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CHANGING BEHAVIOUR THROUGH BUSINESS-NONPROFIT COLLABORATION?

CONSUMER RESPONSES TO SOCIAL ALLIANCES

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European Journal of Marketing, forthcoming

Purpose – The main goal of this study is to explore consumers' responses to social alliances, a specific type of corporate social marketing in which companies cooperate with non-profit organizations. This paper extends previous studies that suggested that a social marketing effort may be a 'double-edged sword' with regard to companies' marketing objectives.

Design/methodology/approach – This study uses a 2 (social value orientation: prosocials/ proselfs) x 3 (company-cause fit: high/ low fit/ control group) between-subjects experimental design.

Findings – The findings suggest that while prosocials reward companies for social marketing alliances with high fit, proselfs punish the company. This effect can be explained by differences in prosocials' and proselfs' perceptions of the company's corporate abilities, which are influenced by the level of fit.

Research limitations/implications – Future research could give more attention to low-fit alliances, and whether specific fit dimensions play a role. It could also identify ways to overcome negative responses by proselfs in case of high fit.

Practical implications – Companies should be cautious in selecting a social marketing alliance partner as high fit is received favourably by some consumers, but unfavourably by others. While high fit has other benefits for companies, increasing consumers' awareness of strong corporate abilities is important.

Originality/value – Previous studies suggested that different consumer types and a link between the company and the cause may impact the effectiveness of social marketing initiatives. Unlike extant studies, this paper explores the combined and hence moderating influence of both factors, and adds perceived corporate abilities as a mediating factor.

Keywords: corporate social marketing, social alliances, social value orientation, company-cause fit.

Paper type: Research Paper

CHANGING BEHAVIOUR THROUGH BUSINESS-NONPROFIT COLLABORATION?

CONSUMER RESPONSES TO SOCIAL ALLIANCES

Introduction

Attention to the societal dimensions of business activities is considerable and extends to marketing specifically (Jones *et al.*, 2008; Kirchgeorg and Winn, 2006; Peattie, 2001), given its potential of “changing consumer behavior and more generally in influencing attitudes and beliefs” (Jones *et al.*, 2008, p. 127). Social marketing applies marketing knowledge and techniques to socially desirable behaviors and goals (Hastings and Saren, 2003; Maignan and Ferrell, 2004), and is carried out by nonprofit, public and for-profit organizations alike (Bhattacharya and Elsbach, 2002; Kotler and Lee, 2004). While some authors consider social marketing programs as incommensurate with (business) organizations’ self-interest or benefits (Bloom *et al.*, 1997), more recent studies have welcomed social marketing’s potential of bridging “the social and commercial worlds” (Hastings and Saren, 2003, p. 315). In particular, corporate social marketing aims to help society while simultaneously realizing economic benefits for the business (Kotler and Lee, 2004).

In addition to carrying out social marketing programs on their own, companies and nonprofit organizations (NPOs) increasingly seek collaboration (Bloom *et al.*, 1997; Kotler and Lee, 2004), a phenomenon that has been referred to as business-nonprofit partnerships in the management literature, and social alliances in the marketing literature. Such cross-sector collaborations, which will be the context of this study, have emerged in

the past decade to address both societal goals (helping a particular social good) as well as organizational objectives of the partners (Berger *et al.*, 2004; Selsky and Parker, 2005). Social alliances are “close, mutually beneficial, long-term” partnerships which have “moved beyond cause-related marketing and philanthropy” (Berger *et al.*, 2006, p. 129) and are increasingly adopted by companies. For example, Procter & Gamble’s Crest brand entered into an alliance with the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, a NPO serving economically disadvantaged young people. Together they developed an educational oral health program for the NPO’s target population. Building on the knowledge contributed by Crest’s dentists, The Boys & Girls Clubs developed videos, audio-tapes and a lesson plan to teach children good oral care, with the ultimate goal of creating “cavity-free zones” across the nation (Kotler and Lee, 2004).

Social alliances can typically result in a win-win situation for the partnering organizations *and* for individuals. With regard to the organizations, the NPO may get access to resources and knowledge, whereas the company partner may benefit from higher brand awareness and loyalty. Moreover, individual behaviors may be changed through social alliances. For instance, the children who participated in the educational program might start to change their oral care behavior. In addition, behavioral change may also be observed among consumers, who might support Crest (relative to other brands) due to its engagement with the cause, thereby indirectly benefiting the cause, and the company economically. According to Bhattacharya and Elsbach (2002, p. 34), “engaging in word of mouth and individual-level action are also legitimate ways of supporting the focal organization’s social change efforts”. Several authors have called for more research on social alliances to increase the current understanding of this promising form of company-nonprofit collaboration (e.g., Austin, 2000; Berger *et al.*, 2004). In particular, this study

focuses on consumers, who have received little attention in previous studies on social alliances, and aims to contribute to the social marketing literature in several ways.

According to Bhattacharya and Elsbach (2002), companies engaging in social marketing initiatives face the risk that while one customer segment identifies and thus supports the initiative, another segment could be put off. Corporate social marketing may include the company's expectation of realizing economic benefits in addition to social ones. Therefore, to ensure companies' long-term commitment to a cause, insights with regard to the type of consumers for whom social alliances matter seem particularly important to obtain. This study aims to contribute to this understanding by studying consumers' social value orientations (SVO), which are described as relatively stable personality traits influencing individuals' helping behavior and judgments with regard to co-operation and competition (Van Lange *et al.*, 1997). SVO, which differentiates between prosocial and proself oriented individuals, has been studied in the context of donations to social causes (Van Lange *et al.*, 2007a), pro-environmental behaviors (Gärling *et al.*, 2003), including commuting preferences (Van Lange *et al.*, 1998; Van Vugt *et al.*, 1995), and fair treatment of others (van Dolen *et al.*, 2012). Although the importance of studying SVO has also been suggested theoretically for the context of consumers' responses to corporate social initiatives (Du *et al.*, 2010), empirical evidence is largely missing – this is addressed in this study.

Furthermore, the social marketing literature suggests that corporate social marketing initiatives should be closely related to the company's products or services (Kotler and Lee, 2004). According to Kotler and Lee (2004), many companies' products have no direct link with the partnering cause, which might hamper the effectiveness of the alliance in terms of social and marketing objectives. This study aims to contribute to our

current understanding of the importance of the level of congruence between the company and the cause by considering the concept of company-cause fit. Specifically, we investigate under which alliance condition (i.e., high versus low fit) SVO matters, and hence consider fit as potential moderating factor. Taking fit into account seems particularly relevant from a practical perspective. As companies cannot influence consumers' stable personality traits, identifying interrelated factors which companies are able to control, as is the case with fit, may help them to cope with specific personality characteristics.

Finally, to explore whether company factors might account for differences between prosocials and proselfs, this research also considers consumers' perceptions of the company's corporate abilities (i.e., product/service quality and innovativeness) at varying levels of fit. With regard to SVO, corporate abilities may be particularly important for proselfs, who care more about their individual gains or advantages compared to prosocials. Consumers' perceptions regarding the company's corporate abilities may therefore help to predict consumers' overall responses towards companies. This approach responds to calls for a further exploration of potential mediating factors that might influence the (in)effectiveness of communication about social causes (Du *et al.*, 2010).

