

# THE INFLUENCE OF PRO- ENVIRONMENTAL CSR IN RECRUITMENT COMMUNICATION ON NORWEGIAN AND DUTCH PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTIONS AND BEHAVIOURAL INTENTIONS

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## **Abstract**

A development in the strategies and policies of Multinational Corporations (MNCs) has been that Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has gained an important role in MNC's. Partly, this important position of CSR is due to the fact that stakeholders increasingly consider CSR to be important and this can be seen in the perceptions of stakeholders towards companies (e.g. Bondy et al., 2012; Becker-Olsen et al, 2011). Research has already shown that the perceptions and behavioural intentions of stakeholders such as customers and (prospective) employees towards companies or employers that incorporate CSR can be positively influenced by corporate communication featuring CSR information (e.g. Becker-Olsen et al, 2011). However, Previous research has mainly been done in the USA and comparative research between countries or groups has been limited. The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of environmental CSR information in recruitment communication on the employer reputation, employee-company identification and intention to apply of prospective employees. The study had a cross-national perspective, involving Norwegian and Dutch participants. It was stated that The Netherlands and Norway differ in historical, demographic and political context and that this affects attitudes to (environmental) CSR in the two countries. This in turn led to the expectation that the Dutch and Norwegians' response to pro-environmental CSR in recruitment advertising might differ too.

In an experiment, participants from Norway and the Netherlands were exposed to a control recruitment text or to an experimental recruitment text containing information regarding pro-environmental CSR. Employer reputation, employee-company identification, intention to apply for a job and the cultural values of the participants were measured through an online questionnaire.

No significant differences, besides an interaction effect for environmental CSR and nationality for the dependent variable employee-company identification that after further analysis also showed for significant results, were found between the Netherlands and Norway for any of the dependent variables, suggesting that the perception of and intention to apply of Norwegian prospective employees at potential employers are not differently influenced by mentioning pro-environmental CSR in recruitment communication. Future research could be focussed on the influence of CSR on other types of stakeholders in cross-national context or on the influence that textual aspects have on participants, regardless of the context of the text.

## **Introduction**

Over the past decades, global trade and business have increased. This is, among other things, due to globalisation (Dunning & Lundan, 2008). As a result of this, the number of international organisations or Multinational Corporations (MNCs) has increased, and the relationships between MNCs and society has become more complex (Rodriguez, Siegel, Hillman & Eden, 2006). Also, MNCs nowadays seem to feel the urge to adapt to the norms and values of their stakeholders and to manage the relationships with their stakeholders. One of the ways to do this is engaging in Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives. Many definitions of Corporate Social Responsibility exist (Dahlsrud, 2008), but no clear consensus of what would be a commonly accepted definition has been reached in the academic world yet. Although no exact definition exists, Dahlsrud (2008) identified five dimensions of CSR, based on an analysis of 37 definitions of CSR, originating from 27 authors whose works were published between 1980 and 2003, that together form the essence of Corporate Social Responsibility which can be adopted by any type of corporation: the environmental dimension, the social dimension, the economic dimension, the stakeholder dimension and the voluntariness dimension.

Bondy, Moon and Matten (2012) studied the role of CSR in MNCs specifically. They found that CSR, after gaining a permanent role in society, has gained a permanent position within MNCs as well and is considered as important as any other department or function within these MNCs. The fact that MNCs show this development might imply that stakeholders have also developed the consideration that CSR has become an indispensable part in organisations. This is also suggested in research by Carroll (1991; 2004) and by Becker-Olsen, Taylor, Hill and Yalcinkaya (2011).

The idea that stakeholders might consider CSR to have become an important part in organisations is supported by findings of Becker-Olsen et al. (2011) in a study to the perception of the consumer towards MNCs that emphasise their CSR activities in corporate communication. They found that MNCs are more positively perceived by stakeholders when emphasising their CSR activities in corporate communication than when this has not been done.

This study explored the influence of communication about engagement in CSR by MNCs on stakeholders. The aim was to determine the effect of information about CSR engagement in recruitment communication on the identification of potential employees with the employer, the commitment to the employer and the intention to apply for a job of potential employees at an MNC. The focus of the study was cross-national, as the importance of engagement with CSR has been found to be perceived differently across nations and to evoke different attitudes across nations. These differences may be a result of differences in, for example, history, demography and politics. In order to examine potential effects of differences in history, demography and politics, the differences in perceptions towards potential employers and intention to apply between the Netherlands and Norway were measured. The Netherlands and Norway have been chosen as these countries have not been compared with one another before or often been the subject of many studies to the effects of CSR engagement on stakeholders. Suspected is, that both countries are perceived to be much alike in most ways, what could have resulted in the lack of comparative research. However, no proof for this can be found. What can be found, are differences between the nations that could influence the attitudes of the Norwegian and the Dutch people towards companies that are involved with CSR differently, and in the case of the Netherlands and Norway specifically environmental CSR, on historical, demographical and political aspect. These differences give reason to abolish the potential idea that Norway and the Netherlands are too similar for comparative research.

As mentioned above, differences between the Netherlands and Norway taken into account in this study have a historical, demographical and political nature and are thought to influence the perception towards engagement with, mainly environmental, CSR. These factors have already shown to differently influence the environmental wellbeing of the countries, the policymaking concerning environmental matters as spatial planning, renewable energy targets and protecting biodiversity (ter Laag, Haukaas & Langvik Flåten, 2015; Hsu, Alexandre, Cohen, Jao, Khusainova & Mosteller, 2016; Sustainable Society Foundation, 2014). The demography of the Netherlands and Norway differs mostly in the number of inhabitants, per square kilometre that is. The Netherlands has averagely 402 inhabitants per square kilometre, while Norway only has 16 (One World, n.d.; Index Mundi, 2014). This could be a reason why, for example, the previously mentioned spatial planning and protection of biodiversity in both countries has different focus, as in Norway the environment simply has more space to thrive. Not only are the differences in policymaking when it comes to environmental matters a result of differences in demography: the policymaking in both countries is a result of

governmental decisions, which on their turn are based on the decision of citizens: through elections. Norway and the Netherlands are both multiparty democracies, meaning that citizens are allowed to choose their government through personal vote (Jakobsen, 2013; Ramkema, 2008) and can choose between more than two parties. For the past decade, the coalitions in Norway were mostly Left-wing (Jakobsen, 2013), while in the Netherlands, the political Right has the biggest share in votes (Europa Nu, 2017). The political Left tends to focus more on the social and caring side of society, such as social equality, social and environmental wellbeing and personal freedom and insists the government interferes in order to assure this equality, freedom and wellbeing, while the political Right has more focus on growth and economic freedom and rejects the governments' interference as this would decrease freedom, regardless of the consequences for social equality and wellbeing or environmental issues (Staatsinrichting, n.d.). Also historically seen, the fact that the Netherlands has been industrialising more rapidly than Norway and is situated in the middle of the biggest industrial regions of Europe (Faludi, 2009; Harrison & Hoyler, 2015; Tous les billets de la catégorie term géo UE, 2015) might also contribute to the difference in environmental wellbeing and prioritising in the Netherlands and Norway, as the emissions of, amongst others, carbon dioxide in the Netherlands are higher than in Norway (Friedrich, Damassa & Ge, 2014). The historical, demographic and political differences may be correlated as matters such as the density of population and history of industrialisation in a country could over time influence the priorities and needs of citizens, who on their turn vote for their government that is responsible for the policymaking and thus for the environmental care and wellbeing in a country. As the Dutch and Norwegians show differences in preferences in national politics, these preferences might also show when it comes to their perceptions towards policymaking on business level, of which CSR is an example.

