban (2000) and Loehndorf and Diamantopoulos (2014). Specifically, the findings indicate that when employees attribute a positive prosocial emotion to their organisation, their self-esteem and pride in being members will increase, demonstrating the importance of positive emotions, like pride, towards how the brand is socially valued.

Notably, the results find a unique expression for the concept of pride in the context of corporate philanthropy, revealing that feelings of pride can be created and amplified by employees' acknowledgement of their organisation's genuine significant contribution towards CP, the heritage of CP involvement, and their reputable charitable partner. For example, some informants particularly valued the tangible impacts of their philanthropic efforts, further suggesting the significant effect of the 'genuine' achievements leading to the 'proper pride' as Lea and Webley (1997) mentioned. Delving more profoundly, the findings reveal that pride is not just a monolithic emotion but multifaceted, which advances insight from Gouthier and Rhein (2011), who suggest that organisational pride can stem from specific successful events and the general perception of the organisation. Thus, the findings challenge the sole dimension of pride and underscore the importance of the concept of pride being twofold: it encompasses the positive emotions employees feel when associated with corporate philanthropy activities and the brand itself. To conclude, both **brand pride and CP-related pride** are identified as crucial emotional conditions of employee brand affinity according to the existing literature and qualitative findings.

The concept of **trust**, which is seen as vital in affective-related discussions (Garbarino and Johnson, 1999; Morgan and Hunt, 1994), is included in this research as a condition of employee brand affinity. This research supports the existing affective-related perspective, treating trust as a psychological state where confidence in a partner's reliability and integrity is paramount. Specifically, the findings from Study 1 demonstrate that brand trust is nurtured through participation in CP activities. The findings bring new knowledge into this understanding of trust in a CP-related context, decoding that when people from different departments work together for a common charitable target, they accumulate trust and expect to build a bond with other colleagues. Moreover, the findings also document

that employees derive trust from their belief in the sincerity of the brands, which holds some relevance to arguments that brand personality and sincerity foster corporate brand trust (Rampl and Kenning, 2014). **Employee trust (brand- and CP-related)** is incorporated into the framework by differentiating its two levels: employees' confidence in CP activities and the brand's reliability and integrity. This distinction is crucial for understanding the affective dynamics of the EBBE development process.

To sum up, the current study draws upon the practical evidence and theoretical stances to suggest that four affective factors, i.e., brand pride, CP-based pride, brand trust, and CP-based trust, are shaping EBBE. Meanwhile, they are essential in structuring the employee brand affinity, a critical stage throughout the cognitive-affective–conative chain, capturing attachment between brands and individuals (Keller and Lehmann, 2006).

9.2.4   Linking CP with employee brand enactment

The following discussion focuses on employee brand enactment, supporting existing studies in which the behaviour of employees is believed to lie at the heart of any brand (Hurrell and Scholarios, 2014; Sirianni et al., 2013). Following the cognitive-affective-behavioural rationale, the exploration of brand enactment centres on how employees engage in the brand and how they would successfully diffuse their brand experience across the organisation as Boukis and Christodoulides (2020) suggested. The consideration of the main conditions of brand enactment also helps to solidify the ideas of pioneer researchers like Burmann and Zeplin (2005), King and Grace (2010) and King et al. (2012) in terms of highlighting the importance of discretionary actions. Particularly, employee brand citizenship and employee brand endorsement represent actions going beyond the prescribed roles for the good of the corporate brand. Furthermore, including a novel item, employee brand development, also advances the overall model development by inviting a long-term perspective to review employees' behaviour and reflecting a mirror effect between consumers and employees. The following discussion further explains the meaning and importance of behavioural-focused brand development.

Employee brand citizenship is included as a critical condition of employee brand enactment, aligning well with King and Grace (2010)'s notion of employees exhibiting behaviours that are 'above and beyond the norm' and reflective of organisational brand values. The findings from Study 1 put together new evidence about how employees 'live

the brand' and enrich the explanation of the diverse aspects of brand citizenship behaviour, like helping behaviour, brand enthusiasm, and self-development, as outlined by Burmann et al. (2009a). Involving CP naturally links with actions that are 'above and beyond the norm' and 'going for the extra mile' at the workplace, which brings more rationale and space for considering the discretionary actions in this research. One interesting finding is that for organisations with no formal position like CSR manager or sustainability officer, some employees voluntarily take the appropriate responsibilities to organise CP-relevant activities that go beyond their role expectations without formal obligations. Embodying the organisational citizenship behaviours described by Burmann and Zeplin (2005), the findings further decode, within a CP-related context, how employees generate citizenship behaviours more naturally and with a more compelling tendency. Therefore, the findings help advance understanding of using the CP context to encourage employees to achieve more positive behavioural outcomes. Another finding that stands out from the results is that employees can develop CP-related ideas and initiatives linked with brand enthusiasm, helping behaviour, and self-development consideration, such as investing and transferring more relevant skills at their workplace to support communities through voluntary mentoring programmes. This finding further contributes to the field by providing diverse aspects of brand citizenship behaviour and explaining how employees intertwine with brands as an organic whole within the CP-related context. In this way, the findings advance insight by highlighting the dynamic nature of employees' brand citizenship in a CP-related context. Thus, integrating employee brand citizenship into the EBBE development process is necessary and insightful.

Including **employee brand endorsement** to capture employees' positive external communication about the brand or the advocacy of the corporate brand significantly resonates with King and Grace (2010) and Xiong et al. (2013), who include this concept as a critical aspect of their brand equity model. Specifically, the findings indicate that employees involved in CP tend to enthusiastically endorse their activities externally. This phenomenon aligns with existing research, such as Schmidt and Baumgarth (2018), which indicates the existence of internally oriented brand ambassadorship. Moreover, the findings also help advance understanding of the mechanism of brand endorsement by pointing out distinctive brand endorsement behaviours from employees in the finance and insurance sectors. It is striking that these employees argue that they prefer to discuss their brand's philanthropic features over sector-specific ones on social occasions. Exploring the rationale behind this finding leads to a more nuanced understanding of how CP is knotted

with positive brand endorsement and the implications of Schmidt and Baumgarth (2018) 'goal-oriented' endorsement. Meanwhile, the findings further suggest that people launch brand endorsements to satisfy their personal needs and want to boost organisational and individual profiles and support their favourable partner charities. Specifically, the findings add new knowledge regarding the importance of employees' internal genuine appreciation and enthusiastic feelings about CP in encouraging them to genuinely promote the corporate brand and criticise the infliction of brand endorsement as a must-do for employees. Accordingly, these insights contribute to understanding employee brand endorsement, revealing its importance for employee brand enactment.

The findings indicate that **employee brand development** is one of the critical dimensions of brand-related behaviours. This supports Piehler et al. (2016), recognising employee brand development as employees' behaviours actively affecting brand development to improve customers' brand experience. Including this dimension also aligns with the call to examine employees' propensity for further development (Burmann et al., 2009b). Specifically, one interesting finding from Study 1 is that some employees particularly mention that they would like to use their CP-related initiatives to create a better company for the customers. Moreover, this finding contributes to the field of service branding, e.g., Morhart et al. (2009), where employee performance plays a vital role in the success of a service brand. This research includes the 'mirroring effect' between employees' behaviour and customers' brand experience as a key aspect of employee brand enactment. This study thus helps advance insight into how the efficacy of brand equity is across the employee-based effects at the customer level. Taken together, this inclusion of employee brand development challenges the closed view of only focusing on internal or external perspectives; instead, this concept incorporates both internal and external perspectives to ensure that there is synergy between employees' actions, resulting in levering the brand potential and optimising consumers' satisfaction as well as offering an open dialogue between employee-based brand equity and customer-based brand equity.

Thus, these findings support and enrich the existing literature on EBBE by adding a corporate philanthropy perspective, highlighting that employee brand citizenship, brand endorsement, and brand development are crucial EBBE conative conditions. The findings help us identify brand enactment as a critical part of the entire EBBE development process because of its precise focus on articulating how employees' discretionary actions contribute to a solid corporate brand.

9.2.5   Overall employee-based brand equity in a CP-related context

The concept of overall brand equity (OBE), essential for understanding the overall strength of a brand, was initially proposed by Yoo et al. (2000) and Yoo and Donthu (2001). Its importance has been recognised in the general branding domain, particularly in studies on Consumer-Based Brand Equity (CBBE) as per Veloutsou et al. (2013). However, its application in employee-focused contexts remains limited, with few studies exploring it, like Chatzipanagiotou et al. (2023). This research uncovers a latent need to incorporate OBE in this employee-focused CP-related context. The findings reveal OBE's role in capturing employees' overall attitudes towards the brand. Notably, the consideration of OBE in this research demonstrates how this concept can cover various contexts, allowing marketers to comprehensively evaluate how to build, sustain, and enrich a brand's differential effect and strength.

9.3   Synthesising the results – identifying the core causes in the EBBE development process

9.3.1   Decoding the complexity of the EBBE development process in a CP-related context

The results of Study 1 have been discussed thoroughly in the above section, which advances the research fields of CP and EBBE by providing insights to inform the identification of relevant conditions for cautiously linking them to form a complex framework. Meanwhile, the findings have identified that brand building, brand assimilation, brand affinity and brand enactment form the EBBE development stages, which follow a hierarchical structure like a 'brand pyramid' or 'branding ladder', in which the success of each block depends on the successful previous block (Keller, 2001). Furthermore, the latest research in the field of consumer-based brand equity (CBBE), including Chatzipanagiotou et al. (2016) and Chatzipanagiotou et al. (2019), has identified CBBE as a complex system and dynamic process comprising multiple building blocks where 'one solution does not fit all'. The recognition of the complex feature in block modelling is transferable from CBBE to EBBE research as there is a 'mirroring effect' between customers (external stakeholders - CBBE) and employees (internal stakeholders - EBBE). By contrast, although some

researchers highlighted the complexity of brand equity, most researchers did not follow the recent advances in the research stream to examine brand equity as a complex, idiosyncratic, and dynamic phenomenon. For example, most existing brand equity models for consumers, e.g., Baalbaki and Guzmán (2016), and models focusing on employees, e.g., King et al. (2012) and Baumgarth and Schmidt (2010), are linear and fail to capture the complexity of brand equity in terms of the co-existing and closely related branding concepts and their interrelationships. This research, therefore, challenges the traditional linear brand equity models and takes EBBE as a complex, idiosyncratic, and dynamic phenomenon to avoid the potentially simplistic or distorted interpretations caused by the previous approach.

Drawing on earlier studies (Pappas and Woodside, 2021; Woodside, 2014), this study follows the central tenets of complexity and configural theory, which is well suited to EBBE's complex nature and its linkage with CP. These theories embrace the concept of equifinality, suggesting that various combinations of initial conditions can lead to equally effective outcomes (Woodside, 2014; Fiss, 2011). By applying these theories, this study explores the configural feature of the EBBE development process, challenging the notion that EBBE is a static and uniform construct. Consequently, employing complexity and configural theory is essential for deepening the understanding of the multifaceted and dynamic process of EBBE in the context of CP.

The following discussion synthesises the results from Study 2, identifying the core causes and multiple pathways in the EBBE development process. Notably, the EBBE development model has been updated in Figure 9.1, in which the reliability test results for scales' psychometric properties checking in the data preparation stage led to a deletion of the CP-related Trust from the employee brand affinity. In Study 2, the core causes, or the causal 'recipe' central to the evolutionary, causal, and sequential process of EBBE were examined and analysed using the fsQCA analysis method and are synthesised in Figure 9.2. Hence, the subsequent section synthesises key findings from Study 2, offering valuable insights by presenting a practical 'mapping' of the interactions between the core causes and expected outcomes within the EBBE development process.

Figure 9. 1 The study's conceptual framework - corporate philanthropy driven employee-based brand equity
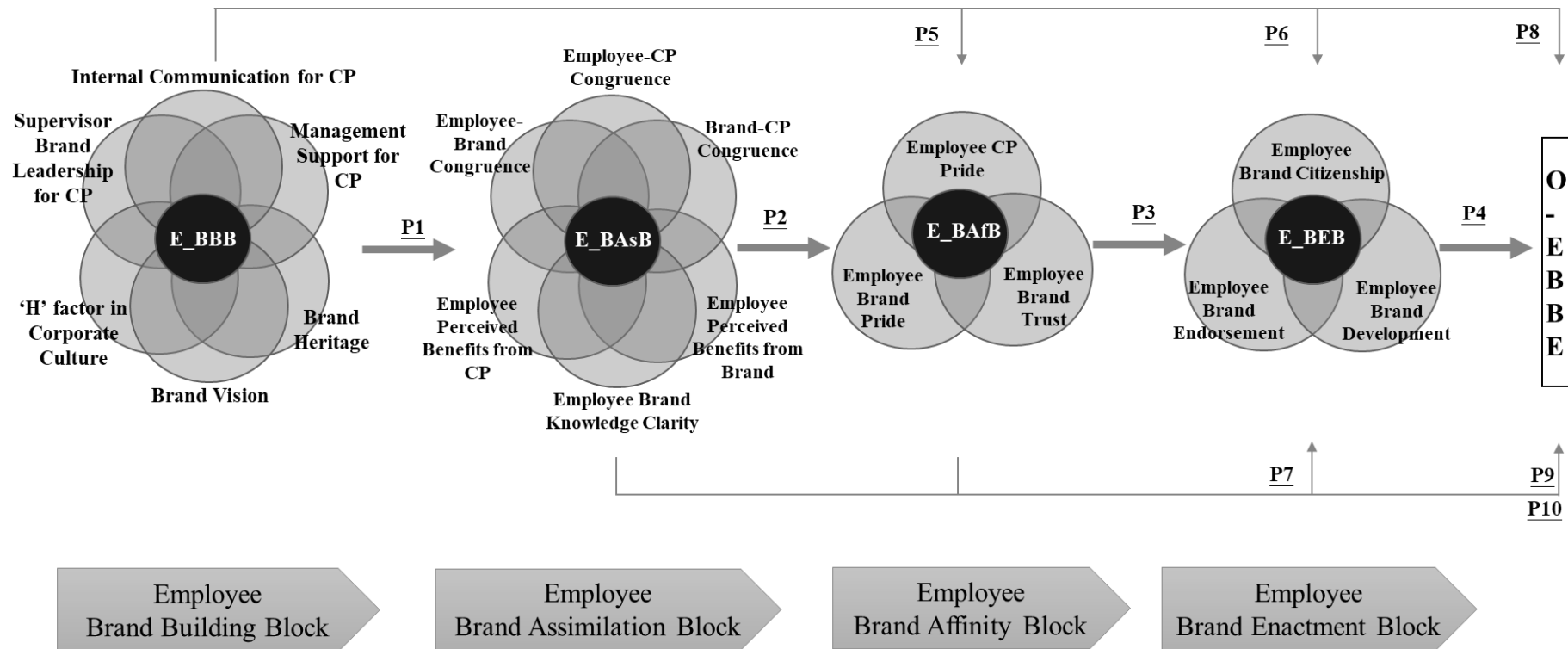
Notes: P1-P10 represents research propositions 1-10.

Figure 9. 2 Core results based on the fsQCA analysis

		2. BAsB						3. BAfB			4. BEB			OBE
		BC	EBC	BCPC	ECPC	BPB	CPPB	BT	BP	CPP	BCTI	BEN	BDE	OBE
1.BBB	Management support about CP (MS)	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	
	Internal communication of CP (IC)	X	X			X	X		X	X		X	X	
	Leadership in CP (L)						X							X
	Overall support - 'H' factor (HF)													X
	Brand heritage (BH)			X	X	X		X	X		X			X
	Brand vision (BV)	X	X			X	X		X	X		X	X	
2. BAsB	Brand Clarity (BC)													
	Employee-brand Congruence (EBC)							X	X			X		X
	Brand-CP Congruence (BCPC)									X	X		X	
	Employee-CP Congruence (ECPC)									X	X		X	
	Brand Perceived Benefit (BPB)										X		X	X
	CP Perceived Benefit (CPPB)							X	X			X		X
3. BAfB	Brand Trust (BT)										X		X	X
	Brand Pride (BP)										X	X		X
	CP Pride (CPP)												X	
4. BEB	Brand Citizenship (BCIT)													
	Brand Endorsement (BEN)													X
	Brand Development (BDE)													

Note: X indicates the contribution of the condition as a core cause in the most empirically relevant models predicting the outcome of interest

9.3.2   Identifying core causes in the main EBBE development process

As reported in the previous chapter, brand-building elements play a critical role in the employees' assimilation with the brand, albeit in different combinations, supporting Research Proposition 1 (RP1). It is worth noting that the 'H' factor (Human factor) plays a peripheral role while other elements all play a core role in achieving employees' assimilation. It is probably because the 'H' factor represents a people-centred aspect of the totality of the basic assumptions, values and norms shared by the organisation's members (Burmann and Zeplin, 2005). Therefore, it provides a humanistic context for employees to build an understanding of the brands, which peripherally leads to employees' assimilation with the brand values.

In detail, it was found that CP-related management support, internal communication, and brand vision are significant drivers to achieve brand knowledge clarity. Then, it was revealed that CP-related internal communication and brand vision can strongly align employees with the corporate brand. Further investigation revealed that the core drivers of brand-CP and employee-CP congruence are the same: CP-related management support and brand heritage. These findings align with the discussion from Kotter (1990), which advances the clarification of management's roles in helping produce order, consistency, and predictability for programmes, leading to the employee's perceived fit. The findings highlight the role of brand heritage and, therefore, build on existing research, such as Balmer and Burghausen (2019) and Keller and Lehmann (2006) and confirm that heritage is a bedrock of branding efforts. The findings add new knowledge by proving that brand heritage can pervade brand assimilation when employees have a story about their brand and value the track record, longevity, core values, and use of symbols (Urde et al., 2007). Therefore, this allows the development of a deeper relationship between brand heritage and employee perceived fit in a CP-related context.