The structure of this paper is as follows. The following theoretical section comprises a review of the relevant literature on SVO and company-cause fit. Based on this review we develop a conceptual framework that explains the hypothesized contingent impact of SVO on consumers' responses to a company's social alliance activity. Next, this paper reports an empirical investigation of the hypotheses formulated and the results. The paper ends with a discussion of the findings and implications for theory and practice.

Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses Development

Social Value Orientation

SVO has been described as “stable preferences for certain patterns of outcomes for oneself and others” (Van Lange *et al.*, 1997, p. 733). They are predictors for helping behavior, judgments of everyday life incidents of co-operation and competition and they also have an impact on decision-making and judging others (Van Lange *et al.*, 1997). Research on SVO is rooted in interdependence theory, which goes beyond the assumption that human behaviour is primarily motivated by self-interest. It assumes that social interaction is also influenced by broader concerns that relate to others, for instance, if individuals care for equality in outcomes, or if they strive to maximize differences between outcomes for themselves and others (cf. Van Lange *et al.*, 2007a; Van Lange *et al.*, 2007b). In fact, situations where others’ interests and preferences are taken into account are abundant in everyday life, and do often imply a conflict between one’s self-interest and the collective interest, also termed a ‘social dilemma’. For instance, many environmental problems create a conflict between the use of resources for one’s comfort versus preserving the environment for future generations (Gärling *et al.*, 2003). At least some consideration for others’ welfare hence seems indispensable for any society to function well (Van Lange *et al.*, 2007b). Research on SVO has shown that individuals consistently differ with regard to considering others’ concerns in their decisions, and hence to the extent to which they engage in cooperation versus competition.

SVO is based on different (combinations of) orientations, including cooperation, egalitarianism, individualism and competition. In line with previous research, this study identifies two types of SVO, namely prosocials and proselfs. While prosocials are

characterized by a combination of cooperative and egalitarian traits, proselfs are described by individualistic and competitive orientations (De Cremer and Van Lange, 2001; Van Lange *et al.*, 2007b). Prosocials therefore exhibit clear tendencies towards cooperation and equality, whereas proselfs try to maximize “their own and relative gain” (Van Lange *et al.*, 1997, p. 733). Compared to proselfs, prosocials seek greater opportunities to enhance collective and equal outcomes and feel more responsible to further the group’s interests. As prosocials consider the consequences of their choices on others, they are generally more sensitive to social norms (such as social responsibility), which describe how someone should act in interdependence situations. Social responsibility at least partly accounts for behavioral differences between prosocials and proselfs. In the context of the current study we are interested in linking companies’ social behaviors to consumers’ perceptions of consequences for ‘self and other’. Strategic corporate social marketing initiatives offer possibilities to combine social benefits for the community with a company’s economic interests (Kotler and Lee, 2004). In a similar vein, consumers supporting such initiatives may benefit not only the social cause, but potentially also further their self-interests, which makes SVO an interesting concept for this study.

Based on their SVO, individuals interpret identical social dilemmas, which are conflicts between individual and collective interests, differently (Van Lange and Kuhlman, 1994). Depending on which perspective on rationality an individual takes, (non-)cooperative decisions can be rational or intelligent for one person, while they appear irrational or unintelligent for another (Van Lange and Kuhlman, 1994). This is particularly relevant for cognitive processes with regard to judging others and forming impressions (Van Lange *et al.*, 2007a). While prosocials define interdependent situations in terms of win-win solutions, proselfs define an identical situation in terms of solutions

that are best for themselves in the first place. Similarly, while prosocials think of others mainly in terms of morality and hence attribute moral judgments such as good or bad, honest or dishonest, proselfs evaluate others rather in terms of intelligence or power. For proselfs, cooperation is a sign of weakness, signaling less intelligence and power (Van Lange and Kuhlman, 1994). As proselfs strive for independence and dominance in interdependence situations, which helps them to fulfill their individual self-interests and which they hence consider as smart (Beersma and De Dreu, 2005), they regard information about others' strengths or weaknesses as important.

According to Marin and Ruiz (2007), attributions in terms of morality or competence are not only relevant with regard to people, but can describe companies as well. In fact, recent research by Aaker *et al.* (2010) shows that in general, consumers perceive companies as more competent (e.g., intelligent, capable, competitive) than nonprofit organizations (NPOs), which, conversely, score higher on dimensions of warmth (e.g., sincerity, generosity, helpfulness). Furthermore, the authors argue that perceptions of competence signal strong corporate abilities to consumers, which in turn impact purchase intent.

While most research on SVO focuses on experimental social dilemmas and game situations (Van Lange *et al.*, 2007a), researchers have paid little attention to differences between prosocials and proselfs in response to companies and their social activities. However, some empirical studies did consider everyday life situations of prosocial behavior. Gärling *et al.* (2003), for instance, studied individuals' motivations to engage in pro-environmental behaviors. Their findings suggest that prosocials, relative to proselfs, are more likely to be driven by the awareness of potential negative consequences for others, such as the effects of pollution on public health. Furthermore, Van Lange *et al.*

(2007a) show that SVO influences individuals' donation behavior to social causes, with prosocials reporting to donate to a greater variety and a larger number of causes. Different from donation situations, which require active involvement through the commitment of funds by citizens, empirical evidence still needs to confirm whether prosocials' likelihood to be more supportive than proselfs also holds for social alliances at the company level, and hence from a consumer perspective.

Due to prosocials' tendency to enhance collective outcomes and their sensitivity for social norms (relative to proselfs), they will be more positive towards a social alliance, which signals companies' helping behavior and social responsibility towards society (or corporate social responsibility, as it is often called). The concept of consumer-company (C-C) congruence lends support for this proposition, as it states that consumers' reactions to companies' social activities depend on the level of congruence that they perceive between the company and their own personality. The company's engagement in a social alliance may reflect consumers' caring personality characteristics. Past research shows that perceptions of C-C congruence mediate consumers' responses to companies' social activities (Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001). Ahearne *et al.* (2005) assert that whether and to what extent C-C identification occurs depends, among other factors, on whether consumers perceive the company's central and distinctive characteristics as attractive, and whether these characteristics help them to express themselves. As consumers' identification with a company has shown to impact their evaluative and behavioral responses towards organizations positively (Ahearne *et al.*, 2005; Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001), prosocials are expected to respond more favorably towards the company compared to proselfs in a social alliance condition.

H₁: Prosocials respond more favorably towards the company than proselfs in

terms of (a) attitudes, (b) trust, and (c) word of mouth, if the company engages in a social alliance.

On the one hand, prosocials are generally likely to respond more positively to social alliances than proselfs. On the other hand, the literature on SVO gives reason to believe that prosocials' and proselfs' responses to alliances will be sensitive to the level of company-cause fit, due to individuals' differences in interpreting identical situations either more in terms of morality (i.e., prosocials) or of intelligence (i.e., proselfs).

The Moderating Role of Company-Cause Fit

Company-cause fit can be based on several dimensions of fit, such as congruence among the collaborating organizations' missions, cultures, employees, resources or offerings (Berger *et al.*, 2004). In a social alliance context, Berger *et al.* (2004) stress that a high level of fit on several of these dimensions will benefit the alliance partners and is thus important. As a reflection of the literature on corporate social responsibility in general, and cause-related marketing in particular, in which the concept of fit covers multiple dimensions (cf. Becker-Olsen and Hill, 2006; Berger *et al.*, 2004; Gourville and Rangan, 2004; Menon and Kahn, 2003; Nan and Heo, 2007), the current study likewise adopts a broad approach and defines fit as perceived overall congruence between the company and the cause. This definition builds on the literature on cause-brand fit, on which the current study draws as well, and which describes fit as "the degree of similarity or compatibility that consumers perceive exists between the cause and the brand" (Lafferty, 2007, p. 448).