## Literature Review

### *Perceptions towards CSR*

As mentioned previously, CSR has gained in importance within MNC's over the past decades and is thought to be considered to be more important for stakeholders. This is also supported by research by Carroll (1991; 2004) and by Becker-Olsen et al. (2011).

For example, Becker-Olsen et al. (2011) found that the perception of consumers towards an MNC were more positive when this MNC emphasised their engagement in CSR in corporate communication. However, this included only consumers from Mexico and the United States. Carroll (1991) already showed this increase in importance in a study over 20 years ago, as the author described the evolution of stakeholder demands towards socially responsible behaviour and the establishment of governmental bodies that demanded the attention of companies for different matters than only profit. Mohr, Webb and Harris (2001) found that the American consumer attitudes towards a business were more positive than the consumer attitudes of the Mexican participants when the company was engaged in CSR and also that American consumers most frequently desire a higher level of CSR engagement than the Mexican consumers and compared to other types of stakeholders. Bhattacharya and Sen (2004) also found that the consumer positively reacts to CSR in a study that sought to find when, why and how consumers respond to CSR. Yoon, Gürhan-Canli and Schwarz (2006) investigated the effect that CSR has on companies with bad reputations and found that when the consumer perceives the motives of a company as sincere, engagement in CSR will improve the reputation of the company. That consumers indeed demand more information about CSR from companies is also supported by Öberseder, Schlegelmilch, & Gruber (2011). However, they do also raise the matter of the paradox that this increase in demand instigates as the purchase intention of consumers is hardly influenced by the CSR information, as Öberseder et al. (2011) state in the study that seeks to shed a light on that paradox. Besides the mentioned studies to the effect of CSR engagement on the consumer, many more studies focussing on the consumer can be found. What is remarkable, is that most of these studies have been done within the USA or took the USA in comparison with another country (e.g. Becker-Olsen et al., 2011; Carroll, 1991; Mohr et al., 2001). Few other countries have been taken into account, either in cross-national comparative studies or one-country studies. The same can be said about other types of stakeholders such as the employee. However, a few examples of research focussing on the employee can be found.

### *Employee perceptions towards CSR*

Examples of studies that have been done on the perceptions of employees towards engagement of employers with CSR have been conducted by Sen, Bhattacharya and Korschun (2006), Mueller, Hattrup, Spiess and Lin-hi (2012), Turban and Greening (1997) and Kim, Lee, Lee and Kim (2010). Sen et al. (2006) showed that employees in the United States react positively to companies in both attitude towards the company and the intention to pursue employment when they are aware of the company's CSR initiatives. Mueller et al. (2012) showed, in a study conducted in seventeen countries, that the affective commitment of employees towards their employer was positively related to visible engagement with CSR, although differences were found between participants from different countries.

De Roeck and Delobbe (2012) surveyed 155 employees working at the headquarters of a large European oil company to discover whether employees might respond positively to their organisations' engagement in CSR initiatives. They found that perceived CSR was positively related to the organisational identification of employees.

The findings of Sen et al. (2006) that CSR can have a positive effect on the attitude towards the company and intention to apply are supported by Turban and Greening (1997). In a study conducted among American prospective employees, they found that the attractiveness of a company as a potential employer is positively related to the company's Corporate Social Performance. Kim et al. (2010) showed that in South-Korea, employees' CSR associations, although indirectly influenced through perceived external prestige of the company, positively influenced the identification of employees with their company of employment, which, in turn resulted in a higher level of commitment to that company.

Of research to CSR in relation to the employee as stakeholder are studies by Turban and Greening (1997), Behrend, Baker and Thompson (2009), and Highhouse, Lievens and Sinar (2003) amongst the few that have focused on prospective employees; the people who are not yet employed by a company but are pursuing employment and whose perceptions of prospective employers and intention to pursue employment at a certain company might also be influenced by CSR.

Both Behrend et al. (2009) and Highhouse et al. (2003) concluded that mentioning CSR, in the case of Behrend et al. (2009) more specifically pro-environmental CSR, in job-recruitment messages has a positive influence on American prospective employees' intentions to apply and their perception of the organisation's reputation in the United States. Behrend et al. (2009) also imply that their findings emphasise the importance of CSR, or corporate social

performance, as a source of information for prospective employees.

After taking above mentioned previous studies into account, a question that remains is whether CSR attitudes differ across nations as most studies did not have a cross national focus. In order to find out whether differences in the effects of CSR exist between stakeholders from different countries, more cross national research could be conducted than has been done so far.

#### *Cross-national research on the effects of CSR*

While not much research to the effects of companies' engagement with CSR on stakeholders' perceptions and behaviour has been done, few examples can be found. One example of a cross-national study is by Maignan (2001), who studied the effects of CSR on consumers in terms of differences in willingness to support socially responsible businesses between German, French and U.S. consumers. The results showed that the French and German consumers were more willing to support socially responsible businesses than the U.S. consumers (Maignan, 2001). Also, the previously mentioned research by Becker-Olsen et al. (2011) is an example of a cross-national study. In this study, the influence of the emphasising of CSR by companies on the perceptions of consumers of two nationalities (Mexican and American) was compared. Research by Mueller et al (2012), whose study showed that the affective commitment of employees towards their employer was positively related to visible engagement with CSR in seventeen countries is also an example of a cross-national study. Similar to the countries in the studies mentioned above, the Netherlands and Norway differ in such a manner that a cross-national study to the difference in effect that a MNC's engagement with CSR on the perceptions towards the MNC's as a potential employer and the intentions to pursuit employment of Dutch and Norwegian participants could be relevant, adding to this that no previous comparison in this context has been done between the two countries either. Further paragraphs will explore these differences between Norway and the Netherlands more profoundly.



### *Norway and the Netherlands: neighbours that differ*

While the Netherlands and Norway both can be found in the Northern regions of Europe and have their people speaking languages from the same language family (Konig & van der Auwera, 2013, p. 1-2), the two countries do certainly differ in a number of aspects, of which demography, history and politics are important examples and the results of these differences especially seem to show specifically in the environmental wellbeing and the environmental policy-making of both countries, as the next paragraphs will show.

A major difference between both countries can be found in the demography of the countries. Norway has approximately 16 inhabitants per square kilometre, the Netherlands has approximately 402 inhabitants per square kilometre (One World, n.d.; Index Mundi, 2014). Based on the different population density in the two countries, it could be said that as a result, the environment has more space to thrive alongside human activity in Norway than in the Netherlands. This on its' turn may also result in a different perception towards the environment in the Netherlands than in Norway as in the Netherlands, the environment might more easily be put second after the needs of its' inhabitants (ter Laag, Haukaas & Langvik Flåtten, 2015). This is seen, for example, in the spatial planning of the country. While the main focus of Norway in spatial planning lies on renewable energy sources, in the Netherlands this is the allocation of land and water to protect the country from flooding (ter Laag et al., 2015). As a result, the renewable energy target for 2020 is that a percentage of 67,5 of all energy use is to be renewable in Norway, while in the Netherlands this target is 14 percent (ter Laag et al., 2015). Remarkable about the Norwegian renewable energy efforts is that while their biggest industries and sources of exportation are fossil fuels such as gas and oil (Norway Exports, n.d.), renewable energy is gaining enormous interest, showing also in, for example, the growth of the solar energy market with 366% in 2016 (Bellini, 2017). This growth is not met by the solar energy market in the Netherlands, as the solar power capacity in the Netherlands grew with 35% in 2016 (The Solar Future, 2017). Another showcase of the differences in the role of nature is that the biodiversity in the Netherlands has been declining in such manner throughout history that the country now sees the necessity to expand the nature areas to protect the biodiversity, while in Norway maintaining the areas suffices in order to protect biodiversity (ter Laag et al., 2015). The possibility that in the Netherlands, the environment might have a lower priority than in Norway is also supported by the results of the Environmental Performance Index (Hsu et al., 2016), in which Norway ranks in a 17<sup>th</sup> place of 180 and the Netherlands in 36<sup>th</sup>. More about the EPI will be explained further in this section. The results of the EPI are not only due to the demography of the two countries, policy

making has certain influence as well, as shows in the examples given above about the protection of biodiversity and spatial planning.