Next, regarding how employees perceive the brand's benefits, CP-related management support, internal communication, brand heritage and brand vision are crucial catalysts. Finally, to achieve perceived benefits from CP, the approaches identified in the findings centre on robust internal communication, leadership of CP, and a clear brand vision. These synthesised findings indicate that brand vision could lead to employees' perceived brand

clarity, congruence, and perceived benefits. This supports the idea of Harris and de Chernatony (2001) that brand vision, encompassing a brand's fundamental purpose and core values, serves as guiding principles for employees. Meanwhile, in line with existing research in corporate branding and internal branding, the findings substantially advance understanding in terms of providing empirical evidence for internal communication's significant roles in offering the context for brand identity relevance to employees (Lings and Greenley, 2010), in structuring congruent perceptions (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001) and in constructing a collective sense or alignment (Burmann and Zeplin, 2005). Notably, the findings demonstrate a limited yet critical impact of CP-related leadership in helping employees perceive benefits from CP, underscoring the importance of psychological safety and inspiration provided by effective leadership, which resonates well with existing research (Buchanan and Huczynski, 2019; May et al., 2004). To conclude, these findings advance understanding by demonstrating and explaining core branding efforts on the attitudinal intentions of employees to form EBBE in a CP-related context.

As reported, within the EBBE development process, employee brand assimilation elements play a critical role in the employees' affinity with the brand, albeit in different combinations, confirming Research Proposition 2 (RP2). It is important to note that the employees' brand clarity and brand-related perceived benefits contribute not directly but rather peripherally to the creation of employees' affinity. This phenomenon is probably because the research context is CP-focused, where the CP-related factors dominate individuals' emotional reactions more than the general brand-related factors. Employees' brand knowledge and perceived benefits set a cognitive foundation for employees to build up emotional connections when participating in CP activities.

Specifically, the findings illuminate how brand trust can be derived from perceived benefits in CP, which substantially advance previous studies, e.g., Downey et al. (2015), in which the positive impact of diversity practices and inclusion on trust has been discovered. Additionally, the research resonates with the observations of Farooq et al. (2014), who posited that when employees see the brand invests in community well-being, they develop trust in the brand's future care and benevolence towards them. As discussed, CP-related perceived benefits embrace social connectedness as a critical aspect. By proving this link between CP-related perceived benefits and brand trust, this research helps advance insight into a commonly accepted principle in the trust literature that raised contact and constant

interaction among individuals can build trust in social exchange relationships (Kramer and Tyler, 1996). Furthermore, this is in line with previous studies of Hurrell and Scholarios (2014), who discussed the significant role of congruity between employees and brands. The findings expand on this by empirically demonstrating how brand trust results from the congruence between employees and their brands, thus adding a new dimension to the existing understanding of brand-employee dynamics and connections.

Moreover, the findings demonstrate that employee-brand congruence is a core cause of brand pride. It holds some relevance to the conversations about how brand pride is affected by the alignment between the brand and an employee's ideal self (Helm et al., 2016). Although previous research, e.g., Greening and Turban (2000), has discovered that prosocial benefits are linked with employee pride. The findings of this research delve deeper, illustrating that perceived benefits from CP significantly influence employee pride. This research, therefore, provides a more comprehensive view of the core causes contributing to brand pride in the CP-related realm.

Interestingly, what is curious about the results is that brand-CP and employee-CP congruence have been captured as core causes for generating the pride rooted in CP. This discovery advances existing studies, such as Saiia et al. (2003), by demonstrating the benefits of the connection between CP and a firm's core values, particularly from an employee-centred perspective. Additionally, in line with previous calls to shed light on exploring the match between a charitable cause and self-schema, e.g., Chowdhury and Khare (2011), this research examines the underexplored employee-centred perspective. The result focuses on the fit between employees and CP causes and its effects rather than the traditional consumer-focused perspective. Therefore, the findings are meaningful in underscoring a harmonious relationship between CP activities, brands, and employees and the benefits sourced from CP as core causes for fostering pride and trust as crucial employee affinity outcomes.

As reported, all employee brand affinity elements play a critical role in the employees' brand enactment, albeit in different combinations, supporting Research Proposition 3 (RP3). Specifically, the findings contribute to the existing literature by applying Social Exchange Theory (SET) as outlined by Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005), which centres on mutual obligations that develop through ongoing interactions among individuals or groups to understand workplace behaviours. The findings demonstrate how a climate of trust can

effectively link to organisational outcomes like brand citizenship and brand development, resonating with the findings from Downey et al. (2015) about the relationship between trust climate and employee engagement. Further, the findings contribute to pride research, e.g., Lea and Webley (1997), by underlining that employees' brand endorsement stems from 'proper pride' derived from brands' genuine achievements and shedding light on the importance of promoting pride-oriented branding outcomes. The results also align with the arguments of Helm et al. (2016) about the influence of socially valued activities on employee behaviours. The findings unpack a new dimension for extant research by proving that employees can generate brand development behaviours for their customers based on their CP-related pride. This finding is important as it could help better understand how CP-related causes lead to brand-level outcomes and the 'mirroring effect' between employees as internal stakeholders and customers as external stakeholders. Thus, the above findings substantially advance insight by demonstrating underlying novel and dynamic pathways between the emotional EBBE causes and behavioural EBBE outcomes in a CP-related context.

As discussed, overall employee-based brand equity (OBE) is identified as an outcome of a sequential, evolutionary causal chain. Thus, after portraying how affective brand affinity leads to behavioural brand enactment, this research tests the causes of this OBE, which is the ultimate outcome of the framework. Although the findings support Research Proposition 4 (RP4), demonstrating that employees' brand enactment leads towards the overall employee-based brand equity (OBE), it is somewhat surprising that only employee brand endorsement is noted as the core cause. Nevertheless, the findings demonstrate the importance of positive employee brand advocacy in any effort to build up the overall strength of a brand and accord with Schmidt and Baumgarth (2018)'s insights on the powerful 'goal-oriented' endorsement in strengthening internal brands.

9.3.3 Identifying other core causes in predicting employee brand affinity

The previous section identifies and offers a realistic 'mapping' of core causes and their chain reaction throughout the EBBE development process. Due to the complexity of the EBBE development process, there are more relationships among the blocks. For example, as reported in the findings, employee brand affinity can not only be led by employee brand assimilation but can also be influenced by brand-building efforts. The findings demonstrate that brand-building elements play a critical role in the employees' affinity with the brand,

albeit in different combinations, confirming Research Proposition 5 (RP5). It is important to note that the leadership in CP and the 'H' factor contribute not directly but rather peripherally to the creation of employees' affinity. This phenomenon is probably because leaders usually set the organisation's tone and navigate employees through transformational leadership. At the same time, the 'H' factor provides a context in which the relationship between employees and brands can be facilitated. In this way, these two elements peripherally create a work environment leading to employee affinity where team members feel valued, supported, and motivated.

The findings demonstrate that management support for CP plays a core role in significantly boosting all employees' affinity outcomes. It is in line with previous studies in which management support has existed as an essential workplace antecedent for employees' reactions, leading to brand management success (Burmann and Zeplin, 2005; de Chernatony, 2010; Piehler, 2018; Punjaisri and Wilson, 2017). This result illuminates that brand pride, trust, and CP-related pride are all grounded on management support for CP. Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that effective CP-related internal communication is the core cause of employee pride in the brand and the CP activities. This significantly contributes to understanding how the reciprocity mechanism works in the CP-related context. Falk and Fischbacher (2006) highlight the importance of individuals' understanding of the consequences of an action and the actor's underlying intentions as the premise for reciprocity. Compared with Falk and Fischbacher (2006), this research offers a more precise focus on proving the possibility and importance of using internal communication to create a reciprocal process that leads to employees' sense of pride.

Additionally, this research advances the insight into the relationship between brand imagery and brand affinity by empirically demonstrating that the perception of heritage is likely to infer brand trust, aligning with existing literature like Urde et al. (2007) and Pecot et al. (2018). The findings also demonstrate that brand heritage significantly influences employee brand pride. This connection is not explicitly made in prior studies, such as those by Rose et al. (2016) and Urde et al. (2007), and therefore adds knowledge about the uniqueness and importance of the branded representation of the past in facilitating employee affective responses, especially brand pride. Next, the findings underline the importance of a well-defined brand imagery concept - brand vision, as discussed by de Chernatony (2010), in fostering brand-related and CP-related pride. These findings not only support but advance the notion by Harris and de Chernatony (2001) as they highlight

that a well-crafted clear brand vision can aid employees in appreciating their professional journey with a sense of pride at the general brand level and at specific occasions like CP involvement. To sum up, the above findings substantially advance previous studies by understanding how the core causes of brand-building efforts can trigger employees' brand affinity in a CP-related context.

9.3.4 Identifying other core causes in predicting employee brand enactment

As reported, brand-building elements play a critical role in the employees' enactment with the brand, albeit in different combinations, confirming Research Proposition 6 (RP6). Similarly, the findings reveal that, among the elements, the leadership in CP and the 'H' factor contribute not directly but rather peripherally to creating employees' brand enactment. This phenomenon is probably because transformational leadership offers space for empowering employees while the 'H' factor provides a context in which the employees' brand behaviours can be facilitated. In this way, these two elements peripherally create a work environment leading to employee brand enactment.

In general, the findings about how brand building leads to employee brand enactment are consistent with Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005)'s social exchange theory. The findings also substantially advance this theory by demonstrating when employees perceive supportive and helpful efforts from the brand during the CP involvement, they tend to return the gesture through actions. In line with existing research about brand heritage, which highlights its potential as a brand intangible or valuable corporate asset, such as Keller and Lehmann (2006) and (Urde et al., 2007). The findings substantially advance insight in focusing on and proving how brand heritage becomes alive in nurturing employee brand citizenship. The findings also underscore the importance for employees to perceive brand vision, i.e., the brand's reason for being and its core values (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001), and advance existing knowledge in demonstrating its roles as a guiding principle for boosting employee brand endorsement and brand development to improve customers' brand experience.

In line with previous studies in which management support has existed as an essential workplace antecedent leading to brand management success (Burmann and Zeplin, 2005; de Chernatony, 2010; Piehler, 2018; Punjaisri and Wilson, 2017). The findings further advance understanding by revealing how management support significantly boosts all the

behavioural outcomes (brand citizenship, endorsement, and development) in the CP-related research context. Moreover, the importance of communication in the findings further decodes the perspectives of King and Grace (2012), highlighting the critical roles of CP-related internal communication. Through organisational storytelling and narratives, CP-related internal communication ensures the brand values are accepted and internalised by employees and shapes endorsement and developmental behaviours for better reaching out to external stakeholders.

The findings also demonstrate that employee brand assimilation elements play a critical role in the employees' enactment of the brand, albeit in different combinations, supporting Research Proposition 7 (RP7). It is important to note that employee brand clarity contributes not directly but rather peripherally to the creation of employees' actions. This phenomenon may be because employee brand clarity is more fundamental than other elements that form employee brand assimilation and, therefore, peripherally leads to employees' brand enactment. Specifically, the findings build upon previous research supporting that employee-brand congruence has a central role in leading to behaviours relating to 'how people make the brand' (Hurrell and Scholarios, 2014), especially in facilitating employees to serve as brand ambassadors (Xiong et al., 2013). The findings also contribute to the Social Exchange Theory (SET) as outlined by Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) by revealing how employees become brand spokespersons through perceiving ongoing benefits from their CP involvement. It better explains how people weigh the potential benefits in a CP-related context and go for social exchange within the workplace. Thus, the findings contribute to existing work by shedding light on how employee brand endorsement is led by the critical but underexplored concepts: employee-brand congruence and CP-related benefits. Interestingly, while perceived benefits related to corporate philanthropy influence brand endorsement, the perception of brand-related benefits results in distinct outcomes: employees' 'above the norm' brand citizenship and brand development for customers. This distinction points to the importance of providing different CP-related and brand-related benefits to facilitate various aspects of employee brand enactment. Moreover, this research contributes to the ongoing dialogue on the multi-dimensional categorisation of the fit theory, following the path of Deng et al. (2023) and Uzunoğlu et al. (2017). Building on the fit theory, this research proves that establishing brand-CP and employee-CP congruence is crucial for leading similar brand enactment outcomes, such as brand citizenship and development. Thus, the findings substantially foster the EBBE research by empirically demonstrating how multi-

dimensional congruence and different benefits can cause employees' discretionary behaviours that exceed expectations, endorse the brand, and enhance the brand to improve customers' experience. To conclude, the findings have underscored the dynamic flow of the EBBE process and decoded more core causes that lead to employee brand enactment from brand building and brand assimilation.

9.3.5   Identifying other core causes leading to overall employee-based brand equity

The above findings have indicated that the architecture of the EBBE development process is not necessarily stepwise but rather dynamic. This leads to the final part of this discussion, which is about the effects of each building block on contributing directly to the building of overall employee-based brand equity (OBE). Specifically, evidence demonstrates that the brand heritage, the 'H' factor, and CP-related leadership play critical roles in sculpting high OBE, supporting Research Proposition 8 (RP8). The findings advance the understanding of the two distinct ways of brand heritage that lead to brand assimilation, brand affinity, and brand enactment within the EBBE architecture process or lead to the ultimate outcome, OBE. This provides a more nuanced understanding of heritage as a valuable corporate asset for an organisation (Urde et al., 2007), especially in this CP-related context.

It is surprising to note that CP-related management support, internal communication for CP and brand vision are not core conditions for directly driving overall employee-based brand equity. Instead, they are identified as the core conditions and contribute to specific building blocks, for employees assimilating the brand's values into their own, increasing their emotional investment in the brand (brand affinity) and motivating them to act in ways that reflect the brand (brand enactment). This result aligns with existing studies, e.g., King and Grace (2012) Harris and de Chernatony (2001), and informs researchers about these three elements' role as significant workplace antecedents for supporting, informing and guiding employees throughout their professional journey at a micro level. It also further demonstrates that overall EBBE is more connected with employees' holistic experiences, including organisational culture, leadership, and their perception of the brand's heritage.

Additionally, although the overall 'H' factor in the corporate culture is not the core indicator leading to other blocks in this sequential causal chain, it acts on the ultimate OBE. This finding is significant as it allows brands to focus on offering the caring and respectful 'Human' factor to enhance their overall brand strength. Likewise, while CP-related

leadership is recognised solely as the core cause for one facet of brand assimilation in the EBBE development process, it directly influences OBE. This finding holds essential implications and amplifies the ideas of Daft and Marcic (2013) regarding leadership's role in achieving the overall organisational goals.

Next, the findings also indicate that employee-brand congruence and perceived benefits from the brand and CP activities are core conditions for creating robust OBE, supporting Research Proposition 9 (RP9). Compared with the alignment with CP, the congruence between employees and their corporate brand determines the overall employee-based brand equity. Building on Hurrell and Scholarios (2014)'s idea that a fit between the brand and employee prompts the notion that 'people make the brand', this research adds evidence towards proving the value of congruence in shaping the overall strength of employee-based brand equity. Furthermore, the results demonstrate that employees cared about the benefits they get from the brand and their CP participation. This finding holds significant implications for underscoring the value of the reciprocal core of employee engagement (Cropanzano and Mitchell, 2005). It also helps solidify the importance of offering CP- and brand-related benefits within organisations to boost employee-based brand equity.

Finally, the findings validate the significant impact of brand trust and pride in developing OBE, supporting Research Proposition 10 (RP10). This proposition advances existing research by highlighting the importance of employees' self-esteem and pride in being members of their corporate brands (Greening and Turban, 2000) and their belief in the organisation's reliability and integrity (Garbarino and Johnson, 1999; Morgan and Hunt, 1994) for contributing to the ultimate strength of employee-based brand equity.

In conclusion, the findings illustrate that OBE is the culmination of the dynamic EBBE model, encompassing different core causes. The results also demonstrate that this EBBE journey is not linear but a complex interplay of various causes. The in-depth findings show how high OBE is achieved through a harmonious and dynamic blend of brand building, assimilation, affinity, and enactment processes.

9.4 Chapter summary

The findings confirm the study's research propositions, as Figure 9.1 shows that EBBE is a complex and dynamic phenomenon achieved through a sequential and evolving causal sequence. Figure 9.2 encapsulates the core findings, serving as a practical aid and guide for brand managers in mapping and designing new employee-focused brand landscapes.

The study contributes to branding theory and practice by proposing and empirically examining an advanced, holistic, and actionable EBBE model that links with corporate philanthropy and moves away from the logic that brand equity is a static and single-dimensional construct. Study 1 yielded qualitative insights rooted in participants' viewpoints, enabling a thorough examination and explanation of the potential dimensions involved in developing EBBE through employees' participation in CP and, therefore, informing Study 2. The outcomes of Study 2 show that the configurational analysis technique (fsQCA) effectively examines complex phenomena and identifies configurations leading to specific results (Ragin, 2009). To sum up, this research contributes to branding scholarship by transitioning the focus from brand equity as a static concept to a dynamic and multifaceted process. This research then captures and synthesises the significant aspects of the EBBE development process to offer valuable insights and recommendations for scholars and brand practitioners. Additionally, this research marks the first instance where complexity theory and fsQCA have been applied to elucidate the causal relationships in the evolving EBBE process under corporate philanthropy. The exploration of asymmetric relationships and complex causal patterns between antecedent and outcome conditions positions this research as a pioneer in visualising the intricate scenario in building employee-based brand equity and, therefore, offers practical benefits for brand managers.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

10.1   Introduction

This section details the main findings and impact of the study, along with its limitations and directions for future research. It starts by discussing the key theoretical insights gained from the study. Next, it highlights essential methodological advancements developed or applied during the research. The section then outlines practical implications for marketing and branding professionals, providing recommendations based on the study's results. Finally, it addresses the study's limitations and suggests areas for further exploration, aiming to guide subsequent research in this field.