Many studies on cause-brand fit draw on congruence or consistency theory (e.g.,

Barone *et al.*, 2007; Lafferty *et al.*, 2004) to explain why consumers are likely to respond more favorably to high-fit cause-brand alliances compared to low-fit alliances (Becker-Olsen and Hill, 2006). Congruence theory states that relatedness or similarity influences storage in memory and retrieval of information (Cornwell *et al.*, 2005; Lafferty, 2007). As people prefer to establish and maintain harmony in their thoughts, feelings and behaviors, they strive for uniformity among cognitive elements (Jagre *et al.*, 2001; Lafferty *et al.*, 2004). Despite strong conceptual and empirical support for the importance of high-fit alliances (e.g., Becker-Olsen and Hill, 2006; Berger *et al.*, 2004), recent empirical research, which examined the effects of fit in more detail, finds only partial or even no support at all for the importance of high fit (e.g., Lafferty, 2007). Menon and Kahn (2003), for instance, who studied the importance of brand-cause fit for two different types of corporate social initiatives, found that lower fit resulted in more favorable consumer perceptions when the initiative primarily focused on the social issue. For initiatives that focused on the corporate brand, however, high fit proved to evoke more positive responses. The authors (p. 318) explained consumers' favorable responses to low-fit initiatives from a "lack of vested self-interest" (i.e., firm-serving motivations), which might increase the credibility of the campaign. Other researchers also identified boundary conditions for the effect of fit, suggesting that the impact of fit may depend on other factors and that high fit might not matter for all individuals equally (e.g., Barone *et al.*, 2007; Nan and Heo, 2007).

Prosocials and proselves are likely to interpret information regarding a company's engagement in a social alliance differently, depending on the perspective taken and the information available. As SVO influences the kind of information that individuals search, encode, retrieve and share (De Dreu *et al.*, 2008), prosocials are more inclined to focus on

cues signaling whether a company behaves morally and honest. Proselfs, on the other hand, will search for cues regarding a company's rational and intelligent intentions and behaviors. In the context of social alliances, this study poses that information about the company's social engagement indicates morality information, describing the company's good intentions towards society. Information about the level of fit, on the other hand, informs consumers about the company's rationality and intelligence, indicating to consumers the company's motivations behind such social engagement (cf. Ellen *et al.*, 2006).

With regard to fit, Rifon *et al.* (2004), who studied consumers' perceptions of companies' motivations to engage in social issues, report that high fit triggers more altruistic attributions by consumers, leading to higher firm credibility. Their study shows that altruism and firm credibility in turn favorably influence consumers' attitudes towards the company. Although Rifon *et al.* (2004) acknowledge that consumers may also attribute firm-serving motivations, they argue that consumers may downplay such profit-motivated goals in high-fit initiatives. Low fit, on the other hand, triggers more firm-serving motivations, which diminish potential altruistic beliefs.

Ellen *et al.* (2006) report similar results from a study on consumers' attributions elicited by companies' social activities in more detail. While high fit simultaneously evokes altruistic motivations (e.g., the moral obligation to give back to the community) and strategic firm motives (i.e., typical business motives), low fit prompts egoistic attributions by consumers. An example of companies' egoistic motivations would be that a company takes advantage of an NPO to help its own business (cf. Ellen *et al.*, 2006), which reflects its non-cooperativeness with regard to the NPO. More specifically, Van Lange and Liebrand (1991b) demonstrate that impressions about others' morality (e.g.,

their sincere intentions towards others) impact individuals' expectations of their cooperative behaviors, for instance in social dilemma situations. The egoistic/self-serving attributions triggered by low fit, however, diminish a company's credibility with regard to its sincerity towards the partnering cause (cf. Bigné-Alcañiz *et al.*, 2009), and will hence decrease consumers' perceptions of the company's cooperative intentions towards the NPO. High fit, on the other hand, primarily signals companies' altruistic motivations (Bigné-Alcañiz *et al.*, 2009), which consumers use to draw inferences regarding a company's sincere and honest intentions towards a cause (Bigné Alcañiz *et al.*, 2010a). By contributing resources and capabilities that are closely related to companies' core business (i.e., high fit), companies share strategically important assets and capabilities with their nonprofit partner. Such a willingness requires high levels of trust; it also means that the company must abandon dominance, which indicates cooperativeness.

As morality is particularly important for prosocials, and they perceive cooperativeness as more moral than non-cooperativeness (Van Lange and Kuhlman, 1994), the company's altruistic or win-win motives attributed to high fit will lead to positive responses towards the company. As consumers associate low fit with a company's egoistic motivations, the importance that prosocials assign to morality and sincerity will cause less favorable responses towards the company compared to high fit. The opposite will be true for proselves. As reading about a company's social initiative may evoke the question among proselves whether the company has made a rational or intelligent decision to engage in a social alliance, they will tend to focus mainly on the aspect of fit. As stated earlier, consumers use information about fit as a signal for companies' altruistic versus self-centered motives to engage in social alliances. As non-cooperativeness, that is low fit, signals more independence and power, and thus

intelligence to proselves (Beersma and De Dreu, 2005; Van Lange and Kuhlman, 1994:), they will prefer a low-fit alliance to high fit. Put differently, and drawing on the concept of C-C congruence, proselves are more likely to identify with a company if they perceive that the company's decisions resemble their own way of thinking and acting (cf. Ahearne *et al.*, 2005). As proselves strive for dominance in interdependent relationships, the company's non-cooperativeness, signaled by low-fit alliances, mirrors their personal preference for strategies that help them to realize individual gains, and which they hence consider as an intelligent choice. Similarly, the company's sincere commitment to cooperation, signaled by high-fit alliances, will be evaluated as unintelligent decision by proselves, as the company hands in some control by giving the NPO access to its core business related resources and capabilities. As proselves will find it difficult do identify with the company's decision to partner with a high-fit cause, they are expected to punish the company in terms of evaluations and behavioral intentions. Perceived value incongruence between an individual and an organization has shown to translate into negative word of mouth (Bhattacharya and Elsbach, 2002) and negative perceptions of the organization (Maignan and Ferrell, 2004).

H₂: Company-cause fit interacts with individuals' SVO in such a way that high fit leads to more favorable responses by prosocials compared to proselves, in terms of (1) attitude towards the company, (2) trust in the company, and (3) word of mouth.

The Mediating Effect of Corporate Abilities

Corporate ability (CA) perceptions describe consumers' beliefs about the company's capabilities to produce and deliver high-quality products and services (Brown and Dacin, 1997). In line with previous studies on companies' social activities (cf. Brown

and Dacin, 1997; Luo and Bhattacharya, 2006), this study considers two specific CAs, namely product quality and innovativeness capability, which have shown to impact consumers' responses to companies that engage in social causes. While perceived product quality describes consumers' overall evaluation of product/service superiority or excellence (Zeithaml, 1988), innovativeness denotes a company's ability to "explore new market possibilities in terms of developing new products" (Luo and Bhattacharya, 2006, p. 6).