This connects to the second difference between the Netherlands and Norway: Politics. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, demography might be a factor that influences policymaking, but the government is the deciding party in the policymaking. As also mentioned previously, both the Netherlands and Norway are multiparty democracies in which the citizen chooses the government through personal vote (Jakobsen, 2013; Ramkema, 2008). For the past decade (2007-2017), a difference in political orientation has shown between the countries as the Norwegians most often voted on Left-wing parties (Jakobsen, 2013) and the Dutch showed to be more Right-wing. Left-wing parties are known to have a bigger focus on equality in society, care for the weaker members of society and the environment and wish for the government to interfere to ensure this social equality and the system of caring is protected, while the Right-wing parties are more focussed on growth and economical freedom and wish for the government to sustain this freedom and growth by refraining from interference, regardless of the effect this has on matters such as social equality (Staatsinrichting, n.d.). This difference in political orientation might be a reflection of differences in norms and values in the countries, as the difference in political orientation is not a development of recent times. In the Netherlands, the Right-wing parties have always had majority of the seats in parliament since 1963 (Parlement & Politiek, 2017), while Norway is historically known to have Left-wing governments (Wahl & Pedersen, 2013). What is remarkable is that while the two countries show differences in political orientation, this does not result in differences in social care and wellbeing or economic freedom in both countries. Both Norway and the Netherlands have highly developed social care systems that show several similarities in the design and were designed to form an inclusive system for all members of society (Eklund, Berggren & Trägårdh, 2011; Institute of Economic Affairs, 2013; McWhinney, 2014; Government of the Netherlands, n.d.). That both countries give priority to social wellbeing also shows in the Social Progress Index (Social Progress Imperative, 2016) that is conducted annually by the Social Progress Imperative, which is a network of corporate, governmental and civil organisations seeking to improve human wellbeing. This index (SPI) shows Norway ranked 7<sup>th</sup> out of 133 and the Netherlands ranked 8<sup>th</sup>.

Based on the historical Right-wing orientation of the Netherlands and Left-wing orientation in Norway, a difference in social care could be expected as well besides the earlier mentioned examples about differences in environmental policymaking. Also, the differences expected between the Dutch and Norwegian freedom of economy, based on the ideas the Left

and Right have about governmental interference in the market and economy (Staatsinrichting, n.d.), do hardly show in the Index of Economic Freedom (Heritage, 2017). In this index, both the Netherlands and Norway are included and is the Netherlands ranked 15<sup>th</sup> of 180 with 75.8 point out of 100 and is Norway ranked 25<sup>th</sup> with 74.0 points.

So, while the citizens of the Netherlands and Norway show differences in preferences for their national governments and therefore also for the policymaking of their governments, this does not really seem the case for the social security of society or the economic freedom in the country.

Another difference between the Netherlands and Norway lies in historical context and is the fact that the Netherlands over time has become one of the most densely urbanised and industrialised countries in Europe and is located in the centre of the most important industrial areas, such as the “Blue Banana” or “Megapolis” (Faludi, 2009; Harrison & Hoyler, 2015; Tous les billets de la catégorie term géo UE, 2015). This also results in higher emissions of harmful waste and gasses, such as carbon dioxide, in the Netherlands than in Norway. The Netherlands has an annual emission of 175.88 million metric tons, while Norway has an emission of 40.1 million metric tons annually (Friedrich, Damassa & Ge, 2014). These emissions directly influence the environmental wellbeing in both countries.

That the environmental wellbeing of the Netherlands and Norway differs as a result from, amongst other reasons, carbon dioxide emission, shows in the Sustainable Society Index (2014) by the Sustainable Society Foundation (2014). This index measures the environmental, human and economic wellbeing of 152 countries annually. For both human and economic wellbeing, Norway and the Netherlands both ranked in the top 20 of 151 countries participating, again defying the idea that based on differences in political preferences and with governments on different sides of the political spectrum, social wellbeing and economics might be prioritised differently. However, for environmental wellbeing, Norway was ranked 99<sup>th</sup> and the Netherlands 142<sup>nd</sup> of 151. Thus, the results of the Sustainable Society Index (2014) show that there is a difference between the Netherlands and Norway with regard to environmental wellbeing. This is supported by the results of the previously mentioned Environmental Performance Index (2016), performed by Yale University, Columbia University, Samuel Family Foundation, McCall MacBain Foundation and the World Economic Forum (2016). The Index evaluates how 180 countries protect ecosystems and human health. Countries are scored, 0 to 100 points, in nine categories, taking into account more than 20 factors. The Index also reveals progress of the countries, comparing scores over the years. In this index, Norway has ranked 17<sup>th</sup> out of 180 with 86.90

points and the Netherland 36<sup>th</sup> with 82.03 points.

As can be concluded from the above, the Netherlands and Norway, differ on several factors: in the density of population, in environmental policymaking, in political preferences and industrial development. These differences may be correlated as the density of population and the development of industrialisation of a country could influence the priorities of citizens, who on their turn vote for their government that is responsible for the policymaking. In the case of the Netherlands and Norway, the result of the differences mentioned shows most in the environmental wellbeing and environmental policymaking of the two countries. When it comes to social care and wellbeing and economic freedom, which could be expected to differ as well based on the differences mentioned above, both countries are quite similar. If the importance of environmental wellbeing is perceived differently by inhabitants of Norway and the Netherlands, it could be that the importance of protection of the environment through corporate activity, such as pro-environmental CSR, is perceived different in both countries as well. Therefore, taking specifically the environmental dimension of CSR into account seemed most relevant for the comparison of the Netherlands and Norway, as no further reason has been found to assume potential differences in perception towards the importance of social care and economic wellbeing of inhabitants of the two countries exist. Due to the lack of reason to assume differences in in perception towards the importance of social care and economic freedom of inhabitants of Norway, CSR focussing on social or economic wellbeing did not seem relevant to include in this study. Also, specifically the pro-environmental dimension of CSR has been included in few previous studies.

#### *Focussing on Environmental CSR*

Behrend et al. (2009) and Highhouse et al. (2003) investigated the effect of CSR information in job-recruitment messages and both studies had a focus specifically on environmental CSR. Behrend et al. (2009) specifically chose to focus on environmental CSR, mainly based on the lack of research to the influence of personal environmental preferences of prospective employees and the effect of mentioning pro-environmental CSR online on the intention to apply. Another study on which the focus lies on environmental CSR has been conducted by Lyon and Maxwell (2008). Findings suggest that the environmental focus is still gaining in importance amongst consumers. Lyon and Maxwell (2008) surveyed literature on the effects of and motives for environmental CSR and showed how the profitability of environmental CSR has been driven up as a result of, amongst other things, demand, supply and the influence of governmental forces. They also mention that the importance of the market as a

driver in environmental CSR is likely to grow over the years. These findings, together with the known differences in history, demography and politics and the influence of these differences on the environmental wellbeing and policy-making in the Netherlands and Norway give reason to focus specifically on the pro-environmental dimension of CSR.