10.2   Theoretical contributions

The key theoretical contributions of this research are threefold, focusing on building on and extending the existing knowledge and literature of corporate philanthropy (CP), employee-based brand equity (EBBE), and the linkage between these two important areas.

Contribution 1: Advancing the conceptualisation of corporate philanthropy (CP) in the business context

This research addresses gaps and inconsistencies in the existing literature through a systematic review of CP's conceptualisations, classifications, and effects in the business context. It contributes to the critical research stream initiated by Porter and Kramer (2002) highlighting there is no inherent contradiction between gaining competitive advantage and making a sincere commitment to society when doing CP. Building on previous research, e.g., Schwartz and Carroll (2003), Gautier and Pache (2015) and Kotler and Lee (2016), this research reveals the key ideas of 'discretionary', 'contribution of corporate resources to the public good', 'permanent solutions to root causes', and importantly, the 'unintentional reciprocity' when conceptualising corporate philanthropy. Notably, by telling the differences and similarities between corporate philanthropy and interchangeable concepts used by previous researchers, this research challenges traditional views of taking corporate philanthropy as purely altruistic or a subset of CSR, e.g., Harvey et al. (2019), which limits its discussion in business contexts. Additionally, this research relates to the dynamic stakeholders' perspectives, which corresponds to Peloza and Shang (2011), when classifying CP and therefore underscores CP's unique value in business research and

practice. This approach aligns with the latest research while contributing new insights into how companies can engage in philanthropy that supports social and economic objectives (Muller et al., 2014; Zhao and Zhang, 2020), ultimately leading to a synergistic performance that benefits multiple stakeholders (Pfajfar et al., 2022; Schaefer et al., 2019).

Contribution 2: Extending the scope of brand equity theory to internal stakeholders

This research significantly broadens the scope of the classic brand equity model and relevant theories by Keller (1993) and Keller and Swaminathan (2020), traditionally applied to consumer journeys, by extending them to the underexplored internal employee context, introducing the perspective of employees—a group typically underrepresented in brand management studies. By shifting the focus to employees in the evaluation of brand equity, this research highlights their unique roles as 'insider witnesses' with greater access to company information (Rupp et al., 2006) and as key players in delivering the brand promise (King and Grace, 2010), distinguishing them from other stakeholder groups.

Importantly, this research builds on the recently published process-focused model (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2016; Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019), which views consumer-based brand equity as a dynamic development and evolving causal chain. Additionally, this research highlights the 'mirror effect' of employee-based brand equity, where interactions between employees and corporate brands influence both internal stakeholders (other employees) and external ones (customers), thereby shaping overall brand performance (Boukis and Christodoulides, 2020). By reflecting on the parallel between consumer- and employee-based brand equity, this research conceptualises employee-based brand equity (EBBE) as a similar developmental process, characterised by multiple stages of employee responses towards the multiple imagery and functional efforts in the brand-building block. This framework holistically embraces the cognitive (brand assimilation block), affective (brand affinity block), and conative (brand engagement block) processes, as well as the overall brand strength (overall employee-based brand equity), offering a unique theoretical contribution to understanding the dynamic and complex nature of brand equity from the perspective of internal stakeholders.

Contribution 3: Highlighting the complexity in a causal model of corporate philanthropy-driven employee-based brand equity

By employing complexity theory, e.g., Ragin (1987) and demonstrating its relevance, this study makes a unique theoretical contribution by identifying that there is no single causal model or 'one size fits all' liner approach to brand equity development, particularly in the context of corporate philanthropy and internal stakeholders. This study challenges and moves beyond the limitations of earlier linear models from researchers such as Baalbaki and Guzmán (2016) and King and Grace (2012). Instead, it presents a set of causal 'recipes' encompassing cognitive, affective, and behavioural elements, offering valuable insights into how corporate brands can adapt their strategies to different targets and scenarios.

The findings prove that brand equity development is a complex, dynamic process requiring tailored, nuanced approaches rather than standardised solutions. This process aligns with the concept of multiple conjunctural causation, emphasising a combination (configuration) of causes that can predict the outcome of interest in the next stage (Rihoux and Ragin, 2009; Ragin, 2009; Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2019). Rather than a straightforward or uniform approach, it involves multiple pathways (equifinality) (Woodside, 2014; Fiss, 2011), demonstrating that different combinations of initial conditions can be equally effective. This extends previous research on the balance between standardisation and adaptation strategies, highlighting how these strategies depend on the specific conditions firms face (Theodosiou and Leonidou, 2003). In a nutshell, by providing a more precise framework for understanding the evolutionary process of brand equity generation and development through interactions and engagement, this study advances the theoretical understanding of corporate philanthropy-driven employee-based brand equity (EBBE) and underscores the crucial role of employees as active agents in the brand-building process.

Table 10.1 and Table 10.2 provide a detailed illustration of how this research contributes to the existing knowledge base and key relevant concepts.

Table 10. 1 Summary of critical theoretical contributions

Aspects	Focus of Contributions	Linkage with Literature	Novel Contributions
CP	• Integrating CP with the business context and revealing the reciprocal nature of CP	• Companies still feel compelled to engage in philanthropic activities, and few have figured out how to do it well (Porter and Kramer, 2002). • CP is being proven as a cost-effective way to improve competitiveness (Gautier and Pache, 2015). • Highlighting the threefold nature of the gift-giving cycle (i.e., give-get-repay) (Mauss, 2002) • Corporate giving leads to getting (relative competitive performance) through the internal processes (Zhao and Zhang, 2020)	• The research offers a more nuanced conceptualisation of CP, differentiating it from similar concepts and emphasising its voluntary core and the ability to be reciprocal. It also reveals CP's possibility of achieving synergistic social and economic performance for brands.
	• Exploring the complex classification of CP and the stakeholder dynamics	• Considering the dynamics between stakeholders and businesses is needed (Bowden et al., 2017). • Social-related activities should target specific stakeholders (e.g., customers and employees) to maximise relationship quality and authenticity (Pfajfar et al., 2022).	• The research reveals the complexity of CP classification and incorporates various stakeholders' perspectives. This provides a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of the phenomenon.
EBBE	• Enhancing employee-based brand equity by taking it as a dynamic process	• All employees have a chance to be involved in branding and can deliver the brand promise (King and Grace, 2010). • Employees have a 'mirroring effect' between employees and customers as it can affect internal and external stakeholders through their interactions (Boukis and Christodoulides, 2020). • Much is still unknown regarding employees' role in the brand equity development process (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2023)	• Investigating brand equity from the under-represented employee-based perspective and offering an inclusive definition of EBBE with explanation power to highlight employees' active roles and generate a clear conceptualisation of EBBE, which takes it as a dynamic and sequential process.
CP driven EBBE	• Operationalising the dynamic EBBE in a CP-related context	• There is a hierarchical structure of the 'branding ladder' according to Keller (2001). • Complexity and configural theory (Woodsides, 2014). • Identifying CBBE as an overall system with three significant blocks or sub-systems (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2016).	• Deepening the configural nature of the EBBE process and validating EBBE as a dynamic evolving process in a CP-related context; Demonstrating how corporate philanthropy can initiate a sequence of employee responses across cognitive, affective, and conative stages, ultimately enhancing overall brand equity.

Table 10. 2 Summary of detailed theoretical contributions based on the EBBE framework

Block	Aspects	Related Extant Literature	Novel Contributions and Key Inputs
Brand Building Block (BBB)	**The Overall Block**	Building successful relationships with employees involves delivering functional information relating to job tasks and brand values and establishing an environment supporting positive relationship exchanges (King and Grace, 2012).	1. Expand the breadth of prior research by going beyond any single element and embracing a mixture of brand performance and imagery. 2. The compound items, such as 'Management Support for CP', offer a novel interface between general branding and CP.
	Brand Heritage	Brand heritage is centred on an organisational belief that a brand's history is essential (Urde et al., 2007).	Reveal that the historical significance is particularly valued by employees by showing its integration with philanthropy and its role in connecting the past, present, and future. Informational asymmetry regarding brand heritage is identified among employees, with longer-tenured employees perceiving heritage more than newcomers.
	Brand Vision	The brand vision is irreplaceable in portraying the fundamental purpose of an employer brand - its reason for being and its core values (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001)	Enhance the concept of brand vision by linking it with the internal positive impact on employees to understand their professional path and long-term benefits for various stakeholders, including the community.
	Management Support for CP	Management support is one of the essential workplace antecedents for employees' reactions leading to brand management success (Burmann and Zeplin, 2005; de Chernatony, 2010; Piehler, 2018; Punjaisri and Wilson, 2017)	1. Identify that employees offer non-financial incentives to support CP participation, while some join in only based on intrinsic motives. 2. Reveal that the lack of management support can cause employee disengagement.
	Supervisors' Brand Leadership for CP	Leadership is indispensable in interpreting and arranging the company's values and vision (Boukis and Christodoulides, 2020) and influencing people toward attaining organisational goals (Daft and Marcic, 2013).	1. Link with social power bases theory, highlighting that supervisors' leadership in CP combines legitimate and referent power through role-modelling and decisive actions. 2. Identify that transformational leadership can empower employee independence and creativity in CP.
	Internal Communication for CP	Communication is essential as it results in brand values being comprehended by employees and accepted and internalised to shape future behaviour (King and Grace, 2012).	1. Discover that effective internal communication in CP uses varied channels like emails and social media, and key communication moments, including induction sessions and displaying CP outcomes, significantly influence internal perceptions. 2. Internal communication is framed as organisational storytelling, crucial for shaping individual identities and facilitating organisational interactions.
	'H' factor in Corporate Culture	The 'H' factor has been incorporated as a crucial element when examining brand equity (King and Grace, 2010). Internalised social values are essential (Chernev and Blair, 2015).	1. CP can contribute to a prosocial identity and a people-centred culture, making employees consider their organisation caring. 2. Reveal that existing philanthropic cultures may seem peripheral, leading to superficial employee engagement and even brand impairment.

(Table 10.2 continued)

Block	Aspects	Related Extant Literature	Novel Contributions and Key Inputs
Brand Assimilation Block (BAsB)	**The Overall Block**	From bottom to top, five aspects form a chain in customer-level brand equity: awareness, associations, attitude, attachment, and activity (Keller and Lehmann, 2006). However, researchers like Sprott et al. (2009) focused mainly on emotional aspects, overlooking engagement's interactive cognitive and behavioural dimensions.	Including this cognitive block helps recognise the multiple dimensions around the interactive interface between brands and employees and portrays how employees know, understand, and appreciate the features of a strong corporate brand.
	Employee Brand Knowledge Clarity	Brand knowledge is a fundamental aspect of brand equity, mainly due to the distinctiveness, robustness, and positive nature of the associations linked to the brand's specific attributes (Keller, 1993)	1. Highlight two unique aspects of brand knowledge clarity in the CP context: understanding the connection between CP and brand purpose and executing the brand promise through CP activities. 2. Emphasise the importance of employees' active role as brand-related information carriers, enhancing brand equity.
	Brand-Employee Congruence, Employee-Cause Congruence and Brand-Cause Congruence	Congruence or perceived fit should be multidimensional (Deng et al., 2023; Nan and Heo, 2007).	1. Reveal that Brand-Employee Congruence is enhanced when employees see alignment between their values and the organisation's ethos. 2. Position the Employee-Cause Congruence as crucial for employees' engagement from an employee-centred perspective and introduce the importance of a match between the charitable causes and employees' interests. 3. Identify Brand-Cause Congruence as a critical factor, where employees value the long-term strategic and authentic alignment between the brand and charitable causes, thus extending the understanding of strategic CP's role in synergising social and economic performance.
	Employee Perceived (Brand- and CP-related) Benefits	Benefits from daily operations and employer branding are the critical determinants of employer attractiveness (Schlager et al., 2011). Social connectedness is an essential predictor of the intention and volunteer participation behaviour (Dury et al., 2020).	Extend existing research by highlighting multiple employees' perceived benefits from both CP and the brand, including developmental, psychological, and social gains from both intrapersonal and interpersonal viewpoints, emphasising the value of social connectedness.

(Table 10.2 continued)

Block	Components	Related Extant Literature	Novel Contributions and Key Inputs
Brand Affinity Block (BAfB)	**The Overall Block**	Emotional or affective indicators ensure employees have a genuine desire to deliver the brand promise (King and Grace, 2010)	This affective-related block underscores the importance of the emotional bond between brands and their employees by capturing how employees feel about the brand.
	Brand pride and CP-related pride	Pride is an emotion provoked by one's achievements or others', closely tied to self-esteem and a positive self-image (Lea and Webley, 1997). Pride is a self-conscious, positive emotion stemming from being associated with a socially valued outcome (Helm et al., 2016)	The dual nature of pride is highlighted: it relates to the employees' connection with corporate philanthropy, with genuine achievements leading to a sense of 'proper pride'; their pride is based on the overall organisational perception.
	Brand trust and CP-related trust	The concept of trust is seen as vital in affective-related discussions (Garbarino and Johnson, 1999; Morgan and Hunt, 1994),	1. Highlight that cross-department collaboration on CP projects builds inter-employee trust and fosters bonding. 2. Reveal that employee brand trust is reinforced by the perceived authenticity of the brands' CP efforts.
Brand Enactment Block (BEB)	**The Overall Block**	The behaviour of employees is believed to lie at the heart of any brand (Hurrell and Scholarios, 2014; Sirianni et al., 2013). Employees are engaged in the brand as well as diffuse their own brand experience successfully across the organisation (Boukis and Christodoulides, 2020)	This behavioural block underscores the importance of the employees' discretionary actions. It adds new knowledge by adopting a long-term perspective to review employees' behaviour and reflect a mirror effect between consumers and employees.
	Employee Brand Citizenship	Employee Brand Citizenship is related to employees exhibiting behaviours that are 'above and beyond the norm' and reflective of organisational brand values (King and Grace, 2010).	Decode how, within a CP-related context, employees generate citizenship behaviours more naturally and with a more compelling tendency via brand enthusiasm, helping behaviour, and self-development consideration.
	Employee Brand Endorsement	Employees' positive external communication about the brand or the advocacy of the corporate brand is a critical aspect of their brand equity model (King and Grace, 2010)	Indicate that employees' genuine appreciation for CP can lead to a positive and authentic endorsement.
	Employee Brand Development	Brand development is about employees' behaviours actively affecting brand development to improve customers' brand experience (Piehler et al., 2016).	Exhibit the 'mirroring effect,' which connects employee actions with potential customer brand experience.

(Table 10.2 continued)

Propositions	Related Extant Literature	Novel Contributions and Key Inputs Examples
The Overall Framework	There is a process consisting of specific development stages that follow a hierarchical structure like a 'brand pyramid' or 'branding ladder' in which each block's success depends on the previous block's success, as suggested by Keller (2001). Complexity theory and configuration theories incorporate the principle of equifinality, which suggests that various combinations of initial conditions can be equally effective (Woodside, 2014; Fiss, 2011)	1. Integrate Employee-Based Brand Equity (EBBE) as a dynamic, multistage process akin to the brand pyramid or 'branding ladder'. 2. Challenge traditional linear brand equity models by adopting a more nuanced approach that captures the interrelationships between brand-related concepts. 3. Apply complexity and configural theories to EBBE, recognising its multifaceted nature and the 'mirroring effect' between customer and employee perceptions, thus advancing the understanding of how brand equity dynamically evolves, especially concerning corporate philanthropy. 4. Provide a more comprehensive and cohesive conceptual framework for understanding the value created by CP initiatives, especially on employee-based effects.
RP 1: BBB → BAsB	Brand vision, encompassing the fundamental purpose and core values of a brand, serves as guiding principles for employees (Harris and de Chernatony, 2001) Heritage is a bedrock in the realm of marketing (Balmer and Burghausen, 2019)	1. Prove that CP-related management support, internal communication, brand heritage, and brand vision act as catalysts for employees to perceive benefits from the brand. 2. Underscore brand heritage is essential in the CP-related context, especially in congruence between the charitable cause, the employee, and the brand. 3. Demonstrate that robust internal communication, effective CP-related leadership, and a clear brand vision are crucial for employees to perceive the benefits of CP, highlighting the role of psychological safety and inspiration.
RP 2: BAsB → BAfB	Employees develop trust in the brand's future care and benevolence towards them when they see it investing in community well-being (Farooq et al., 2014) There is a significant role of congruity between employees and brands(Hurrell and Scholarios, 2014). There is a link between prosocial benefits and employee pride (Greening and Turban, 2000).	1. Illuminate how brand trust can be derived from perceived benefits in CP, offering a focused perspective and a nuanced extension of the general principles on the genesis of brand trust by highlighting the reciprocal relationship between employees and their brands. 2. Highlight the significance of brand-CP and employee-CP congruence in fostering pride rooted in CP, deepening the understanding of CP's role in aligning with a firm's core values from an employee viewpoint.