Building on the literature on SVO and fit, this study asserts that consumers' perceptions of quality and innovativeness may explain why prosocials will reward the company if fit is high, while proselves will punish the firm. Whereas previous studies either treat consumers' associations with regard to companies' CA and their social activities as independent constructs (Brown and Dacin, 1997; Marin and Ruiz, 2007), or focus on the moderating role of CAs (Luo and Bhattacharya, 2006), this study proposes a mediating role. This study hence draws on Luo and Bhattacharya (2006) who propose that information about a company's social activity may influence and thus explain consumers' CA perceptions. Different from previous studies, this research does not make the focal company's CAs salient or manipulate them. Consumers will therefore use their knowledge about the social alliance activity and the level of company-cause fit in particular to draw inferences regarding the company's product quality and innovativeness.

With regard to product quality, Brown and Dacin (1997) report that consumers' perceptions of a company's social initiatives influence their overall evaluation of the company and subsequently of its products. These results imply that consumers will use information regarding a company's social alliance activity to judge its offerings. In particular, the authors conclude that negative associations regarding a company's social

engagement (e.g., low financial contribution to social causes) can harm the company in terms of unfavorable product evaluations, while positive associations impact consumers' product evaluations favorably. In line with these findings, our study expects proselves to evaluate high fit as negative social alliance information. It is argued that the company's cooperativeness towards the NPO is considered a weakness by proselves and does not comply with how they would act in a comparable situation. Building on Brown and Dacin (1997), such negative social alliance associations will cause negative evaluations of the company's product/service quality. To prosocials, on the other hand, the company's cooperativeness towards the NPO, signaled by high fit, will be seen as desirable behavior, and hence evaluated as positive social alliance information. Following Brown and Dacin (1997), such positive associations are likely to have a favorable impact on prosocials' perceptions of the focal company's product/service quality.

With regard to innovativeness, this study asserts that prosocials and proselves differ in their interpretations concerning what kind of behaviors they consider innovative, which would explain why high-fit alliances signal high corporate innovativeness to prosocials but not to proselves. Innovative or creative individuals are more likely to be proself-oriented, which might explain why innovative people usually perform better in work-related tasks than in handling relationships (Helson, 1996). By contrast, consensus and harmony, which is particularly valued by prosocials, can hamper creativity and innovation, according to the literature. For instance, some creative tasks, such as brainstorming, necessitate divergence rather than convergence in performance, which complies with proselves' values of independence and personal success rather than with prosocials' values of harmony and inclusiveness (Beersma and De Dreu, 2005). Therefore, a climate of competition, disagreement and independence stimulates

innovation, and is hence more likely to be found among proselfs (Beersma and De Dreu, 2005). However, not only proselfs are innovative. Rather, whereas prosocials' innovativeness becomes visible in designing strategies for cooperation, which are necessary to promote integrative win-win agreements, proselfs appear to be relatively more innovative with regard to competition or conflict strategies, which promote their individual advantage (De Dreu and Nijstad, 2008). In line with these insights, prosocials will evaluate the cooperation strategy signaled by high-fit alliances as innovative, whereas proselfs will perceive that the climate of consensus and dependence on the nonprofit partner signaled by high-fit will impede the company's innovativeness capabilities.

H₃: Company-cause fit interacts with individuals' SVO in such a way that prosocials evaluate the focal company's corporate abilities (i.e., product/service quality and innovativeness) more favorable than proselfs when fit is high.

Marketing studies suggests that consumers use social alliance associations, as well as performance-related CA associations, to form overall evaluations of the company in terms of attitude or trust (Marin and Ruiz, 2007; Sen and Bhattacharya, 2001). Marin and Ruiz's (2007) empirical study demonstrates that perceived CA influences consumers' corporate evaluations directly, whereas perceptions of C-C congruence mediate the impact of associations related to a company's social activities. Other studies have also established a direct link between consumers' CA associations and their attitudes towards the company (Brown and Dacin, 1997) and the perceived attractiveness of the brand (Bigne-Alcaniz et al., 2010b). Furthermore, Luo and Bhattacharya (2006) suggest that companies that engage in social activities, but those with low corporate abilities generate lower levels of customer satisfaction, which in turn may even hurt companies.

In particular, past marketing research has established a link between perceived product quality or innovativeness capabilities and market value. Luo and Bhattacharya (2006) report that companies with low innovativeness capability may generate a negative market value from their engagement in social initiatives due to lower customer satisfaction levels. Although they found no penalizing effect for low product quality, results showed that companies with high product quality can benefit from their involvement with social causes (Luo and Bhattacharya, 2006). Drawing on Luo and Bhattacharya (2006), Vlachos *et al.* (2009) identified consumer trust as an important factor that (partially) mediates the impact of service quality perceptions on consumers' intentions to recommend the company. In line with these findings, positive (negative) perceptions of product/service quality and innovativeness will lead to favorable (unfavorable) responses towards companies in terms of evaluative and behavioral consumer responses.

H₄: Consumers' perceptions of the company's corporate abilities (i.e., product/service quality and innovativeness) mediate the interaction between SVO and fit on consumers' responses towards the company in terms of a) attitudes, b) trust, and c) word of mouth.

Method

We framed the data collection method as a field experiment, where data is collected in a realistic setting rather than in a laboratory. Field experiments benefit from the precision of measurement as independent variables are manipulated and can hence be controlled (Scandura and Williams, 2000). While external validity is generally put at risk by the use of experimental methods, which is also a caveat regarding the current study, we

tried to improve realism in several ways: first, we collected data among real consumers rather than among student samples that are common in experimental studies (Winer, 1999). Second, we based the stimuli on a real press release about a social alliance, which we adapted to fit the aims of our study. Third, SVO, the main independent variable of our study, was measured instead of manipulated.

Participants and Procedure

Participants were recruited at public places (airport, train station, restaurant) in the Netherlands to assure a large variety of people with different demographic and personal characteristics. A total of 216 participants completed the questionnaire. Respondents, who were assigned randomly to one of three conditions (high fit, low fit, control group), first completed a games measure to determine their SVO (see below). Subsequently, they read one of three press articles and filled out the questionnaire. 29 participants whose SVO could not be determined based on their responses to the games measure were excluded, leaving 187 respondents for the analyses. From these 187 respondents 58% were male and 42% female (three respondents did not answer this question). With regard to participants' age, 53% of the respondents were between 18 to 25 years old, followed by 26 to 35 year-olds (19%), 36 to 45 year-olds (12%) and 46-55 year-olds (10%). Those aged 56 to 65-plus accounted for 6%.

Measures

Independent variables. This study includes a 2 (prosocials/proselfs) x 3 (high fit/low fit/control group) factorial design. Respondents of the control group, whose SVO was assessed as well, were not informed about the company's social engagement. The

design includes a defined minimum of 25 respondents for each of the six cells.