A number of studies, mentioned above, have shown that the influence of CSR on the perception of stakeholders towards MNC's is positive. These studies mostly focused on the effect of general CSR activities on stakeholder attitudes. Fewer effect studies have focused on a more specific type of CSR. This goes for the focus on stakeholder types as well. The type of stakeholder most often investigated in relation to CSR is the consumer (e.g. Becker-Olsen et al, 2011; Mohr et al., 2001). In fewer cases the (prospective) employee (e.g. Sen et al., 2006; Mueller et al., 2012) was focussed on. This category might therefore need more looking into in order to know how CSR might influence their perception and behaviour in, for example, the recruitment process.

The aim of the present study was to investigate to what extent mentioning environmental CSR in recruitment communication differently influences the employer reputation, employee-company identification and intention to apply of Norwegian and Dutch prospective employees. The following research question was formulated:

**RQ:** To what extent does pro-environmental CSR information in recruitment communication affect Norwegian potential employees' versus Dutch potential employees' perceptions and intention to apply differently?

To support this question, sub questions were formulated.

**SRQ 1:** To what extent does pro-environmental CSR information in recruitment communication affect Norwegian potential employees versus Dutch potential employees when it comes to the employee-company identification?

**SRQ 2:** To what extent does pro-environmental CSR information in recruitment communication affect Norwegian potential employees versus Dutch potential employees when it comes to the employer reputation?

**SRQ 3:** To what extent does pro-environmental CSR information in recruitment communication affect Norwegian potential employees versus Dutch potential employees when it comes to intention to apply?

Currently, both MNCs and academics seem to sometimes not consider the national differences of countries to be such influence on the inhabitants, that countries are sometimes treated them as identically when it comes to business-, marketing-, and recruitment strategies and in research while those differences are certainly present (e.g. Matten & Moon, 2008; Chaing & Birthc, 2010). The current study into the differences of the effect of pro-environmental CSR in recruitment communication in the Netherlands and Norway was thought to provide insight into potential differences between these two countries, as both countries do show differences in environmental wellbeing, for historical, demographic and political reasons. The results of this study could provide insight into whether mentioning environmental CSR in recruitment communication, could be potentially have a different effect in Norway and the Netherlands.

## **Method**

### Materials:

The independent variable in this study was an employer branding text with the inclusion (or not) of pro-environmental Corporate Social Responsibility information in recruitment communication. The reason for using pro-environmental CSR specifically in this study is that the countries chosen for comparison, the Netherlands and Norway, showed differences that mostly influenced environmental wellbeing and policymaking and not aspects that would have involved other dimensions of CSR, such as social CSR or economic CSR. Along with this, previous studies to the effects of CSR most often did not focus on a specific type of CSR and when a focus was chosen, the environmental dimension was in few cases used (e.g. Behrend et al., 2009; Highhouse et al., 2003; Lyon & Maxwell, 2008).

The stimulus text informed participants about career possibilities at the company concerned and why a career at the company ‘WhiteCo’ should be pursued by the reader. The company featured in the text was a fictional company from no specific industry and was given a fictional name: WhiteCo. The reason for this was that an existing company might already be known to the participants and as a result the participants might already have an opinion about the company, also regarding potential employment at that company. The colour in the name, white, is a neutral colour. The text was written in two versions; a control version and an experimental version. The control version included no information about the company’s engagement in pro-environmental Corporate Social Responsibility. In the experimental version, information about the company’s engagement in pro-environmental Corporate Social Responsibility was added. Also, the background visuals were different, as the control version had a background picture featuring mobile phones and the experimental versions’ background featured a green globe. Both versions were made to look like a screenshot from a corporate website, specifically a webpage that focusses on the career options at the corporation. The text was based on an authentic recruitment text on the corporate website of Samsung Electronics (Samsung Electronics, n.d.). This text then was rewritten to remove all mentions of Samsung. Also, the industry Samsung operates in was no longer mentioned. See Appendix one for the two text versions.

To test whether the materials and manipulation were effective, a pre-test was conducted. The aim of the pre-test was to test the success of the manipulation, the authenticity of the materials, the appeal of the organisation in the text, the appeal of the text and the clarity of the text of both versions of the recruitment communication.

For this pre-test, 27 participants, who would not take part in the main experiment, were individually approached. The participants were exposed to one of the two versions of the materials and asked to answer a series of ten 7-point Likert-scale questions regarding the text and the company mentioned in the text. The scales were developed by the author. The series of items were as follows to test the success of the manipulation: On a scale of one to seven, indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements: ‘This company is a socially responsible employer.’, ‘This employer is socially aware.’, ‘This company is environmentally aware.’, ‘This employer is aware of the influence their business has on the environment.’.

For the authenticity of the text, the items were as follows: On a scale of one to seven, indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements: ‘This text comes across naturally.’, ‘This text could be found on a company website.’, ‘This text looks authentic.’.

For the clarity of the text, the following item was used: On a scale of one to seven, indicate to what extent you agree with the following statement: ‘This text gives me a clear image of the employer’.

For the appeal of the text, the following item was used: On a scale of one to seven, indicate to what extent you agree with the following statement: ‘This text appeals to me.’.

For appeal of the organisation in the text the following item was used: On a scale of one to seven, indicate to what extent you agree with the following statement: ‘This organisation appeals to me as an employer.’.

An independent samples t-test showed a significant difference between the control version of the materials and the experimental version of the materials when it comes to the manipulation ( $t(25) = 3.77, p = .001$ ). The experimental version ( $M = 5.63, SD = .75$ ) was shown to better display the social responsibility, social awareness, environmental awareness and the overall awareness of the impact of business on the environment of the company in the materials than the control version ( $M = 4.36, SD = .99$ ). Therefore, the manipulation was deemed to be successful.

For authenticity of the text, an independent samples t-test did not show a significant difference between the control version and the experimental version ( $t(25) = .77, p = .451$ ). The text in the control version ( $M = 5.15, SD = 1.34$ ) was shown to be perceived as authentic as the experimental version ( $M = 4.79, SD = 1.10$ ).

For clarity of the text, an independent samples t-test showed no significant difference between the control and the experimental version ( $t(25) = 1.28, p = .210$ ). The text in the control version ( $M = 4.73, SD = 1.62$ ) seemed to be as clear as the text in the experimental version ( $M = 4.00, SD = 1.32$ ). An independent samples t-test for the appeal of the text



showed no significant difference between the control version and the experimental version ( $t(25) = .66, p = .516$ ). The text in the experimental version ( $M = 4.50, SD = 1.46$ ) was thought to be as appealing as the text in the control version ( $M = 4.09, SD = 1.76$ ). Finally, an independent samples t-test for the appeal of the organisation in the text showed no significant difference between the control and the experimental version ( $t(25) = 0.44, p = .665$ ). The organisation in the text of the experimental version ( $M = 4.44, SD = 1.37$ ) was as appealing as the same organisation in the text of the control version ( $M = 4.18, SD = 1.67$ ).

The reliability for the series of items for success of the manipulation was good:  $\alpha = .87$ . The reliability for the series items for authenticity of the text was good as well:  $\alpha = .84$ . See Appendix two for the questionnaire of the pre-test.

### Participants

The participants had to meet the following requirements: Being either Dutch or Norwegian, having either Dutch or Norwegian as a first language as this was an extra reassurance of the nationality and cultural background of the participant and English as a second language as the questionnaire was presented to the participants in English. A participant also had to be an advanced Bachelor student (last year), Master student, PhD student or one had to have graduated not more than two years prior to taking the survey as this group of people was perceived to be more likely to be orienting on future jobs and possibly have a clearer view on what they look for in a potential employer than people further away from entering the job market.