RP 3: BAfB → BEB	Social Exchange Theory (SET), as outlined by Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005), centres on mutual obligations that develop through ongoing interactions among individuals or groups who rely on each other reciprocally for understanding workplace behaviours.	1. Applying Social Exchange Theory to workplace behaviours shows how trust leads to organisational outcomes like brand citizenship. 2. Highlight those genuine achievements and 'proper pride' fuel employees' brand endorsement, advancing the discussion on the emotional underpinnings of brand-related behaviours. 3. By demonstrating recipes such as how CP-related pride influences brand development behaviours, the findings provide new insights into the dynamic interplay between emotional and behavioural aspects of EBBE in CP contexts.
RP 4: BEB → OBE	Overall brand equity measures the overall strength of a corporate brand (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2016)	Identify employee brand endorsement as a pivotal element in the brand enactment phase for achieving OBE, highlighting the influential effect of goal-oriented endorsement strategies.
RP 5: BBB → BAfB	Management support has existed as an essential workplace antecedent for employees' reactions leading to brand management success (Burmann and Zeplin, 2005; de Chernatony, 2010; Piehler, 2018; Punjaisri and Wilson, 2017)	1. Stress the pivotal role of management support in enhancing emotional outcomes like brand pride and trust within the context of CP. 2. Showcase how effective communication about CP activities fosters employee pride, advancing theories on reciprocity in workplace interactions. 3. Underscore the influence of brand heritage on employee pride, offering new empirical insights into the heritage-trust-pride nexus.
RP 6: BBB → BEB	This aligns with existing research about brand heritage, highlighting its potential as an intangible or valuable corporate asset, such as Keller and Lehmann (2006) and (Urde et al., 2007).	1. Validate Social Exchange Theory by showing reciprocated supportive efforts in CP with positive actions, enriching the theory's application in a CP context. 2. Emphasise the crucial role of communication in ensuring employees understand, accept, and internalise brand values, influencing future behaviours. 3. Underscore the significance of organisational storytelling in shaping internal self-perception and identity negotiation, leading to brand endorsement and development, and advancing the understanding of communication's impact. 4. Prove the role of brand heritage in fostering employee brand citizenship, adding depth to its value as a corporate asset. 5. Illustrate the importance of a clear brand vision in guiding employee actions towards brand endorsement and development, offering new

		insights into brand vision's influence.
RP 7: BAsB → BEB	Brand-employee congruence is central to helping researchers and practitioners understand 'how people make the brand' (Hurrell and Scholarios, 2014) and assisting employees in serving as brand ambassadors (Xiong et al., 2013).	1. Highlights social connectedness as a CP-related benefit, fostering employees as brand spokespersons. 2. Advance fit theory by establishing the significance of brand-CP and employee-CP congruence as the multidimensional unity in driving discretionary brand enactment. 3. Capture the blurring of boundaries between firms, employees, and customers by demonstrating how brand assimilation aggregation motivate employees to exceed expectations, improving customer experiences.
RP8: BBB → OBE **RP9:** BAsB → OBE **RP10:** BAfB → OBE	Overall brand equity measures the overall strength of a corporate brand (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2016) A prosocial organisational identity can lead employees to perceive their organisation as caring from an overall perspective (Grant and Ashford, 2008). Overall brand equity measures the overall strength of a corporate brand (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2016; Yoo et al., 2000)	RP8: Demonstrate CP-related leadership, organisational culture ('H' factor), and brand heritage as critical drivers of overall employee-based brand equity (OBE), with a novel focus on the 'H' factor's influence on OBE outcomes. RP9: Expand on the concept of employee-brand congruence and its critical role in building OBE, emphasising the importance of perceived benefits from brand and CP activities in this process. RP10: Advance the understanding of how brand trust and pride contribute to OBE, highlighting their significance in enhancing employees' connection to the corporate brand.

Notes for abbreviations: Brand Building Block (BBB); Brand Assimilation Block (BAsB); Brand Affinity Block (BAfB); Brand Enactment Block (BEB); Overall employee-based brand equity (OBE).

10.3   Additional contributions in examining CP and EBBE linkage

Exploring the dynamic nature of EBEE

The study makes a significant contribution by leveraging the advantages of complexity theory and the fuzzy-set qualitative comparative analysis technique (fsQCA) to capture and synthesise the significant aspects of corporate brands' CP-related efforts and EBBE and decode the EBBE building process. FsQCA stands as a pioneering method that masterfully bridges qualitative and quantitative strategies by integrating the depth and individual case focus of qualitative research with the systematic rigour and broad applicability of quantitative analysis (Ragin, 1987).

More specifically, fsQCA embodies three strengths of the qualitative approach (Saridakis et al., 2016). Firstly, it treats each case as a unique and complex unit that requires a thorough understanding (Ragin, 1987). Second, by applying fsQCA analysis, this research embodies the strengths of complexity by multiple conjunctural causation (Ragin, 1987). For example, a combination of conditions that produce an outcome is welcomed in this research. Meanwhile, various pathways can lead to the same result (equifinality), and the influence of a particular factor can vary depending on the context (Saridakis et al., 2016). Lastly, fsQCA allows the researcher to identify and describe various causal patterns across cases rather than forcing a single, universal model that fits the data as quantitative researchers. This approach, therefore, contributes by emphasising the diversity and complexity of causal relationships in social research. By applying fsQCA, the research also blends some advantages of quantitative approaches into its analysis as Saridakis et al. (2016) summarised. First, it allows the analysis of many cases simultaneously and produces generalisations. Second, it uses Boolean algebra to break down each case into a series of variables, known as 'conditions' and 'outcomes' (Ragin, 1987). This structured approach helps keep the analysis clear and systematic. Lastly, fsQCA aims to simplify the analysis by identifying the most straightforward patterns of cause and effect. It does this by focusing on the minimal core conditions to explain an outcome, making the results easier to understand and more practical for application.

According to the researcher's best knowledge, the exploration of connecting CP and EBBE has not been approached using fsQCA analysis. Therefore, this research innovatively introduces this new approach (i.e., fsQCA) to examine the complex EBBE model and

highlight the usefulness and advantages of using this analysis technique. More specifically, by applying fsQCA, this research embraces the idea of causal complexity and thereby focuses on the combinatorial synergistic effects in which the combinations of antecedent conditions (e.g., brand building block) lead to a specific outcome. This research also takes advantage of equifinality and therefore identifies that employees would have and emphasise various pathways about perceptions, feelings, and actions on their CP involvement at their workplace that can, alternatively, result in strong corporate brand strength. This existence of differences offers multiple solutions to the same outcome of interests; thereby, employees' idiosyncratic perceptions are covered and considered to generate optimal solutions for developing a solid corporate brand. Moreover, fsQCA also entitles the research to treat relationships between the critical constructs as nonlinear or asymmetric. The above features also challenge the one-size-fits-all assumption in conventional quantitative methods and provide new insights into the examined complex relationship. To conclude, the introduction of fsQCA significantly contributes to the existing literature by verifying its uniqueness and potential in embracing causal complexity, equifinality, and asymmetry in analysing relevant branding topics.

Integrating mixed methods to enhance understanding of CP and EBBE

This study significantly enhances a better and full understanding of corporate philanthropy (CP) and employee-based brand equity (EBBE) by employing a mixed-methods approach and combining quantitative and qualitative techniques. Previous research on CP and EBBE predominantly used quantitative or qualitative methods in isolation; e.g., Szocs et al. (2016) and King and Grace (2012) only used quantitative methods. Some studies merely incorporate qualitative techniques. For example, Breeze and Wiepking (2020) used observational methods to study shop floor staff's charitable behaviours and attitudes in workplaces. However, most previous studies like this have not dealt with employees' cognitive-affective-conative reaction chain through a qualitative analysis. This study, therefore, applies a mixed method, in which the investigator gathers both quantitative (close-ended) and qualitative (open-ended) data, integrates the two and then draws interpretations with rich insights based on the combined strengths of both sets of data to understand research problems (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2017). Specifically, semi-structured interviews delve into the diverse experiences and perceptions of front-line employees and senior managers, employing thematic analysis to extract deep insights and nuances about CP and EBBE. Meanwhile, by having the participant interactions and

emerging analyses valued during the analysis (Charmaz, 2007; Bryant and Charmaz, 2019) and building on the theory-driven analysis, the thematic analysis contributes to a comprehensive understanding of EBBE in a CP-related context. This qualitative exploration informs and refines the theoretical framework and precedes the quantitative phase, where surveys and Fuzzy-set Qualitative Comparative Analysis (fsQCA) test the relationships and validate the proposed CP-EBBE model. By embracing this dual approach, the research can achieve a comprehensive and corroborated understanding of the dynamics (Johnson et al., 2007), significantly advancing the theoretical development and practical application of the EBBE process model within corporate philanthropy.

10.4   Managerial implications

This research is of significant importance to brand managers and marketers. From this research, corporate philanthropy and employee-based equity have been proven to be significant and growing in importance for the management and marketing of brands. This session is, therefore, designed to help marketing and internal branding practitioners better appreciate the fact that there are diverse opportunities for achieving corporate philanthropic-driven employee-based brand equity and provide the relevant diagnostic tools.

Implication 1: Leveraging key building blocks for internal branding development

First, managers can leverage the conceptual framework (Figure 9.1) by adopting a holistic view of the four key building blocks and 18 detailed conditions of corporate philanthropy-driven employee-based brand equity. This comprehensive approach enables managers to identify and foster employees' cognitive, affective, and behavioural development in CP participation, ultimately enhancing brand effectiveness and efficiency. For example, by focusing on the first employee brand-building block and its core dimensions, managers can effectively identify the importance of cultivating CP-driven functional and imagery branding characteristics. This allows them to strategically allocate resources and design initiatives that drive brand success.

The discussion below summarises the managerial implications of this research and how internal branding managers can take relevant blocks and stages as a diagnostic tool.

Employee Brand Building Block (BBB). At this initial stage, the focus is on how effectively employees are involved in and acknowledged for their contributions to internal brand-building activities. Brand managers need to recognise employees' active roles in relevant initiatives (such as CP activities) and promote comprehensive internal brand-building efforts that integrate performance and imagery aspects. Notably, addressing informational asymmetry about the brand heritage is crucial, linking the brand vision to positive internal impacts and monitoring management support on employee engagement. Additionally, fostering transformational leadership, framing internal communication with organisational storytelling, and cultivating a human-related culture are essential considerations for managers.

Employee Brand Assimilation Block (BAsB). This stage examines how well employees perceive and internalise the brand's core values through their participation in CP activities. Brand managers should ensure employees understand the connection between CP initiatives and the broader brand purpose, encouraging active participation. Ensuring employees can benefit from their participation as well as the corporate brand and enhancing the alignment between employees' values and the organisational ethos is essential. Aligning CP activities with causes that resonate with employees' interests is necessary to increase engagement and ensure authenticity.

Employee Brand Affinity Block (BAfB). At this stage, the focus shifts to fostering positive emotions among employees. Brand managers need to engage employees in meaningful CP activities that reflect company values, showcase impact, and celebrate employee involvement to foster pride. Promoting the long-standing brand heritage within CP participation helps build trust and community. Highlighting the multiple benefits of engaging with CP also strengthens employee trust and connection.

Employee Brand Enactment Block (BEB). This stage evaluates how employees' actions support the corporate brand in a CP-related context. Mainly, authentic appreciation of CP activities among employees should be promoted, and these initiatives should be aligned with personal and organisational values. Creating an environment where brand advocacy is voluntary and stems from genuine satisfaction is essential. Utilising the 'mirroring effect' to reflect positive employee behaviours onto customer perceptions can be a powerful tool.

Overall Employee-Based Brand Equity (OBE). The final stage addresses the overall

internal brand strength. Brand managers should leverage employee-based brand equity as a critical indicator of how employees feel about the brand. Developing and utilising tools to measure the impact of philanthropic activities on the corporate brand is necessary. Considering and measuring the mirror effect of employee-based brand equity on customer-based brand equity helps achieve and sustain a solid internal brand, integrating insights from the previous stages to create a cohesive and supportive environment that reinforces the brand's values.

Implication 2: Effectively identifying core conditions for achieving desired branding outcomes

Alternatively, managers can derive valuable insights from this research when aiming to achieve specific outcomes of interests. For instance, in the case of enhancing employee brand endorsement, brand managers can effectively refer to the relevant sections and trace the core conditions outlined in Figure 9.2. These findings highlight the importance of investing in the brand's performance-related and imagery-related attributes, such as management support, internal communication for corporate philanthropy, and clear brand vision. Additionally, the results underscore the significance of strengthening brand alignment, offering meaningful benefits for employee participation in CP activities, and fostering a sense of pride. Together, these efforts contribute to enhanced employee brand endorsement.

Identifying the core conditions to achieve overall brand equity is a key managerial implication of this research, providing actionable insights for holistically and effectively strengthening brand value. As revealed in Figure 9.2, the first focus for managers and marketers is on nourishing the core brand's imagery and performance-related characteristics in the Brand Building Block (BBB) towards building a robust corporate brand. Managers should prioritise establishing an overall 'Human' factor in the corporate culture and effective CP-related leadership to enhance the brand functionally. Brand heritage is a critical factor in brand imagery and essential in reinforcing overall brand equity. Therefore, a solid corporate brand can be generated based on how these BBB characteristics help employees live the brand. This research also offers managers insights into the core conditions in the Brand Assimilation Block (BAsB) that are important for developing a strong corporate brand. Marketers should also know the importance of nourishing a congruence between employees and their corporate brand. Moreover, based

on the reciprocal core of employee-corporate engagement, brand managers must offer appropriate employee benefits from the corporate brand level and throughout the CP participation process. These employees' perceived congruence and benefits can transfer to the corporate brand's overall strength. Next, this study is also helpful for practitioners to focus on specific employee emotions, i.e., key items in the Brand Affinity Block (BAfB) during the brand development process. Specifically, marketers may consider cultivating employees' self-esteem and pride in being members of their corporate brands and their trust in the brands to form a robust corporate brand. Finally, it may be surprising for managers to recognise the decisive role of brand endorsement as the only key factor in the Brand Enactment Block (BBB) leading to the overall powerful corporate brand. Therefore, at a practical level, corporates need to try their best to encourage their employees to have positive external communication about the brand or the advocacy of the brand.

Implication 3: Optimal solutions from multiple branding 'recipes'

Managers can adopt flexible branding strategies by leveraging various combinational 'recipes' from the core-periphery models in Chapter 8, enabling them to implement the most appropriate initiatives to achieve their objectives. These models offer multiple combinational 'recipes' as alternative pathways to reach the same desired outcomes, granting managers the autonomy to take more relevant and practical initiatives. It underscores the importance of crafting and applying a distinctive 'recipe' for brand performance and success. For example, one core approach to fostering employee brand citizenship is through strengthening brand trust. Alternatively, enhancing the central role of brand pride while peripherally reinforcing employees' pride in their participation in CP activities offers another route to positive employee brand citizenship. Therefore, the flexibility offered by the findings can help firms identify their distinctive roadmap for developing and maintaining a powerful brand while leveraging their CP-related practices and engaging their workforce.

In a nutshell, this research serves as an effective diagnostic tool for managers, helping them assess the current state of brand development, identify areas for improvement, and implement targeted, impactful interventions. By offering a practical framework for managing brand equity from an internal perspective, it equips managers with actionable insights to drive brand growth and better engage their workforce through corporate philanthropy (CP). The EBBE model helps brand managers navigate the complexities of

achieving social and economic synergies, optimise partnerships with charitable organisations, and leverage CP initiatives to enhance brand value and foster interdisciplinary collaboration.

10.5 Limitations and directions for future research

Despite the above contributions and implications, this research has several limitations that deserve future investigations. First, despite the rigorous features of the systematic literature review, this study still contains several limitations. Web of Science and EBSCOhost are chosen over others. Different keywords and databases may result in different outputs. Only English publications were incorporated. These factors limit the result of our review, and therefore, future reviews could improve on it by developing a better literature review protocol with more rigorous considerations.

This research focuses on the UK as its research context due to convenience and the UK's corporate philanthropy roots (Campbell et al., 2002). However, cultural variations could impact the outcomes of this study. Future investigations should broaden this work and replicate relevant findings by examining the relationships between CP and EBBE from diverse nations, enabling the creation of varied benchmarks based on employee individuals' national and cultural identities and dimensions.

There are limitations regarding the data collection method in the quantitative method, mainly because CP and EBBE did not enable access to a probabilistic random sample. Although the researcher set a quota for a representative sample via the platform Prolific, only specific groups of individuals are eligible for CP participation in their workplace. Future studies may try to address this issue further.

The researcher has noticed that interviewees in this research have revealed some negative aspects of employees' CP involvement; however, this study's main findings and discussions mainly focus on the beneficial elements of favourable brand equity. Future research should examine the dark side of CP participation and negative EBBE to determine and complete relevant mechanisms. It will also be helpful to identify the potential applicability of the proposed model's rationale in other branding phenomena (e.g., cobranding between corporate and charity brands).

Moreover, this research focuses solely on types of corporate philanthropy (i.e., focal and peripheral employee-related CP activities) that employees can access and are familiar with. Future research should broaden this scope to include other types of CP activities or emerging forms (e.g., digital philanthropy) beyond those typically studied or offer a particular focus on a specific CP type.