Social Value Orientation. Participants' SVO was assessed by their responses to a games measure, which has been used extensively in controlled experimental settings (e.g., De Bruin and Van Lange, 2000; Declerck and Bogaert, 2008; Van Lange and Kuhlman, 1994), as well as in real world settings (e.g., Gärling *et al.*, 2003; Van Lange *et al.*, 2007a). The games measure (see Appendix for an explanation), which is adopted from Van Lange *et al.* (1997), is known for its reliability of results and its internal validity (cf. Declerck and Bogaert, 2008). After completing the games measure, respondents were classified as either prosocial, individualist or competitor, based on the choices they had made during the game. 29 respondents could not be classified and were excluded from further analyses. Consistent with previous research, individualists and competitors were combined in one single group called 'proselfs' (cf. De Cremer and Van Lange, 2001; Van Lange and Liebrand, 1991a), as the group of competitors is usually relatively small (only 12 individuals in the current study). Together, individualists and competitors form a group of basically self-interested individuals (Van Lange and Liebrand, 1991a). From the 187 respondents who could be classified and were hence included in further analyses, 96 were prosocial (51%) and 91 proself (49%). These two categories of SVO were used for further analyses. Prosocials and proselfs were distributed almost evenly across the three conditions: the high-fit condition includes 28 prosocials and 31 proselfs, the low-fit condition 36 prosocials and 27 proselfs, and the control group 32 prosocials and 33 proselfs.

Company-cause fit was manipulated by varying two NPOs in fictitious press articles, whereas the company was held constant across the three conditions. These articles informed respondents about the launch of an alliance between a NPO and the

focal company, an existing provider of telephone and internet services. In a pretest two coders evaluated the actual level of fit between the company and both NPOs based on nine dimensions of fit identified by Berger *et al.* (2004). The alliance between the focal company and the first NPO, a telephone and internet helpline for children, was identified as high fit, scoring high on several of these dimensions. For example: both organizations share the central idea of inclusion (of society), indicating a fit between the organizations' missions. Almost no corresponding matches were found, however, between the company and the second NPO, an organization caring for the conservation of nature, which consequently served as the low-fit alliance partner. For instance, the nonprofit's mission with a focus on nature did not match with the company's social mission. Differences between both alliances were stressed in the fictitious press articles to ensure that the manipulation would be successful. For instance, in the high-fit condition, the director of the company mentioned that it was a logical choice for them to support the NPO, as their core business related activities (i.e., providing phone and internet services) are similar and complementary. In the low-fit condition, however, the director stated that it might not be the most logical choice to support the NPO, as there is no clear link between their activities.

The control group was assigned a general press release about the focal company, mentioning no alliance with an NPO at all. 59 out of 187 respondents were assigned to the high-fit condition, 63 to the low-fit condition and 65 to the control group.

Dependent variables.

Evaluative responses. Attitude towards the company (4 items, Cronbach's Alpha=0.82 after deletion of one item) and trust (4 items, Alpha=0.94) are used to measure evaluative consumer responses. Social alliance activities can build trust (cf.

Marin and Ruiz, 2007; Vaaland *et al.*, 2008) and evoke positive attitudes towards companies among consumers, which are also influenced by the level of perceived fit (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004). Items used in the questionnaire were based on previous research and adapted/extended for the context of our study. Attitude items (cf. Liu *et al.*, 2010) were phrased as “In general my impressions of [the company] are positive. Trust items (cf. Sung *et al.*, 2010; Massey and Kyriazis, 2007) were phrased as “I can count on [the company]”, and “[The company] appears trustworthy”. Consumers’ perceptions of the company’s corporate abilities (i.e., product/service quality and innovativeness) were based on Marin and Ruiz (2007) and extended for the context of our study. Quality items (3 items, Alpha= 0.79) were phrased as “[The company] offers products/services of high quality”, and “...offers good value for money”; and innovativeness items (3 items, Alpha=0.76) as “[The company] adapts quickly to a changing environment”, and “...is an innovative company”. Items of one construct were averaged into a single measure.

Behavioral intentions. Word of mouth (3 items, Alpha=0.91) was used to measure consumers’ behavioral intentions toward the company. According to Bhattacharya and Sen (2004), word of mouth (i.e., consumers’ willingness to talk favorably about the company to others) can be seen as one of the key behavioral outcomes of a company’s engagement with a social cause. This behavior can be explained by consumers’ identification with a company that engages in social activities. Word-of-mouth items (cf. Zeithaml *et al.*, 1996) were phrased as “I will encourage others to purchase the products and services of [the company]” and “I will say positive things about [the company] to others”.

All items in the questionnaire were measured on a 7-point scale, anchored by “totally agree” and “totally disagree”, except for one item of attitude, which was anchored

by the terms "extremely positive" and "extremely negative".

Results

In order to assess the fit manipulation, participants evaluated the fit between the two allied organizations presented to them (3 items averaged into a single measure, $\alpha=0.87$). An exemplary item is "The link between the core business of [the company] and [the nonprofit] is clear to me". Results of a one-way ANOVA show that the manipulation is successful, as the company's cooperation with the well-fitting nonprofit resulted in more favorable responses than an alliance with the low-fit NPO ($M_{\text{high fit}}=4.94$, $M_{\text{low fit}}=3.92$, $F=12.70$, $p=0.00$).

Hypothesis 1 proposes that in an alliance condition prosocials will respond more favorably towards the company than proselves, relative to the control condition. To test for H_1 , we conducted several two-way analyses of variance (ANOVA), followed by planned contrasts (cf. Laufer *et al.*, 2010; Wagner *et al.*, 2009), to compare the effect of SVO between the alliance condition (i.e., high and low fit combined) and the control group. A significant interaction effect was found for attitudes ($F=4.31$, $p<0.04$), but not for trust ($F=2.79$, $p=0.10$) or word of mouth ($F=2.68$, $p=0.10$). No main effects were detected for the independent variables SVO and alliance condition (i.e., alliance versus no alliance). Planned contrasts revealed significant differences between prosocials and proselves for all three dependent variables for the alliance condition, with prosocials responding more favorably towards the alliance than proselves. As expected, the control condition did not show significant differences between prosocials and proselves. These findings lend full support for H_1 (see Table I).

Table I here.

Hypothesis 2 proposed that the effect of SVO would be moderated by company-cause fit. A series of two-way ANOVAs and subsequent planned contrasts were conducted to test this hypothesis. Analyses for the dependent measures attitude ($F=3.54$, $p<0.05$) and trust ($F=3.10$, $p<0.05$), but not word of mouth ($F=1.98$, $p>0.10$) result in significant interaction effects between fit-condition and SVO. Therefore, prosocials and proselfs differ significantly across different fit conditions with regard to the evaluative measures attitude and trust, but not with regard to the behavioral response measure used in this study (i.e., word of mouth) (see Figures 1, 2 and 3). While no main effects are found for fit, for SVO a significant main effect emerges for trust ($F=4.53$; $p=0.04$), meaning that overall, prosocials trust the focal company more than proselfs. No significant main effects for SVO was found, however, for attitudes or word of mouth. As the interaction between SVO and fit was non-significant for word of mouth, we conducted multiple regression analysis to detect potential indirect effects. Attitude ($B=0.36$, $Beta=0.32$, $t=3.98$, $p=0.00$) and trust ($B=0.56$, $Beta=0.52$, $t=6.62$, $p=0.00$), which accounted for 63% of the variation ($R^2=0.63$, adjusted $R^2=0.63$, $F=155.32$, $p=0.00$), significantly impacted word of mouth, suggesting that consumers' recommendation intentions may be influenced indirectly.

Figures 1, 2, and 3 here.

Planned contrasts were conducted in a next step to test whether or not the nature of the observed interaction effects indeed supports H_2 . For the high-fit condition, significant differences between prosocials and proselfs emerge for attitude, trust, and word of mouth (see Table II). For the low-fit condition as well as for the control group no significant differences were found between prosocials and proselfs with regard to attitude, trust, or word of mouth (Table II). These findings lend support for H_2 , as prosocials

respond more favorably towards the company in terms of evaluative and behavioral measures than proselves in a high-fit condition, whereas SVO does not seem to matter in the low-fit or control condition.