The total number of participants was 130, of which 68 participants were Dutch (52%) and 62 (48%) participants were Norwegian. The number of total participants from the Netherlands that started the survey was 80, of which 12 did not finish. None of the Dutch participants that finished the survey did not meet the requirements for participation, meaning that all completed surveys were included. The number of Norwegian participants that started the survey was 267, of which 69 finished the survey. Of these 69 finished surveys, 7 were not included in the study as the participants did not meet the requirements for either the nationality or education. The most frequent level of education was University Master with the levels of education ranging from third year of University Bachelor to PhD. The age of the participants ranged from 19 to 35 and the mean age was 24.08. 82 (63.1%) participants were female and 48 were male. Participants had a diverse background in studies, being; Law (13), Sciences (26), Arts (6), Social Sciences (14), Medicine (12), Business (59).

A Chi-square test showed no significant relation between version of the text and gender ( $\chi^2(1) = .21, p = .646$ ). For a relation between nationality and the version of the text, a chi-square test did not show a significant result either ( $\chi^2(1) = .00, p = .987$ ).

### Design

The study used a 2x2 between-subjects design for which the independent variables were nationality (Dutch or Norwegian) and version (control or experimental). Half of the participants in each of the nationality groups (Dutch, Norwegian) was exposed to the control version in which no text about environmental CSR was used and the other half was exposed to the experimental version, in which text about CSR was used.

The versions were distributed randomly to the participants. All participants were exposed to the measurement of the dependent variables; employer reputation, employer-company identification and intention to apply. For all participants the cultural values of the following dimensions were measured: femininity versus masculinity and indulgence versus restraint (Hofstede, 1980; Hofstede et al., 2010)

### Instruments

The instruments used to collect the data was a questionnaire. In the questionnaire, the three dependent variables were measured (see Design).

When it comes to the establishment of scales to use, previous studies have been the basis. Highhouse et al. (2003) have used the variables employee reputation and intention to apply as well, as they sought to measure the attraction to organisations of prospective employees. Their decision to use these scales they have, has been based on the principle of correspondence from the theory of reasoned action by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980). This principle suggests that the relations between attitude and behaviour are stronger when measured at the same level of specificity (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). This means that when one is looking to predict the reputation of an employer based on communication about CSR, one should measure the employer reputation instead of measuring the attitude towards CSR. The theory of reasoned action also indicates that measuring intentions offers a better ground for prediction than measuring attitudes (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). This means that when one is interested in predicting the intention to apply for a job, exactly this should be measured and not the attitude towards the potential employer. This theory offers ground to use the scales that Highhouse et al. (2003) and Kim et al (2010) have used, as this study seeks to predict the intention to apply of prospective employees to apply for a job at an employer that mentions

environmental CSR in their online recruitment communication and the influence that mentioning CSR in recruitment communication has on the perceptions of and levels of identification with the employer of prospective employees. Highhouse et al. (2003) measured employer reputation and intention to apply in their study, while Kim et al. (2010) measure the employee-company identification. Another reason to use these scales is the fact that all scales have been proven reliable already and therefore appropriate to use for measuring the intention to apply, the employer reputation and the employee-company identification of prospective employees.

The items that measured these three variables were presented to participants in a mixed order. For all items, participants indicated their agreement on a 7-point Likert scale. The first variable, employer reputation, measured the perceived internal and external reputation of an organisation as an employer. It was measured with five items (Highhouse et al., 2003); On a scale of one to seven, indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements: 'Employees are probably proud to say they work at this company', 'This company probably has a reputation of being an excellent employer', 'I would find this company a prestigious place to work', 'This is a reputable company to work for' and 'There are probably many people who would like to work at this company'. The reliability of this scale was good:  $\alpha = .85$ .

The second variable, employee-company identification, measured the level of identification of an employer with the company of (potential) employment and the sense of belongingness within said company. Three items (Kim et al., 2010) measured this variable; On a scale of one to seven, indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements: 'I would like to be part of this company', 'I would experience a strong sense of belongingness to this company' and 'I feel strong ties with this company'. The reliability of this scale was adequate:  $\alpha = .77$ .

The third variable was intention to apply, and measured the intention of the participant to work at the company used in the stimulus materials when the opportunity arises and to what extent the participant would put effort into getting a job at said company. Five items (Highhouse et al., 2003) measured intention to apply; On a scale of one to seven, indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements: 'I would make real effort to work for this company', 'I would accept a job offer from this company', 'I would make this company one of my first choices as an employer', 'I would recommend this company to a friend

looking for a job' and 'If this company invited me for a job interview, I would go'. The reliability for this scale was good:  $\alpha = .85$ .

For all items, the utmost left point on the scale represented the lowest level of agreement and was anchored by "Totally disagree". The utmost right point on the scale represented the highest level of agreement and was anchored by "Totally agree".

The success of the manipulation was measured as well, using the same items as had been used in the pre-test: On a scale of one to seven, indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements: 'This company is a socially responsible employer.', 'This employer is socially aware.', 'This company is environmentally aware.', 'This employer is aware of the influence their business has on the environment.'. Again, making use of a 7-point Likert scale with the utmost left point on the scale anchored by "Totally disagree" and the utmost right point by "Totally agree".

Finally, questions regarding the biodata of the participants were asked. regarding: Age, sex, nationality, native language, highest level of education obtained, current level of education, if graduated; year of graduation, expected year of graduation and field of studies'. For the full questionnaire, see appendix two.

### Procedure

Participants were contacted through the use of social media (Facebook, LinkedIn) and by individual requests in the direct social circles of the author for participation.

An online survey was used to collect the data, accessible through a link that redirected the participant to the introduction of the questionnaire. In the introduction, the participants were told that they were about to read a text and then answer questions about this text. They were reassured that all answers were correct as was asked for their own point of view. The participants were also given the time that was expected for them to take it to finish the entire survey: 10 minutes. Also, the participants were thanked for their participation. Participants were able to complete the survey anywhere and anytime, as long as they had internet connection and completed the survey within one week.

When the participant had agreed to participate, the participant was first asked to thoroughly read the introduction that explained what was expected from the participant and that also stated that all data was collected while assuring anonymity for the participant. Second, the participant was exposed to one of the two versions of the independent variable; either the control version or the experimental version. After the exposure, the participant was asked to complete the questionnaire (see Instruments).

Lastly, the participant was asked to answer questions regarding bio data. When finished, the participant was thanked for his or her participation.

#### Statistical treatments

In order to measure whether the manipulation of the materials was successful, an independent samples t-test was used. To measure the influence of mentioning pro-environmental corporate social responsibility on employer reputation, employee-company identification and intention to apply, multiple two-way analyses of variance were conducted.

## Results

### Success of the manipulation

Concerning the success of the manipulation of the materials an independent samples t-test showed a significant difference between the experimental version and the control version ( $t(128) = 5.57, p < .001$ ). The experimental version ( $M = 5.56, SD = 1.03$ ) was shown to better display the social responsibility, social awareness, environmental awareness and the overall awareness of the impact of business on the environment of the company in the materials than the control version ( $M = 4.56, SD = 1.01$ ). Therefore, the manipulation was successful.