Future research should also focus on a more detailed comparison and evaluation of company characteristics, such as size, industry, and organisational structure when studying corporate philanthropy and its impacts on employee-based brand equity. For example, larger companies with extensive resources may be able to implement more comprehensive and high-profile CP initiatives, potentially leading to stronger employee engagement and brand equity compared to smaller firms with limited resources. These differences highlight how company size can influence the scale, visibility, and internal impact of CP efforts. A deeper understanding of these variables could provide more tailored insights for companies seeking to optimise their philanthropic efforts.

Although there are different demographic features of participants in this research, less is known about whether and how these features would influence the overall results. For example, the researcher recorded factors like age, education situations, industries they work for, working experience, and contact time with consumers. However, these have not been further explored in terms of their relationships with our key research focus due to the capabilities of the methods employed. Thus, there are many research opportunities to understand further, compare individuals' differences (e.g., occupation, income, age, and gender), and consider social elements (e.g., social change and social attitudes) in this EBBE framework. Additionally, it would be exciting and valuable to investigate the impact of employees working in different modes (such as teleworking or working from home) on the overall EBBE. Building upon this, a promising future research avenue would be to explore the impact of digital transformation on CP and its subsequent effect on EBBE. Specifically, researchers could investigate how digital tools and platforms (e.g., the use of social media, mobile apps, and even virtual reality) enhance CP initiatives, engagement, and efficiency.

In future investigations, it might be possible to acknowledge that employee-based brand equity (EBBE) is rarely an end goal. It has the potential to predict various essential outcomes. To close the loop, researchers should link CP and EBBE with further subjective

and objective measures, such as firm-related outcomes (e.g., employee performance and turnover), employee-related outcomes (e.g., well-being, morale and word-of-mouth), and external-oriented outcomes (e.g., customer satisfaction and brand loyalty). Future studies should also consider the integration of CP and EBBE with the brand equity of other stakeholders, such as customer-based brand equity (CBBE), to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the overall impact of CP initiatives.

Finally, future research should also investigate the 'dark side' of employee involvement in corporate philanthropy, particularly when there is a lack of congruence between employees' values, corporate philanthropy activities, and the brand itself. Misalignment in these areas can lead to cynicism, a 'forced' feeling, resentment, disengagement, and even negative impacts on brand equity. Exploring these dynamics will provide valuable insights into helping companies better align their CP initiatives with both brand values and employee expectations to avoid potential conflicts.

10.6   Chapter summary

This thesis has explored two key concepts - Corporate Philanthropy (CP) and Employee-based Brand Equity (EBBE) in the marketing research realm. Specifically, this research introduces a unique and significant perspective by exploring how brands can boost their competitive edge through EBBE by engaging their workforce in CP initiatives. This final chapter of this thesis has covered several contributions, implications and recommendations for future research and practice. This study makes a three-pronged contribution to the fields of CP and EBBE and the interconnection between these two critical concepts. One of the main contributions is about the conceptualisation and classification of CP, through which the researcher, going beyond the opposition and conflict between altruism and self-interest, defines CP as being reciprocal and highlights its diversity and possibility in embracing different stakeholders in terms of classification. Another critical contribution is offering an inclusive definition of the novel concept EBBE that emphasises the crucial roles employees play in a dynamic and sequential build-building process. This research empirically contributes to deepening the dimensionality and configural nature of the EBBE and validates EBBE's dynamic evolving process in a CP-related context. This thesis has also provided a suite of strategies and practices for practitioners to help brands effectively engage in CP while assisting employees in 'living the brand' and boosting brand

performance. Finally, this thesis acknowledges its limitations and suggests future research avenues. In closing, this thesis is expected to serve as a springboard for research on the substantial topic relating to corporate philanthropy and employee-based brand equity.

Appendices

Appendix A: Classification of CP with cases

				Corporate-level philanthropic contribution								
			Descriptive Features						Analytical Features			Sources
Type	Definition	Exemplars	Nature of business	Causes	Involved parties	Purposes	Potential effects	Congruence	Branding Alternatives	Organisations	Resources availability	Timing	
Monetary Donation	Direct monetary donation made in a corporate-level.	**The donation of Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation:** In 2020 the foundation funded grantees in 49 states and the District of Columbia. Internationally, they funded work in 134 countries. The foundation spent $5.8 billion on direct grantee support with 2,136 grants towards 1,357 grantees. The foundation has spent $53.8 billion since 2000. It supports multiple causes. For example, $2.1 Billion Commitment to Ignite Progress on Gender Equality (June 2021); Foundation Commits $1.75 Billion to COVID-19 Pandemic Response (December 2020).	a nonprofit fighting poverty, disease, and inequity around the world.	Gender Equality; Global Development Program; Global Growth & Opportunity Program; Global Health Program; Global Policy & Advocacy; United States Program; Other Charitable Sector Support initiative.	the foundation and grantees	Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people's health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people—especially those with the fewest resources—have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life.	Offer the opportunity to improve the quality of life for people; promising solutions that governments and businesses can't afford to make.	Strategic	Create Own Self Branded Cause	Disruptive	Entrepreneurial	Proactive	https://www.gatesfoundation.org/our-work
		Barclays' 100x100 Programme of COVID-19 Community Aid Package donations: Through our 100x100 Programme, Barclay invited UK charities to apply for one of 100 donations of £100,000 each, to help them deliver impactful on-the-ground support. So far, funding has helped 187 organisations across the UK and, as the impact of the pandemic continues to be felt, they're extending the support to even more UK charities.	Banking	Help for people experiencing physical and mental health issues; financial assistance for people facing financial hardship; support for ethnically diverse communities disproportionately impacted by the crisis; and enhancing digital accessibility.	firms and charities	Provide local support for UK communities - to support vulnerable people and communities impacted by COVID-19, and to alleviate the associated social and economic hardship caused by the crisis.	show the power of acting together in support of communities; make a positive difference by delivering help where it's needed most.	Strategic	Cobranded: Link to Existing Cause	Contributory	Grant	Reactive	https://home.barclays/content/dam/home-barclays/documents/citizenship/Covid-Fund/Barclays-COVID-19-Community-Aid-Package-e-Impact-Report.pdf https://home.barclays/society/investing-in-our-communities/barclays-covid-19-community-aid-package/barclays-100x100-uk-covid-19-community-relief-programme/
		AstraZeneca's donation: According to AstraZeneca's 2020 annual report, the group gave more than $76 million in financial and non-financial contributions in 2020 through its community investment activities to 1,339 non-profit organisations in 88 countries. They also provide $15 million COVID response and relief.	biopharmaceutical business	support a non-profit, patient advocate, medical professional or researcher to advance patient health, increase access to care, drive science innovation and build healthy and resilient communities for all.	firms and charities	They aim to make a positive impact on people and the communities in which they live.	give back the the community and link with people	Strategic	Cobranded: Link to Existing Cause	Contributory	Grant	Proactive	https://www.astrazeneca.com/sustainability/supporting-our-communities.html
In-kind Donation	Direct in-kind donation made in a corporate-level. Examples of in-kind support might include the distribution of used stock; free access to company facilities	**M&S Surplus redistribution scheme:** Since 2015 M&S have been partnered with the community platform Neighbourly, which support M&S in connecting all of our owned stores with local causes across the country. During that time, they have been able to donate over 31m meals to those who need it most through 1,400 local community causes. In response to Covid, 2020/21 they have donated more than 11.8m meals to support communities across the UK.	Multinational retailer	food poverty	community partner: Neighbourly; colleagues	supporting the communities	deliver mutual value and make an impact	Strategic	Cobranded: Link to Existing Cause	Contributory	Grant	Proactive	https://corporate.marksandspencer.com/sustainability/our-communities https://www.neighbourly.com/MarksandSpencer
		Center Parcs's donation of furniture and trips: Apart from supporting their corporate charity partners, Center Parcs has also supported the British Heart Foundation through donations of furniture since 2016 as they refurbish accommodation. Their furniture donations have raised more than £550,000 and more than 440 tonnes of furniture have been reused, rather than being sent to land fills. In addition, each year, they also select a number of smaller charities to work with for more than a decade. These charities share the ethos of keeping families together and they donate a number of breaks for them to allocate to families in need of some special time away together.	A group engaged in the operation of short break holiday villages.	helping the heart and circulatory diseases research and helping families be together.	supply chain, target charities	Supporting charities that make a difference to families across the UK.	deliver their value through donating to target causes	Strategic	Cobranded: Link to Existing Cause	Contributory	Grant	Proactive	https://corporate.centerparcs.co.uk/social.html https://corporate.centerparcs.co.uk/social/charitable-giving/corporate-partnerships.html
		Erke's impressive disaster relief donation: Hongxing Erke, a Chinese sports company announced that it would donate 50 million yuan ($7.7 million) in supplies – 47 million yuan in materials and 3 million yuan in cash - to victims affected by the disastrous flooding in Henan earlier 2021	Sportswear retailers	victims affected by the disastrous flooding in Henan Province	firms and consumers	disaster relief	one good deed deserves another: within hours, the Chinese internet lit up with praise for its goodwill as posters pointed out that Erke's contribution was particularly impressive given its financial situation and relatively small scale. Then, they enjoyed a sales explosion-8 ales immediately sky rocketed by up to 52 times normal levels, lines sold out, customers queued to get into its stores and some demanded they pay more than the list price.	Peripheral	Cobranded: Link to Existing Cause	Contributory	Grant	Reactive	https://www.forbes.com/sites/markfaithfull/2021/08/05/sales-a-cause-at-ailing-chinese-brand-erke-after-good-deed-goes-viral/?sh=4d827562b136

Employee-involved corporate philanthropy														
Descriptive Features									Analytical Features					Sources
Type	Definition	Exemplars	Nature of business	Causes	Involved parties	Role of employees	Purposes	Potential effects	Congruence	Branding Alternatives	Organizations	Resources availability	Timing	
Employee Nomination of Target Causes	It is an opportunity for employees nominations and votes for as their target partner charity which will have the greatest impact with their support (Hammerson, 2021). Their choices of Charity of the Year programmes support a single organisation typically for a period of a year; however this can be extended (Pembridge, 2021).	**Irwin Mitchell nomination 'Charity of the Year'** For Irwin Mitchell, they declare that all employees have the ability to request donations for their charities of choice on a monthly basis. In addition, each office nominates a local 'Charity of the Year' - this charity benefits from 12 months of fundraising and any other support that we can provide.	Engaged in the provision of legal services.	the relief hardship or distress, and helping vulnerable groups within the community	the firm, employees, nominated regional charities	do the nomination for 'Charity of the Year'	Support the development of the people and places within our communities to help them reach their full potential; Provide support in cases of need, hardship or distress for the general benefit of the regions surrounding our offices; Provide support to vulnerable groups within our community	put giving back to the community as part of the culture; make employees see first-hand the difference they can make'--Kate Rawlings, Corporate Social Responsibility Manager	Strategic	Cobranded: Link to Existing Cause	Contributory	Venture	Proactive	https://www.irwinmitchell.com/about-us/social-responsibility/communities
		Employees deciding and donating within Aviva Community Fund: Employees can be a part of the Aviva Community Fund. Aviva distributed the fund evenly among all UK employees by putting the power in their hands to decide which of the causes get funding. Employees can head to the employee page and active the £25 voucher for donation to their target organisation. After that, they can also get the update from it.	The transaction of general and long term insurance.	multiple causes	the firm, fund, employees, multiple target charities	pick and decide their own supporting causes	Back innovative ideas that move communities forward and build stronger, more resilient communities across the UK	Get more involved with employees and nudge people to take action through embracing principles of behavioral science; "Make all staff can choose how to make a difference"	Strategic	Cobranded: Link to Existing Cause	Contributory	Grant	Proactive	https://www.avivacommunityfund.co.uk/employee https://www.avivacommunityfund.co.uk/
		Anglo American and their employee-chosen charity: Three charities of the year were chosen by staff. They awarded and presented cheques for £21,600 to each of these three charities with the money raised throughout the year via a series of internal fundraisers, staff donations and a company safety initiative to encourage best safety practices and behaviours.	Mining company focused on precious metals and minerals.	three themes important to the business: safety, care and community (Yorkshire Air Ambulance, Zoe's Place Baby Hospice, Rainbow Centre)	the firm, employees, target charities	pick and decide their own supporting causes	Giving back to the local community	Have a positive impact among the community where they operate	Strategic	Cobranded: Link to Existing Cause	Contributory	Grant	Proactive	https://uk.angloamerican.com/our-community
Payroll Giving	Payroll Giving is a way of make donations from their wages without paying tax on it (Pembridge, 2021; GOV.UK, 2021).	**GAYE in Irwin Mitchell** we can find regular contributions from employees via the Give As You Earn (GAYE) scheme in Irwin Mitchell. They declare that this form of charitable giving is popular within Irwin Mitchell, with over 30% of our employees choosing to donate. The Irwin Mitchell Charities Foundation receives money each year from partner donations and the employee Give As You Earn (GAYE) scheme.	Engaged in the provision of legal services.	the relief hardship or distress, and helping vulnerable groups within the community	employees, recognised national charities and disaster relief funds	donor	Supporting the communities in which we operate'	get involved with employees; connect with communities	Strategic	Cobranded: Link to Existing Cause	Contributory	Grant	Proactive	https://www.irwinmitchell.com/about-us/social-responsibility/communities
		GAYE in Investec: The UK payroll giving programme, Give As You Earn, enables staff to donate money to a charity of their choice in a tax efficient way that benefits the charity through an online portal. Staff fundraising endeavours are supported through employee charity funding while small grants are made to local charities outside our formal partnerships but within their focus areas via the donations' committee. UK staff donated £359,017 to charity through payroll giving (2020: £331,029).	Financials	multiple causes: Education and learnerships; Entrepreneurship and job creation; Environment and other philanthropy; Staff volunteerism.	The firm, employees and target charities.	donor	be a responsible corporate organisation by making an unselfish contribution to society, nurturing an entrepreneurial spirit, valuing diversity and respecting others	get involved with employees; connect with communities	Strategic	Cobranded: Link to Existing Cause	Contributory	Grant	Proactive	https://www.investec.com/content/dam/investor-relations/financial-information/group-financial-results/2021/Investec-Group-Sustainability-and-ESG-Report-2021.pdf
		PAYE in NEXT: A scheme which is available to all UK based employees and allows people paid through PAYE to make tax-efficient donations to any UK registered charity. During the year, employees donated around £25,000 to charities of their choice	Retailer	children, caring for the sick and people with disabilities, healthcare, medical research and community support	The firm, employees and target charities.	donor	to make a difference and to make an impact by working with a wide range of charities and organisations	make an impact within their communities	Strategic	Cobranded: Link to Existing Cause	Contributory	Grant	Proactive	https://www.nextplc.co.uk/~/media/Files/N/Next-PLC-V2/documents/cr-reports/next-cr-report-2021.pdf
Employee Volunteering	Voluntarily providing time, knowledge or expertise to target charitable causes. Some of them are entitled to paid volunteer time. Also called Pro bono work. Pro bono work can provide a way for charities to access invaluable professional skills and knowledge from companies free of charge. Many people think of pro bono work as being the domain of law and accountancy firms; however companies from across the corporate sector provide charities with various specialisms, sometimes with remarkably innovative outcomes.	Microsoft employee giving programme: Microsoft declared that their employees volunteer more than 750,000 hours in the US during the 2019–20 fiscal year. The Microsoft legal department and volunteers across the company have been committed to do pro bono services. They also design a programme named Hack for Good. Volunteer time matched at $25 per hour.	technology	multiple causes for 27,000 nonprofits	employees, nonprofits	volunteering	giving time, money, and skills to address the issues facing our world	help nonprofits accelerate their missions	Strategic	Cobranded: Link to Existing Cause	Contributory	Entrepreneurial	Proactive	https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/corporate-responsibility
		Sheffield United Community Foundation and community: Using the power of sport, SUFC provide opportunities for children and young people in Sheffield to develop their physical and personal skills through participation, education, inclusion, personal development and social action initiatives with 251,307 hours of delivery in total.	Football club	Education & Training, Health & Wellbeing, National Citizen Service and Participation & Inclusion.	employees, local communities	volunteering	use the power of football and sport in general to encourage, motivate and inspire all individuals, regardless of background, to achieve their potential.	providing opportunities for young people to play football in some of our most deprived communities, improving children's physical health and mental well-being	Strategic	Create Own Self-Branded Cause	Disruptive	Entrepreneurial	Proactive	https://www.sufc-community.com/
		Volunteering programme in HSBC UK: During the partnership of HSBC UK with BBC Children in Need, colleagues have produced educational content and have been running digital workshops for children and young people, to encourage and support learning around finances, money management and planning for the future. Time spent volunteering with community projects of HSBC UK in 2020 is 82,000 hours	Banking	Employability and financial skills; Children and young people; promoting diversity within HSBC	employees, target charities	volunteering	helping people develop the employability and financial skills	bring great personal rewards for employees– enabling people to build connections, develop new skills, and gain a fresh perspective.	Strategic	Cobranded: Link to Existing Cause	Disruptive	Entrepreneurial	Proactive	https://www.hsbc.com/who-we-are/our-people-and-communities/volunteering