Table II here.

Hypothesis 3 suggests that the interaction between SVO and fit causes prosocials to evaluate the company's corporate abilities (in terms of product/service quality and innovativeness) more favorably than proselves when fit is high. In the case of low fit, no significant differences were expected based on consumers' SVO. The tests for H_3 included two two-way ANOVAs (interaction effect between fit and SVO), with quality and innovativeness serving as dependent variables, and subsequent planned contrasts. The results show significant interaction effects for both quality ($F=3.65$, $p<0.05$) and innovativeness ($F=5.72$, $p<0.01$) perceptions. No significant main effects were detected. The results of the planned contrasts demonstrate that in a high-fit condition, prosocials evaluate the focal company's product/service quality and its innovativeness capabilities significantly higher than proselves, lending support for H_3 (Table III). No significant differences were detected in the low-fit condition. In line with the results of past research these results suggest that consumers' quality and innovativeness judgments may mediate their responses towards the company, which is tested in the next step.

Table III here.

Hypothesis 4 suggests that the interaction between SVO and fit (i.e., independent variables) on evaluative and behavioral consumers responses (i.e., dependent variables) will be mediated by perceptions of a company's corporate abilities (i.e., proposed mediators). In line with Baron and Kenny (1986), additional analyses were conducted to test for mediation effects. The first step advocated by Baron and Kenny (1986) was met

for the dependent variables attitude and trust, as our two-way ANOVA's conducted earlier to test H₂ were significant for attitude (F=3.54, p<0.05) and trust (F=3.10, p<0.05), but not for word of mouth (F=1.98, P>0.10). Word of mouth was hence not considered in the next steps. The second criterion by Baron and Kenny (1986) requires a significant effect of the independent variables on the mediator, which has been confirmed by testing H₃, as the interaction effect of SVO and fit was significant for quality (F=3.65, p<0.05) and innovativeness (F=5.72, p<0.01). We then ran two-way ANCOVA's and included first quality and then innovativeness as covariates. Our analyses showed significant results for these covariates for attitude (quality: F=119.55, p<0.001; innovativeness: F=32.28, p<0.001) and trust (quality: F=97.50, p<0.001; innovativeness: F=30.08, p<0.001). The previously significant interaction effects for attitude and trust were co-varied out by quality and innovativeness (Table IV). We hence conclude that quality and innovativeness fully mediate the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent measures attitude and trust, lending support for H₄ with regard to the evaluative measures used in this study, but not for word of mouth.

Table IV here.

Discussion and Conclusions

Corporate social marketing, which is often carried out in collaboration with NPOs, has been identified as an important means of helping society while at the same time realizing economic benefits for business (Kotler and Lee, 2004). These so-called 'social alliances' between companies and NPOs aim at changing the target population's behavior to improve the social good. Simultaneously, consumers who support the social cause may change their beliefs, attitudes and behaviors towards the company as well, in

an attempt to help the cause indirectly by supporting the company's business. However, as indicated by extant research, consumers may not be equally supportive of a company's social marketing effort (Bhattacharya and Elsbach, 2002), which may threaten the company's commitment towards the cause and hence the success of the social alliance. Similarly, it has been suggested that the effectiveness of corporate social marketing initiatives also depends on the level of fit or congruence between the company's offerings and the social cause (Kotler and Lee, 2004). To extend previous research in this field, this study explored the combined and hence moderating influence of consumers' personality traits (namely, their social value orientations) and the level of company-cause fit. In addition, perceptions regarding the company's corporate abilities were considered. The main purpose of this study was to understand for which type of consumer (i.e., prosocials or proselfs) social alliances are more important, under which alliance condition (i.e., high or low company-cause fit), and whether consumers' perceptions of the company's corporate abilities (i.e., quality and innovativeness) may account for differences. By doing so, this study responds to calls for more research on social alliances more generally, and particularly with regard to consumers' responses towards this promising form of business-nonprofit collaboration (Austin, 2000; Berger *et al.*, 2004).

With regard to the type of consumer, overall, the results of this empirical study suggest that prosocials seem to be more sensitive to social alliances than proselfs, as they reward the company in terms of favorable evaluations (attitudes, trust) and behavioral intentions (word of mouth) more than proselfs. However, taking a closer look, evidence for the effect of SVO was only found in cases with a high level of fit or congruence between the company and the cause, indicating that SVO matters only under certain alliance conditions. In fact, while prosocials reward companies for high-fit social

alliances, proselves even seem to punish them, which poses a dilemma for companies when choosing a suitable cause to form a social marketing alliance. This finding is particularly intriguing given that the frequently adopted congruence theory emphasizes the importance of high-fit alliances in order to evoke favorable consumer responses.

Seemingly, consistency among one's thoughts and feelings, as suggested by congruence theory, is not established equally for all individuals. Information that may be consistent with the thoughts and feelings of prosocials might be inconsistent with proselves' values and ideas, and hence cause different evaluations and behaviors. Furthermore, the findings suggest that not only proselves, but also prosocials do not seem to care about companies' engagement in low-fit alliances, or no social alliance at all, as prosocials and proselves do not differ in their responses towards the company in both the low-fit and the control conditions. Therefore, considering SVO, low-fit social marketing alliances seem to neither help nor hurt the company.

Our investigation of factors that might explain these effects suggests that individuals' perceptions of a company's corporate abilities account for differences between prosocials and proselves. In particular, perceptions of high fit prompt inferences of favorable product/service quality and innovativeness capabilities among prosocials, whereas the opposite occurs for proselves. To proselves, high-fit alliances seem to be a negative indication of the company's ability to deliver high quality and innovation. The fact that the low-fit condition did not reveal such differences in SVO supports our reasoning that the notion of a high-fit alliance signals different meanings to prosocials and proselves. This finding is also supported by extant SVO research which states that prosocials and proselves interpret identical situations differently (Van Lange and Kuhlman, 1994). Finally, perceptions of quality and innovativeness seem to mediate consumers'

trust in and attitude toward the company, which consequently seem to impact their intentions to recommend the company to others.

This study extends research which suggested that a social marketing effort may be a “double-edged sword”, as it may result in identification with and thus support for the cause among one group of individuals, while promoting disidentification among another (Bhattacharya and Elsbach, 2002, p. 34). Our empirical investigation, which considered consumers’ social value orientation by investigating differences between prosocials and proselfs, reflects this notion. It is remarkable that prosocials and proselfs seem to infer different personal consequences (i.e., in terms of corporate abilities) from a company’s decision to support high-fit causes. In particular, the results of our study suggest that the level of fit signals different messages to prosocials and proselfs. Prosocials value cooperativeness (Van Lange *et al.*, 1997), a notion that seems to be reflected by high-fit alliances, and they appear to believe that high-fit alliances can help companies to strengthen their corporate abilities. Proselfs, on the other hand, seem to regard cooperativeness as weak and an unintelligent business decision (cf. Van Lange and Kuhlman, 1994). They thus do not seem to trust the company’s ability to produce innovative and high quality products and services if they are aware of a high-fit alliance.