### Main tests for employer reputation, employee-company identification and attention to apply

A two-way analysis of variance with environmental CSR mentioned and nationality as factors showed no significant main effect for environmental CSR mentioned on employer reputation ( $F(1, 126) < 1, p = .687$ ). Nationality was also not found to have a significant effect on employer reputation ( $F(1, 126) < 1, p = .385$ ). The interaction effect for environmental CSR mentioned and nationality was not statistically significant ( $F(1, 126) = 1.92$ ).

Another two-way analysis of variance environmental CSR mentioned and nationality as factors showed no significant main effect for environmental CSR mentioned and employee-company identification ( $F(1, 126) < 1, p = .902$ ). For the effect of nationality on employee-company identification, no significant effect was found either ( $F(1, 126) < 1, p = .943$ ). However, the interaction effect of environmental CSR mentioned and nationality was statistically significant ( $F(1, 126) = 6.25, p = .014$ ).

Interpretation of the interaction effect showed a disordinal nature of the interaction effect in a plot. This plot shows an opposite effect for Norwegian participants compared to the Dutch participants of environmental CSR mentioned on the dependent variable employee-company identification. A simple effects analysis for the effect of no environmental CSR mentioned on employee-company identification showed no significant difference between de Dutch and Norwegian participants ( $F(1, 126) = 2.86, p = .09$ ). For the effect of environmental CSR mentioned on employee-company identification, no significant difference was found either ( $F(1, 126) = 3.41, p = .07$ ). For the plot, see appendix 3.

Finally, a last two-way analysis of variance with environmental CSR mentioned and nationality as factors showed no significant main effect of CSR mentioned for intention to

apply ( $F(1, 126) < 1, p = .662$ ), as was the case for nationality ( $F(1, 126) < 1, p = .427$ ). The interaction effect for environmental CSR mentioned and nationality was not statistically significant ( $F(1, 126) = 2.66$ ). The descriptive statistics are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Means and SDs for employer reputation, employee-company identification and intention to apply, across conditions (unless being stated differently, the average has been based on  $n = 130$ ) (1 = totally disagree; 7 = totally agree)**

Variable	Version	Nationality	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
Employer reputation	Experimental	Dutch	5.02	0.90	33
		Norwegian	4.67	0.92	30
	Control	Dutch	4.87	0.79	35
		Norwegian	4.95	0.99	32
Employee-company identification	Experimental	Dutch	4.34	1.09	33
		Norwegian	3.87	1.03	30
	Control	Dutch	3.83	1.16	35
		Norwegian	4.33	1.18	32
Intention to apply	Experimental	Dutch	4.68	1.04	33
		Norwegian	4.53	0.92	30
	Control	Dutch	4.31	1.00	35
		Norwegian	4.75	1.16	32

## **Conclusion**

In this study, the extent to which pro-environmental CSR information in recruitment communication affects the perceptions and intention to apply of Norwegian potential employees and Dutch potential employees differently was researched. The aim of this study was to find the extent of influence that mentioning pro-environmental CSR in recruitment communication has on the employer reputation, employee-company identification and the intention to apply of potential employees from Norway and the Netherlands. As no significant effects were found, it could be concluded that there is no difference between Norwegians and Dutch potential employees when it comes to the effect of mentioned pro-environmental CSR in recruitment communication on their perceptions and intention to apply, besides an interaction effect between environmental CSR mentioned and nationality for the variable employee-company identification. After further analysis, this interaction effect showed no significant effects for employee-company identification when analysing the two versions (control and experimental) separately. Meaning that the conclusion that there is no difference between Norwegian and Dutch potential employees when it comes to the effect of mentioned pro-environmental CSR in recruitment communication on their perceptions and intentions to apply is sustained.

With this information, the research question and sub questions could be answered, starting with sub question 1: “To what extent do Dutch potential employees and Norwegian potential employees differ when it comes to the influence of pro-environmental CSR information in recruitment communication on their employee-company identification?”. Dutch potential employees and Norwegian potential employees do not differ when it comes to the influence of pro-environmental CSR information in recruitment communication on their employee-company identification.

Sub question 2: “To what extent do Dutch potential employees and Norwegian potential employees differ when it comes to the influence of pro-environmental CSR information in recruitment communication on the employer reputation?”. Dutch potential employees and Norwegian potential employees do not differ when it comes to the influence of pro-environmental CSR information in recruitment communication on employer reputation.

Sub question 3: “To what extent do Dutch potential employees and Norwegian potential employees differ when it comes to the influence of pro-environmental CSR information in recruitment communication on the intention to apply at the concerned company?”. Dutch potential employees and Norwegian potential employees do not differ



when it comes to the influence of pro-environmental CSR information in recruitment communication on the intention to apply at the concerned company.

## **Discussion**

This study provided insight into the influence that the mentioning of pro-environmental CSR in recruitment communication has on the perceptions of and intention to apply at a company of Dutch potential employees and Norwegian potential employees. The study showed no significant results, meaning that there is no difference between Norwegian potential employees and Dutch potential employees when it comes to the employer reputation, employee-company identification and intention to apply. Based on historical, demographical and political differences (see Introduction), differences could potentially have been expected.

While no significant results of mentioning CSR in recruitment advertising were found, there was an exception of a significant interaction effect between nationality and environmental CSR mentioned for the dependent variable employee-company identification and nationality. However, interpretation of this interaction effect showed no significant difference between Norwegian participants and Dutch participants for the control version, nor for the experimental version.

While proof of involvement with CSR has a positive influence on the employer-company identification and has shown to have a positive influence on employee's identification with the company of employment and the intention to pursuit employment (Sen, Bhattacharya & Korschun, 2006; Mueller et al., 2012), the results of this study do not support this. Also the findings of Turban and Greening (1997) and Kim et al. (2010) that the attractiveness of an employer and the affective commitment is positively related to a company being involved with CSR are not supported by this study. When it comes specifically to the influence of pro-environmental CSR on employees, Behrend et al. (2009) and Highhouse et al. (2003) looked into the effect of mentioning pro-environmental CSR in recruitment communication on prospective employees' behavioural intention and their perception of the reputation of the potential employer. Their findings are not supported by the results of this study either.

The lack of significant effects across the two groups for employer reputation, employee-company identification and intention to apply could be explained by, amongst other factors, the sample in this study. The sample in this study only selected highly educated potential employees that (almost) finished their university degree and existed of a relatively small number and had a majority of female participants. While a chi-square test showed an equal distribution of males and females across the versions of the materials, the unequal number of males and females could potentially be taken into account. As this sample does not

reflect the background of an entire society, it cannot be expected to show the same results when analysed as a sample in research that represents all layers of a society as the differences mentioned in this study between Norway and the Netherlands affect all layers of society. Another limitation might have been the fact that all data was collected through online questionnaires. The participants were not put in a controlled environment and had the opportunity to complete the questionnaire in the course of a full week. This might have given some participants the time to reconsider previously given answers or to find more information about certain matters and therefore change opinions, points of view and perceptions. Also, while participants were required to possess certain characteristics, it was not possible to control whether they actually did possess those characteristics before participation. Participants were asked for their bio data, but it was not possible to find out whether the information given was truthful as none of them had been met in person or had been put in a controlled environment.

Despite several limitations, the outcomes do contribute to the academic knowledge so far. This research has focussed on two nations not previously compared, while the focus in previous studies to the effect of CSR on stakeholders thus far mainly had been on larger countries and often the same countries such as the U.S.A. (e.g. Maignan, 2001; Becker-Olsen et al., 2011; Mohr, Webb & Harris, 2001; Highhouse et al., 2009). The outcomes of the present study offer insight into two nations that have previously been put together to compare with other groups of nations or had not been studied in the same research context at all. The results of this study offer insight into the existence of potential differences, when it comes to the influence of CSR on stakeholders, specifically prospective employees, in nations that have different national backgrounds when it comes to history, politics and demography. Also, for the hiring strategies of MNC's, the information acquired through this study might be helpful as the added value of putting time and money in adapting recruitment and marketing strategies to separate cultures instead of cultural groups becomes more predictable.