Category	Description	Example	Industry	Cause	Stakeholders	Role	Objective 1	Objective 2	Strategic	Branding	Type	Approach	Stance	Reference
Employee Fundraising	Rasing money for target chartibale casues with individually organised regular commitments or one-off team efforts by employees (Pembridge, 2021)	**HSBC Fundraising for BBC Children in Need:** HSBC UK raised £1.1m for BBC Children in Need through extensive customer and colleague engagement channels including digital fundraising, paid social activity and advertising. For example, their colleagues across the branch network joined forces and organised all kinds of creative and challenging fundraisers including – 9 marathons in 9 days and 100 mile cycle rides. Not only this but together HSBC UK and BBC Children in Need created educational online content with HSBC UK colleagues delivering workshops to young people supported by a BBC Children in Need funded project.	Banking	Support children and young people affected by a whole range of disadvantages such as poverty, disability, illness, distress or trauma.	employees, target charities	organiser and fundraiser	To make a positive difference to the lives of children and young people through contributing to financial wellbeing	get involved with employees to help children in need	Strategic	Cobranded: Link to Existing Cause	Disruptive	Entrepreneurial	Proactive	https://www.bbcchildreninneed.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/CN1226-Annual-Report-2020-2021.pdf https://www.bbcchildreninneed.co.uk/partners/hsbcuk/
		Tesco's Employees fundraising for Cancer Research UK's Race for Life: Throughout 20 years of the partnership, colleagues in Tesco across the UK have held fundraising events in store, taken part in race events and encouraged customers to donate to support life-saving research. Tesco pays the entry fee for all colleagues wishing to enter a Race for Life event. Since 2002, over 20,000 of Tesco colleagues take part each year. Over £60million has been contributed to Cancer Research UK. Tesco has recognised the hard work of colleagues by introducing the Tesco Race for Life Hero awards. Nominated by fellow colleagues, nine Tesco colleagues, plus one store, who have gone the extra mile in the past 20 years to make the partnership such a great success have received awards.	Retailing	Cancer Research	The firm, employees, customers and the target charity	Fundraiser	make a difference in the fight against cancer	raise money for research into cancer; raise awareness for both Tesco and the charity	Strategic	Cobranded: Link to Existing Cause	Contributory	Venture	Proactive	https://www.tescoplc.com/news/2021/tesco-celebrates-20-years-in-partnership-with-race-for-life/
		ITV fundraising for Soccer Aid for Unicef: ITV and UNICEF have partnered on Soccer Aid for UNICEF since 2006. Beyond broadcasting the world-beating football match, ITV gets behind Soccer Aid for Unicef in multiple ways. On air, they promote fundraising through an ad campaign and create fundraising celebrity specials from some of our most-loved quiz shows, while off-air employees raise money through an online fundraising quiz to help make the Soccer Aid for Unicef total as big as possible. £9.3m raised by Soccer Aid for Unicef in 2020 and £47m raised since Soccer Aid began.	Communications	Soccer Aid for Unicef	The firm, employees, audiences and the target charity	broadcaster, fundraiser	raise money for Unicef's vital work protecting children in danger around the world, defending play for every child.	Giving back to communities; link the firm with causes they care about	Strategic	Jointly Branded: Branded Link to Existing Cause	Contributory	Grant	Proactive	https://www.itvplc.com/~/media/Files/I/ITV-PLC/download/itv-social-purpose-impact-report-2020.pdf https://www.itvplc.com/socialpurpose/giving-back
Employee Matching Gift Programmes	Firms support their employees in their charitable efforts to encourage employee engagement in philanthropy. Matched giving (also known as match funding) gives employees the chance to boost their fundraising since their employer matches the money they've raised. Some companies offer this on a pound-for-pound basis, while others will specify the amount they're prepared to give. It can be used to match payroll donations and employee fundraising – or pay for volunteer time.	**COVID-19 Colleague Matched Donations of Barclays:** Barclays colleagues have raised more than £6.5 million for charities around the world. Backed by their COVID-19 Colleague Matched Donations Programme, more than £13 million is going to support charities delivering relief. More than 7700 colleagues from 20 countries applied for matching	Banking	In alleviating the associated social and economic hardship caused by the crisis.	Firm, employees, target charities	fundraiser, donor and influencer	Barclays is committed to helping its customers, clients, colleagues, and the wider community deal with the unprecedented social and economic crisis caused by COVID-19.	show the power of acting together in support of communities; make a positive difference by delivering help where it's needed most.	Strategic	Cobranded: Link to Existing Cause	Contributory	Grant	Reactive	https://home.barclays/content/dam/home-barclays/documents/citizenship/Covid-Fund/Barclays-COVID-19-Community-Aid-Package-Impact-Report.pdf https://home.barclays/news/press-releases/2020/04/barclays-launches-p100-million-covid-19-community-aid-package/
		Cisco's Matching gifts for supporting colleagues in India: During the COVID-19 surge in India in spring 2021, Cisco opened a disaster relief campaign to benefit nonprofits serving in this region. Employees quickly responded by donating funds to this important cause. Over 10,000 employees made gifts that were matched by the Cisco Foundation, for a total impact of nearly US$1.6 million. In Cisco, they provide matching of employee donations and volunteer time, and advisory/consulting services. US$34 million was given in combined employee donations and matching gifts from the Cisco Foundation in fiscal 2021.	technology conglomerate corporation	COVID-19 and other multiple causes.	Firm, employees, the foundation	fundraiser, volunteer, donor and influencer	putting people, technology, and resources toward Powering an Inclusive Future for All, where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.	engaging employees in learning, giving, and advocating on the biggest problems facing society, and provides extra motivation through virtual engagements.	Strategic	Cobranded: Link to Existing Cause	Contributory	Grant	Reactive	https://www.cisco.com/c/dam/en_us/about/csr/esg-hub/_pdf/purpose-report-2021.pdf
		Microsoft matching programme: matches each employee's donations of money, products, and time to nonprofits, up to $15,000 a year. The match of volunteer time is $25 per hour that an employee volunteers. Donations and time can be easily logged in an online system; donations can be withdrawn automatically from paychecks; and if employees aren't sure where to begin, Microsoft has a database of more than 55,000 nonprofits and schools to choose from.	technology	multiple causes	Firm, employees, target charities	fundraiser, volunteer, donor and influencer	Support inclusive economic opportunity, Protect fundamental rights, Commit to a sustainable future, Earn trust	help nonprofits achieve more; employees are empowered to do more for the causes they care about; provide work-life balance and job happiness.	Strategic	Cobranded: Link to Existing Cause	Contributory	Grant	Proactive	https://news.microsoft.com/life/employee-giving/ https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/corporate-responsibility/philanthropies/employee-engagement

Customer-involved corporate philanthropy													
Descriptive Features								Analytical Features					Sources
Type	Definition	Exemplars	Causes	Involved parties	Role of employees	Purposes	Potential effects	Congruence	Branding Alternatives	Organisations	Resources availability	Timing	
Customer Nomination of Target Local Causes	It is an opportunity for customers nominations and votes for as their target local community initiatives or projects which will have the greatest impact with their support.	**Customers' nomination of local community grant scheme in Tesco:** The local community grant scheme provides funding for local projects across the United Kingdom. Customers can vote for the project they want the money to go to. To date, 68 million votes received from customers supporting over 40,000 community projects which have awarded over £90min grants since launching in October 2015.	Multiple causes from different communities	the firm, local shops, customers, charities target causes	/	support the projects and organisations that really matter locally.	get involved with customers and local communities	Strategic	Cobranded: Link to Existing Cause	Contributory	Grant	Proactive	https://www.tescoplc.com/sustainability/taking-action/community/community-grants/
		The Adopt a Station programme of ScotRail: More recently, ScotRail gets local community volunteers across the country involved in undertaking work to improve the physical environment of many stations. Some of these adapters are individual volunteers and local community groups. They can communicate the name of and the planning plan for the station they're interested in adopting or becoming involved with. ScotRail can reimburse costs for planting materials up to the annual budget set for those stations.	Multiple focus decided by participants	the firm, local communities, customers/volunteers	Employees work with participants to tailor their plans for the station.	make the railway an engine of social and economic regeneration	working with and supporting local communities to maximise the benefits their services and stations can bring to local areas; giving people who get involved a sense of pride in the work they're doing for the community.	Strategic	Jointly Branded: Branded Link to Existing Cause	Contributory	Venture	Proactive	https://www.scotrail.co.uk/about-scotrail/volunteering/adopt-station https://www.scotrail.co.uk/sites/default/files/assets/download_ct/20201204/4p7f9VZfCE8JjRq-gD_KsF4Pj9-DJR8ZE3szTvuz7bU/scotrail_community_awards_2020_winners_booklet.pdf
		ASDA's Green Token Giving: In 2021, as a part of their four-pillar strategy -Creating Change for Better, Asda Foundation was committed to giving £1.4million to thousands of local good causes in the heart of Asda communities through digital Green Token Giving. The online vote supports over 4,000 local grassroot projects and charities in 2021. Customers are entitled with supporting the local community by voting online for their favourite local cause. The cause with the most online votes will receive a £500 donation while second and third place each receive £200 in every local area.	Multiple focus decided by participants	the firm, local communities, customers		build stronger communities, and to connect and convene others to make a collective impact.	offer people opportunities and support at a local level which builds stronger communities	Strategic	Cobranded: Link to Existing Cause	Contributory	Venture	Proactive	https://www.asda.com/creating-change-for-better/better-communities

Category	Definition	Case											
		Louis Vuitton for UNICEF since 2016: By purchasing Louis Vuitton's Silver Lockit and Doudou Louis, customers have the opportunity to help children in vulnerable situations. For each bracelet purchased, $100 is donated to UNICEF to help children in urgent need. For each Doudou Louis sale, $200 will be donated. People are invited to make a donation and then share online their promise to help children while tagging friends and encouraging them to #MAKEAPROMISE as well. Since its launch, the Louis Vuitton for UNICEF partnership has raised nearly US $13 million for children at risk.	help children in vulnerable situations	charity partner: UNICEF; customers; employees	a group of voluntary Louis Vuitton employees being as 'LV for UNICEF Reporters' to see UNICEF in action. They witness first-hand how children's aid programmes are run and share their experiences with colleagues and friends to raise awareness of the important work being done with support from Louis Vuitton.	raising awareness and funds to support UNICEF's work	help children and get customers and employees involved	Strategic	Jointly Branded: Branded Link to Existing Cause	Disruptive	Entrepreneurial	Proactive	https://uk.louisvuitton.com/eng-gb/magazine/articles/lv-for-unicef# https://www.unicef.org/partnerships/louis-vuitton
Cause-related marketing	cause-related marketing happens when a charity donation ties to a commercial exchange that can support others in need.(Peloza and Shang 2011)	Actimel partner with Fareshare: Give Our Communities Your Best Shot: The partnership came about as part of Actimel's commitment to supporting communities, and up until 30 April 2021, the campaign gives Actimel customers the opportunity to support charities by buying a pack of Actimel and unlocking a pack to be donated in their community. Actimel has set a target of donating a total of 1 million Actimel bottles to their partners FareShare in the UK and FoodCloud in Ireland. In the end, they donated 426,880 bottles to charities across the UK and Ireland.	community	charity partner: FareShare and FoodCloud ; customers	/	support communities	support the most vulnerable people in their communities; the rise of awareness	Strategic	Jointly Branded: Branded Link to Existing Cause	Disruptive	Grant	Proactive	https://www.actimel-communitydonations.co.uk https://fareshare.org.uk/news-media/news/actimel-partner-with-fareshare-give-our-communities-your-best-shot/
		Elvis & Kresse: rescue-transfer-donate Since 2005 Elvis & Kresse have been rescuing raw materials, transforming them into luxury lifestyle accessories and donating 50% of profits back to charities (Fire Fighters Charity, Barefoot College, British Forces Foundation, The Costa Foundation and two coffee grower initiatives). To be specific, the website of Elvis & Kresse claims that once a customer brought a MESSENGER BAG (250GBP), it can save 1.3kg of textiles from landfills, donate 50% of profits to the Fire Fighters Charity and support 4.1 hours of living wages.Total donations in 2021 have reached nearly £100,000.	Firefighting and recycling	charities, non-profits, customers	/	Elvis & Kresse was established to rescue London's decommissioned fire hoses. Then, they add goodness, making the world better honour, ethics, transparency and sustainability into their purposes.	they are representing a whole new kind of luxury, which is sustainable, ethical, transparent, generous and kind.	Strategic	Jointly Branded: Branded Link to Existing Cause	Disruptive	Entrepreneurial	Proactive	https://www.elvisandkresse.com/blogs/news/elvis-kresse-on-the-purpose-driven-business-the-entrepreneurship-guest-lecture-series-at-ucl https://www.elvisandkresse.com/pages/about-us-2
Customer Fundraising	Rasing money for target chartibale casues with individually organised regular commitments or one-off team efforts by customers (Pembridge, 2021)	Individual fundraisers in BBC Children in need: BBC Children in need provide downloadable resources below and a free fundraising kit to the public. They encourage the public to use bake sales for fundraising or get sponsored for the Countryfile Ramble and then, pay in their money from fundraising. These fundraisers also can order a Thank You Certificate.	Support children and young people affected by a whole range of disadvantages such as poverty, disability, illness, distress or trauma.	the firm and the public	may come up with ideas for public fundraising	To make a positive difference to the lives of children and young people through contributing to financial wellbeing	get involved with the public and individual fundraisers to help children in need	Strategic	Create Own Self-Branded Cause	Disruptive	Entrepreneurial	Proactive	https://www.bbcchildreninneed.co.uk/fundraising/

Appendix B: Ethical approval letter

University
of Glasgow

College of Social
Sciences

13 September 2022

Dear Haoran Liu,

College of Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Project Title: Conceptualising and Measuring the Effects of Corporate Philanthropy on Employee-based Brand Equity

Application No: 400220032

The College Research Ethics Committee has reviewed your application and has agreed that there is no objection on ethical grounds to the proposed study. It is happy therefore to approve the project, subject to the following conditions:

- Start date of ethical approval: 13/09/2022
- Project end date: 01/10/2023
- Any outstanding permissions needed from third parties in order to recruit research participants or to access facilities or venues for research purposes must be obtained in writing and submitted to the CoSS Research Ethics Administrator before research commences: socsci-ethics@glasgow.ac.uk
- The research should be carried out only on the sites, and/or with the groups and using the methods defined in the application.
- The data should be held securely for a period of ten years after the completion of the research project, or for longer if specified by the research funder or sponsor, in accordance with the University's Code of Good Practice in Research: (https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_490311_en.pdf)
- Any proposed changes in the protocol should be submitted for reassessment as an amendment to the original application. The **Request for Amendments to an Approved Application** form should be used:

  https://www.gla.ac.uk/colleges/socialsciences/students/ethics/forms/staffandpostgraduateresearchstudents/

Yours sincerely,

Dr Susan A. Batchelor
College Ethics Lead

Appendix C: Semi-structured interview invitations and interview guide

Participant Information Sheet for Interview

Name of Project: Conceptualising and Measuring the Effects of Corporate Philanthropy on Employee-based Brand Equity

Name of Researcher: Miss Haoran Liu

Name of Supervisors: Dr Thomas Anker, Dr Kalliopi Chatzipanagiotou

You are being invited by the Adam Smith Business School at the University of Glasgow to take part in a PhD research study on corporate philanthropy and branding. I would like to invite you to participate in an interview. Before you decide to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take some time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this:

The purpose of this study is to explore if experiencing philanthropic activities at the workplace can improve the brand value in the minds of employees. By inviting you to take part in the interview, we want to understand your perceptions, views and feelings on corporate philanthropy organized or led by your brand.

You are being invited to take part in this research because you work in a company that has some corporate philanthropic practices in the UK and you know about the practices. Employees like you have been selected and invited to participate directly, after prior discussion, or indirectly through the recommendation of others. Great Britain is chosen as the research context.

This interview will offer you opportunities for reflection on valuable corporate philanthropic practices. Meanwhile, your ideas are very important for the researchers to understand the effects of corporate philanthropy through employees' insights. For a wider community, your viewpoints will help with informing how brands can enhance competitiveness and commit to social benefits by involving their employees when doing corporate philanthropy.

It is up to you to decide whether to take part. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time (before the day after this interview) without giving a reason and without facing any ramifications.

If you agree to participate, you will be asked for a semi-structured interview that will probably last between 40 and 60 minutes. It can be Zoom-based online or face-to-face and it will be up to you to decide.

The interview will be recorded (audio only) to facilitate and increase the accuracy of data collection and successive data analysis. The interviews will tentatively take place from Sep 2022-Dec 2022 approx.

The findings of this study will be used in a doctoral thesis and may be published in academic journals and reports, conference proceedings or books. The data including your interview responses may be used for future publications arising from current research. Neither you individually nor your organisation will be identifiable in any reporting of the project findings.

All the data that are collected for this research project will be analysed by the researcher, whose details are available at the end of this document. If you would like to have a summary of the findings of the research, please email the researcher.

Please be assured that your contribution will be kept strictly anonymous. You will be identified by a generated ID number only. The data of this research will be archived in Enlighten (the University's research data repository) with the access by authenticated researchers. Any paper-based documents will remain locked in cabinets at the University of Glasgow when not in use. The material related to personal data will be destroyed once the project is complete (01/10/2023). Electronic files will be erased using secure removal software.

Please note that these guidelines on confidentiality will be strictly adhered to unless evidence of wrongdoing or potential harm is uncovered. In such cases, the University may be obliged to contact relevant statutory bodies/agencies.

If you have any questions or concerns, or you would like to know more about this research project please feel free to contact the researcher Haoran Liu by email: haoran.liu@glasgow.ac.uk

To pursue any complaint about the conduct of the research: contact the College of Social Sciences Lead for Ethical Review, Dr Susan Batchelor: socsci-ethics-lead@glasgow.ac.uk

Thank you!