This study also contributes to the literature on SVO by responding to calls for research that is not restricted to the outcomes of controlled experimental games, but uses SVO to predict behaviors of societal interest as well (Van Lange *et al.*, 2007a). This study extends past investigations which demonstrate the importance of considering SVO in an attempt to explain individuals’ divergent behaviors with regard to charitable donations and pro-environmental acts (Gärling *et al.*, 2003; Van Lange *et al.*, 2007a). While in these studies individuals were requested to make choices that could either benefit or harm

themselves directly (e.g., donating money versus saving for oneself), consumers' responses in the current study reflect their opinions about decisions taken by the company, which could at most impact them personally in an indirect way.

Managerial Implications

While existing literature on corporate social marketing suggests that companies should affiliate themselves to causes that are closely related to the company's offerings (Kotler and Lee, 2004), companies face a dilemma if they decide to engage in a high-fit alliance. Our results hence suggest that managers should be cautious when selecting a social marketing alliance partner. As consumers seem to infer corporate abilities from information about the level of fit, and social alliance activities more generally, managers should make sure that consumers are not only aware of the company's social alliance, but also of its strong corporate abilities. Apparently, and also in line with past research, favorable beliefs about the company's social activities *and* its corporate abilities are crucial for consumers to form positive associations (cf. Brown and Dacin, 1997).

Irrespective of individuals' SVO, it should be noted that the potential benefits or drawbacks of high fit go beyond consumers' responses towards the company and relate to a successful collaboration among the alliance partners more broadly, as well as to the overall social objectives of the alliance (cf. Kotler and Lee, 2004). A high level of congruence among the organizations' missions or cultures, for instance, is likely to reduce potential conflicts of interest or power (Berger *et al.*, 2004), and might thus ensure a more fruitful and effective collaboration.

Considering the potential benefits of high-fit social marketing alliances, managers should identify ways to entice proselves to engage in prosocial behaviors, that is, behaviors

directed towards cooperative, win-win outcomes, whereby proselfs support the company's social marketing initiative. Although SVO is largely considered a dispositional trait, situational characteristics, such as incentives or payment contingent on collective performance, can promote prosocial behavior among proselfs (Beersma and De Dreu, 2005). Cooperation might become a rational choice for proselfs if self-interest is made salient at the collective level (De Cremer and Van Vugt, 1999).

Future research could hence identify whether priming consumers' individual self-interest in high-fit social marketing initiatives might serve as a situational factor that potentially stimulates proselfs to support these activities. Bhattacharya et al., (2009) theorized that consumers may derive personal benefits from companies' social initiatives, for instance in the form of increased well-being or health. Moreover, Green and Peloza (2011) empirically verified that consumers can derive functional benefits from companies' social initiatives, depending on the type of activity. As proselfs are particularly sensitive to self-interest, identifying ways to create value for the nonprofit partner, the company *and* the consumer might help to overcome negative responses by proselfs. While this notion certainly requires empirical investigation, it is possible that the strategic nature of social alliances is particularly suitable to effectuate such win-win-win situations.

Limitations and Future Research

Due to the experimental nature of our empirical study, there are limitations to the generalizability and external validity of our findings. To assess whether or not the results are replicable in other settings, research could be extended to companies from other industries and to other (nonprofit) causes than the two used in the present study. In

addition, combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies may help to understand the underlying processes of our findings (Deshpande, 1983), and to generate new insights with regard to proselves, such as how to transform them into supporters of high-fit social alliances. Given the broad population of this study (i.e., adults living in the Netherlands), a convenience sample was employed, which is another factor that might impact the generalizability of our findings. Our results should hence be considered with caution. On the other hand, we believe that our approach to collect data among real consumers, rather than using student samples that are common in experimental studies, increases the generalizability of our results.

While this study focuses primarily on a high-fit condition, researchers could also give some further attention to social marketing alliances with a low fit, particularly since these appear to hardly differ from a situation in which the company had no social alliance at all. A more detailed investigation of why particular (types of) consumers value high-fit only, and whether specific fit dimensions are crucial in this regard, could add further insight to the findings of the present study.

Furthermore, while this research considered word of mouth to capture consumers' behavioral intentions in their responses to corporate social marketing initiatives, it might be interesting for future studies to include buying and/or switching intentions as well. According to Bhattacharya and Sen (2004), external outcomes in response to companies' social initiatives (e.g., buying, switching) are generally weaker and more difficult to detect compared to consumers' internal outcomes (e.g., attitude, trust). Moreover, in the context of the current study, telecommunication services, consumers' experienced switching costs, such as the perceived risk of changing providers (cf. Lee and Cunningham, 2001), might influence their willingness to switch, which might make it

difficult to detect the potential impact of social alliances or fit. Nevertheless, whether prosocials and proselfs differ in their willingness to purchase a company's products, or to switch providers in their responses to social alliances, might be an interesting topic to explore, also considering potential differences across industries and products.

With regard to different industries and products/services, future studies may also consider consumers' involvement with the product or brand, which has been identified as a determinant of consumers' willingness to talk about the company, either favorably or unfavorably (Van Wangenheim, 2005). Involvement refers to consumers' perceived relevance of a specific product or category, and may differ across individual consumers, but also across product categories more generally (Sichtmann and Stingel, 2007). While the current study did not consider individual consumers' product involvement, cable services (such as internet, fixed line networks and television) as a product category is regarded as rather 'undifferentiable', given that the purchase decision is primarily driven by price, similar to most low-involvement products (Watson et al., 2002).

Other factors similar to product involvement that might be interesting to consider in related studies include consumers' attitudes towards the company and the social cause. Both factors, the reputation of the company and consumers' affinity or involvement with the cause have shown to impact consumers' responses towards companies' social initiatives (Bhattacharya and Sen, 2004; Sheikh and Beise-Zee, 2011; Gupta and Pirsch, 2006). Recent research by Sheikh and Beise-Zee (2011) demonstrated that consumers who support the cause and consider it as relevant respond more favorably to companies' social initiatives compared to consumers who do not care about (or may even object to) the cause. The authors argue that cause affinity can help consumers to identify more strongly with companies, and can hence be considered as an effect similar to C-C

congruence.

Finally, with regard to the cause, exploring consumers' perceptions of the NPO's abilities in terms of quality or innovativeness would be another interesting venue to explore. Recent research by Aaker *et al.* (2010) suggests that consumers are more willing to buy from for-profit organizations due to higher levels of perceived competence, relative to NPOs. However, their findings also show that credible endorsers may help improve consumers' perceptions of the nonprofit's competence. Future research could explore whether social alliances may help to transfer perceptions of the company's competence to the nonprofit partner, or vice versa. Collaboration with an established and admired NPO might increase consumers' perceptions of the NPO's as well as the company's corporate abilities, which might impact consumers' responses towards social alliances. These are next steps to consider in further research on corporate social marketing alliances on the basis of the findings presented in this paper.

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Tables

Table I: Two-way ANOVAs and planned contrasts (means, standard deviations, F-values and p-values)

	2-way ANOVA		Alliance condition				Control group			
	F	p	Pro-socials	Pro-selfs	F	p	Pro-socials	Pro-selfs	F	p
Attitude	F=4.31	p<0.04	3.95 (1.20)	3.43 (1.11)	F=6.14	p=0.01	3.49 (1.30)	3.72 (1.17)	F=0.59	p=0.44
Trust	F=2.79	p=0.10	4.13 (1.22)	3.51 (1.23)	F=7.21	p<0.01	3.61 (1.48)	3.65 (1.23)	F=0.01	p=0.92
Word/Mouth	F=2.68	p=0.10	3.39 (1.33)	2.89 (1.37)	F=4.07	p<0.05	3.04 (1.53)	3.23 (1.28)	F=0.32	p=0.58

Table II: Two-way ANOVAs and planned contrasts (means, standard deviations, F-values and p-values)

	2-way ANOVA		High Fit			Low Fit			Control		
	F	p	Pro-socials	Pro-selfs	F & p	Pro-socials	Pro-selfs	p	Pro-socials	Pro-selfs	p
Attitude	F=3.54	p<0.05	4.11 (1.30)	3.22 (1.13)	8.49 (p=0.00)	3.83 (1.11)	3.67 (1.06)	P=0.53	3.49 (1.30)	3.72 (1.17)	p>0.44
Trust	F=3.10	p<0.05	4.30 (1.26)	3.24 (1.08)	10.05 (p=0.00)	4.01 (1.19)	3.82 (1.34)	P=0.50	3.61 (1.48)	3.65 (1.23)	p>0.93
WoM	F=1.98	p>0.10	3.51 (1.37)	2.72 (1.38)	4.98 (p<0.03)	3.30 (1.32)	3.09 (1.36)	p>0.52	3.04 (1.53)	3.23 (1.28)	p>0.58

Table III: Two-way ANOVAs and planned contrasts (means, standard deviations, F-values and p-values)

	2-way ANOVAs		High Fit			Low Fit		
	F	p	Pro-socials	Pro-selfs	F & p	Pro-socials	Pro-selfs	F & p
Quality	F=3.65	p<0.05	4.40 (0.94)	3.61 (0.98)	F=8.93 (p=0.00)	4.05 (1.00)	4.25 (0.74)	F=0.57 (p=0.45)
Innovativeness	F=5.72	p<0.01	4.77 (1.07)	4.14 (0.90)	F=5.92 (p=0.02)	4.35 (1.04)	4.15 (0.82)	F=0.41 (p=0.52)

Table IV: Results mediation tests

Dep.var.	Interactions	Mediation tests	
	No Mediators	Interaction effects co-varied out by:	
	(SVO * Fit)	Quality	Innovativeness
Attitude	3.54 (p<0.05)	2.53 (p>0.05)	1.66 (p>0.10)
Trust	3.10 (p<0.05)	1.46 (p>0.20)	1.74 (p>0.10)
Word/Mouth	Non-sign.		

Figures

Figure 1: Two-way ANOVA for Attitude

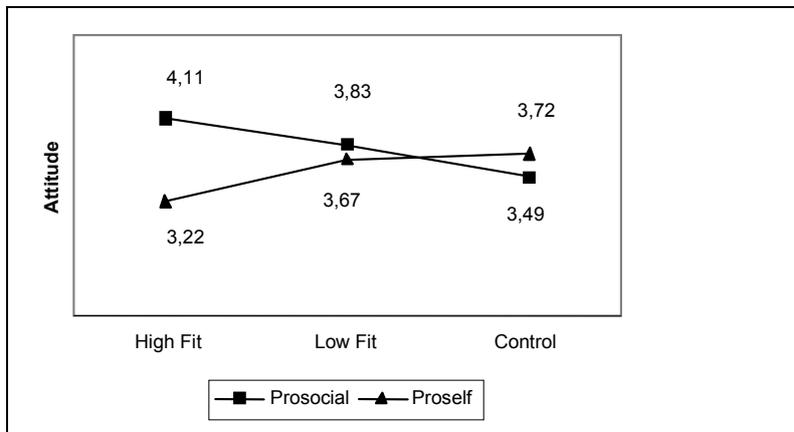


Figure 2: Two-way ANOVA for Trust

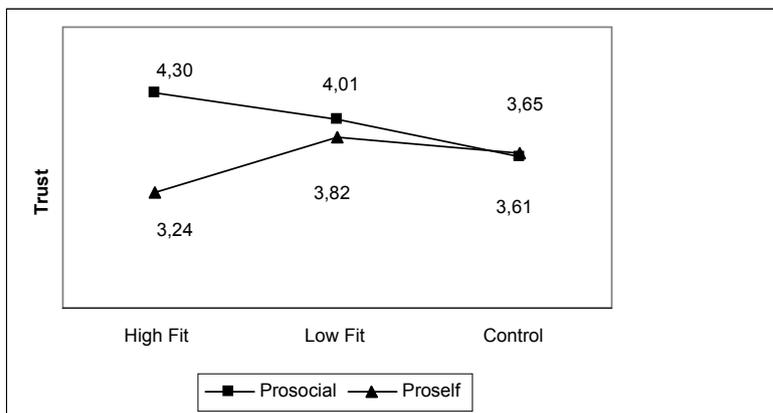
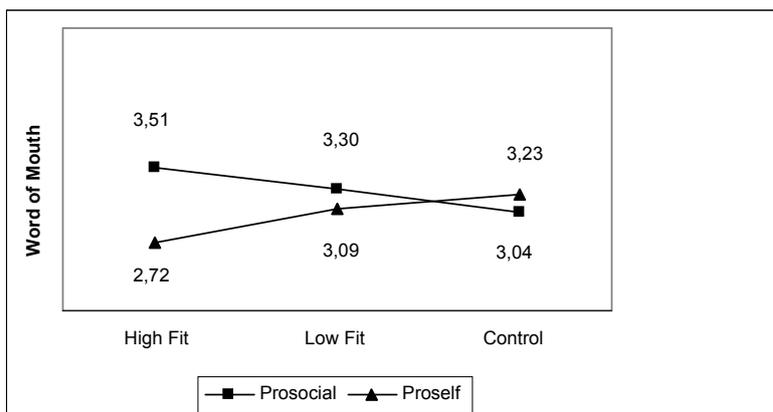


Figure 3: Two-way ANOVA for Word of Mouth



Appendix

SVO games measure. Respondents had to make choices between three different options (A, B, C), each presenting a specific combination of points for oneself and for a hypothetical other person. Respondents were asked to imagine they had been randomly paired with another person whom they have never met in the past, and whom they would never meet in the future. They were informed that whatever choice they made would influence not only how many points they would get (the higher the number of points, the better), but also the outcome in terms of points for the other person. Similarly, respondents had to imagine that the same options would be presented to the other person, and that this person's choice for A, B or C would influence the respondent's outcome as well. One of the nine choices respondents had to make is presented below:

	A	B	C
You get	480	540	480
Other gets	80	280	480

Respondents were informed that these points had value, and that they should choose any option they preferred by circling either the letter A, B, or C. Each outcome-combination represents one of three types of SVO: prosocials, individualists and competitors. In this specific case, option A represents the competitive choice, as it maximizes the difference between one's own outcome and the other's outcome. Option B would be an example of the individualistic choice, which maximizes one's own outcome across the three options (i.e., 540 points instead of 480). Finally, option C represents the prosocial or cooperative choice, characterized by an equal distribution of outcomes for the partners, and by the best joint outcome for both partners. Respondents made choices for nine different scenarios similar to the example presented above. In line with previous

studies, they were categorized as either prosocial, individualist or competitor if at least six out of these nine choices were consistent (De Cremer and Van Lange, 2001; Van Lange and Kuhlman, 1994; Van Lange *et al.*, 1997).