The focus on prospective employees could also shift to existing employees. As prospective employees are not yet in employment with companies and therefore potentially look differently at companies displaying CSR in their recruitment communication, it might be interesting to research the perceptions of employees that already have pursued employment on CSR within their company. Also, future research could focus on a sample that reflects the entire society of a country, as this research only focused on those with a university degree that were almost or just recently graduated and this sample did not fully reflect the societies of the Netherlands and Norway. Added to this, it might be interesting to study the importance

stakeholders have given CSR in their choice of brands, employers, products or in any other role a company might play for a stakeholder. Lastly, future research could be based on the descriptive statistics of this study in which the Norwegian participants exposed to the experimental version showed lower averages for all dependent variables than the Norwegian participants exposed to the control version, while for the Dutch participants this is the other way around and the manipulation has proven to be successful for both Norwegian and Dutch participants. This could potentially indicate that the style of a recruitment communication text might also influence the stakeholders' perception and behavioural intention. While not directly related to the use of CSR in recruitment communication, this is relevant to know before one can predict the influence of a text in which CSR is mentioned.

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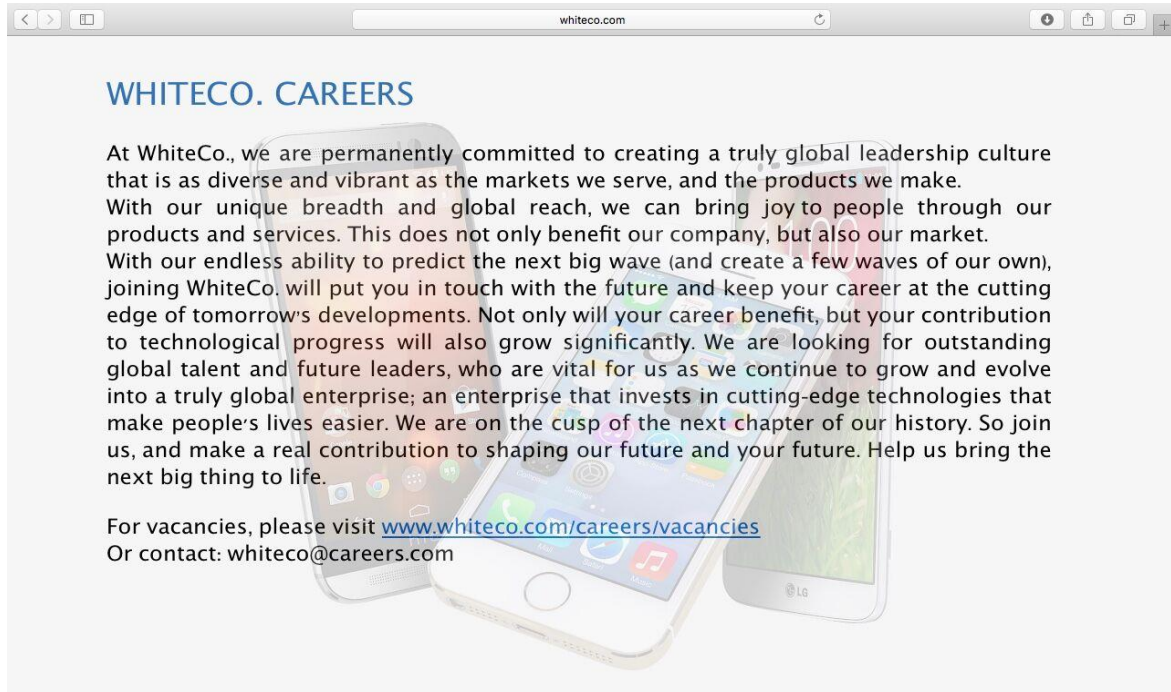
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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Materials

#### Control recruitment text

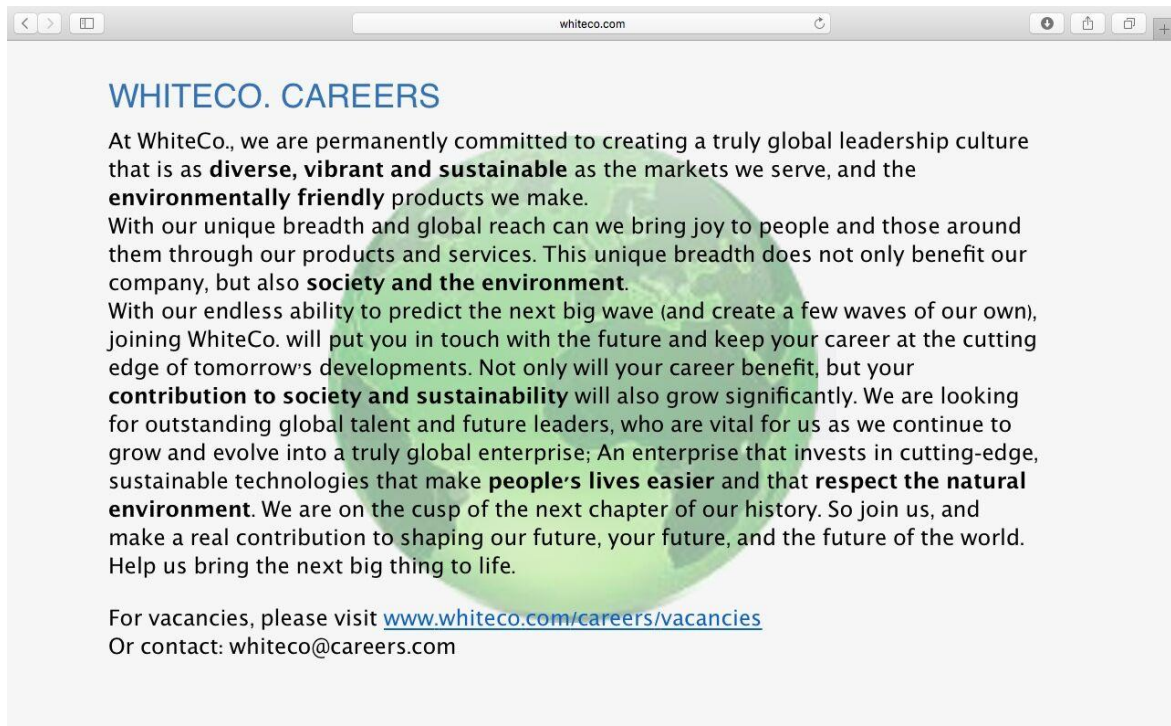


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At WhiteCo., we are permanently committed to creating a truly global leadership culture that is as diverse and vibrant as the markets we serve, and the products we make. With our unique breadth and global reach, we can bring joy to people through our products and services. This does not only benefit our company, but also our market. With our endless ability to predict the next big wave (and create a few waves of our own), joining WhiteCo. will put you in touch with the future and keep your career at the cutting edge of tomorrow's developments. Not only will your career benefit, but your contribution to technological progress will also grow significantly. We are looking for outstanding global talent and future leaders, who are vital for us as we continue to grow and evolve into a truly global enterprise; an enterprise that invests in cutting-edge technologies that make people's lives easier. We are on the cusp of the next chapter of our history. So join us, and make a real contribution to shaping our future and your future. Help us bring the next big thing to life.