University of Glasgow

College of Social Sciences

Research Consent Form

Title of Project: Conceptualising and Measuring the Effects of Corporate Philanthropy on Employee-based Brand Equity

Name of Researcher: Haoran Liu

Name of Supervisors: Dr Thomas Anker, Dr Kalliopi Chatzipanagiotou

Consent statement

I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time (before the day after this interview), without giving any reason.

Confidentiality

I acknowledge that participants will be referred to by pseudonym in any publications arising from the research.

Data usage and storage

- All names and other material likely to identify individuals will be anonymised.
- The material will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times.
- The material will be retained in secure storage for use in future academic research.
- The material may be used in future publications, both in print and online.
- I understand that other authenticated researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.
- I understand that other authenticated researchers may use my words in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form.

Privacy Notice

I acknowledge the provision of a Privacy Notice in relation to this research project

Tick box for Consent

I agree to take part in this research study   Yes ☐   No☐

I give my consent for this interview being audio-recorded   Yes ☐   No☐

I allow the researchers to archive the interview data for open access to authenticated researchers

         Yes ☐   No☐

Name of Participant …………………………
Signature ……………………………………………
Date …………………………………

Name of Researcher: Haoran Liu

Signature:

Date

Interview Guide:

Introductory Session (3 min)

Thanks so much for joining this interview! The purpose of this interview is to uncover the feelings and meanings that employees attach to philanthropic/charitable activities in their workplace.

As I explained before in the participant information sheet, the reason that I've invited you is that you have some experience in corporate philanthropy in your workplace/ you are an expert in this area. This interview will last for 45-60 minutes. It's important to let you know that you are still free to stop at any time, or if you want to take a break, please just let me know. (Explain more ethical considerations if needed.)

Do you have any questions for me before we get started?

---- Warm-up questions ---- (5 min)

Think about the last time you joined/heard of philanthropic activity in your workplace, can you tell me what it was about? / Can you give me a brief introduction to this?

--Corporate Philanthropy Efforts-- (5-10 min)

Why have you decided to engage in philanthropic activities at work? / What makes you notice philanthropic activities at work? / How does XX organisation support employee involvement in corporate philanthropy?

--Cognitive EBBE -- (5-10 min)

Do you know or learn something new because of the philanthropic activity?

If no, then why? If yes, then what are they?

What does philanthropic involvement mean to you? / How do you find this activity in line with your own values?

--Affective EBBE -- (5-10 min)

Can you tell me what you feel when you associate with this philanthropic activity?

Why is this? / Why is this feeling important to you?

--Behavioural EBBE-- (5-10 min)

What impact (if any) does this philanthropic activity has on your work?

Do you do anything different in your work or life because of the philanthropic activity? Why or why not?

---- Follow-up questions for all employees---- (5 min)

Can you describe your ideal corporate philanthropic programme for the corporate brand?

Why would you perceive those philanthropic-related aspects as essential efforts of the organisation?

---- Closing the interview ---- (3min)

That is really all the questions that I have for you. Is there anything that you want to share or that you find relevant, but I have not asked you about?

Appendix D: Examples of the detailed thematic analysis coding

Axial Codes	Codes	Descriptions	One Illustrative Quote
Functional and imagery branding efforts in the CP context	Leadership influences employee CP involvement in multiple ways	Supervisors' supportive leadership is influential for employee CP involvement	And my manager is huge on that, and she wants to get colleagues to talk about it, she wants to encourage it... this is because she's passionate about community and engagement via community...she's very supportive...she makes it happen. (F8)
		Transformational leadership in creating more employee CP involvement	It was pretty much the manager's initiative. But he does like to work collaboratively…It's very good because you feel involved very early in the process. (M3)
		General senior leadership can be decisive for employee CP involvement	when there's the chief executive says there is a particular charity or a particular issue. It's really interesting that you know, people will get involved. […] Sometimes we're really lucky. The global CEO might mention something about a CSR or an ESG initiative. (M9)
	Award and support employees' CP involvement from the management level	Employee's CP-related efforts can be acknowledged by incentives and award	We also always tried to recognise and praise the efforts that people were making. So, they will feel motivated to continue to do it. (F7)
		Perceived tailored support from the board and ambassadors	our senior management and directors will try the things that we're recommending. And then behind us, they're on board to do these things. (M7)
	Internal communication helps employees understand CP, even the brand	Assorted communication mediums for CP	...Where we have a group on there, and we post opportunities for people to go out there. And then we've just lifted started in a newsletter for people to buy basically read and then get glimpsed the opportunity. So, there's kind of like a three-pronged approach. (F5)
		Employees can understand CP and the brand from induction to 'outcome displaying'	the main way that we can convince anybody to do it is to give some examples of what people have done before and that they enjoyed it and that there was a real outcome for the people who received the work or the money or the time or whatever it was. (M1)
		CP-related internal communication should be two-way	I think the company overall should announce this a bit more to its employees in the sense the research, and in the city where the company is based, what kind of volunteering activities are available, and what employees can take part in. (F3)
	CP-related 'Human' related culture	Philanthropy can be inherent or supplementary for different brand culture	The pillar for giving back as part of our business directive of people first. It is about putting people at the heart of the company to help drive engagement. So, the giving back pillar is that makes sense to us as to how we can get employees to engage with our local communities. (F5)

is increasingly obvious	Industrial background as a motivator to instigate cultural change through CP	I think it's important to have that sort of corporate branding for prospective employees. If it's an inclusive and giving culture rather than a very aggressive culture [...] private equity is a bit like investment banking, it sometimes has a bit of a negative reputation. (F2)
	A shift to a people-centred culture	I think the culture has shifted to where now corporates answer to their employees, like they have a responsibility to maintain happy employees... (M6)
	Clear familiarity with the brand and its CP's history	they were already doing a lot of charitable work as a business leading up to the establishment of the foundation in 1987…we fall within a hardship program for over 20 years now. (F6)
Brand heritage is pivotal in a CP-related context	The potential informational asymmetry about brand heritage among employees	The average length of service of our UK employees is about 10 years. So, people are very familiar with this. (M8)
	The belief in the CP-related heritage can differentiate the brand	it's very sensible for the business, to be continuing to support us to be able to attract and recruit the best talent. (M8)
The brand envisions a future	The articulated overall picture and envisioned future of the brand	Our overall picture is to promote the message that everyone deserves to live in a safe and healthy world of work. (M6)
	The brand's future is intertwined with employees and CP	it's actually trying to see how we can create real change or society and become a better bank for customers, investors or colleagues. (F7)

Appendix E: Screening survey

1. **Do you currently work in the UK?**

Yes

No

2. **How long have you worked with your current corporate?**

Less than 6 months

6 months – 2 years

over 2 – 5 years

over 5 years

3. **Corporate philanthropy is the voluntary contribution of corporations for the public good and charitable causes. Did you participate in any corporate philanthropic activity in your workplace?**

YES

No. I only heard of it but never participated in it.

No. My company does not have any corporate philanthropic activity.

4. **Which corporate philanthropic activities did you join in your workplace? (You can choose multiple answers based on your experience)**

Monetary donation

In-kind donation

Nomination of charitable causes

Payroll Giving or Give As You Earn

Corporate matching gift

Corporate and workplace volunteering

Corporate and workplace fundraising

Cause-related marketing (a promotional activity in which a societal or charitable cause is endorsed)

Others

None above them

(The individual will not be invited to the main questionnaire if 'None above them' is selected)

5. **In the upcoming two weeks, we may invite you to join our main study via a custom allow list based on your answers. Would you be interested in joining it? (a 10-min questionnaire in Prolific about your philanthropic participation in your workplace)**

YES

NO

(The individual will not be invited to the main questionnaire if 'NO' is selected)

Appendix F: Main survey

The Main Survey Cover Letter

University
of Glasgow

Adam Smith
Business School

The Adam Smith Business School invites you to participate in a PhD research study by answering a questionnaire. This questionnaire is designed to explore the effects of corporate philanthropy on branding from the employees' perspective.

Corporate philanthropy is the voluntary contribution of corporations for the public good and charitable causes. According to your answer to our screening survey, we are assuming that you have already participated in corporate philanthropic activity in your workplace. Therefore, we hope you can provide us with more information regarding your perceptions, feelings and actions about your corporate brand and its philanthropic activities. You will be asked to finish a survey with six parts, which will take 10-12 minutes.

The College Research Ethics Committee at the University of Glasgow has considered and approved the project. Your participation is entirely voluntary. All information given is collected in a fully anonymous manner. Please take time to read our **participant information sheet** for this research before you begin.

If you wish to learn more about the project, please contact the researcher:
Haoran Liu (h.liu.3@research.gla.ac.uk)

Thank you for taking part in this study!

Please indicate whether you would like to participate in this research:

☐ I agree to participate in this research.

☐ I do not want to participate in this research.

What is your Prolific ID?
(Please note that this response should auto-fill with the correct ID)

Main Questionnaire

PART 1: General information about your corporate

Which of the following categories best describes the industry you work in?

(The following options were displayed in a drop-down format)

Computer and Electronics Manufacturing

Wholesale

Transportation and Warehousing

Real Estate, Rental and Leasing

Hotel and Food Services

Retail

Finance and Insurance

College, University, and Adult Education

Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation

Health Care

Telecommunications

Government and Public Administration

Manufacturing

Others

What is the name of the company or organisation that you work for?
(Word limitation: Please write down the name within three words.)
If you prefer not to clarify its name, you can use an abbreviation of your corporate brand or use any way to make it unidentified. Thanks!

PART 2: The following questions let you share more about the corporate brand.
Please indicate your agreement or disagreement by selecting the relevant option.

I believe that ...

(Brand Vision Scales)	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
The values of this corporate brand are really strong					
Every colleague in this corporate brand shares the values of the organisation					
Every colleague in this corporate brand vigorously pursues the values of the organisation					
This corporate brand's vision reflects convincingly the values of the organisation					

I believe that the corporate brand…

(Brand Heritage Scales)	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
…knows how to reinvent itself					
…has a sense of tradition					
…reinforces and builds on long-held traditions					
…has a strong link to the past					

I find that ...

(Brand Knowledge Clarity Scales)	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Information about my organisation's brand improved my basic understanding of my job					
I understand what is expected of me because I have information about my organisation's brand					
I know how to make specific decisions for my job because I have information about my organisation's brand					

By thinking about the fit between yourself and the corporate brand, please indicate your agreement or disagreement based on your perceptions:

(Brand-employee Congruence Scales)	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
My professional values perfectly match the corporate brand's values					
My personal values perfectly match the corporate brand's values					
I know exactly what the corporate brand stands for					
I have trouble figuring out what image the corporate brand is trying to achieve					
The corporate brand doesn't pretend to be something it isn't					

Working with the corporate brand, I enjoy …

(Brand-based Perceived Benefits Scales-1)	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Good mentoring culture					
Good internal training opportunities					
Empowering environment					
Good recognition for individual work					
Respectful environment					
Friendly relationships amongst individual co-workers					
Strong team spirit					
Competent co-workers					

Working with the corporate brand, I enjoy …

(Brand-based Perceived Benefits Scales-2)	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Good line-managers					
"People first" attitude					
Good variety of work activities					
Challenging tasks					
Interesting tasks					
Good reputation of the company amongst friends					
Good brand to have on the resume					
To make sure that you are paying attention to this study. Please tick "Strongly Disagree" for this statement					

Overall, I find that the corporate brand ...

('H' factor Scales)	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
... strongly considers my values					
... really cares about my well-being					
... cares about my opinion					
... is willing to help me if I need a special favour					
... would forgive an honest mistake on my part					

PART 3: The following questions are about philanthropy and the general information of corporate philanthropic activities in the corporate brand.

PHILANTHROPY is about donating money, resources, or time to support charitable and good causes. What is your view about philanthropy?

In general, I believe that...

(General Attitudes on Philanthropy Scales)	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
We have to leave this world a better place for the next generation					
Each generation has to solve its own problems					
Society is in danger because people are less concerned about each other nowadays					
The world needs responsible citizens					
The world community relies on international politics and corporations and that is a good thing					
I give money to charitable causes, no matter what the government does					
Charity and public benefit should be supported by the government, and not by citizens and business corporations					

CORPORATE PHILANTHROPY is about companies helping or giving money to charities or good causes. For example, a company might encourage employees to volunteer to help kids attend school, while another company may match their employees' charitable donations.

*Which corporate philanthropic activities has the corporate brand organised? (You can choose multiple answers based on your experience.)

☐Monetary Donation

☐In-kind Donation

☐Nomination of Charitable Causes

☐Payroll Giving or Give as You Earn

☐Corporate Matching Gift

☐Employee Volunteering

☐Employee Fundraising

☐Cause-related Marketing (a promotional activity in which a societal or charitable cause is endorsed)

☐Others, please specify: _____

Please specify how often the corporate brand has organised these activities.

(Only display the options that the participants chose in the last question.)

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely
Monetary Donation				
In-kind Donation				
Employee Nomination of Target Causes				
Payroll Giving or Give as You Earn				
Corporate Matching Gift				
Employee Volunteering				
Employee Fundraising				
Cause-related Marketing				

How often have YOU participated in these corporate philanthropic activities?

(Only display the options that the participants chose in the question with *)

	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Monetary Donation					
In-kind Donation					
Employee Nomination of Target Causes					
Payroll Giving or Give as You Earn					
Corporate Matching Gift					
Employee Volunteering					
Employee Fundraising					
Cause-related Marketing					
Other Options written by the participant					

Please choose ONE of the following corporate philanthropic activities organised by the corporate brand that you have recently participated in.

After selecting, please KEEP THIS ANSWER IN YOUR MIND.

(Only display the options that the participants chose in the question with *)

☐Monetary Donation

☐In-kind Donation

☐Nomination of Charitable Causes

☐Payroll Giving or Give as You Earn

☐Corporate Matching Gift

☐Employee Volunteering

☐Employee Fundraising

☐Cause-related Marketing

PART 4: With the above-selected philanthropic activity in mind, the following questions allow you to share more about this philanthropic participation.

Having participated in this philanthropic activity, I find the corporate brand…

(Management support about CP Scales)	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
… values my contribution to this philanthropic activity					
… strongly considers the goals and values of this philanthropic activity					
… provides help regarding it					
… tries to make it interesting					
… is willing to help me perform the best I can					
… understands my problems with it					
… acknowledges my effort in it					

Having participated in this philanthropic activity, I find the corporate brand…

(Internal communication of CP Scales)	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
… communicates well how this philanthropic activity contribute to the brand values					
… make skill and knowledge development of employees happen as an ongoing process					
… helps us learn why we should do this activity and not just how we should do this					
… communicates the importance of my role being the face of our brand					
… provided helpful information about this philanthropic activity during onboarding					

My line manager …

(Leadership in CP Scales)	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
… gets me to look at how my job can link to the philanthropic activity					
… articulates a compelling vision of the philanthropic activity					
… displays a sense of confidence when talking about the philanthropic activity					
… effectively coaches me on issues that relate to the philanthropic activity					
… specifies the importance of having this activity in our brand					
To make sure that you are paying attention to this study. Please tick "Strongly Disagree" for this statement					

By thinking about the links between yourself, the corporate brand, and your selected philanthropic activity, please indicate your agreement or disagreement based on your perceptions:

(Brand-cause congruence Scales) (Employee-cause congruence Scales)	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
The philanthropic activity and **the corporate brand** is a match-up					
The philanthropic activity is appropriate to **the corporate brand**'s values					
I really support the core values of this philanthropic activity					
My values are in line with this philanthropic activity					

Having participated in this philanthropic activity, I …

(Perceived Benefits from CP Scales-1)	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
… discover something that was missing from my job					
... make up for a lack of something in my job					
… expose myself to something that isn't a part of my job					
… learn new things					
… seek out intellectual challenges					
… can do things that challenge me					
… broaden my horizons					

I appreciate that the corporate brand offered me the opportunity to participate in this philanthropic activity because…

(Perceived Benefits from CP Scales-2)	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
… it is socially acceptable to participate in this type of activities					
… it is socially encouraged to fight for a purpose					
… people who are involved in these philanthropic activities are seen by society as better than those who are not					
… I would have felt guilty if I knew I could have donated my time, effort or money to a cause but did not					
… I believe that I have more opportunities than others, at least partially because of where I was born					
… these corporate philanthropic activities alleviate any unease I may have about suffering in the world					

Overall,

(Perceived Benefits from CP Scales-3)	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I get something out of my involvement					
The benefits of my involvement outweigh any costs					

The following questions concern your feelings towards the philanthropic activity.
Please indicate your agreement or disagreement based on your true feelings:

(Pride based on CP Scales) (Trust based on CP Scales)	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
It makes me proud when others notice that I participate in philanthropic activity					
The philanthropic activity stands for values that make me proud					
I am proud of how this philanthropic activity is perceived by the public					
When I tell others what the philanthropic activity stands for, I do that with a sense of pride					
Joining in the philanthropic activity makes me proud					
I trust the decisions about the philanthropic activity					
I rely on what I got from the philanthropic activity					
Joining the philanthropic activity is always safe					

Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the statements below.

I feel that …

(Employee Brand Pride Scales) (Employee Brand Trust Scales)	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
… it makes me proud when others notice that I belong to **the corporate brand**					
… t**he corporate brand** stands for values that make me proud					
… I am proud of how **the corporate brand** is perceived by the public					
… when I tell others what **this corporate brand** stands for, I do that with a sense of pride					
… working for **this corporate brand** makes					
… I trust **the corporate's brand**					
… I rely on **the corporate's brand**					
… working for **the corporate brand** is safe					

Other people would characterise me as a colleague, who ...

(Employee Brand Citizenship Behaviour Scales)	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
… takes responsibility for tasks outside of my own area if necessary					
… demonstrate behaviours that are consistent with **the corporate brand's** brand					
... considers the impact on **the corporate brand** before communicating or taking action in any situation					
... shows extra initiative to ensure that my behaviour remains consistent with **the corporate brand's** brand promise					
... passes on knowledge about **the corporate brand** to new employees when given the opportunity					
... are always interested to learn about **the corporate brand** and what it means for me in my role					

Other people would characterise me as a colleague, who ...

(Employee Brand Endorsement Scales)	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
… says positive things about **the corporate brand** to others					
… would recommend **the corporate brand** to someone who seeks my advice					
… enjoys talking about **the corporate brand** to others					
… talks positively about **the corporate brand** to others					

People I work with would characterise me as a colleague who cares about the customers' brand experience and ...

(Employee Brand Development Scales)	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
…actively asks customers for feedback					
…passes on customers' feedback directly to the person in charge					
…actively asks feedback from colleagues					
… communicates problems in customer service directly to the person in charge					
…constantly strives to develop expertise in serving the customers better					
…actively seeks to join in-house training opportunities					
…takes initiative to develop ideas (products, services or processes)					
…makes constructive suggestions on how to improve the customer's brand experience					
To make sure that you are paying attention to this study. Please tick "Strongly Disagree" for this statement					

Overall,

(Overall EBBE Scales)	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
It makes more sense to work for **the corporate brand** than any other firm					
I prefer working for **the corporate brand,** although other organisations may be as good corporates as the corporate brand is					
Even if **the corporate brand** is no different in any way from other organisations, it seems smarter to work for the corporate brand					
It makes sense to work for **the corporate brand** even if another organisation would offer me a higher salary					
If another organisation offered me a more attractive remuneration package, I would be reluctant to quit my job at **the corporate brand**					
It makes sense to work for **the corporate brand** even if I have to work harder and longer than in other organisations					
I would be prepared to give up my job only if another corporate offered me a significantly better deal					

PART 6: Thank you for paying attention to sharing your perception of your corporate brand and the corporate philanthropy activity with us!
This is the final set of questions. They are related to your professional details.

What is your highest-held qualification?

Less than high school

High school graduate

Degree, or degree level equivalent

Higher degree and postgraduate qualifications

Doctorate

Others [   ]

How long have you worked with the corporate brand?

Less than 6 months

6 months – 2 years

over 2 – 5 years

over 5-10 years

over 15-10 years

more than 20 years

What is your position in the corporate brand?

[   ]

Based on your job description/role, please indicate how much of your time approximately involves direct contact with the corporate brand's customers (from 0% to 100%)

	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
Percentage of your time %											
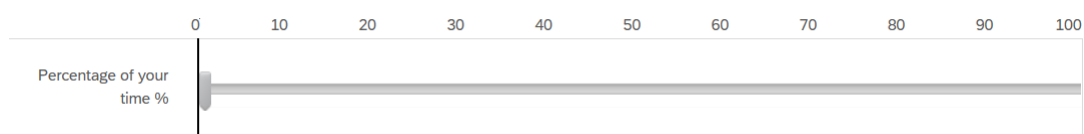
End of Survey
(Respondents will be redirected to the submissions complete page in Prolific)

Appendix G: Scales for the questionnaire constructs

Constructs	Items	Measurement Level	Sources
Brand vision (4 items)	**I believe that ...**	**General**	Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2023
	The values of this corporate brand are really strong		
	Every colleague in this corporate brand shares the values of the organisation		
	Every colleague in this corporate brand vigorously pursues the values of the organisation		
	This corporate brand's vision reflects convincingly the values of the organisation		

brand heritage (4 items)	**I believe that the corporate brand…**	**General**	Pecot et al., 2019
	…knows how to reinvent itself		
	…has a sense of tradition		
	…reinforces and builds on long-held traditions		
	…has a strong link to the past		

Brand knowledge clarity (3 items)	Information about my organisation's brand improved my basic understanding of my job	**General**	King et al., 2012
	I understand what is expected of me because I have information about my organisation's brand		
	I know how to make specific decisions for my job because I have information about my organisation's brand		

Employee- brand congruence	My professional values perfectly match the corporate brand's values	**General**	Chatzipanagiotou

(5 items)	My personal values perfectly match the corporate brand's values		et al., 2023
	I know exactly what the corporate brand stands for		
	I have trouble figuring out what image the corporate brand is trying to achieve (reverse scored)		
	The corporate brand doesn't pretend to be something it isn't		
Employee perceived benefits (15 items)	**Working with the corporate brand, I enjoy a/an…**	**General**	Schlager et al., 2011
	Good mentoring culture		
	Good internal training opportunities		
	Empowering environment		
	Good recognition for individual work		
	Respectful environment		
	Friendly relationships amongst individual co-workers		
	Strong team spirit		
	Competent co-workers		
	Good line-managers		
	"People first" attitude		
	Good variety of work activities		
	Challenging tasks		
	Interesting tasks		
	Good reputation of the company amongst friends		
	Good brand to have on the resume		

Overall support – 'H' factor (5 items)	**Overall, I find that the corporate brand...**	General	Saks, 2006
	... really cares about my well-being		
	... strongly considers my values		
	... cares about my opinion		
	... is willing to help me if I need a special favour		
	... would forgive an honest mistake on my part		

General philanthropic attitude (7 items)	**In general, I believe that...**	General	Schuyt et al., 2010
	We have to leave this world a better place for the next generation.		
	Each generation has to solve its own problems. (reverse-scored)		
	Society is in danger because people are less concerned about each other nowadays.		
	The world needs responsible citizens.		
	The world community relies on international politics and corporations, and that is a good thing. (reverse-scored)		
	I give money to charitable causes, no matter what the government does.		
	Charity and public benefit should be supported by the government, and not by citizens and business corporations. (reverse-scored)		

Construct	Items	Measurement Level	Sources
Management support about CP (7 items)	**Having participated in this philanthropic activity, I find the corporate brand…**	**CP**	King and Grace, 2010
	… values my contribution in this CP activity		
	… strongly considers goals and values of this CP activity		
	… provides help regarding this CP activity		
	… tries to make this CP activity interesting		
	… is willing to help me perform the best I can in this CP activity		
	… understands my problems about this CP activity		
	… acknowledges my effort in this CP activity		
Internal communication of CP (5 items)	**Having participated in this philanthropic activity, I find that the corporate brand...**	**CP**	Partly adapted from King and Grace, 2010
	… communicates well how this philanthropic activity contribute to the brand values		
	… make skill and knowledge development of employees happens as an ongoing process		
	… helps us learn why we should do this activity and not just how we should do this		
	… communicates the importance of my role being the face of our brand		
	… provided helpful information about this philanthropic activity during onboarding		
Leadership in CP (5 items)	**My line manager…**	**CP**	Morhart et al., 2009
	… gets me to look at how my job can link to philanthropic activity		
	… articulates a compelling vision of this CP activity		

	… displays a sense of confidence when talking about this CP activity		
	… specifies the importance of having this activity in our brand		
	… effectively coaches me on CP-related issues		

Brand-CP congruence (2 items)	This corporate brand and this CP activity is a match-up	**CP**	Partly adapted from Deng et al. 2023
	The philanthropic activity is appropriate to the corporate brand's values		
Employee-CP congruence (2 items)	I really support the core values of this CP activity		
	My values are in line with this philanthropic activity		

Perceived Benefits from CP (15 items)	**Having participated in this philanthropic activity, I …**		**CP**	
	Supplemental	… discover something that was missing from my job		Rodell, 2013
		... make up for a lack of something in my job		
		… expose myself to something that isn't a part of my job		
	Functional	… learn new things		Sonnentag and Fritz, 2007
		… seek out intellectual challenges		
		… can do things that challenge me		
		… broaden my horizons		
	Social Recognition	It is socially acceptable to participate in this type of activities		Interviews; Graça and Zwick, 2021
		It is socially encouraged to fight for a purpose		
		People who are involved in these philanthropic activities are seen by society as better than those who are not		
	Guilt Mitigation	I would have felt guilty if I knew I could have donated my time, effort or money to a cause but did not		

		I believe that I have more opportunities than others, at least partially because of where I was born		
		These corporate philanthropic activities alleviate any unease I may have about suffering in the world		
	Overall	I get something out of my involvement		Interviews
		The benefits of my involvement outweigh any costs		

Pride based on CP (5 items)	It makes me proud when others notice that I participate in philanthropic activity	**CP**	Helm et al., 2016
	The philanthropic activity stands for values that make me proud		
	I am proud of how this philanthropic activity is perceived by the public		
	When I tell others what the philanthropic activity stands for, I do that with a sense of pride		
	Joining in the philanthropic activity makes me proud		Rampl and Kenning, 2014
Trust based on CP (3 items)	I trust the decisions about the philanthropic activity		
	I rely on what I got from the philanthropic activity		
	Joining the philanthropic activity is always safe		
Employee brand pride (5 items)	It makes me proud when others notice that I belong to the brand	**General**	Helm et al., 2016
	The brand stands for values that make me proud		
	I am proud of how this brand is perceived by the public		
	When I tell others what this brand stands for, I do that with a sense of pride		
	Working for this corporate brand makes me proud brand		Rampl and Kenning, 2014
Employee brand trust (3 items)	I trust my corporate's brand		
	I rely on my corporate's brand		

	Working for the corporate brand is safe		

	I take responsibility for tasks outside of my own area if necessary, e.g. following up on customer requests etc.	**General**	King and Grace, 2010
Employee brand citizenship behaviour (6 items)	I demonstrate behaviours that are consistent with the brand promise of the organisation I work for.		
	I consider the impact on my organisation's brand before communicating or taking action in any situation.		
	I show extra initiative to ensure that my behaviour remains consistent with the brand promise of the organisation I work for.		
	If given the opportunity, I pass on my knowledge about my organisation's brand to new employees.		
	I am always interested to learn about my organisation's brand and what it means for me in my role.		
Employee brand endorsement (4 items)	I say positive things about the organisation I work for to others		King et al., 2012
	I would recommend the organisation I work for to someone who seeks my advice		
	I enjoy talking about the organisation I work for to others		
	I talk positively about the organisation I work for to others		
Employee brand development (8 items)	**People I work with would characterise me as a colleague, who cares about the customers' brand experience and**…actively asks customers for feedback		Piehler et al., 2016
	…passes on customers' feedback directly to the person in charge		
	…actively asks feedback from colleagues		
	… communicates problems in customer service directly to the person in charge		
	…constantly strives to develop expertise in serving the customers better		
	…actively seeks to join in-house training opportunities		

| | …takes initiative to develop ideas (products, services or processes) | | |
| | …makes constructive suggestions on how to improve the customer's brand experience | | |

Overall EBBE (7 items)	It makes more sense to work for the corporate brand than any other firm	**General**	Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2023
	I prefer working for the corporate brand although other organisations may be as good corporates as the corporate brand is		
	Even if the corporate brand is no different in any way from other organisations, it seems smarter to work for the corporate brand		
	It makes sense to work for the corporate brand even if another organisation would offer me a higher salary		
	If another organisation offered me a more attractive remuneration package I would be reluctant to quit my job at the corporate brand		
	It makes sense to work for the corporate brand even if I have to work harder and longer than in other organisations		
	I would be prepared to give up my job only if another corporation offered me a significantly better deal		

Appendix H: Notes of EFA and CFA Results

EFA was based on a principal component analysis and varimax rotation. The minimum factor loading criteria was set to 0.50. The communality of the scale, which indicates the amount of variance in each dimension, was also assessed to ensure acceptable levels of explanation. According to the EFA performance of employee-perceived brand benefits, B_PB6 was dropped because its factor loading did not meet the 0.5 criteria. B_PB9 was dropped because it did not appear where it should be when checking the rotated component matrix according to the pre-defined model. B_PB14 and B_PB15 were also deleted as they appeared twice in different columns of the rotated component matrix.

After the revision, the researcher set three factors to extract according to the initial structure from the literature. Therefore, the factor solution derived from this analysis yielded three factors for the scale. Although B_PB3 and B_PB4 appeared in groups 1 and 3 simultaneously, we used the initial literature to categorise them. The results show that all communalities were over 0.50. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy (MSA), which indicates the appropriateness of the data for factor analysis, was 0.918. In this regard, data with MSA values above 0.800 are considered appropriate for factor analysis. Next, the results of model fit indices of the re-specified model are shown in the Table below. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) tests a pre-specified model against the data. In this procedure, the standardised regression weights factor loadings were checked, and any item's value should be beyond 0.5. The primary model fit indices were checked until they met the criteria. Therefore, after the EFA and CFA, 11 items were survived to formulate the measurement scales of employee-perceived brand benefits.

Model fit indices of the re-specified model:

Model fit indices	Values	Criteria
CMIN	129.045	The higher the better
CMIN/DF	3.147	Below 2 –ideal; 2 – 5 acceptable
NFI	0.920	Over 0.9
CFI	0.944	Over 0.9
TLI	0.925	Over 0.9
RMSEA	0.091	0.05 to 0.1 – acceptable; Below 0.05 -ideal

Appendix I: Inter-correlations between constructs

Correlations

	BV	BH	BC	EBC	BPB	HF	MS	IC	L	ECPC	BCPC	CPPB	CPPR	BPR	BT	BCTI	BEN	BDE	OBE
BV	1																		
BH	.337**	1																	
BC	.487**	.352**	1																
EBC	.761**	.308**	.560**	1															
BPB	.686**	.356**	.501**	.712**	1														
HF	.673**	.356**	.518**	.710**	.839**	1													
MS	.606**	.337**	.378**	.585**	.642**	.633**	1												
IC	.568**	.325**	.464**	.566**	.600**	.625**	.803**	1											
L	.547**	.228**	.414**	.474**	.508**	.510**	.606**	.721**	1										
ECPC	.368**	.186**	.291**	.405**	.413**	.350**	.469**	.441**	.291**	1									
BCPC	.488**	.267**	.345**	.495**	.430**	.471**	.551**	.544**	.394**	.633**	1								
CPPB	.368**	.235**	.343**	.329**	.402**	.358**	.452**	.446**	.530**	.296**	.322**	1							
CPPR	.372**	.242**	.354**	.376**	.361**	.307**	.509**	.472**	.431**	.571**	.430**	.435**	1						
BPR	.753**	.355**	.548**	.741**	.729**	.704**	.635**	.604**	.564**	.451**	.481**	.418**	.465**	1					
BT	.656**	.413**	.493**	.676**	.728**	.703**	.596**	.611**	.458**	.418**	.461**	.308**	.383**	.754**	1				
BCTI	.524**	.254**	.519**	.622**	.565**	.554**	.558**	.544**	.445**	.487**	.462**	.290**	.491**	.640**	.597**	1			
BEN	.723**	.316**	.529**	.726**	.717**	.709**	.643**	.574**	.514**	.427**	.466**	.404**	.439**	.848**	.733**	.695**	1		
BDE	.357**	.129*	.401**	.371**	.459**	.388**	.357**	.369**	.330**	.365**	.287**	.288**	.309**	.456**	.386**	.476**	.435**	1	
OBE	.615**	.326**	.392**	.572**	.633**	.591**	.445**	.432**	.428**	.282**	.360**	.326**	.301**	.709**	.595**	.454**	.665**	.248**	1

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

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

Appendix J: Robustness checks

Changes in thresholds	Changes in solutions	Changes in solutions (detailed)	Changes in overall consistency	Changes in overall coverage
Consistency cutoff set to 0.90	BBB -> Brand-CP Congruence	IC occurs a core condition	From 0.95 to 0.96	From 0.83 to 0.82
	BAsB -> brand trust	BPB replaces CPPB as a core condition	From 0.93 to 0.94	From 0.88 to 0.87
	BAsB -> brand pride	BPB replaces EBC as a core condition	From 0.92 to 0.93	From 0.91 to 0.90
	BAsB -> CP pride	BC and EBC replaces BPB as core conditions	Keep the same	From 0.92 to 0.91
	BAfB -> Brand citizenship	BT is removed from both parsimounious and intermediate solutions	From 0.93 to 0.96	From 0.93 to 0.85
	BAfB -> Brand development	BPR replaces CPPR as a core condition; One configuration changes from CPPR to BPR*CPPR	From 0.9 to 0.92	From 0.97 to 0.91
	BBB -> brand pride	Core conditions change to HF and BV*IC; A new configuration occur: BV*BH*MS*IC	From 0.92 to 0.93	From 0.87 to 0.86
	BBB -> brand trust	All core conditions change; One original configuration is moved away: BV*MS*IC*L	From 0.93 to 0.96	From 0.87 to .84
	BBB -> brand citizenship	IC occurs a core condition	From 0.94 to 0.96	From 0.84 to 0.82
	BBB -> brand endorsement	All core conditions change; One original configuration is moved away: BV*BH*MS*IC	From 0.95 to 0.97	From 0.85 to 0.83
	BAsB -> brand citizenship	Two core conditions change	From 0.94 to 0.95	From 0.92 to 0.91
	BAsB -> brand endorsement	BPB replaces EBC as a core condition	From 0.95 to 0.96	From 0.88 to 0.86
	BAsB -> brand development	Three core conditions change	From 0.92 to 0.93	From 0.9 to 0.89

Note: This change in threshold does not apply to factors that lead to OBE as it would delete most cases

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