For vacancies, please visit [www.whiteco.com/careers/vacancies](http://www.whiteco.com/careers/vacancies)  
Or contact: [whiteco@careers.com](mailto:whiteco@careers.com)

#### Experimental recruitment text



WHITECO. CAREERS

At WhiteCo., we are permanently committed to creating a truly global leadership culture that is as **diverse, vibrant and sustainable** as the markets we serve, and the **environmentally friendly** products we make. With our unique breadth and global reach can we bring joy to people and those around them through our products and services. This unique breadth does not only benefit our company, but also **society and the environment**. With our endless ability to predict the next big wave (and create a few waves of our own), joining WhiteCo. will put you in touch with the future and keep your career at the cutting edge of tomorrow's developments. Not only will your career benefit, but your **contribution to society and sustainability** will also grow significantly. We are looking for outstanding global talent and future leaders, who are vital for us as we continue to grow and evolve into a truly global enterprise; An enterprise that invests in cutting-edge, sustainable technologies that make **people's lives easier** and that **respect the natural environment**. We are on the cusp of the next chapter of our history. So join us, and make a real contribution to shaping our future, your future, and the future of the world. Help us bring the next big thing to life.

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Or contact: [whiteco@careers.com](mailto:whiteco@careers.com)

## Appendix 2: Items for the questionnaire:

### Items for Employer reputation, Employee-company identification and Intention to apply

ER = Employer Reputation

ECI = Employee-Company Identification

IntAp = Intention to Apply

On a scale of one to seven, indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements

1. Employees are probably proud to say they work at this company. (ER)

Totally disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Totally agree

2. I would like to be part of this company. (ECI)

Totally disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Totally agree

3. I would make real effort to work for this company. (IntAp)

Totally disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Totally agree

4. This company probably has a reputation of being an excellent employer. (ER)

Totally disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Totally agree

5. I would experience a strong sense of belongingness to this company. (ECI)

Totally disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Totally agree

6. I would accept a job offer from this company. (IntAp)

Totally disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Totally agree

7. I would find this company a prestigious place to work. (ER)

Totally disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Totally agree

8. I would make this company one of my first choices as an employer. (IntAp)

Totally disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Totally agree

9. This is a reputable company to work for. (ER)

Totally disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Totally agree

10. I would recommend this company to a friend looking for a job. (IntAp)

Totally disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Totally agree

11. If this company invited me for a job interview, I would go. (IntAp)

Totally disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Totally agree

12. I feel strong ties with this company. (ECI)

Totally disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Totally agree

13. There are probably many people who would like to work at this company. (ER)

Totally disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Totally agree

### **Items pre-test and manipulation check**

On a scale of one to seven, indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements.

1. This company is a socially responsible employer

Totally disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Totally agree

2. This employer is socially aware

Totally disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Totally agree

3. This company is environmentally aware

Totally disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Totally agree

4. This employer is aware of the influence their business has on the environment

Totally disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Totally agree

5. This text comes across naturally

Totally disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Totally agree

6. This text could be found on a company website

Totally disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Totally agree

7. This text looks authentic

Totally disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Totally agree

8. This text gives me a clear image of the employer

Totally disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Totally agree

9. This text appeals to me

Totally disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Totally agree

10. This organisation appeals to me as an employer.

Totally disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Totally agree

### **Biodata**

1. What is your age?

2. Sex: M/F

3. Nationality:

4. Native language:

5. Highest level of education obtained: High School/University Bachelor/ University  
Master/ PhD:

6. Current level of education: (1<sup>st</sup> year, 2<sup>nd</sup> year, 3<sup>rd</sup> year University Bachelor/ University  
Master/ PhD)

7. If graduated, year of graduation:

8. Expected year of graduation:

9. Field of studies:

10. On a scale of one to seven, indicate to what extent you agree with the following statements

10.1 It is important that companies contribute to developments in sustainability.

Totally disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Totally agree

10.2 It is important that companies operate in an environmentally friendly way.

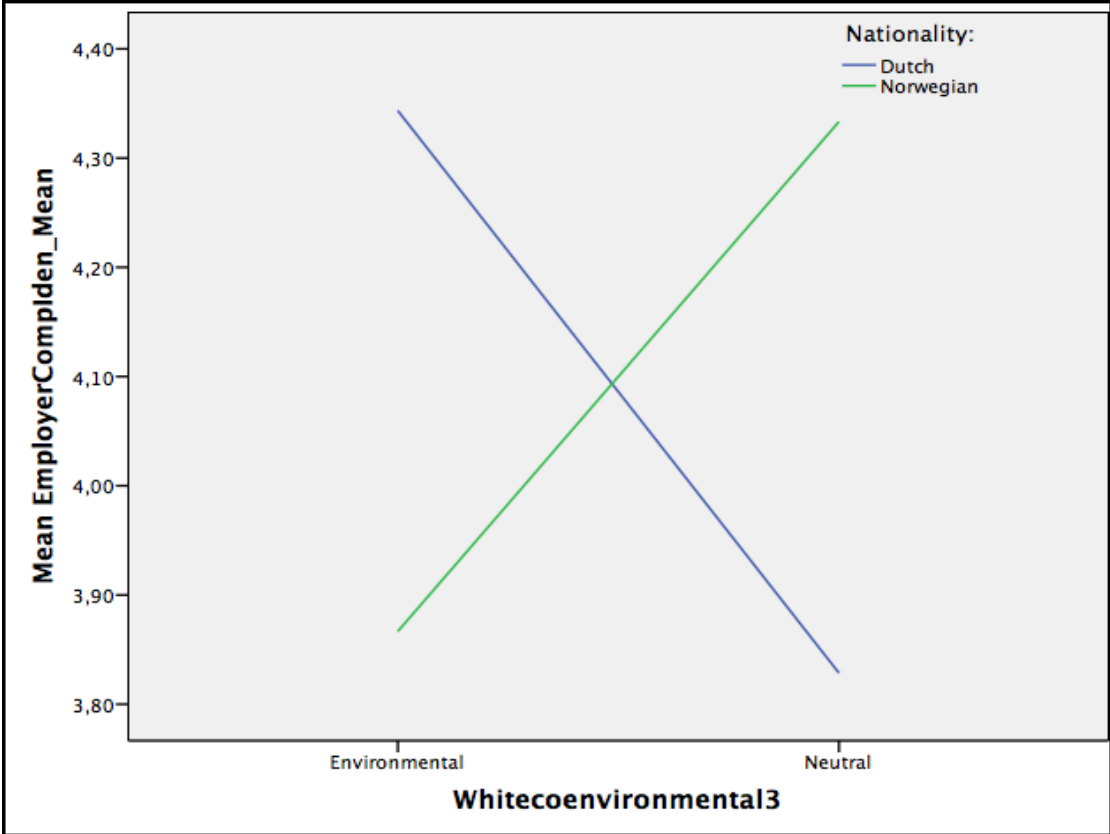
Totally disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Totally agree

10.3 It is important that companies are involved in CSR.

Totally disagree    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    Totally agree



**Appendix 3: Plot interaction effect**



## **Declaration on plagiarism and fraud**

The undersigned

[first name, surname and student number],

Master's student at the Radboud University Faculty of Arts,

declares that the assessed thesis is entirely original and was written exclusively by himself/herself. The undersigned indicated explicitly and in detail where all the information and ideas derived from other sources can be found. The research data presented in this thesis was collected by the undersigned himself/herself using the methods described in this thesis.

Place and date:

Signature: