

## MASTER

### Conceptualising benevolent business processes

Synthesise the current knowledge regarding corporate benevolence and derive a novel understanding on how corporate business processes can embed benevolence in their day-to-day operations

Croes, Nicole C.M.

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*MASTER OPERATIONS MANAGEMENT AND LOGISTICS*

# Conceptualising benevolent business processes

Synthesise the current knowledge regarding corporate benevolence and derive a novel understanding on how corporate business processes can embed benevolence in their day-to-day operations.

*Author: Nicole Croes*

*Student number: 0839877*

*Supervisors:*

*Associate Professor Dr. Oktay Türetken, Eindhoven University of Technology, IS*

*Associate Professor Dr. Wasana Bandara, Queensland University of Technology, IS*

*Dr. Alexia Athanasopoulou, Eindhoven University of Technology, IS*

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## Preface

This thesis is the result of my graduation project executed in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Operations Management & Logistics. The research is conducted at the Queensland University of Technology in Brisbane, Australia.

It has been a period with some challenges in which I learnt a lot. I learnt a lot about the research area of this thesis, but also how to conduct research more efficiently and to work more efficiently. Also, to work more independently and under pressure as part of a bigger project. With all this knowledge, I am confident that I could approach a future research project more efficiently and effectively.

Firstly, I would like to thank my first supervisor Dr. Oktay Türetken, for jumping in and take me over as his student, for all his advice, feedback. Secondly, I would like to thank my second supervisor Dr. Wasana Bandara for all her advice, feedback, encouragement, for making the time to help me and to answer all my questions, for their support, and for making my stay in Australia a lovely experience in such a wonderful department. Thirdly, I would like to thank Dr. Alexia Athanasopoulou for her advice, feedback, and encouragements when needed.

I also would like to thank my parents, Edgar and Wina, my sister, Cindy, and my close friend, Derrelaine, for their support, for giving me a push when needed, for motivating me when needed and for just being there for me when I needed it. Without my parents, this wonderful experience would not have happened.

Nicole Croes

Brisbane, July 2023



## Summary

The context of this research revolves around Business Process Management (BPM). Digital technologies and changing demands have led to a shift towards integrating human-centricity into BPM beyond mere profitability. There is a call to create a safe and inclusive economic system that prioritises overall human wellbeing. However, many firms still prioritise short-term profits over human-centricity due to a lack of well-defined concepts and methodologies. The research objective is to explore benevolence in a for-profit corporate setting, conceptualize benevolent business processes (BBP), and identify their antecedents, contextual factors, and impacts. The goal is to show for-profit organizations how to integrate benevolence into their daily operations, highlighting their human-centric side and care for customers and business partners. The research questions aim to understand the concept of benevolence in a business process, how benevolence is manifested, and what its contributions are. The research question is **“How can benevolence become an integral part of an organisations’ operational processes?”**. The research design involves a structured literature review (SLR) to identify and synthesise relevant literature on benevolence. The methodology includes conceptualisation theories and methods to define the concept of benevolence in a for-profit context. Rigorous research methods will be employed to ensure the quality and validity of the findings. This research aims to shed light on the importance of benevolence in BPM and provide a foundation for further investigations into BBP, helping organizations foster a human-centric approach in their operations.

Benevolence is defined as a focus on human-centricity and kindness, going beyond contractual aspects to genuinely care for the wellbeing of others. It is a relatively new phenomenon in the business context. Existing research on benevolence is limited, and much of it has been studied in non-profit contexts or as a dimension of trust and goodwill. There is a gap in research regarding benevolence on a process level within for-profit organisations. Several related concepts, such as goodwill, trust, gratitude, and humanity, have been discussed in relation to benevolence. While some aspects of these concepts overlap with benevolence, they are not entirely synonymous with it. The study proposes to explore and compare different definitions and aspects of benevolence in a for-profit context, to create a more coherent and complete understanding of the concept. Additionally, the research aims to investigate the potential impacts of benevolence in business relationships, which have not been thoroughly explored yet.

The research design is a conceptual research that is focused on theoretical development and uses existing literature on benevolence as data to generate novel insights. Conceptualisation involves defining concepts to communicate their dimensions accurately and build a solid foundation for theory development. The research design for this study is based on conceptualisation, following theories by Jaakkola (2020), Yadav (2010), Cornelissen (2017), Wacker (2004), and Zhang et al. (2016).

A SLR was conducted to gather relevant papers on corporate benevolence in the for-profit context to conceptualise BBP following Bandara et al. (2011), Bandara et al. (2015), and Randolph (2009). The SLR followed a structured process with ten steps: pilot search to identify databases and define search string, selection of databases, finalisation of the search string, definition of inclusion and exclusion criteria, execution of the search, elimination of duplicates, assessment of titles, abstracts, and keywords, reading of full texts, backward and forward search, and further scoping. The final pool of papers consisted of 36 publications. The coding and analysis phase followed a multi-phased approach with four rounds of coding using the software NVivo. A Coding Rule Book was developed to ensure rigour and reliability during the coding process.

The conceptualisation of benevolence in a for-profit setting focused on defining benevolence, the existing measures used, unpacking the antecedents of benevolence, the possible contextual variables between benevolence and its impacts, and unpacking the impacts of benevolence on an interorganisational level. Figure 1 gives an overview of the conceptual framework of BBP.

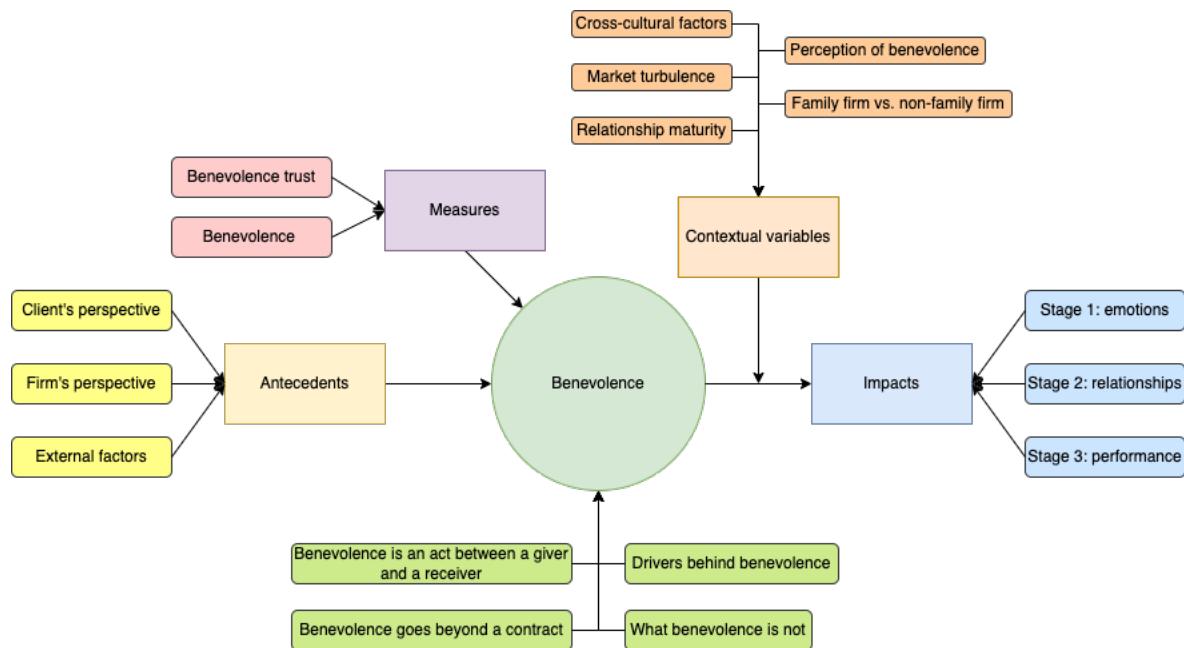


Figure 1. Overview conceptual model of BBP

Direct definitions of benevolence were used to unpack its characteristics and to propose a new integrated definition. The definitions are analysed and categorised into themes and sub-themes, which helps in proposing the integrated definition. Four main themes were developed: (1) benevolence is an act between a giver and a receiver, (2) benevolence goes beyond a contract, (3) what benevolence is not, and (2) drivers behind benevolence. The integrated definition of benevolence is as follows: "**Benevolence is an act that goes beyond contractual terms between a giver and a receiver that is beneficial, in the interest, welfare and wellbeing of the receiver, and entails behaviour of warmth, fairness, impartiality, patience, politeness, and tolerance from the giver**".

The analysis of existing measures revealed two main categories: "general or generic benevolence" and "benevolence as a trust dimension", however no clear distinction was found between them. Many measurement items were based on earlier works, however, the types of benevolence lacked overall support. Validity and reliability were important aspects for assessing survey items through Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted of the construct. While some CR values raised concerns, most of the measurement items met acceptable standards. Better measurement items are needed to capture the full extent of benevolence, including its degree, antecedents, impacts, and contextual factors.

The antecedents of benevolence were synthesised by compiling keywords from data strings and grouping them into higher-level themes and categories. The antecedents are classified into three sources: the client's perspective, the firm's perspective, and external factors. The client's perspective consists of client's expectations and attitude, client's trust, client's prior history with the firm, and client's perception of the firm. The firm's perspective consists of the firm's perception of the client, the firm's intended relationships, the firm's values and purposes, the firm's operations, the firm's investments, the firm's communication,

and the firm's commitment. External factors influencing benevolence include helpfulness in a crisis and the framing of the situation, which beyond the control of the firm or the client. These aspects covered in the antecedents contribute to shaping the perception of benevolence in a business context.

The contextual variables play a crucial role in understanding the dynamics and outcomes of benevolent relationships. The contextual variables are cross-cultural factors, market turbulence, family firms, perceptions of benevolence, and relationship duration. There hasn't been much research on potential contextual variables, indicating the need for further exploration and understanding to gain a fuller view of benevolence in relationships.

The impacts of benevolence in business exchanges, encounters, and relationship are categorised into three stages: the emotional outcomes experienced by the customer due to benevolent acts, the influence of benevolence on relationships, and the potential impact on the organization's return. The first stage – emotional effects – includes alleviating the customer's perceived risk, enhancing trust, creating a sense of credibility, the feeling of indebtedness, and overconfidence in the benevolent act. The second stage – relationship – includes creation of new relationships, strengthen of existing relationship, relationship independent of duration, opportunism, reduced involvement, and openings for negative behaviours. The third stage – performance – includes customer perspective, financial perspective, and overall firm performance. The impacts of benevolence are not limited to a single stage but progress over time, influencing different aspects of the relationship and firm performance. The positive and negative impacts may be interconnected, with the effects of benevolence in one stage influencing subsequent stages. However, not all benevolent acts will lead to positive impacts in all stages, and there may be instances where negative feelings or behaviours arise from acts of benevolence.

This research emphasizes the need and opportunity for integrating benevolence into routine business processes to prioritize customer well-being and create long-term payoffs. This study proposes a more integrated and comprehensive definition of benevolence and identifies the need for validation in future research. Many studies lacked validity testing, and future research should focus on developing more appropriate and distinct measures for benevolence. Antecedents of benevolence were categorized into client, firm, and external factors, but some remained vague and needed more concrete support. This research also suggests exploring negative aspects of benevolence in future studies. The study identifies three stages of benevolent impacts, where performance-related outcomes are not guaranteed and requires a strategic and processual perspective. This research highlights the need to investigate contextual factors, such as cross-cultural aspects and perception of benevolence, to gain a deeper understanding of benevolence in various contexts.

The implications for practice suggest that the research provides organisations with a framework that incorporates key elements of BBP that can help practitioners understand the importance of benevolence in BPM and how it can benefit both the organisation and its stakeholders. By adopting a more humane and cooperative mentality, organisations can enhance customer loyalty, purchase intentions, cooperation, and longevity of business relationships.

This study bridges the gap in the literature by providing a comprehensive and accurate definition of benevolence and a deep conceptualisation of BBP. The research suggests several directions for future studies, including exploring how to achieve the antecedents of BBP, understanding the contextual factors influencing benevolence and its impacts, developing measures for BBP, validating the research through qualitative methods, and finding ways to implement BBP into organisational processes.



## Abbreviations

B2B	Business-to-business
B2C	Business-to-consumer
BBP	Benevolent Business Process(es)
BPM	Business Process Management
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
OCB	Organisational citizen behaviour
QUT	Queensland University of Technology
Rep	Organisation's representative, such as a salesperson or purchaser
RoBI	Return on Benevolent Investments
SLR	Structured Literature Review
TU/e	Eindhoven University of Technology

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Problem context

BPM has been defined by authors as a practice that is devoted to the understanding and shaping of how organisations conduct and continuously improve their way of working (vom Brocke et al., 2023). In essence, BPM deals with the development of an extensive set of capabilities that support the development of processes to deliver unique strategic objectives. Until now, BPM has been concentrated on process efficiency and effectiveness which are measured by time, cost, or quality metrics. However, changing demand patterns and affordability of digital technologies lead to new objectives as an entirely new set of conditions for BPM- one such objective is to integrate human centricity that goes beyond profitability. These objectives include business processes that are not only scalable (e.g., cloud computing), ubiquitous (e.g., mobile), personalised (e.g., artificial intelligence), socio-material (e.g., Internet of Things), traceable (e.g., process mining and block chain), virtualised (e.g., augmented reality), but also being ethical, sustainable, trusted, agile, explainable, and inclusive (vom Brocke et al., 2023).

Today's digitalisation has a great impact on companies, people, processes and stakeholders involved. Digital transformation is no longer optional; it is becoming an integral aspect of most companies (Human et al., 2022). Trends such as Industry 5.0 uses the power of digitalisation with a focus on human-centred approaches and tackling societal needs (Leng et al., 2022). There is a call to promote a safe and inclusive economic system that prioritises overall human wellbeing (Xu et al., 2021). In the community of information systems, there is a call for an applied human-centred approach in digital transformation, that increasingly focusses on humans' needs, values and experiences (Human et al., 2022). There is a growing awareness of non-financial value, however, companies often opt for a technology-driven method that focusses on profit rather than on human-centricity and kindness (Mercier & Deslandes, 2020). This arise from companies that are hesitant to forsake short-term profits and a lack of well-defined concepts, methodologies, and approaches to effectively realise and apply human-centricity and prioritise focus on human values and needs (Human et al., 2022).

Further, vom Brocke et al. (2023) pointed out that dominating process lifecycle models and embedded methods are necessary but are no longer sufficient as the power of digitalisation that is focused on human centricity is becoming more prominent. Thus, new factors of concerns and opportunity in business processes need to be seized, understood, and dealt with. Vom Brocke et al. (2023) calls for contributions to help explore and shape the new era of BPM where researchers need to think differently. The new era of BPM should include digital technology for the creation of new value propositions that go past common corporate shareholders' interest and go beyond being only compliant and humane towards customers and business partners (vom Brocke et al., 2023), such as benevolence.

This research is different than existing studies as it dives deep into literature on benevolence and collects all the different pieces that are scattered between studies and try make a puzzle of it. It will unpack the characteristics of benevolence, which will help to conceptually define benevolence. Afterwards, it will also look at existing measure of benevolence. Moreover, it will compare the different antecedents and impacts that is presented in prior studies and an attempt will be made to

place together to propose a BBP framework as the first block to continue investigating benevolence in a for-profit context.

### 1.1. Problem statement and research objectives

*There is a call for more human-centric approaches in the digital transformations of BPM that entails a new way of thinking with regards to process performance and purpose that goes beyond profit merit.* The objective of this research is to synthesise the current knowledge regarding corporate benevolence, derive a novel understanding on how business processes can embed benevolence in corporate day-to-day operations, and present a research agenda for future research on benevolent business processes (BBP). Moreover, this conceptualisation will specifically focus on the antecedents, the characteristics, defining BBP, and the impact of BBP.

The secondary objective is to enlighten organisations that there are other ways of ‘doing good’ to others in their environment that is not related to the traditional cost and time and a new way of managing their business processes. Moreover, it gives other researchers an opportunity and a first step to continue to research BBP further. In short, the research objective is as follows: *extending research on BPM by looking at how BPM can be made more complete by conceptualising benevolent business processes (BBP) to show customers and business partners of for-profit organisations their human-centric side and that they care.*

### 1.2. Research questions

Following the problem context, problem statement and research objective, the following research question has been constructed:

**“How can benevolence become an integral part of an organisations’ operational processes?”**

Three sub questions have been constructed to help answer this driving research question. The objective is to better understand the concept of benevolence in a business process by synthesising how organisational benevolence is defined by other researchers and why is it important to businesses. The first sub-question: **“What is benevolent business process?”**. This question will include what a BBP is, its characteristics, and how it has been measures so far. The second sub-question: **“How are benevolent business processes manifested?”**. This question will focus on the antecedents and contextual factors of benevolence and will investigate how benevolence can be achieved or created. The third sub-question: **“What does benevolent business process contribute to?”**. This question will help with the understanding the importance and what the implications could look like when integrating benevolence into the operations of a for-profit organisation.

### 1.3. Scope

The notion of benevolence is often mentioned as a part or a complement to conceptualisations that involve organizations acting ethically and assuming responsibility, such as corporate social responsibility (CSR), goodwill, or organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) (Bhattacharya et al., 2021; Chernev & Blair, 2015). Moreover, benevolence has been researched so far mostly in a not-for-profit context. Additionally, there is a call to integrate a human-centric aspect into BPM to make it more complete and as a prominent aspect of the transition of digitalisation of organisations. Therefore, this

research is scoped to include only for-profit organisations and specifically in the context of inter-organisation such as business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C). With is, this research is aimed at **benevolence manifested between for-profit organisation by looking at the process level of their operations**. The context of intra-organisation, such as employer-to-employee or manager-to-employee, will be out of scope for this research. Moreover, areas such as governance, benevolence typical to health care provisioning (e.g., in nursing), or CSR will be out of scope as these concepts are different to benevolence in a for-profit interorganisational context. Furthermore, the initial literature pool will include publications from approximately the last quarter of the century (after 2000 onwards) to maintain recency. An exception is the crucial studies coming from the backward searching that happen to be published before the year 2000.

#### 1.4. Research design

Research design contains decisions about how to achieve research goal, linking theories, questions, and goals to appropriate resources and methods (Jaakkola, 2020). Success of a research depends on clear understanding of the concepts (Goel et al., 2022; Goel et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2016) as unclear concepts with ambiguous meaning will jeopardise validity, hinder quality of research outcome and complicate comparison and accumulation of knowledge area (Goel et al., 2022; Goel et al., 2023). A conceptualisation entails a definition of a concept that captures its dimensions thereby communicating what it is (Goel et al., 2022; Goel et al., 2023; MacKenzie et al., 2011), which can then be used to understand measures and operationalise constructs in future research (Goel et al., 2022). Burton-Jones & Straub (2006) suggest identifying the 'structure' of the concept as a first step towards conceptualisation. The research design is based on conceptualisation theories and method.

The methodology starts with a problem definition, where the problem or domain at hand will be explained. Afterwards, a SLR was conducted to capture all relevant literature in the scope of this research. Hereon, a literature profiling was conducted to understand the literature pool of the SLR. After this, an extensive synthesis of knowledge of prior literature was used to build on and define the concept of benevolence in a for-profit context. From the synthesis, initial ideas and propositions were derived. These initial ideas followed theorising concepts of Cornelissen (2017). Additionally, the definition of benevolence will be judged by the rules proposed by Wacker (2004) on conceptual definition and the principles proposed by Zhang et al. (2016) on facet definitional theory.

Research rigour is an important aspect in academic research, and to ensure this research is rigorous several methods were applied. This research made use of conceptualisation methods from published authors. Additionally, the review of the literature is a structured literature review (SLR). Further, the communication of this research will be a master thesis and papers submitted to the BPM conference and journal.

#### 1.5. Thesis outline

This report will be structured as follows.

Chapter 1 has given a brief introduction and motivation for conducting this research. Moreover, the objectives and research question has been justified.

Chapter 0 will elaborate on related literature to the topic of this research.



Chapter 3 describes the research design in detail. This includes the SLR methodology, and literature profiling.

Chapter 4 will contain the findings of the literature review and the conceptualisation of BBP.

Chapter 5 will present the discussion, limitations, and future research.

Chapter 6 will provide a conclusion and summary contributions for practice and research.

## 2. Related literature

This chapter gives a short explanation of the related literature to support this research's motivation. Since this research is an extensive SLR, a more detailed literature review is outlined in Chapter 3 with its findings presented in Chapter 4. This chapter is designed to further argue the need to study this topic and argue that benevolence is different to other similar concepts.

### 2.1. Literature to support the Study Motivation

This section explains the importance of this research and why it is different of existing literature on benevolence.

There is limited research conducted solely on benevolence in a corporate setting, such as Schoenherr & Wagner, 2016; Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000; Wang & Jap, 2017. However, there is substantial research conducted on trust and trustworthiness, where benevolence, benevolence trust, goodwill or goodwill trust is used as either an antecedent or a dimension of these constructs, such as Franklin & Marshall, 2019; Jiang et al., 2015; Kantsperger & Kunz, 2010. However, benevolence has not been investigated yet in on a process level. Digital transformation is becoming an integral part of organisations with a focus on human-centricity and society (Human et al., 2022; Leng et al., 2022). Moreover, changing demand patterns and affordability of digital technologies lead to new objectives for BPM. Additionally, dominating process lifecycle models and embedded methods are necessary but are no longer sufficient as the power of digitalisation that is focused on human centricity is becoming more prominent. The new era of BPM should include digital technology for the creation of new value propositions that go past common corporate shareholders' interest and go beyond being only compliant and humane towards customers and business partners (vom Brocke et al., 2023), such as benevolence.

Some researchers argue that goodwill is a part of benevolence and benevolence is a part of trust or a dimension of trust. The gap in the literature regarding benevolence is that it has merely been researched as a concept in a corporate setting. Additionally, benevolence should be researched on both perspective, such as buyer and supplier since it is a reciprocal concept. Besides, the possible negative impacts or effects of benevolence have not yet been researched. It should be noted that research on the positive impacts of benevolence without linking it to other concepts such as trust has not been conducted yet (Kantsperger & Kunz, 2010). Research on benevolence in non-profit context seems promising and could be also investigated on a for-profit context. However, most of research only focus on the positive side of benevolence. As pointed out by Kantsperger & Kunz (2010) and Wang & Jap (2017) there is a potential side effect of benevolence that should also be researched.

First, Beveridge & Höllerer (2023) have researched benevolence in an organisational setting. However, they researched prosocial organisational behaviour where the objective is non-economic. Though, their research did not unpack the antecedents, characteristics, or impacts of benevolence in organisations.

Second, Wang & Jap (2017) researched benevolence in a B2B context. They propose three types of benevolence, namely affective – a desire, calculative – a need, and normative – an obligation. Moreover, they propose that powerful firms may act as a 'benevolent dictator', which is defined as an undemocratic or authoritarian leader who has a dominant power, but who is focused on the gain of

both parties and who is committed to maintaining peaceful relationships with the other parties. To be noted, they pointed out that altruism and trust are different concepts than benevolence, which contradicts the research of other authors that stated that benevolence is a dimension, facet, or characteristic of trust. They argued that altruism engages in potentially self-destructive behaviours for the benefit of others, and trust implies honesty, integrity, expertise, and dependence, which does not necessarily imply benevolence.

Third, Liff & Wahlström (2017) also researched benevolence in B2B setting. They propose that there is a difference between thin and thick trust and implied that goodwill is a form of thick trust. Specifically, they argue that thick trust is person-based and constitutes of the benevolence dimension of trust. Moreover, they insinuated that benevolence depends on immediate competitors and the long-standing business relationship.

Fourth, benevolence have been researched between a focal firm and its suppliers such as the research of Selnes & Gønhaug (2000) and Schoenherr & Wagner (2016). However, these researched do not unpack benevolence as a whole. Selnes & Gønhaug (2000) focused only the effect of benevolence in supplier benevolence in business marketing and Schoenherr & Wagner (2016) focused on the effect of benevolence in supplier involvement on product development. Hence, they did not cover the antecedents nor characteristics that involves benevolence.

Fifth, Lin et al. (2018), among others, point out that benevolence is considered as an antecedent of trust. Trust is pervasive in social life and a basic element of both intimate and distant interpersonal relations and an asset for businesses. With such significant effects of trust, where benevolence is a key part in the creation of trust, it is an utmost necessity to also research benevolence on its own to find to out the impacts it has on business relationships as research on trust did not cover this.

Last, there are several authors who defined benevolence. Different research defined benevolence in another way using different aspects and having a different context. However, benevolence has not been research in a way to unpack and compare different studies to propose a more complete and coherent definition for benevolence in a for-profit corporate setting. Moreover, Wang & Jap (2017) suggest some direction for future research such as the long-term benefits of benevolence, i.e., the long-term impacts for benevolence. Additionally, Schoenherr & Wagner (2016) point out that the negative side of benevolence even in relation to trust has been overlooked and disregarded in research.

Benevolence is concept that is focused on human-centricity and kindness and could be used within organisations. Benevolence comes from the Latin words 'bene' and 'volens,' which means 'wanting the good' (Mercier & Deslandes, 2020) Benevolence is caring for the other party, which manifests in actions that go beyond contractual aspects (Bhattacharya et al., 2021; Chernev & Blair, 2015). The notion of benevolence is often mentioned as a part or a complement to conceptualisations that involve organizations acting ethically and assuming responsibility, such as corporate social responsibility (CSR), goodwill, or organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB) (Bhattacharya et al., 2021; Chernev & Blair, 2015). Although these concepts aim to enhance organisational outputs with the customers and societies good in mind, such as reduced perceived purchase risk or enhanced loyalty (Aaker et al., 2010; Bhattacharya et al., 2021), there are difference in their scope. CSR, OCB, and goodwill represent broader concepts that encompass an organization's responsibility toward multiple stakeholders and society as a whole. Importantly, several research has been conducted about the

impacts that benevolence could have for a firm, such customer loyalty, sales revenue, and firm credibility. However, no research has been conducted yet of benevolence integrated within business processes. Accordingly, benevolence should be integrated into BPM. There are current discussions going on about independent separate processes, such as CSR, that are not completely integrated in BPM (vom Brocke et al., 2023). These processes make BPM disconnected and thus make it difficult for benevolence to be a key aspect of BPM. Benevolence has a narrower focus as it centres on a genuine concern for the individuals' well-being. Benevolence entails more than just being complaint, humane and ethical towards the other side, may it be customers or business partners. An example of benevolent act: a customer that bought a laptop receives a free laptop case from the retailer, which is not a promotion (Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014). Benevolence is still a new phenomenon in the business setting and should still be conceptualised and build on. Organisations should engage more benevolently towards their customers and business partners to build more long lasting, meaningful relationships based on trust and commitment (Gefen & Straub, 2004; Kumar et al., 1995b; Liff & Wahlström, 2017; Oliveira et al., 2017; Wang & Jap, 2017). Liff & Wahlström (2017) signalled that benevolence leads to thick trust, which seems to sustain a relationship during a crisis that helps maintain longer relationships.

This research views benevolence as a concept to realize the vision of human centrality in the digital age. An attempt is made to populate the idea of benevolent business processes (BPP), which holds a distinct focus on kindness and human-centrality demonstrated within the operational aspects of businesses, especially in relation to serving customers and business partners. This is especially relevant as most of the benevolence literature is within the non-profit context, whereas this research investigates the concept in a for-profit setting, driven to understand benevolence while generating profit. In this research a 'theoretical literature review' (as per Paré et al., 2015) is produced, which conceptualises the characteristics, antecedents, contextual factors, and the impacts of benevolent processes in a for-profit organisational context. The decision to limit the review to for-profit literature aligns with the business process lens, which assumes that a business's routine operations are driven by expectations of certain return. In this context, benevolence is seen as an organisation that demonstrates its commitment to the well-being of its customers and business partners by sacrificing short-term profits, with the aim of achieving a later payoff, such as increased customer loyalty or advocacy.

Moreover, there have been more research into doing things differently recently, such as "do good by the customers" and to use "technology for good" (Rosemann et al., 2023). This perspective led to creation of positive impact on customers' advocacy, retention, and engagement. Rosemann et al. (2023) pointed out that organisations need to move away from time, cost, and quality metrics to other types of measurement that are not financially focused and are less tangible such as customer loyalty and customer advocacy. Rosemann et al. (2023) have suggested that organisations should consider the viewpoint of customer and their well-being by integrating benevolence into their business processes. Recently, shared values, conscious capitalism, and purpose-led organisation have been receiving more attention due to the changing BPM. These are all concepts that could be a part of a BBP.

## 2.2. Benevolence and related concepts

There are several concepts that are somewhat related to benevolence, but still different to benevolence. In this subsection, the related concepts of goodwill, trust and trustworthiness, gratitude, and humanity will be discussed.

### Goodwill

Goodwill has been defined as completion of task beyond what is required and agreed to ((Dowell et al., 2015). It also presumes positive orientation, motives and intentions to the other party. Moreover, these aspects of goodwill are what Liff & Wahlström (2017) refer to as thick trust. The characteristics of goodwill mentioned are all aspects that are a piece of benevolence. Several researchers argue that benevolence is similar to being responsive and having goodwill towards another party (McKnight et al., 2002; Seyedghorban et al., 2021). Benevolence arises out of goodwill that partners will act objectively (Acquah et al., 2021; Minerbo et al., 2018). However, benevolence do not entail only these aspects. Benevolence concerns partner's motives such as goodwill intention, but also caring and altruism (Cho, 2006), but also genuine concern for the other party (Gu et al., 2019). Moreover, some authors such as Johnson et al. (1996) used goodwill among other aspects to define benevolence. Furthermore, Rosemann et al. (2023) pinpoint that a company that demonstrate goodwill is potentially trust-building as it puts the customer's wellbeing above immediate revenue opportunities. Also, Roy et al. (2004) use goodwill and benevolence trust interchangeably. In this research, goodwill is seen as an aspect of benevolence among other aspects.

### Trust

Research on trust and trustworthiness have received a lot of attention. Benevolence is a commonly used as a characteristic of trust (Kantsperger & Kunz, 2010). Mayer et al. (1995) proposed the ABI model of trust that have widely been used in research on trust by for example Doney & Cannon (1997), Hong & Cho (2011), and Oliveira et al. (2017), where the "b" stands for benevolence as a criterion of trustworthiness. Benevolence has been used as an aspect of the definition of trust (Acquah et al., 2021), a dimension of trust (Bove et al., 2009; Ganesan, 1994), or an impact of trust (Cho, 2006). Cho (2006) suggests that benevolence is likely to a trust-producing factor who positive effects build trust.

### Gratitude

Reciprocating benevolence has been seen as a form of gratitude, thus an effect of a benevolent act. Gratitude has been defined as a voluntary, emotional response that arises from the recognition that a benefit has been received from the other party (Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014).

### Humanity

Humanity has been used by Anwer et al. (2020) interchangeably with benevolence. Anwer et al. (2020) argue that humanity represents humaneness and benevolence. However, even though they used these terms interchangeably, one can argue that benevolence is one piece of humanity, but not completely the same.

### 3. Methods

In this section, the research methodology will be explained. This research follows an integrated conceptualisation method with an extensive SLR methodology and a literature profiling.

#### 3.1. Conceptualisation methodology

Research design contains decisions about how to achieve research goal, linking theories, questions, and goals to appropriate resources and methods (Jaakkola, 2020). It is a plan for collecting and analysing evidence that helps to answer the research question and improve the usability of the research (Jaakkola, 2020). These are crucial to conceptual research and is solely based on existing literature on benevolence.

The goal of conceptual research is to create knowledge by building on selected sources based on a set of norms. Conceptual research focus primarily on theoretical development, such as theoretical syntheses that includes new ideas as novel theories. Conceptual research plays a key role in the context of idea generation in the discovery phase that could initiate theory development (Yadav, 2010). Conceptualisation help to describe a phenomenon and is an essential pre-requisite to building theory (Goel et al., 2023; Van de Ven, 2007). Moreover, success of a research depends on clear understanding of the concepts (Goel et al., 2022; Goel et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2016) as unclear concepts with ambiguous meaning will jeopardise validity, hinder quality of research outcome and complicate comparison and accumulation of knowledge area (Goel et al., 2022; Goel et al., 2023). A conceptualisation entails a definition of a concept that captures its dimensions thereby communicating what it is (Goel et al., 2022; Goel et al., 2023; MacKenzie et al., 2011), which can then be used to understand measures and operationalise constructs in future research (Goel et al., 2022). Undetected failure to adequately define a concept may result in invalid conclusions about relationships with other constructs due to deficient indicators (Goel et al., 2023; MacKenzie et al., 2011), hence producing unreliable theoretical conclusions. Burton-Jones & Straub (2006) suggest identifying the ‘structure’ of the concept as a first step towards conceptualisation.

Clearly defined concept is not a straightforward task (Cornelissen, 2017) Moreover, many researchers neglect to clearly define focal concepts in the research process (MacKenzie et al., 2011). Zhang et al., (2016) argue that concepts should be precisely defined since it would otherwise be not possible to distinguish which phenomena the theory can apply and to which it cannot. Conceptual research uses established theories and concepts as data to generate novel insights where the unit of analysis is the perspective of the researcher and the level of analysis. Furthermore, the data gathered from existing literature is translated to a target phenomenon and used for defining key concepts by integrating knowledge from prior studies (Jaakkola, 2020). Therefore, a research design based on conceptualisation will be followed for this research, which is depicted in Figure 2.

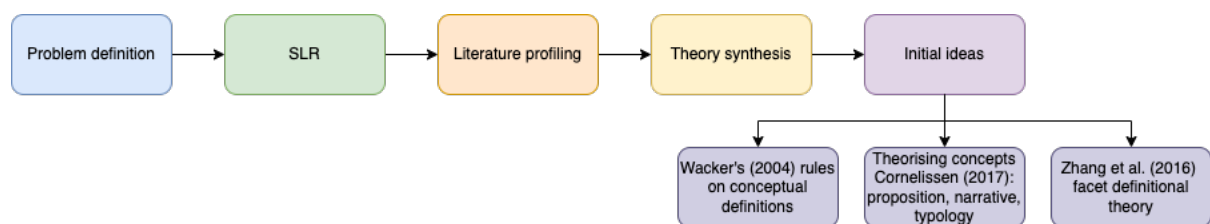


Figure 2. Overview of research design.

The context of discovery is related to the conception of new ideas or to the creative synthesis of existing ideas (Yadav, 2010). However, much less is known about how the output of the discovery phase should be evaluated. Therefore, Yadav (2010) suggested multifaceted roles for theory development. This entails a context of discovery which consists of knowledge developed stages. It starts with a problem definition. After the problem is clearly defined, a SLR will be performed to capture all relevant papers in the scope of this research followed by a literature profiling to understand the papers. Hereafter, a synthesis of the existing literature will be performed. Jaakkola (2020) suggests theory synthesis as it seeks to achieve conceptual integration across multiple literature streams. This research type offers a new or enhanced view of a concept by linking previously unconnected or incompatible pieces in a novel way by summarising and integrating current understanding of a concept, which seeks to increase understanding of a relatively narrow concept. After this, initial will be created that is based on Yadav's (2010) context of discovery framework. This method uses analogy by comparing with prior knowledge, invokes a theory type that explore a phenomenon and leverage an established theory to explore a phenomenon, and uses interrelations by combining previously unconnected fields or bodies of knowledge (Yadav, 2010).

Following the initial ideas, Cornelissen (2017) styles for theorising concepts will be followed. First, a proposition-based style of theorising is a statement of a theoretical concept that introduces new terms and cause-effect relationship. It entails a formal idiom that formalises contingencies around a subject into basic cause-effect relationships that act as broad signposts and implication for future research. This style broadens the scope of the propositions with a novel set of assumptions as theorised ground as it summarises the prior literature. Second, a narrative-based style of theorising is a specifying a process model that lays out a set of mechanisms explaining events and outcomes. It explains the subject and its potential outcomes around a generalised mechanism, as the underlying storyline of a process model. This style elaborates the underlying conceptual linkages of a process model, foregrounding a clear mechanism or set of mechanisms, and it strengthen the explanatory potential. Third, specifying a typology that interrelates different dimension to flesh out new concepts and causal interactions. It entails a categorisation that explains the fuzzy nature of many subjects by logically and casually combining different constructs into a coherent and explanatory set of types. This type develops the typology by incorporating multiples theoretical dimensions. Moreover, the typology is descriptive, systematises, and summarises existing research, which is based on categorising and clustering ideas and observations for a multidimensional view. These three styles can be used to unpack the definitions, characteristics, antecedents, and impacts of benevolence.

Specifically for the definition, Wacker (2004) and Zhang et al. (2016) propose some rules for good and adequate definitions and concepts. Wacker (2004) argue that definitions must be carefully designed to clearly represent the abstract concept. 'Good' formal conceptual definitions should be exhibiting inclusivity, exclusivity, differentiability, clarity, communicability, consistency, and parsimony. 'Good' measure of concept cannot be built before the clear conceptual definition passes the rules of the formation for definitions. When 'bad' formal conceptual are used, there are three additional conceptual difficulties. These conceptual difficulties are (a) unclear measures, (b) definitional overlap, and (c) loss of causality. First, 'bad' conceptual definitions do not pass the rules for good conceptual definitions since they are ambiguous, vague, and unclear causing these concepts to lead to a multitude of measures. Therefore, Wacker (2004) proposed eight rules to develop good definitions, which is presented in Table 1. Zhang et al. (2016) proposed that facet theory can be used for definitions. Zhang

et al. (2016) adapted the principles of the facet definitional framework by McGrath (1968) so that these can be applied to defining concepts.

Table 1. Overview of conceptualisation rules and principles

Wacker's (2004) conceptual definition rules	Zhang et al. (2016) facet definitional principles
1. Definitions should be formally defined using primitive and derived terms. Primitive terms are not defined and are assumed to be understood by the academic field. Derived terms are composed of primitive terms and/or other derived terms.	P1: Concepts in a content universe should be specified in terms of all relevant facets.
2. Each concept should be uniquely defined. It should exclude (as many as possible) shared terms with other definitions to reduce confusion with related concepts.	P2: The facets, collectively, should be logically exhaustive of the content universe.
3. Definitions should include only unambiguous and clear terms.	P3: The logical relationships among facets should be specified; independence among facets is preferred.
4. Definitions should have as few terms as possible in the conceptual definition to avoid violating the parsimony virtue of 'good' theory.	P4: Each facet should be analysed into a set of collectively exhaustive elements.
5. Definitions should be consistent within the production/operations management field. That is, formal conceptual definitions should be as similar as possible between studies.	P5: Each facet should be analysed into a set of mutually exclusive elements.
6. Definitions should not make any term broader and less exclusive.	P6: The logical relationships among elements of a facet should be specified.
7. New hypotheses cannot be introduced in the definitions.	P7: The relationships among the concepts defined according to the facets and the elements of facets should correspond to the focal phenomenon.
8. Statistical tests for content validity must be performed after the terms are formally defined.	

Research rigour is an important aspect in academic research. To make sure this research is rigorous several methods have been applied. This research makes use of conceptualisation methods from published authors. Additionally, the review of the literature is a SLR. Further, the communication of this research will be a master thesis and papers submitted to the BPM conference and journal.

### 3.2. Structured Literature Review (SLR) methodology

A systematic literature review was conducted, following the guideline of (Bandara et al., 2011; Bandara et al., 2015; Barends & Rousseau, 2018; Randolph, 2009). An overview of the literature search process can be seen in Figure 3. In step 1, a pilot search was conducted to identify databases and to define search string. In step 2, five databases were selected. In step 3, the final search string was identified. In step 4, the inclusion and exclusion criteria were defined. In step 5, the search was performed, which resulted into 164 papers. This was followed by the elimination process consisted of elimination of duplicates in step 6, which resulted into 124 papers; reading the title, abstract and keywords in step 7, which resulted into 121 papers; and reading the full text in step 8, which consisted of 36 papers. Hereafter, the backward and forward search was performed in step 9, which resulted



into a total 45 papers. In step 10, the research was further scoped, which resulted into the final pool of 36 papers. The last step was to code, extract, and synthesise the data and findings of the SLR. In the next paragraph the steps will be explained more thoroughly.

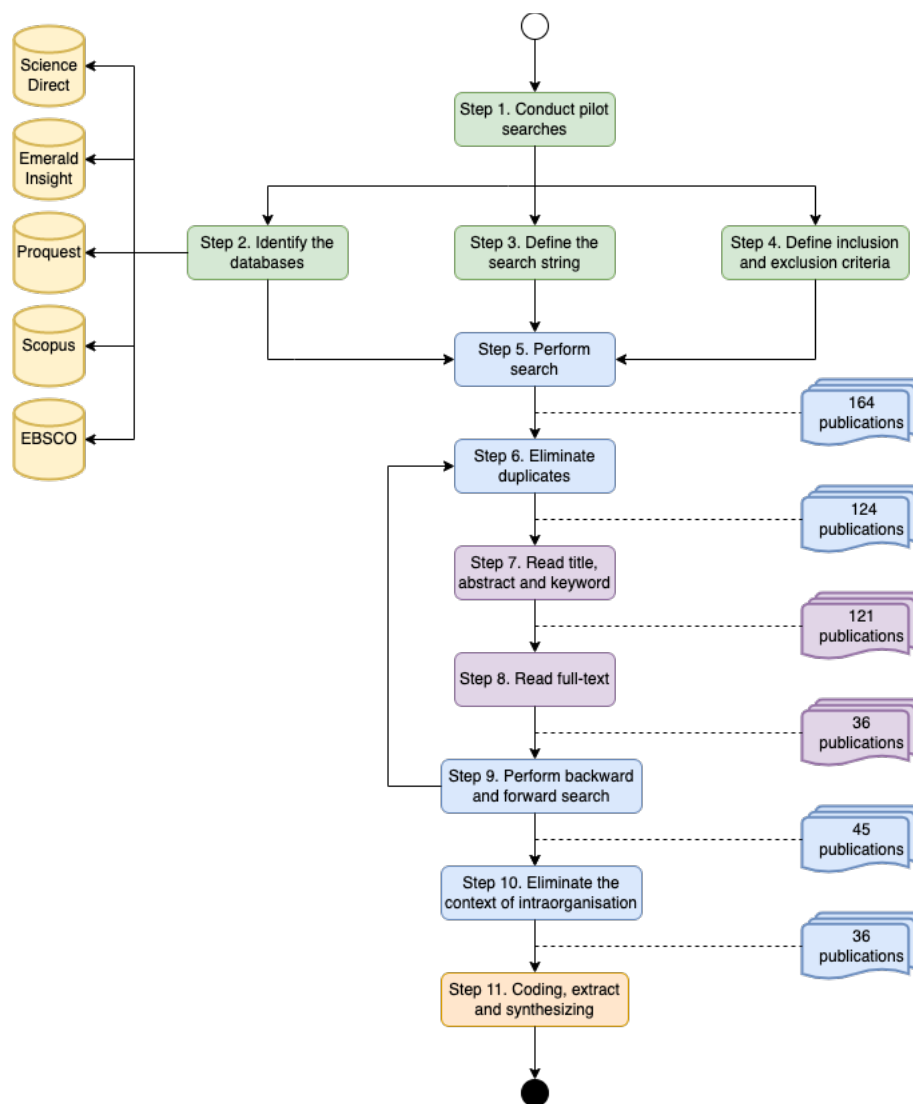


Figure 3. The literature search process and the resulting number of publications.

### Paper extraction

Aligned to the abovementioned goals and scope, the literature search focused on corporate benevolence, specifically in the for-profit context, from which relevant insights to conceptualise BBP could be drawn. The *first, second and third step* of Figure 3 were to conduct a pilot search, to choose the databases, and to define the search string. During the *first and second step* a basic search of “benevolence business process” and “benevolent business process” were conducted using Google Scholar to find out which databases and journals were more applicable and prominent to use. During this search, it confirmed the assumptions that there was no research conducted on BBP. The papers focused on either benevolence or business process separately. The most applicable journals were BPM, business research, organisational behaviour, business ethics, and management. The databases Emerald Insight, Business Premium Collection (Proquest), EBSCO, Scopus, and Science

Direct were chosen based on suggestions by Bandara et al. (2011) for IS topics and suggestions provided by TU/e. However, none of the included papers were from the database of EBSCO. This database had been redundant and was not needed in the search of this research topic. All these databases form part of the field of business and social science. Hereafter, a basic search of “benevolen\* business process” was piloted for the *third step* to find out the most common synonyms of the terms “benevolence”, “business”, and “process”. The most eminent synonyms can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Benevolent business process and synonyms.

Terms	Synonyms
Benevolence	Compassion, goodwill, kind, care, humane, socially conscious, thoughtful, generous
Business	Corporation, company, firm, enterprise, industry, organisation
Process	Action, operation, procedure, technique

Afterwards the search string was defined using the synonyms. The search string is as follows:

*(benevolen\* OR compassion\* OR goodwill OR kind\* OR car\* OR humane OR social\* conscious OR thoughtful\* OR generous) AND (business OR corporat\* OR company OR firm OR enterpris\* OR industr\* OR organi?ation OR process\* OR action\* OR operation\* OR procedure\* OR technique\*).*

This search string used wildcards and truncation for a more complete search. Based on the pilot search, it seemed better to merge the synonyms of ‘business’ and ‘process’ to capture the most relevant papers. During the pilot search, it became evident that when search synonyms of ‘business’ and ‘process’ using the ‘AND’ Boolean operator, the results were very limited since there has not been much research conducted on benevolence in a business process. However, when we searched ‘business’ and ‘process’ using the ‘OR’ Boolean operator, more literature could be captured. Some databases had a constrained on the length of the search string and therefore had to be split into several parts. Additionally, a lot of literature were found with the synonyms of benevolence, therefore a second search was performed without the synonyms of benevolence to find more concise literature.

During our pilot search it became evident that when search synonyms of ‘business’ and ‘process’ using the ‘AND’ Boolean operator, the results were very limited since there has not been much research conducted on benevolence in a business process. However, when we searched ‘business’ and ‘process’ using the ‘OR’ Boolean operator, more literature could be captured. Some databases had a constrained on the length of the search string and therefore had to be split into several parts. An overview of the search string for each database can be seen in Appendix 1.

For the *fourth step*, the inclusion and exclusion criteria were defined. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied in step 7 and step 8. In step 7 these criteria were applied after reading the abstract, title and keywords. This step had seven inclusion criteria. Firstly, the abstract must mention benevolence or one of its synonyms in a corporate setting. For example, goodwill acts and behaviour between a retailer and their customers. An example that was rejected, was goodwill in an accountancy context of an organisation where they use goodwill as a donation which can be seen on a balanced sheet (e.g., Whiting et al., 2017). Secondly, the paper had to be peer-reviewed, which increased the degree of rigour of this research. Thirdly, the paper had to be in the English language. Fourthly, the paper had to be from the year 2000 onwards. According to many resources literature from the last ten years is considered recent (Price et al., 2015). However, since BBP has not been researched yet, it was decided to capture literature from the year 2000 onwards (Greenbaum, 2021; Pautasso, 2013). Fifthly, the

paper had to be published in a journal related to business or business processes. Sixthly, the context of the paper based on abstract, title, and/ or keyword had to be either in an intra-organisation or inter-organisation. These two contexts were used since the scope was to conceptualise BBP in a corporate setting, such as B2C, B2B, or between employer or supervisor and employees. However, further on during the research was scoped to only include inter-organisational context: B2C and B2B. Additionally, the context of organisation in general will be used as supporting paper. Lastly, the subject area of the paper based on abstract, title, and/ or keyword had to be from a for-profit corporate setting which was key to this research. The focus should be about day-to-day core businesses. Any papers that talked about benevolence in other ways, such as corporate social responsibility (CSR) (e.g., Bak et al., 2022) were excluded. Additionally, this step had two exclusion criteria. Firstly, the focus of the paper was not on benevolence or not in the correct context or not in a for-profit corporate setting based on the abstract, title, and/or keyword. For example, a paper that used one of its synonyms in incorrect context, such as goodwill in a corporate setting, but goodwill was in the context of finance. Another example is paper that focused on malevolence but still refers to benevolence in the abstract. A last example is a paper that focused on benevolence in healthcare or social enterprise. Secondly and lastly, a paper is in another language than English.

In step 8 the inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied after reading the full text of the papers. This step had three inclusion criteria. Firstly, the context of the paper based on the full text of the paper had to be either in an intra-organisation or inter-organisation, since these contexts are part of the scope. However, further on during the research was scoped to only include inter-organisational context: B2C and B2B. Additionally, the context of organisation in general will be used as supporting paper. Secondly, the paper had to focus on benevolence in at least one (sub)section of the paper. For example, a paper could focus solely on benevolence or benevolence could be a part of or an antecedent to another concept which are elaborated on in a subsection or section of a paper. Papers that only provided a definition of benevolence were not included. Lastly, the subject area of the paper based on the full text of the paper had to be related to business or business processes which was key to this research. Additionally, this step had four exclusion criteria. Firstly, the focus of the paper was not on benevolence or not in the correct context or not in a for-profit corporate setting based on the full text of the paper. For example, a paper that used one of its synonyms in incorrect context, such as goodwill in a corporate setting, but goodwill was in the context of finance, which could not be devised from the abstract. Another example is paper that focused on malevolence but still refers to benevolence in the full text. A last example is a paper that focused on benevolence in healthcare or social enterprise. Secondly, if benevolence was only mentioned in the full text, but not explained. Thirdly, if a paper mentioned benevolence as keyword, but it was never brought up in the full text of the paper nor any of its synonyms. Lastly, a paper that not accessible in full text by either QUT or TU\e. In this research, only papers accessible by the collaborating universities, QUT and TU\e or that were freely accessible were used.

During the *fifth* step the initial literature search was performed. In each of the databases the complete search string was searched at once or it was split into different part depending on the rules of the database. For example, in Science Direct only eight operators could be used at once and there are no truncation nor wildcards allowed. Appendix 1 gives an overview of how the search string was split into different parts per database. During this step a total of 164 publications were obtained. During the *sixth* step all duplicated were eliminated, which resulted into 124 publications. For the *seventh* step

the title, abstract, and keywords were read to make sure the paper was indeed according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria. This resulted into 121 publications.

For the *eight* step the full text of the papers was read thoroughly to assess if they should be included in the synthesis and analysis of this research according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria. This resulted into 36 publications. During the *ninth* step the most relevant papers were selected to perform a backward and forward snowballing (Wohlin, 2014). Six papers had been selected to perform the backward and forward literature search, which can be seen in Table 3. This selection includes all the papers that were solely about benevolence that were found in the above-mentioned databases: Emerald Insight, Business Premium Collection (Proquest), Scopus, and Science Direct. Only one paper relating to trust was included as this paper really dig deeply into the mediating effect of benevolence whereas the other papers relating to trust only researched about benevolence as a dimension of trust. Moreover, in these papers more data was captured. To make sure no important backward references was left out, the most relevant papers where benevolence was an indirect focus, e.g., benevolence as a dimension of the concept trust, was also considered for the backward and forward search. During backward and forward search, the titles of the papers were skimmed to see if it seemed related to benevolence in some extent. Afterwards, the abstract was also read to eliminate any irrelevant paper. Subsequently, the remaining papers were skimmed and the ones that were still relevant were read thoroughly to complete the whole elimination process. This resulted in a pool of 45 papers.

Table 3. Selected papers for backward and forward search.

Selected papers for backward and forward search	
1.	Fazal e Hasan, S., Lings, I., Neale, L., & Mortimer, G. (2014). The role of customer gratitude in making relationship marketing investments successful. <i>Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services</i> , 21(5), 788–796. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iretconser.2014.06.007">https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iretconser.2014.06.007</a>
2.	Kantsperger, R., & Kunz, W. H. (2010). Consumer trust in service companies: a multiple mediating analysis. <i>Managing Service Quality: An International Journal</i> , 20(1), 4–25. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1108/09604521011011603">https://doi.org/10.1108/09604521011011603</a>
3.	Schoenherr, T., & Wagner, S. M. (2016). Supplier involvement in the fuzzy front end of new product development: An investigation of homophily, benevolence and market turbulence. <i>International Journal of Production Economics</i> , 180, 101–113. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijpe.2016.06.027">https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijpe.2016.06.027</a>
4.	Selnes, F., & Gønhaug, K. (2000). Effects of Supplier Reliability and Benevolence in Business Marketing. <i>Journal of Business Research</i> , 49(3), 259–271. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963(99)00017-X">https://doi.org/10.1016/S0148-2963(99)00017-X</a>
5.	Wang, Q., & Jap, S. (2017). Benevolent dictatorship and buyer-supplier exchange. <i>Journal of Business Research</i> , 78, 204–216. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.12.016">https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2016.12.016</a>
6.	Zhang, C.-B., & Li, Y.-N. (2019). How social media usage influences B2B customer loyalty: roles of trust and purchase risk. <i>Journal of Business &amp; Industrial Marketing</i> , 34(7), 1420–1433. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1108/JBIM-07-2018-0211">https://doi.org/10.1108/JBIM-07-2018-0211</a>

In step *ten* the research was further scoped, where the focus would be only on the interorganisational context, hence all paper in the intra-organisational context were eliminated. These included among others, employer-to-employee, leadership-to-team, and manager-to-employee. After this last step of elimination, the final pool consisted of 36 publications. This last step concluded the literature search process.

## Coding and analysis

The goal was to capture what is already known about benevolence in for-profit corporate setting to conceptualise BBP. The coding and analysis followed a multi-phased approach with four rounds of coding, which can be seen in Figure 4. The coding and analysis were performed by the qualitative data analysis tool – Nvivo. A coding rule book with detailed coding guidelines were derived and adhered to, which were based on Saldaña (2013) and Bandara et al. (2015). Additionally, coder corroboration sessions took place to ensure coding quality and consistency at each coding round. In short, the first round of coding followed a deductive approach based on pre-determined codes. The second level followed an inductive approach using “in vivo” codes. The third level group the codes together to form categories for the conceptualisation of BBP. These three levels are elaborated on in the next paragraphs.

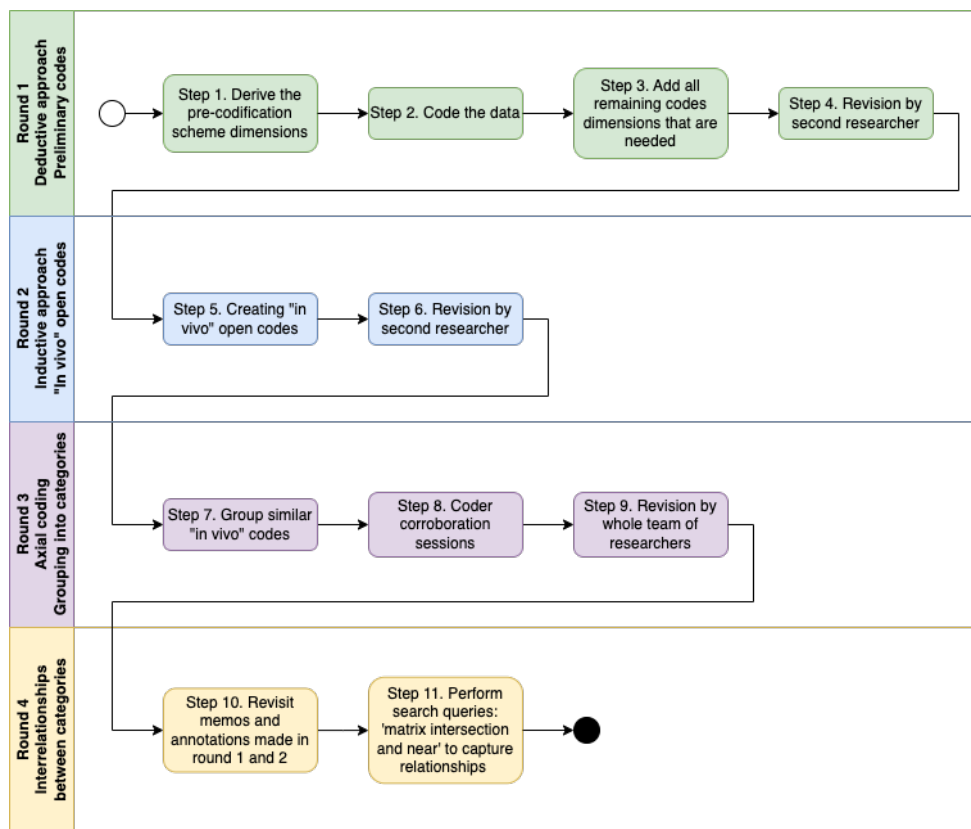


Figure 4. Coding process.

The first round of coding followed a deductive grounded approach through thematic analyses (Bandara et al., 2011; Bandara et al., 2015). This round of coding consisted of deriving preliminary codes and coding the papers under those existing codes. Bandara et al. (2011) and Bandara et al. (2015) suggested some high-level pre-codification scheme for IS literature reviews, such as definitions, objectives, key characteristics, antecedents, and success factors. An adaptation of their pre-codification scheme dimensions was derived: *importance of benevolence, benevolence measures, benevolence attributes, benevolence definition, antecedents of benevolence, impacts of benevolence, supported hypotheses, and future areas that should be researched* (step 1). These codes were filled using Excel to have an overview of the papers. Further on, NVivo was used since this software gave a better overview, was easier to code and was more useful for capturing data from literature. Moreover,

NVivo helps to capture data for the theorizing efforts in a more efficient and effective way, the settings of NVivo can be customized to fit a researcher's needs and desires. Additionally, NVivo also offers the option to start coding with higher level coding followed by sub-coding categories, and to write annotations and memos as the researcher codes to capture thoughts along the process (step 2). Even though, this was a deductive approach, some themes popped up a bit later such as similar concepts to benevolence, theories and models used to research benevolence, examples of benevolence, and dividing the impacts between positive and negative impacts (step 3). All 36 papers from the final pool of papers went through this first round of coding. After this level of completed, a second researcher went through the codes to validate that the data have been coded correctly (step 4).

The second round of coding used an inductive approach, where the coded content under each coded theme in round one was looked at more deeply. Extracted pertinent sentences from each of the paper were once again coding in the form of "in vivo" coding (Bandara et al., 2011; Bandara et al., 2015), where open codes (Corbin & Strauss, 2012) were created. "In vivo" coding is one of the coding strategies proposed and suggested by Saldaña (2013). The codes in the higher level were analysed again and a new code was created with the essence of the line coded. The codes would refer to a word or a short phrase from the actual language found in the line to be coded (Saldaña, 2013). The "in vivo" open codes formed the granular-level data points that started the detailed conceptualisation within each captured in round one. These codes would be the subcodes of the pre-determined codes from the first round of coding (step 5). This level of coding had also been checked by a second researcher to make sure the content coded was aligned to the meta-theme it was meant to be associated with, the labelling captured the intended meaning, and the open codes were at the right level of granularity (step 6).

In the third round of coding, axial coding (Corbin & Strauss, 2012) was used to group the "in vivo" open codes into groups of codes to form high level themes (step 7). After the "in vivo" open codes were grouped to form higher-level themes purely from a data driven approach, coder corroboration sessions took place, where independently derived groupings were evaluated for similarities and differences using constant comparison (step 8). This level of coding had been checked and validated by all the four researchers involved (step 9). This step was crucial to make sure the "in vivo" codes were correctly placed under the derived categories.

Lastly, round four of coding was focused on trying to unveil patterns, inherent interrelationships between themes and other interesting insights. During round one and 2 of coding, memos and annotations were created to capture potential patterns that were indicated by the data points. These memos and annotations were revisited in this round to understand and enrich the conceptual framework and its components (step 10). The resulting themes from round three were used in search queries as 'matrix coding query' to assist in identifying data points that supported direct and indirect relationships (step 11). The results of the 'matrix coding query' would lead to meaningful integration to the conceptual framework, which were used in design sessions to theorise these higher-level interpretations.

### *Coding rules*

A Coding Rule Book was constructed to achieve rigour and reliability. Development of a codebook is an iterative process (DeCuir-Gunby et al., 2011), which evolves as the coding progresses. Nine coding rules were developed for the code book.

**Rule 1:** The overall process allows a quasi-deductive approach (combination of both deductive and inductive approaches) across multiple phases of the coding process. For example, a deductive approach was used for the pre-determined set of meta-themes, but also for new meta-themes to emerge from the analysis (inductive). Once data related to a Meta-theme was extracted from the papers, a deep dive of that classified content using an inductive approach to identify sub themes was followed.

**Rule 2:** Coding will occur in clearly set Coding Rounds. The target outcomes of each coding phase/round will be discussed and agreed upon at the start. Multiple coders will be engaged across all coding phases. In depth coder corroboration will occur with two to three coders in each round of coding.

**Rule 3:** Coding will be in full sentence and line-by-line, where each line is counted as a separate Coding Reference. If a few lines in a row are relevant the whole set will be coded as one coding reference.

**Rule 4:** The same sentence may be coded in several places. If necessary, use annotations to add explanation.

**Rule 5:** Use annotations as much as possible to help maintain a record of our thoughts and interpretations during the coding process.

**Rule 6:** Coders' overall understanding and interpretations (e.g., observable patterns) of data should be recorded by creating memos and annotations in NVivo.

**Rule 7:** In-vivo codes are to be labelled using the words of the original data points verbatim in a manner to reflect the associated sense in a comprehensive and descriptive way.

**Rule 8:** Hypotheses were only coded if they were supported or confirmed.

**Rule 9:** Information provided in Tables and Figures will also be coded within nodes. The usual pull and drag options may not work for these. Thus, it is recommended to use the 'Region coding' option (Figure 5) to select the related area and code this content.

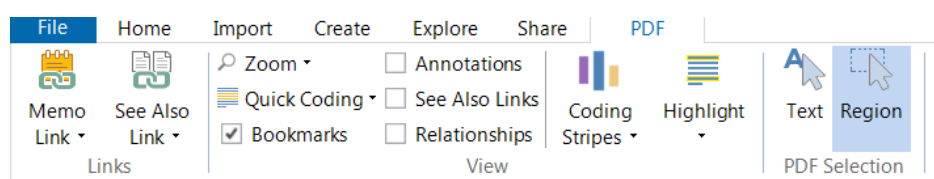


Figure 5. 'Region coding' in the ribbon of NVivo.

### 3.3. Literature profiling

In this subsection, a descriptive overview of the papers will be presented focused on the source, source type, journals, and years, which is known as literature profiling. Literature profiling provides details of the pool of papers. Webster & Watson (2002) and Gaffar et al. (2015) argue that literature profiling is essential for a comprehensive literature review and is important for quality assurance, transparency, and identifying major trends and patterns within a research domain. Literature profiling is applied by analysing and interpreting the meta-data pertaining to the papers, such as year of publication, which creates a vivid picture of the pool of papers (Whittemore & Knafel, 2005).

As presented in Figure 3 in the SLR procedure, the 36 papers of the final pool were not only found using databases, but also through forward and backward snowballing (Wohlin, 2014), and a few papers obtained through secondary sources. Figure 6 shows the distribution between the different sources. The different source gives a first impression of the rigour and quality of the data used in this research. Firstly, more than half of the papers were found from the database Science Direct. Secondly, almost twenty percent of the papers were found by backward searching.

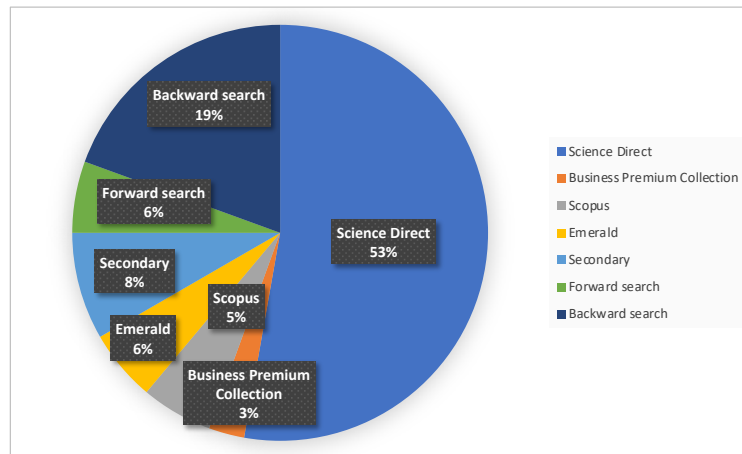


Figure 6. Distribution of sources.

It is important to have credible literature to ensure the rigour of this research. About 95 percent of the papers were journal papers. Journal papers are one way to prove the credibility and rigour of the data used in this research. It is justified to conclude that the final pool of papers is credible papers which contribute to the rigour of this research.

This research aimed to capture the most recent literature. According to Price et al. (2015), papers from the last ten years are considered the most recent ones. However, since the BBP has not been researched yet, Greenbaum (2021) and Pautasso (2013) advise taking more than ten years into account for topics that have not been researched yet. It was decided to capture any literature from the year 2000 onwards, which captured 32 papers out of the 36 papers of the final pool as can be seen in Figure 7. Additionally, through backward snowballing, four papers before the year 2000 were included in the final pool of papers.

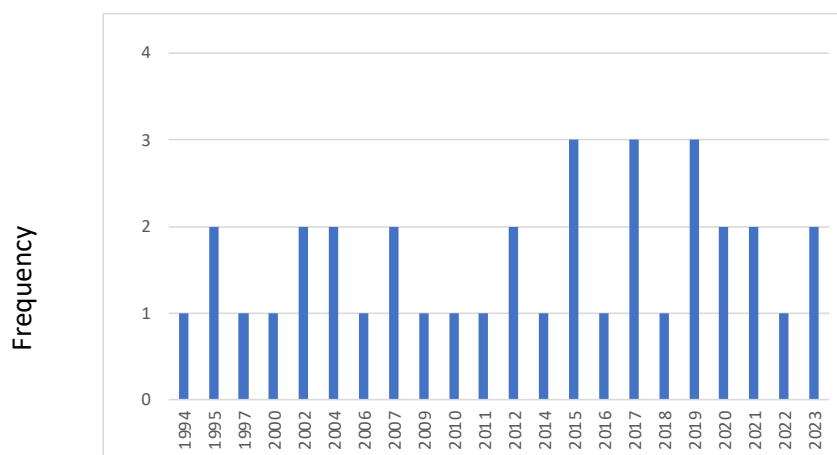


Figure 7. Distribution of the publication years.



An understanding of the background of the journal papers may be valuable. The journals stem from various fields, as can be seen in Figure 8. Most of the papers are published in marketing, business, or management fields. All in all, the fields are related to business in one way or another. An overview of the distribution of journals is shown in Figure 9. Notably, the journal of Industrial Marketing Management has four papers, followed by the Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing and the Journal of Business Research, which have three papers each. Most of the journals have only one paper used for this research. One can say that these fields and journals are in the business world, which is the area of the topic of this research.

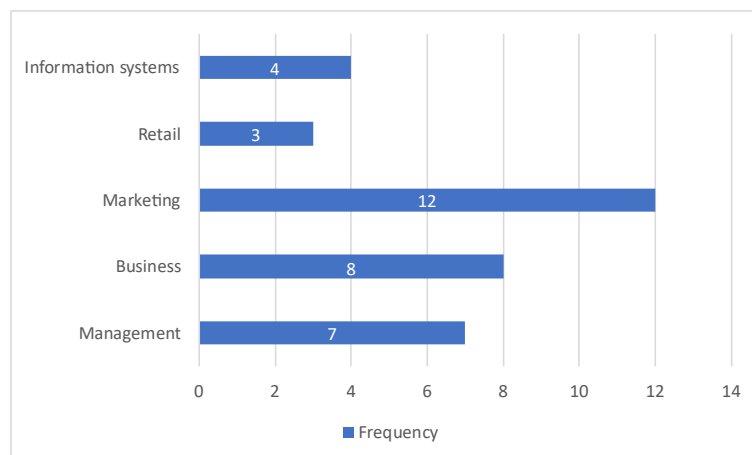


Figure 8. Distribution of areas of journals



Figure 9. Distribution of the journals.

## 4. Review of results and conceptualisation

In this section, a conceptualisation of benevolence in a for-profit setting will be provided. The first subsection will focus on defining the conceptualisation of benevolence. The second subsection will elaborate on the existing measures of benevolence. The third subsection will go deeper into the antecedents of benevolence. The fourth subsection will be about the possible contextual variables between benevolence and its impacts. The fifth and last subsection will unpack the impacts of benevolence on an interorganisational level. An overview of the subsections can be seen in Figure 10.

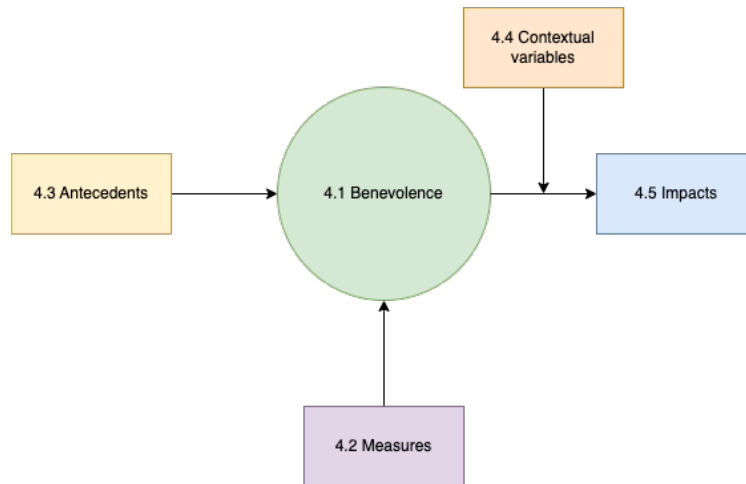


Figure 10. Overview of the components of the conceptualisation of benevolence.

### 4.1. Defining benevolence

In this subsection, existing definitions of benevolence are discussed, and a new integrated definition is proposed. The aim of this subsection is to provide an understanding of the concept benevolence.

Table 4 presents an excerpt of the overview of the existing definitions of benevolence that are provided in the articles included in this study. The table shows direct definitions of benevolence are presented together with the context of the study, the defined benevolence, the definitions, related prior studies used for this definition, the frequency that this paper was cited in another study, and where this paper was cited in. A complete overview of the direct definitions of benevolence is presented in Table 19 (Appendix 2). Moreover, all the prior studies in this research's pool have also been compiled to have a complete overview of the direct definitions, where the types of benevolence are also presented.

Table 4. Excerpt of the overview of prior definitions of benevolence.

Paper	Context of Study	Defined benevolence	Definition given	Critique on definition	Related prior studies for definition	Frequency that paper was cited in another study	Cited in
<b>Doney &amp; Cannon (1997)</b>	Trust in buyer-seller relationship	Benevolence	The extent to which one partner is <u>genuinely interested in the other partner's welfare and well-being</u> and motivated to <u>seek joint gain</u>	All rules are followed		7	Gu et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2004; Lee, Lee & Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee & Ulgado, 2007; Seyedghorban et al., 2021; Wang & Jap, 2017; Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014*
<b>Ganesan (1994)</b>	Determinants of long-term orientation in buyer-seller relationships	Benevolence	the extent to which the retailer believes that the vendor has <u>intentions and motives beneficial</u> to the retailer <u>when new conditions arise, conditions for which a commitment was not made.</u> benevolence is based on <u>caring and making sacrifices</u> for the channel partner.	All rules are followed	Rempel et al., 1985	4	Kantsperger & Kunz, 2010; Lee et al., 2004; Wang & Jap, 2017; Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014*
<b>Mayer et al. (1995)</b>	Organisational trust	Benevolence	the extent to which a trustee is believed to <u>want to do good</u> to the trustor <u>from warm-heartedness</u> , aside from an <u>egocentric profit motive.</u> the perception of a <u>positive orientation</u> of the trustee toward the trustor. a trustee that helps a trustor <u>beyond what is prescribed in their formal agreements</u> and who consider the trustor's <u>interests and to refrain from opportunistic actions.</u>	All rules are followed		10	Gu et al., 2019; Hong & Cho, 2011; Lee et al., 2004; Lee, Lee & Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee & Ulgado, 2007; Mcknight et al., 2002; Seyedghorban et al., 2021; Wang & Jap, 2021; Zhang & Li, 2019; Liff & Wahlström, 2017
...							

During the analysis of the definitions given for benevolence, the key parts were underlined, which would later serve as the keywords. Additionally, the rules presented by Wacker (2004) and the principles proposed by Zhang et al. (2016) are used for the definitions to assess if they are considered good formal conceptual definitions. According to Wacker (2004), a formal conceptual definition is a

clear, concise verbalisation of an abstract concept used for empirical testing later on. Thus, it includes good theory building and helps to develop measurement instruments further on. The rules to assess conceptual definitions are depicted in Table 1.

As presented in Table 4 and Table 19 (Appendix 2), not all the definitions can be considered proper and good definitions. For example, Franklin & Marshall (2019) defined benevolence as “the extent to which a trustee is believed to want to do good to the trustor, aside from profit motive”, which is too similar to goodwill. Additionally, the types of benevolence affective, calculative, and normative were not given a definition, which is concerning.

The underlined parts of the definitions presented in Table 19 are used to form the keywords. Table 5 gives an overview of the keywords, themes, and categories that followed from the analysis of the definition of benevolence as presented in existing studies. The first step is to capture key parts of each definition, but to be aware of those definitions that were not proper ones. After that, the keywords are grouped to form higher level themes. Some higher-level themes were similar or can be placed together in some way, where the categories were introduced. All this formed Table 5 which is used to propose a more integrated definition of benevolence.

Table 5. Overview keywords and themes of definitions of benevolence.

Categories	Themes	Sub-themes	Sub-sub-themes
What benevolence is not	No negative impacts of actions		
	No opportunistic actions		
	No unethical actions		
	No unfair advantages		
	Refrain from exploitation		
	No manipulation		
	Not egocentric		
Benevolence as an act between giver and receiver	Evidence of the act between two parties	Act beneficially towards others	
		Act in interest of others	
		Act in welfare and wellbeing of others	
		Act objectively towards others	
		Protect the other	
		Showing consideration and sensitivity to the needs of others	
		Willingness to help the other	
		Care about others	
		Genuine consideration or intention to others	
Benevolence as an act between giver and receiver	Examples of acts of benevolence	Making sacrifices	
		Short-term dislocations	
		Service exchange	
		Commission of time and resources	
Benevolence as an act	The giver's behaviour towards the recipient during the act of benevolence	<i>Demonstration of warmth</i>	warmheartedness
			kind acts
			Showing care
Benevolence as an act	Examples of benevolent acts	Making sacrifices	
		Short-term dislocations	

between giver and receiver		Service exchange		
		Commission of time and resources		
	The giver's behaviour towards the recipient during the act of benevolence	<i>Demonstration of warmth</i>		warmheartedness
				kind acts
				Showing care
			Genuinely interested in the other's welfare	
		<i>Fair and impartial</i>		fairness
		impartiality		
	patience			
	politeness			
	tolerance			
Beyond a contract	Beyond contractual terms			
	Obligation			
	Extra-role actions			
	Sense of duty			
	Voluntary nature	charitable acts		
	voluntary act			
Drivers behind benevolence	Expectations on gain	Calculative costs		
		Expectations of reciprocity		
		Mutual and joint gain		
		<i>No expectations</i>	Without expected future gain	
			Outside of egocentric profit motive	
	Motives to do good	Beneficial motives		
		Benefit as ultimate goal		
		Do good		
		Do right		
		General		
Goodwill				
<i>Orientation</i>			Affective orientation	
			positive orientation	
	Pro-consumer motivation			
	Seek common ground			
	Utilitarian motives			

The categories that followed are presented in Figure 11, which are (1) what benevolence is not, (2) benevolence is an act between a giver and a receiver, (3) benevolence goes beyond a contract, and (4) the drivers behind benevolence. What benevolence is not refers to the aspects that is not benevolence and cannot be part of benevolent acts and behaviours. Benevolence is an act between a giver and a receiver refers to the aspects that support these acts. Benevolence goes beyond a contract refers to the expectations, rules, and contract which can be set aside in some situations when wanting to be benevolent. The drivers behind benevolence refer to the expectations on gain and motivations to be benevolent. In the following subsections, each category will be elaborated followed by an integrated definition for benevolence in a for-profit corporate setting.

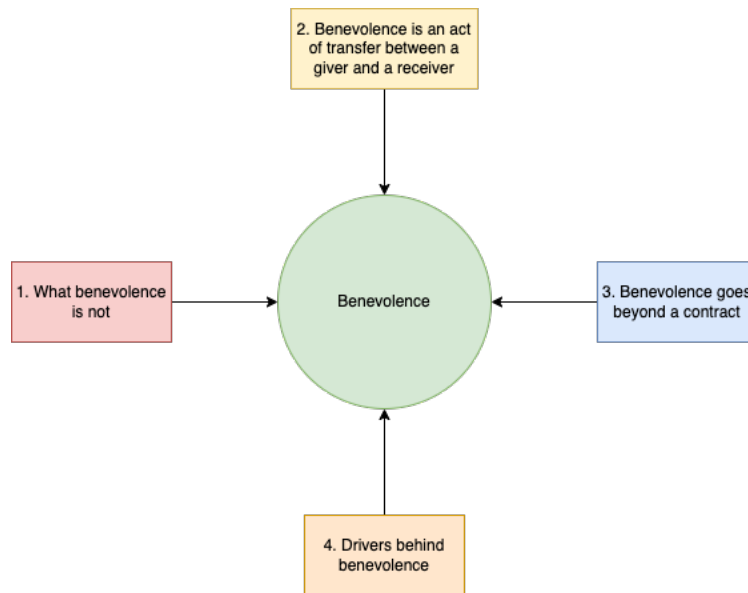


Figure 11. Overview of the aspects of the definition of benevolence.

#### 4.1.1. What benevolence is not

As presented in Figure 11, the first aspect of defining benevolence is what benevolence is not. It must be clear what benevolence is not. Benevolence does not have opportunistic actions, unethical actions, manipulative actions, egocentric motive, exploitative intentions, unfair advantages or have negative impacts. Anderson & Weitz (1989), Anderson & Narus (1990), and Kantsperger & Kunz (2010) argue that a benevolent rep will not engage in opportunistic actions that might harm the receiving party. Moreover, Gefen (2002), Mayer et al. (1995), and Morgan & Hunt (1994) pinpoint that a benevolent rep takes initiatives that favour the receiver while refraining from self-serving opportunism and refrain from opportunistic behaviour. Furthermore, a benevolent rep will not engage in unethical actions that might harm the receiver (Anderson & Weitz, 1989; Anderson & Narus, 1990). McKnight et al. (2002) also argue that benevolence exclude acting manipulatively. Likewise, a benevolent firm cannot act egocentrically (Schlosser et al., 2006; White & Yuan, 2012). Additionally, benevolent givers will refrain from exploiting receivers (Atuahene-Gima & Li, 2002; Gao & Brown, 1997). What's more is that Gefen (2002) argues that a benevolent firm will not take unfair advantage of the receiver's dependability.

#### 4.1.2. Benevolence is an act between a giver and a receiver

As presented in Figure 11, the second aspect of defining benevolence is that benevolence is an act between a giver and a receiver. A giver can refer to the organisation or business partners such as customers or suppliers. A recipient can refer to a customer, external stakeholders or the organisation. The act of the giver is beneficially towards the receiver, objectively towards the receiver, in the interest of the receiver, and in the welfare and wellbeing of the receiver. The giver cares for the receiver, has genuine consideration towards the receiver, protects the receiver, shows consideration and sensitivity to the needs of the receiver, and helps the receiver. Ganesan (1994) indicates that a giver acts beneficially towards the receiver when new conditions arise. Likewise, Johnson et al. (1996), Kumar et al. (1995b), and Selnes & Gønhaug (2000) pinpoint that a benevolent firm behaves in a beneficial way to both the firm and partner. Similarly, Mayer & Davis (1999) argues that the giver will

behave beneficially for the receiver. (Zhang & Li, 2019) point out that a benevolent firm's reputation potential extra efforts optimise a buyer's benefit.

A benevolence giver would behave in the receiver's utmost interest even though the behaviours cannot be monitored or verified (Nyaga et al., 2010). Moreover, a benevolent giver promotes the receiver's best interests (Cho, 2006; Doney & Cannon, 1997; Leeman & Reynolds, 2012; Liff & Wahlström, 2017; Mayer et al., 1995; McKnight et al., 2002). Likewise, a benevolent firm's reputation act in the best interest of their partner (Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014; Gu et al., 2019). Similarly, a benevolent firm holds its customer interest ahead of its own self-interest (Hong & Cho, 2011; Oliveira et al., 2017). Additionally, the giver protects the receiver's interests (Gao & Brown, 1997). Furthermore, Roy et al. (2004) argues that a benevolent giver looks after the receiver's interest without a formal request.

Organisational benevolence refers to an organisations' inclination to pursue the welfare of a partner (Beveridge & Höllerer, 2023; Kumar et al., 1995a; Kumar et al., 1995b; Oliveira et al., 2017; Pavlou, 2002; Rempel et al., 1985) that is above its own self-interest (Ganesan, 1994). Furthermore, it is a benevolent firm genuine interest in the partner's welfare (Garbarino & Lee, 2003; Gu et al., 2019; Schoenherr & Wagner, 2016; Seyedghorban et al., 2021). Organisational benevolence also refers to an organisation's inclination to further the wellbeing of its partners for its own sake (Batson, 1991; Beveridge & Höllerer, 2023; Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2004; Lee, Lee, & Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee, & Ulgado, 2007). Similarly, Bove et al. (2009) pinpoint that a benevolent person is concerned about other's wellbeing. Moreover, a benevolent giver is genuinely interested in the receiver's wellbeing (Doney & Cannon, 1997; Gao & Brown, 1997; Moorman et al., 1992; Schlosser et al., 2006; Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000). Jarvenpaa et al. (1998) argue that a benevolent giver feels interpersonal care and concern for the receiver. Benevolent firms will act objectively as well towards their partner out of their goodwill (Acquah et al., 2021).

Livnat (2004) argues that a benevolent person care about others. Similarly, pinpoint that a benevolent firm is based on caring for their partners (Cullen et al., 2000; Ganesan, 1994; Garbarino & Lee, 2003; Gefen & Straub, 2004; Gu et al., 2019; Mayer et al., 1995; McKnight et al., 2002; Rosemann et al., 2023). Moreover, Jarvenpaa et al. (1998) specify that a benevolent giver feel interpersonal care and concern for the receiver. More specifically, Selnes & Gønhaug (2000) indicate that a benevolent firm care about the problems of their partners.

Atuahene-Gima & Li (2002), Fazal e Hasan et al. (2014), and Gu et al. (2019) indicate that a benevolent firm has genuine intention towards their customers. Additionally, a benevolent firm has intentions attributed to their partner (Ganesan, 1994; Rempel et al., 1985). In other words, Moorman et al. (1992) and Schlosser et al. (2006) argue that benevolent firms are well-intentioned towards their customers. Also, Atuahene-Gima & Li (2002) and White & Yuan (2012) point out that benevolent firms protect their customers. Furthermore, a benevolent giver shows consideration and sensitivity to the needs of the receiver (Gao & Brown, 1997).

A firm's willingness to help others is at the center of interorganisational benevolence (Gao & Brown, 1997; Lee et al., 2004; Lee, Lee, & Ulgado, 2007; Mayer & Davis, 1999). Moreover, a benevolent firm may want to help its partner even though it is not required to be helpful (Mayer et al., 1995). Oliveira et al. (2017) identifies that a benevolent firm would do its best to help its customers, which Selnes & Gønhaug (2000) argue can be perceived as a manner equivalent to friendship.

A benevolent act between a giver and a receiver can come in the form of commissioning time and resource on the part of the giver for the receiver (Ganesan, 1994; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). Furthermore, a benevolent giver can make sacrifices for the receiver (Ganesan, 1994). Moreover, Kantsperger & Kunz (2010) and Lengnick-Hall et al. (2000) argue that benevolent acts can come in the form of immediate service exchange, which can come with or without commensurate benefits (Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002). On another note, (Anderson et al., 1987) pinpoint that a benevolent giver is willing to accept short-term dislocations, such as taking the cost for themselves, for the receiver.

Moreover, the giver's behaviour towards the receiver should include a demonstration of warmth, fairness and impartiality, patience, politeness, and tolerance. The benevolent giver can demonstrate their warmth towards the receiver in several ways. First, the benevolent giver can demonstrate its warmth through kind acts (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2000). Second, it can demonstrate its warmth by caring for them (Cullen et al., 2000; Ganesan, 1994; Garbarino & Lee, 2003; Livnat, 2004; Pavlou, 2002). Third, a benevolent giver may want to help the receiver with a feeling of warm-heartedness towards the receiver (Mayer et al., 1995). Last, a benevolent giver can show its genuine interest in the receiver (Doney & Cannon, 1997; Gao & Brown, 1997; Garbarino & Lee, 2003; Moorman et al., 1992; Schlosser et al., 2006; Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000). A benevolent giver acts fair (Kantsperger & Kunz, 2010), and impartial (Minerbo et al., 2018) towards the receiver. Moreover, a benevolent giver has patience and tolerance and is also polite towards the receiver (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2000).

#### 4.1.3. Benevolence goes beyond a contract

As presented in Figure 11, the third aspect of defining benevolence is that benevolence goes beyond a contract of the business relationship. Benevolence goes beyond contractual terms, obligation, extra-role actions of the giver, and sense of duty, and is of voluntary nature. A benevolent firm's rep work beyond explicit contractual terms (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Rosemann et al., 2023), prescribed formal agreements and roles (Doney & Cannon, 1997; Jarvenpaa et al., 1998; Lee et al., 2004; Lee, Lee, & Suh, 2007; Mayer et al., 1995). Additionally, a benevolent firm's rep works beyond the explicit requirement of the business relationship (Mayer & Davis, 1999). Furthermore, a benevolent firm's rep may accommodate the unique request of their partners (Batson, 1991). A benevolent firm's rep may provide extra-role actions for which the firm cover the costs of their partners (Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002; Zhang & Li, 2019). Moreover, a benevolent firm may act from a sense of duty (Lee, Lee, & Ulgado, 2007) or obligation (Beveridge & Höllerer, 2023; Wang & Jap, 2017). Benevolent acts between a giver and receiver are based on the feeling of obligation or voluntary-based. Benevolent acts are charitable acts (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2000) and are voluntary (Beveridge & Höllerer, 2023; Mayer et al., 1995).

#### 4.1.4. Drivers behind benevolence

As presented in Figure 11, the fourth and final aspect of defining benevolence is the drivers behind benevolence. The current literature commonly mentioned the drivers of benevolence when defining the notion. The drivers could be categorised as expectations of gain and motives to do good. Expectations of gain are factors that could be included in benevolence, but they do not have to be included. Expectations of gain are calculative costs, expectations of reciprocity, mutual and joint gain, and no expectations. A benevolent act may be calculative based on idiosyncratic investments or, in other words, economic stakes by the giver for the receiver (Wang & Jap, 2017). A benevolent firm may



expect its benevolent act to be reciprocated by its partners. On one hand, mutualistic benevolence is characterised by the expectation of reciprocity by both parties (Lee et al., 2004; Lee, Lee, & Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee, & Ulgado, 2007). On the other hand, altruistic benevolence is characterised by no expectation of reciprocity from the receiver (Batson, 1991). Additionally, benevolence may be characterised by joint or mutual gain where both parties expect to gain something from the benevolence acts provided, which many distinguish as mutualistic benevolence. A benevolent giver may seek joint gain (Doney & Cannon, 1997; Johnson et al., 1996; Kumar et al., 1995b; Rosemann et al., 2023; Wang & Jap, 2017). More specifically, Zhang & Li (2019) characterised benevolence as a win-win situation for both parties.

Besides, benevolence may be characterised as excluding egocentric profit motive or expected future gain where a giver acts without expecting anything in return for their benevolent acts, which many distinguish as altruistic benevolence. Benevolence may occur outside of an egocentric profit motive (Bell et al., 2002; Brownell & Reynolds, 2002; Doney & Cannon, 1997; Franklin & Marshall, 2019; Leeman & Reynolds, 2012; Mayer et al., 1995; Mayer & Davis, 1999; Rosemann et al., 2023) or beyond an egocentric profit motive (Jarvenpaa et al., 1998; Moorman et al., 1992; Schlosser et al., 2006). Additionally, benevolent firms may act without the expectation of future gain (Batson, 1991; Lee, Lee, & Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee, & Ulgado, 2007; Rosemann et al., 2023).

Motives to do good are the motives why organisations employ benevolence in their business processes. Motives to do good are beneficial motives, benefit as the ultimate goal, to do good, to do right, goodwill, the firm's orientation, pro-consumer motivation, seeking common ground, and utilitarian motives. First, a firm may act benevolently towards its partners due to the beneficial motives it will have for itself (Ganesan, 1994). Second, benevolence acts may be an end in itself or the ultimate goal for the firm (Batson, 1991; Beveridge & Höllerer, 2023). Third, a firm may want to act benevolently to do good to its partners (Beveridge & Höllerer, 2023; Castaldo, 2007; Franklin & Marshall, 2019; Jarvenpaa et al., 1998; Leeman & Reynolds, 2012; Livnat, 2004; Mayer et al., 1995; Rosemann et al., 2023; Stutz et al., 2022) or be perceived as having good intentions by its partners (Kantsperger & Kunz, 2010). Fourth, a benevolent firm's rep may want to act benevolently to do the right thing (Mayer et al., 1995). Fifth, a benevolent firm may want to act benevolently from a standpoint of goodwill with its partners (Cullen et al., 2000; Doney & Cannon, 1997; Garbarino & Lee, 2003; Gu et al., 2019; Johnson et al., 1996; Minerbo et al., 2018; Roy et al., 2004). Sixth, a benevolent firm may act benevolently from an affective orientation towards its partners (Wang & Jap, 2017) or a positive orientation towards its partners (Doney & Cannon, 1997; Gu et al., 2019; Mayer & Davis, 1999). Seventh, a benevolent firm's rep may act benevolently from a stance of pro-consumer motivations towards their customers (Gu et al., 2019). Eighth, a benevolent firm's rep may act benevolently from a viewpoint of motivation to seek common ground (Doney & Cannon, 1997; Gu et al., 2019; Mayer & Davis, 1999). Last, a benevolent firm may want to act benevolently for utilitarian motives (Lee, Lee, & Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee, & Ulgado, 2007; Rosemann et al., 2023), which is considered by many as mutualistic benevolence.

#### 4.1.5. Towards an integrated definition for benevolence

Following the abovementioned synthesis of the understanding of the concept benevolence, the following integrated definition is proposed for benevolence in the context of B2C and B2B:

*“Benevolence is an act that goes beyond contractual terms between a giver and a receiver that is beneficial, in the interest, welfare and wellbeing of the receiver, an act and entails behaviour of warmth, fairness, impartiality, patience, politeness, and tolerance from the giver.”*

In this definition, the core aspects are the acts of benevolence between giver and receiver, the giver’s behaviour, going beyond a contract. This definition has integrated the different views on benevolence based on 48 different studies, which makes it more comprehensive and inclusive.

## 4.2. Measures

All attempts to measure benevolence was captured and analysed in our literature review. In this subsection, the measures regarding benevolence used by previous research are presented. Measurements is the process by which meaning to the key facts, concepts, or other phenomena that are being investigated are described and ascribed (Blackstone, 2018). In this case, the measurements were quantifiable through survey and questionnaires and gave meaning to the concept of benevolence. From the final pool of papers, 18 papers measured benevolence using a questionnaire or survey items. Based on the analysis, differentiations between the measure of ‘benevolence’ and the measure of ‘benevolence as a trust dimension’ can be made. The measures regarding benevolence refer to general or generic benevolence, types of benevolence proposed by some authors, such as altruistic or mutualistic benevolence, or benevolence as dimension of trust. General or generic benevolence refers to items that have the sole purpose to measure benevolence. General or generic benevolence has been researched by various researchers in different ways, such as perceived benevolence of the supplier, benevolence of a firm’s rep. Benevolence as a trust dimension refers to items that have the ultimate purpose to measure trust and benevolence is a subcategory within trust. Therefore, it is important to distinguish measures regarding benevolence and benevolence as a trust dimension. Table 6 present the prior work and how each of these studies measured benevolence. It can be seen in this table that half of the studies measured benevolence as a trust dimension and the other half measured general or generic benevolence.

Table 6. Overview of measures

	Bove et al., 2009	Cho, 2006	Franklin & Marshall, 2017	Gefen, 2002	Gefen & Straub, 2004	Kantsperger & Kunz, 2010	Kumar et al., 1995	Lee et al., 2004	Lee, Lee & Suh, 2007	Lee, Lee & Ulgado, 2007	McKnight et al., 2002	Oliveira et al., 2017	Schoenherr & Wagner, 2016	Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000	Syedghorban et al., 2021	Wang & Jap, 2017	Xie & Peng, 2009	Zhang & Li, 2019
<b>Benevolence</b>	X	X	X					X	X	X			X	X		X	X	
<b>Benevolence as a trust dimension</b>				X	X	X	X				X	X			X			X

Table 7 shows the different measures presented in previous literature used for this study. The table includes various aspects. The type of benevolence refers to the types presented by the authors of previous literature or benevolence in general or benevolence as a dimension of trust. The items

measured refers to what has been measured. The measurement derivation refers to where and how the measurement was derived. The actual measurement includes the reference of where the measurement is presented, the survey or questionnaire items, and the type of scale that is used. If presented, the reliability and validity of the constructs are also presented.

As shown in Table 7 and Table 4, there are only five types of benevolence that has been discussed in literature besides general or generic benevolence, and benevolence as a trust dimension. These types are altruistic and mutualistic benevolence, and affective, calculative, and normative benevolence. Moreover, Table 7 and Table 20 (Appendix 3) give an overview of the measures including the type of benevolence, what the items measured, how the measures were derived, the source of the items, the survey items, how the items were measured, and their validity or reliability.

Looking at what has been measured by the measurement items, there are three main categories: firm, supplier, and customer. The latter has only been measured by one author in our pool of literature. For benevolence in general, the authors measured the firm’s and supplier’s perspective in about equal proportion. For benevolence as trust dimension, the majority was measured as the firm’s perspective. Almost all the measurement items used Likert scale as the method of measurement.

The measures were mostly based on previous items presented in the literature. It was evident that there were some authors that were critical and still are in research on benevolence. The most adapted items were from Ganesan (1994), Kumar et al. (1995b), Moorman et al. (1992), and Morgan & Hunt (1994). Even though, the most recent literature on benevolence was incorporated for this research, these items stem from before the year 2000. For the types of benevolence, altruistic and mutualistic did use items from other researchers. However, the affective, calculative, and normative types of benevolence did not use any items from other authors. The types of benevolence overall lack support in general.

Table 7. Excerpt of the different measures by previous researchers

Type of benevolence	Items measured	Measurements derivation	Actual measurement			Validity/reliability	Critique
			Source	Survey items	How the items were measured		
Altruistic benevolence	Firm’s or buyer’s benevolence	Interviews with academicians and practitioners; adapted from Doney & Cannon (1997), Kumar et al. (1995a), and Kumar et al. (1995)	Lee et al., 2004; Lee, Lee & Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee & Ulgado, 2007	1. We were concerned about the supplier's welfare. Our feelings of concern are truly genuine, not economically motivated. 2. We helped this supplier beyond the call of duty, and we did not expect anything in return. 3. We helped this supplier not because we were expected to, but we just wanted to help.	Seven-point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7)	CR = 0.91	All items measure the mutualistic type of benevolence

Affective benevolence	Supplier's benevolence	Interviews with purchasing managers	Wang & Jap, 2017	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. This supplier has an emotional attachment to our company, that's one of the major reasons it cares about our welfare.</li> <li>2. Because this supplier likes doing business with our company, it cares about our company's success.</li> <li>3. The success of our relationship has a great deal of personal meaning to this supplier.</li> <li>4. This supplier's positive feelings towards our company are a strong force that motivates it to care about our company.</li> </ol>		$\alpha = CR = 0.88$	Point 2 does not measure the affective type of benevolence, but benevolence in general
Generic / general benevolence	Firm's or supplier's benevolence	Adapted from Kumar et al. (1995)	Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Willingness to support the customer if the environment causes changes</li> <li>2. Consideration of the customer's welfare when making important decisions</li> <li>3. Responding with understanding when problems arise</li> <li>4. Consideration of how future decisions and actions will affect the customer</li> <li>5. Dependable support on things that are important to the customer.</li> </ol>	Six-point Likert scale from "not at all" (1) to "very much" (6)	CR = 0.85 AVE = 0.65	All items measure firm's benevolence from the customer's perspective

Benevolence as a trust dimension	Supplier's trust in benevolence	Adapted from multi-item measures	Kumar et al., 1995b	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Though circumstances change, we believe that the supplier will be ready and willing to offer us assistance and support.</li> <li>2. When making important decisions, the supplier is concerned about our welfare.</li> <li>3. When we share our problems with the supplier, we know that they will respond with understanding.</li> <li>4. In the future we can count on the supplier to consider how its decisions and actions will affect us.</li> <li>5. When it comes to things which are important to us, we can depend on the supplier's support.</li> </ol>	Seven-point Likert scale from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7)	CR= 0.94	All items measure supplier's benevolence from the customer's perspective
...							

Reliability:  $\alpha = \text{Cronbach's alpha} \geq 0.7$  (Collins, 2007; Statistics Solutions, 2023); CR = composite reliability:  $\geq 0.7$  and  $\leq 0.9$ ; AVE = average variance extracted of constructs:  $\geq 0.5$  (Hair et al., 2021; Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000)

Validity and reliability are important aspects to assess the survey items. For reliability, Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ), composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted of the construct (AVE) were used. Most of the measurement items used all three reliability methods ( $\alpha$ , CR, and AVE). Some of the CR values were concerning, but even then, the  $\alpha$  and AVE values were in the acceptable range. None of the survey items presented validity aspects.

Even though some authors presented their measure to be related to benevolence as a trust dimension, the items are very similar to the items for general or generic benevolence. Moreover, the types of benevolence do not always represent that the type completely but a mixture of general or generic benevolence combined with the type of benevolence. Better measurement items need to be developed to have a fuller and better measure of benevolence which consists of measurement of the degree of benevolence, the antecedents, the impacts, and if possible also the contextual factors.

### 4.3. Antecedents

In this subsection, the antecedents of benevolence will be elaborated on. In the context this study an 'antecedent' consists of the elements and factors that can directly or indirectly lead to the creation of benevolence or influence the degree of benevolence. Antecedents of benevolence are elements that precedes the signal or occurrence of benevolence or increase or decrease benevolence (APA, 2023). Antecedents are one of the key aspects to understanding what a benevolence business process is and how it can be achieved. These are aspects that firms should focus on for benevolence to prevail.

To synthesise the antecedents, the key words for each data string has been compiled. Afterwards, the keywords were grouped that lead to higher-level themes and categories. Table 8 is an excerpt of the keywords that is formed after analysing the data points in NVivo – the complete overview can be seen in Table 21 (Appendix 4). The antecedents of benevolence were classified under different keywords, which were further classified under higher-level themes. The total coding references refers to the total number of coded lines of this keyword, and the number of supported sources represents the number of papers where the coded lines can be found. Each of the keywords was further classified.

*Table 8. Excerpt of key words of the data regarding antecedents.*

Main keywords	Example data extracted	Total coding References	# of supporting sources
Client's expectation	"Defining, negotiating and aligning to clients' expectations to demonstrate benevolence"	1	1, <b>Nikolova et al., 2015</b>
Satisfaction with past outcomes	"A retailer's satisfaction with outcomes will increase its perception of a vendor's benevolence"	5	3, <b>Ganesan, 1994</b> ; Kantsperger & Kunz, 2010; Lee, Lee & Suh, 2007
Relationship wellbeing	"Firms affectively committed to their relationships are likely to engage in helping behaviors to further the well-being of the relationship"	1	1, <b>Lee, Lee &amp; Suh, 2007</b>
Authority to provide clients with flexible solutions	"Higher levels of gratitude and perceived benevolence will be experienced in situations where a customer has genuinely made a purchase error and the retailer responds urgently to redress at all costs"	2	2, <b>Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014</b> ; Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000
Helpfulness in a crisis	"During a serious crisis, a bank maintains a minimum number of relationships, and the evaluating bank exhibits greater benevolence to its counterparty if reciprocal benevolence has been received in the past"	2	1, <b>Liff &amp; Wahlström, 2017</b>
...			

After analysing the key words, they were grouped to form higher-level themes. These higher-level themes are displayed in Table 22 (Appendix 5). An excerpt of the grouped themes can be seen in Table 9.

Table 9. Excerpt of themes of the data regarding antecedents

Theme – level 0	Theme – level 1	Theme – level 2
Client’s expectation and attitude	Client’s expectation	
	Attitude towards online shopping	
Client’s prior history with firm	Client’s previous experience	
	Satisfaction with past outcomes	
	Long-standing business relationship	
	Brand recognition	
Firm’s intended relationship	Benefits to relationships	
	Cost reduction of continuing the relationship	
	Relationship satisfaction	
	Relationship wellbeing	
	Long-term orientation of firm	
Firm’s operations	Core business operations	Core offerings
	Authority to provide flexible solutions	
	Cost of action	
	Firm’s strategies	Marketing strategy
		Price strategy
Website strategy		
Helpfulness in a crisis		
...		

After analysing the main themes, it was found that the antecedents could be categorised in relation to the relevant source, namely the client’s perspective, the firm’s perspective, and external factors, which can be seen in Figure 12. The antecedents of benevolence with regard to the **client’s perspective** refer to the elements that have a direct influence on the client and can have an impact on how the client views the firm and how their view can be affected by these elements. For example, a client that was satisfied with the outcome from the business exchange in the past would view the firm as benevolent compared to a client who was not satisfied with the outcomes. The antecedents of benevolence with regard to the **firm’s perspective** refer to the elements that are stemming from the firm and can have an impact on how the view of the firm can be affected by the firm itself, by clients, or partners. For example, a firm which provide their clients and partners with flexible solution would be seen as benevolent compared to firms who do not. The antecedents of benevolence with regard to the **external factors** refer to the elements that are beyond the control of the firm, the client, or partners, but which might have an influence on the view of the firm’s benevolence. For example, a firm which helps their partners and client in the COVID-19 pandemic is deemed benevolent compared to firms who did not. In the following subsections, we elaborate on these sources and corresponding key themes.

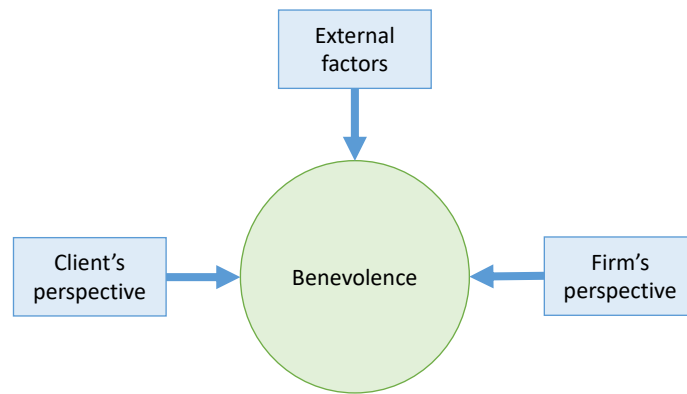


Figure 12. Higher-level themes of the antecedents of benevolence.

#### 4.3.1. Client's Perspective

The client's perspective is categorised under four categories:

- (i) client's expectations and attitude,
- (ii) client's trust,
- (iii) client's prior history with the firm, and
- (iv) client's perception of the firm.

The client's expectations and attitude refer to the assumed and anticipated behaviour and the manner and approach the firm has towards the client in their business relationship. The client's trust refers to the client's confidence that the firm would act with integrity, ability, and reliance and meet the client's expectations. The client's prior history with the firm refers to the client's past experiences and involvement with the firm. The client's perception of the firm refers to the impression the client has of the firm and the judgment the client makes of the firm based on their past encounters with the firm. All these categories may potentially be related to each other and might overlap and are thus not mutually exclusive. For example, brand recognition, which falls under the category of the client's prior history with the firm, may be related to and overlap with the client's perception of the firm's reputation. All these categories and their themes are illustrated in Table 10 and are elaborated on in the following sub-sections.

Table 10. Antecedents of benevolence from the client's perspective

Themes	Sub-themes
Client's expectation and attitude	Client's expectation
	Attitude towards online shopping
Client's trust	Propensity to trust
	Trust stance
	Message of trust
Prior history with firm	Client's previous experience
	Satisfaction with (past) outcomes
	Long-standing business relationships
	Brand recognition
Client's perception of firm	Integrity



	Reputation
	Reliability

### *Client's expectations and attitude*

Client's expectations and attitude refer to (i) the client's expectation of the firm and (ii) the client's attitude towards online shopping. The client's expectation of the firm refers to the assumed and anticipated behaviour of the firm towards the client in their business relationship. Nikolova et al. (2015) points out that in order to demonstrate benevolence, a firm has to define, negotiate, and align its business exchange to the **client's expectations**. Moreover, Oliveira et al. (2017) argue that consumer characteristics, such as **client's attitude towards online shopping**, are one of the major sources of trust that influence, among others, the benevolence dimension of consumer trust. The client's attitude towards online shopping refers to the mindset the client has of e-commerce.

### *Client's trust*

Client's trust refers to (i) client's propensity to trust, (ii) client's trust stance, and (iii) firm's message of trust to their clients. First, it has been proved that the **propensity to trust** has a positive effect on benevolence, which is a dimension of customers' trust (Kantsperger & Kunz, 2010). Propensity to trust refers to the client's disposition to have confidence in the firm's actions and behaviour. Second, Oliveira et al. (2017) also argue that consumer characteristics, such as their **trust stance**, is one of the key sources of trust that influence the benevolence dimension of consumer trust, which explains overall trust and has a direct effect on the intention to purchase online. Trust stance refers to the viewpoint the client has of their confidence in the firm's actions and behaviour. Last, firms that convey **messages of trust**, customer commitment or reliability as 'price guarantees' or 'money-back guarantees' will increase perceived levels of benevolence (Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014). Messages of trust refer to how the firm communicates that the client can have confidence in their actions and behaviour.

### *Client's prior history with the firm*

Client's prior history with the firm refers to (i) the previous experience the client had with the firm, (ii) the client's satisfaction with the firm's (past) outcomes, (iii) the long-standing business relationships, and (iv) the brand recognition by the client. First, positive **previous experiences** the client has with the firm will increase their perception of the benevolence (Kantsperger & Kunz, 2010). The client's previous experiences refer to the past encounters the client had with the firm. Second, Ganesan (1994) pinpoints that a **client's satisfaction with outcomes** will increase their perception of a firm's benevolence since it indicates the firm's concern for equitable outcomes and the welfare of the client. Moreover, the research of Kantsperger & Kunz (2010) also proves that customer satisfaction leads to benevolence. A customer that is satisfied with the firm's performance denotes that the firm has been successful in their service and/or product provision, is honest, and acts in the interest of the client (Kantsperger & Kunz, 2010). Furthermore, firms should develop marketing programs designed to increase client's level of commitment and satisfaction, which in turn facilitate benevolence. Higher commitment can be facilitated by providing additional benefits to the relationship, reducing the cost of remaining in the relationship, and higher satisfaction can be facilitated by social ties (Lee, Lee, &

Suh, 2007; Liff & Wahlström, 2017). The client's satisfaction with outcomes refers to the degree of fulfilment the client feels with the result of the business exchange with the firm. Third, **long-standing business relationships**, which have developed over the years and includes personal contacts and mutual relationship, increase client's perception of the benevolence (Liff & Wahlström, 2017). The long-standing business relationship refers to an established and lasting business relationship and the client's viewpoint of the long-standing business relationship. Last, Oliveira et al. (2017) argue that firm characteristics, such as **brand recognition**, are one of the key sources of trust that influence the benevolence dimension of consumer trust, which leads to overall trust and has a direct effect on the intention to purchase online. Brand recognition refers to a client that can identify the brand from previous knowledge of, for example, past business exchanges.

#### *Client's perception of the firm*

Client's perception of the firm refers to (i) integrity, (ii) reputation, and (iii) reliability. First, **lack of integrity** is one of the key sources of trust that could decrease the level of the benevolence dimension of the consumer trust (Oliveira et al., 2017). Integrity refers to client's view of the firm's moral and ethical principles, honesty and sincerity. Second, they also argue that firm characteristics such as **reputation** can increase the benevolence dimension of trust. Additionally, the research of Wang & Jap (2017) proved that a firm's reputation is positively related to the client's perception of the firm's normative benevolence. Affective and normative benevolence can be manifested by specific actions by the firms, such as concessions besides reputation. Additionally, a firm's good reputation signals a client for the firm's benevolence and good intention (Kantsperger & Kunz, 2010). Reputation refers to the client's viewpoint of the firm's good character, position, and fame. Last, firms that convey messages of trust, customer commitment or **reliability** as 'price guarantees' or 'money-back guarantees' will increase perceived levels of benevolence (Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014). Reliability refers to the client's point of view of the firm's dependability for their loyalty, honesty and trustworthiness.

#### 4.3.2. Firm's Perspective

The firm's perspective is categorised under seven categories:

- (i) The firm's perception of the client
- (ii) The firm's intended relationships
- (iii) The firm's values and purposes
- (iv) The firm's operations
- (v) The firm's investments
- (vi) The firm's communication
- (vii) The firm's commitment

The firm's perception of the client refers to the impression the firm has of the client and the judgment the firm makes of the client based on their past encounters or first-time encounter, such as their treatment of the client and their attitude and behaviour towards the client. The firm's intended relationships refer to the kind of relationships the firm aim, desires, and expects to have with the client. The firm's values and purposes refer to the importance and significance of the firm regarding benevolence and the target and aspiration the firm have for benevolence, such as culture and their sense of obligation and duty. The firm's operations refer to core business operations that are related and have an effect on benevolence, such as strategy and organisational performance. The firm's

investments refer to investments that the firm does for the business exchange to enhance benevolence, such as relationship investments. The firm's communications refer to the invested ways the firm transmits information towards the client to facilitate benevolence. The firm's commitment refers to different types of ways the firm is engaged in a relationship with the client that leads to benevolence. All these categories may potentially be related to each other and might overlap and are thus not mutually exclusive. For example, the preferential treatment a firm gives to a particular client, which is a theme of the firm's perception of the client, may be related and overlap with the firm's intended relationships, the firm's communication, and the firm's commitment towards the client. All these categories and their themes are illustrated in Table 11 and are elaborated on in the following sub-sections.

Table 11. Antecedents of benevolence from the firm's perspective

Themes	Sub-themes	Sub-sub themes
Firm's perception of client	Firm's attitude towards clients	Caring attitude
		Favourable attitude
		Helping behaviour
		Reassurance
		Making concessions
		Tangible reward
	Treatment of the client	Social bonding
		Preferential treatment
		Expected gain
		Concerns about partner's outcome
Firm's intended relationships	Benefits to relationships	
	Cost reduction of continuing the relationships	
	Relationship satisfaction	
	Relationship wellbeing	
	Long-term orientation of firm	
Firm's values and purposes	Firm's intention	Collective intention
		Client's best interest
	Obligation and duty	
	Firm governance	
	Culture	Relationship orientation
		Culture familiarity
Firm's operations	Core business operations	Core offerings
	Authority to provide client's with flexible solutions	Redress client's purchase error
	Cost of action	
	Firm's strategies	Marketing strategies
		Price strategy
		Website strategies

Firm's investments	Relationship investments	
	Transaction specific investments (TSI)	
	Idiosyncratic investments	
Firm's communication	Specific communication strategies	Social media usage
	Customer interaction	Customised interpersonal interaction
	Sharing confidential information	
	Rep's personal information and details	
Firm's commitment	Demonstrated commitment	Collective commitment
		Message of customer commitment
	Commitment to business relationship	
	Affective commitment	
	Calculative commitment	

### *Firm's perception of the client*

The firm's perception of the client includes (i) treatment of the client and (ii) attitude towards the client. First, treatment of the client refers to how the firm chooses to act towards the client based on the perception it has of the client. Treatment of the client is categorised under four parts: (i) social bonding, (ii) preferential treatment, (iii) expected gain from the exchange, and (iv) concerns about the client's outcome. Lee et al. (2004) and Lee, Lee, & Suh (2007) argue that firms should enhance **social bonding** (i.e., to have a social relationship aside from a business relationship) and affective commitment with their partners to increase the level of altruistic benevolence. This in turn have a positive effect to the relationship performance in long-term relationships. Benevolence can also be influenced by giving the client **preferential treatment** compared to other clients (Cho, 2006). Here, the firm chooses to act differently in a positive way towards the clients because of the liking and positive perception it has of the client. A firm can pursue a more positive treatment of the client because of an **expected gain** from the business exchange, which is their motivation for their benevolent act (Lee et al., 2004; Wang & Jap, 2017). Wang & Jap (2017) also point out that firms that are mutually oriented and **concerned about the client's outcomes** are perceived as more effectively benevolent.

Second, attitude towards the clients refers to the firm's behaviour towards the client and how the firm chooses to approach the client to increase the client's perceived benevolence. Attitude is categorised under six parts: (i) caring attitude, (ii) favourable attitude, (iii) reassurance, (iv) helping behaviour, (v) concession, and (vi) tangible reward. A high level of cultural familiarity means that partners have a better understanding of each other, which facilitates a **caring attitude** and mutual understanding, which increases the perceived benevolence (Lee, Lee, & Suh, 2007). Additionally, partners who gather for mutual understanding and make their partner's performance an aspect of their own goal and evaluation criteria develop a **favourable attitude**, which leads to a more committed and benevolent relationship (Lee, Lee, & Ulgado, 2007). Lee, Lee, & Suh (2007) pinpoint that affectively committed firms have a higher chance to engage in **helping behaviour** which will elevate perceived levels of benevolence. Firms who **reassure** their clients that the client can trust them are perceived as

more benevolent and threat-reducing since this is a demonstration that the firm cares and will protect the client's welfare (Nikolova et al., 2015). Reassurance can be in the form of messages that underlines that the client can indeed trust the firm. One way that a firm can signal its affective orientation towards the clients is by **making concessions**. Making concessions is assisting or accommodating the unique requests of the client that advance their well-being without an expectation of future gains by the firm (Batson, 1991; Wang & Jap, 2017). Some examples of concessions are (i) adjusting a product requirement to accommodate the partner's business processes, (ii) giving the client a price reduction (Carnevale & Pruitt, 1992; Wang & Jap, 2017), (iii) positive changes in the service, contract, or product quality (Good & Evans, 2001; Wang & Jap, 2017). Moreover, Wang & Jap (2017) proved that concessions are positively related to the perception of affective and normative benevolence. Furthermore, Cho (2006) claims that **rewarding clients in a tangible way** influences benevolence as well, where tangible rewards include economic rewards for regular clients and economic incentives for returning clients.

#### *Firm's intended relationships*

The firm's intended relationships include (i) the benefits to the relationship, (ii) the cost reduction of continuing the relationship, (iii) the relationship satisfaction, (iv) the relationship wellbeing, and (v) the long-term orientation of the firm. First, the firm should provide **benefits to the relationship** and **reduce the cost of continuing the business relationship** to enhance commitment which will elevate levels of benevolence (Lee, Lee, & Suh, 2007). Second, they argue that **relationship satisfaction** and commitment are considered to be the most significant antecedents of benevolence. Third, (Lee, Lee, & Suh, 2007) claim that firms who are affectively committed to the business exchange have a higher chance to further the **wellbeing of the relationship**, which enhances benevolence. Lastly, firms who have a **long-term orientation** about the business relationship in an affective and emotional way enhance their perceived benevolence (Stutz et al., 2022).

#### *Firm's values and purposes*

The firm's values and purposes include (i) the firm's intention, (ii) its obligation and duty, (iii) the firm's governance, and (iv) its culture. The firm's intention refers to the plan or purpose the firm has for their partners according to their values, which includes their collective intention and their best interest for their clients. Beveridge & Höllerer (2023) claim that **collective intention** leads to higher levels of benevolence. Moreover, Fazal e Hasan et al. (2014) argue that firms should retain elements that demonstrate they are serving the **client's best interest** over financial gains to increase benevolence. From another perspective, benevolence can arise from a **sense of obligation or duty** towards the clients (Wang & Jap, 2017), where the firm feels that they have the duty or unwritten obligation to behave benevolently towards the client.

Crucially, the research by Stutz et al. (2022) proved that **firm governance** similar to a family firm has a positive effect on benevolence. Firm governance refers to the bureaucracy and management of a firm. The culture of the firm is also very essential for the perceived benevolence of the firm. The culture, as part of the values and purposes, refers to relationship-oriented culture, culture familiarity, and shared values and norms. A firm that creates a **relationship-oriented culture** where benevolent behaviour is desired and valued by the organisation increases the perceived level of benevolence by the client (Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000). **Culture familiarity** is important since it helps to understand the business partners and how they see business aspects, tasks, and behaviour. A firm that understands

the **individual differences** between them and their partners influences the perceived benevolence of their partners (Wang & Jap, 2017). Additionally, firms that **share values and norms** enable them to understand their partners' objectives and goals better, which increases their benevolent intentions (Doney & Cannon, 1997). Doney & Cannon (1997) also argue that with a higher level of cultural familiarity, the firm develops a caring attitude and mutual understanding, which fosters benevolence. Additionally, a firm with a limited understanding can host gatherings to have a higher mutual understanding which in turn leads to a more committed and benevolent relationship. Wang & Jap (2017) pinpoint that mutually oriented firms that are also concerned about the partner's outcome increase their perceived affective benevolence by the partner.

### *Firm's operations*

The firm's operations include the influential aspects that are related to its business processes. The firm's operations can be classified into four categories, namely (i) the core business operations, (ii) the cost of action, (iii) the tactics, and (iv) the authority to provide flexible solutions. First, **core business operations** refer to the elements the firm must maintain in order to stay in business and execute its business model (Cho, 2006). For example, offering good product assortment and value. Cho (2006) also postulates that core business operations influence a firm's benevolence. Moreover, their research supported the claim that performance evaluations on **core product offerings** have an influence on benevolence.

Second, benevolence can arise by giving the organisation's rep the **authority to provide clients with flexible solutions** (Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000), which refer to solutions that are slightly beyond the firm's rules and regulations, for example, a few days extra for the return period. Another example is when a client makes a genuine purchase error, and the firm responds urgently to **redress the error** at all costs (Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014).

Third, an expected gain can be demonstrated through the **cost of action or inaction**, which influences the calculative benevolence (Wang & Jap, 2017). A captivating example by Livnat (2004) is "when Ruthie loans Robert her life savings to help him open a business he has dreamed of opening for years and then Robert's business fails, Ruthie knows that she has a right to ask for her money back but knows that would worsen his situation. By refraining from asking for her money back, her forbearance creates a recognizable discomfort that she incurs on his behalf, but she does so because she knows it is in his best interest".

Last, a **firm's tactics**, such as those related to marketing, pricing, and website, can have an influence on benevolence. In the early stages of a relationship, **marketing strategies** and tactics provide economic and mutualistic benefits, which will lead to mutualistic benevolence (Lee et al., 2004). In more mature stages of a relationship, marketing strategies and tactics provide affective commitment, which leads to altruistic benevolence (Lee et al., 2004). Moreover, marketing programs designed to increase a firm's level of commitment and satisfaction facilitate benevolence (Lee, Lee, & Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee, & Ulgado, 2007).

Second, the **pricing strategy** that is used by the firm can also signal benevolence, for example, low pricing strategies, such as price matching guarantee (PMG) or everyday low pricing (EDLP). Low pricing strategies, such as PMG or EDLP, can create the beliefs that a firm is capable of offering the lowest available prices and are altruistically motivated to do so under high price dispersion, which enhances

benevolence and, therefore also purchase intention (White & Yuan, 2012). Moreover, White & Yuan (2012) argue that offering clients exclusive deals may also be perceived as a benevolent act. Furthermore, they claim that firms that provide their clients with the opportunity to search or require an additional search to obtain the lowest price available are perceived as benevolent.

Last, **website strategy** is another approach that has an influence on benevolence. Gefen & Straub (2004) suggest that the perception of social presence on the website increases benevolence perception. Moreover, McKnight et al. (2002) claims that a high-quality website creates the belief that a firm is honest and benevolent. Additionally, Oliveira et al. (2017) postulate that the likability of the website infrastructure, which includes integrity, privacy, and security, positively influences the perception of a firm's benevolence. Likewise, Cho (2006) pinpoints that site design and security influence benevolence. For example, the firm's website is easy to navigate and aesthetically pleasing, and the firm's infrastructure and privacy policy are reliable and secure (Cho, 2006).

#### *Firm's investments*

The firm's investments include the firm's investments related to (i) the business relationship, (ii) transaction, and (iii) idiosyncratic investments. First, Cho (2006) postulates that **relationship investment** increases benevolence. Relationship investments refer to a firm's additional practices targeted at promoting and rewarding repeat clients (Cho, 2006). For example, (i) offering tangible economic rewards to encourage clients to return, (ii) frequent and personalised communications intended to ease social bonding between the firm and the client, and (iii) preferential treatment of the client to augment the perception that the firm serves its regular clients better than its nonregular clients and make them feel special and important (Berry, 1995).

Second, Ganesan (1994) pinpoints that the perception of a firm's **transaction-specific investments** (TSI) increases benevolence. A TSI can be investments in people, lasting assets, and procedures. For example, training salespeople in merchandising, developing displays, providing dedicated electronic linkups for inventory management, and offering information on new products in a vendor-retailer relationship (Ganesan, 1994).

Last, Wang & Jap (2017) claim that a firm's **idiosyncratic investments** are positively related to the perception of affective and calculative benevolence. Idiosyncratic investments or economic investments send a message that the firm is mutually oriented and is concerned about its partner's outcomes. Idiosyncratic investments can be tangible or intangible, and they are also non-fungible or not easily transferred to an alternative business exchange relationship. Examples of tangible investments are capital equipment or machinery, and intangible investments are services, and specific and implicit knowledge (Wang & Jap, 2017).

#### *Firm's communication*

The firm's communication includes (i) its communication strategies, (ii) customer interactions, (iii) sharing of confidential information, and (iv) the personal information and details that a rep shares online. First, benevolence can result from **specific communication strategies** of the firm, such as advertising and branding (Kantsperger & Kunz, 2010). Moreover, the research of Zhang & Li (2019) supported the notion that social media usage has a positive influence on benevolence. Social media can enhance information exchange and collaboration, and uncertainty reduction. Moreover, the firm's

rep's timely response on social media may augment the communication between the firm and the client (Zhang & Li, 2019). Second, research confirmed that **customer interaction** that includes service quality and customer satisfaction has a positive influence on the benevolence (Oliveira et al., 2017). Additionally, Zhang & Li (2019) point out that clients cherish the firm's rep's effort and attempt to make sense of their input and develop a positive evaluation of the rep's benevolence when the rep spends time engaging in communication with the client. Likewise, Doney & Cannon (1997) point out that customised interpersonal interaction with the client can demonstrate predictable behaviours and benevolent intentions. Third, a firm that **shares confidential information** with the client signal to the client that the firm's motives and intentions are benevolent and they can be trusted (Doney & Cannon, 1997). Last, Zhang & Li (2019) pinpoint that the accumulated records of a **rep's personal information**, daily life, and significant events on social media imply their family background, cultural background, ethnicity, and other personal characteristics signal benevolence.

#### *Firm's commitment*

The firm's commitment includes (i) demonstrated commitment, (ii) commitment to business relationship, (iii) affective commitment, and (iv) calculative commitment. First, **demonstrated commitment** consists of collective commitment and a message of customer commitment. Making the client look good in internal presentation **demonstrates a commitment** to the client which creates a feeling of comfort and confidence that the firm is putting the client's goals and welfare above their own, which has a positive influence on benevolence and contributes to the development of shared beliefs (Nikolova et al., 2015). Moreover, **collective commitment** and intention are key to benevolent actions (Beveridge & Höllerer, 2023). Additionally, firms who express **messages of customer commitment** elevate the perceived benevolence (Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014). Second, **commitment to a business relationship** manifests benevolence which leads to enhanced relationship performance (Lee et al., 2004; Lee, Lee, & Suh, 2007). Third, the research of Lee, Lee, & Ulgado (2007) supported that a firm's **affective commitment** to the relationship has a positive influence on its altruistic benevolence and fourth, a firm's **calculative commitment** to the relationship has a positive influence on its mutualistic benevolence.

#### 4.3.3. External factors

The antecedents of benevolence regarding the external factors refer to factors that are outside of the firm's or the client's control. The external factors include (i) helpfulness in crisis and (ii) framing of the situation. Helpfulness in a crisis refers to the actions and behaviour the firm takes in a crisis which is beyond its control but still chooses to help its partners and clients. Framing of a situation refers to how the firm perceives the situation and decides how to act on it. These two categories may potentially be related to each other and might overlap and are thus not mutually exclusive. These two categories and their themes are illustrated in Table 12 and are elaborated on in the following sub-sections.



Table 12. Antecedents of benevolence from external factors

Themes	Sub-themes
Helpfulness in a crisis	
Framing of situation	Cause
	Circumstances
	Context

### Helpfulness in a crisis

**Helpfulness in a crisis** increases benevolence (Liff & Wahlström, 2017). Moreover, Liff & Wahlström (2017) point out that during a serious crisis, a firm maintains a minimum number of relationships, which exhibits a higher level of benevolence to the partners if reciprocal benevolence has been received in the past.

### Framing of the situation

**Framing of the situation** has an influence on the perceptions of benevolence by the partner, such as the underlying goal orientation (Stutz et al., 2022). Moreover, Wang & Jap (2017) argue that benevolence can result from an affective, a self-interest, or a duty cause. They also claim that circumstances such as the level of competition between the firm and its partners, influence the perception of benevolence by the partner. Additionally, the context in general influences the perceived level of benevolence by the partner (Mayer et al., 1995).

## 4.4. Contextual variables

Contextual variables refer to possible mediators and moderators which have an influence on the impacts of benevolence. There are several moderators and mediators in the literature on benevolence. The possible contextual variables that came forward from previous studies are cross-cultural factors, such as cultural distance, cultural familiarity, and cultural values, market turbulence, family firms versus non-family firms, perception of benevolence, and relationship maturity. These can be seen in Figure 13.

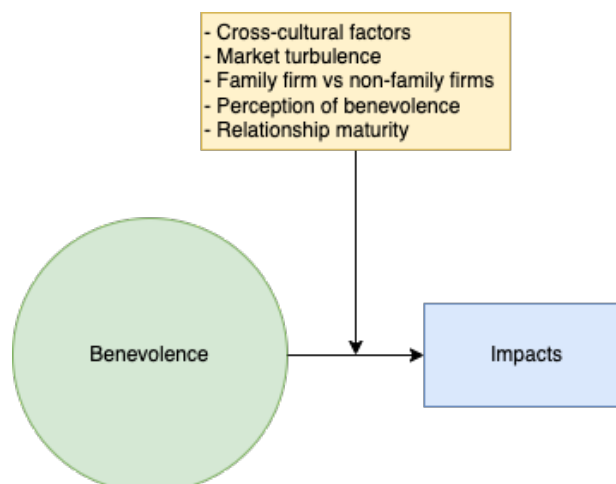


Figure 13. Overview contextual variables.

First, cross-cultural factors can play a significant role in determining the success of benevolent relationships. According to Gu et al. (2019), when cultural differences are significant, a firm representative's (rep) benevolence trust becomes critical in developing commitment from the client. Moreover, Gu et al. (2019) point out that low uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation can dampen the effect of benevolence on information credibility. Furthermore, Gu et al. (2019) acknowledge that when cultural distance is high, benevolence becomes more important in developing commitment. Cultural familiarity also influences the impacts of benevolence. As found by Lee, Lee, & Suh (2007), the impact of relationship satisfaction with the relationship on benevolence can be strengthened by increased *value similarity* and *cultural familiarity* between the parties involved. Lee, Lee, & Suh (2007) argue that when cultural familiarity is low, business partners have a limited understanding of each other, which impedes the development of caring attitude and mutual understanding. A partner's relationship satisfaction has a significant influence on benevolence only when cultural familiarity is high, as high cultural familiarity is characterized by understanding of one another, caring attitude, and mutual understanding Lee, Lee, & Suh (2007). Moreover, Lee, Lee, & Ulgado (2007) pinpoint that cultural values affect the effect of benevolence on relational exchange. When there are significant differences in values, understanding between the parties may be limited, inhibiting reciprocity in the relationship (Bonnici, 1991; Schoenherr & Wagner, 2016).

Second, market turbulence can play a significant role in determining the success of benevolent relationships. The association between benevolence and involvement is weakened under high levels of market turbulence (Schoenherr & Wagner, 2016). The effectiveness of benevolence is then weakened in constrained and restricted environments, which can be interpreted as risk of betrayal or opportunistic behaviour (Schoenherr & Wagner, 2016). Additionally, Lee, Lee, & Ulgado (2007) found that altruistic benevolence has a positive effect on relationship performance in long-duration relationships and a detrimental effect on relationship performance in short-duration relationships.

Third, family firms can also play a significant role in determining the success of benevolent relationships. Family firms will lead to benevolence perceptions which in turn will lead to credibility advantages like information credibility (Stutz et al., 2022). Moreover, family firm governance has a stronger effect on information credibility through benevolence (Stutz et al., 2022).

Fourth, perceptions of benevolence can play a significant role in determining the success of benevolent relationships. Since benevolence play a dominant-rile in trust-building, customers will have to perceive benevolence as positive (Cho, 2006), such as firms being interested in their customer's best interest (Doney & Cannon, 1997). Moreover, perceived benevolence is positively related to the customer's commitment to the business relationship (Wang & Jap, 2017).

Fifth, the *duration of a relationship* influences the relationship of altruistic benevolence and relationship performance. The impact of altruistic benevolence on relationship performance is positive in mature relationships (Lee et al., 2004). However, the impact of altruistic benevolence on relationship performance is negative in new relationships, since business partners are less confidence about each other's motive and intention for doing business (Doney & Cannon, 1997; Lee et al., 2004).

There has not been much research conducted on potential contextual variables on the relationship between benevolence and their impacts. These are necessary to be able to have a fuller view and understanding of the concept of benevolence.

#### 4.5. Impacts of benevolence

In this subsection, the positive and negative impacts of benevolence are presented, i.e., the elements and factors that will follow benevolent acts and behaviour. Impacts of benevolence are effects benevolence has on a business exchange, encounter, and/or relationship (Cambridge Dictionary, 2023). The impacts can be positive in the perspective of the firm, partner, or client, or they can be negative. Impacts are another key aspect to understanding the influence of benevolence business processes and what it contributes to.

Similar to the antecedents, the impacts were synthesised by listing the key words for each data string and then grouping the keywords which resulted in higher-level themes and categories. Table 13 is an excerpt of the key word that were formed after analysing the data points in NVivo – the complete overview can be seen in Table 23 (Appendix 6). The total coding references refers to the total number of coded lines of this keyword, and the number of supported sources represents the number of papers where the coded lines can be found. Each of these was further classified.

Table 13. Excerpt of key words of the data regarding impacts

Main keywords	Sub- key words	Example data extracted	Total coding References	# of supporting sources
Gratitude		“increase the level of gratitude”	11	2, <b>Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014</b> ; Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000
Improve relationship performance		“enhancing relationship performance”	35	6, <b>Lee et al., 2004</b> ; Lee, Lee, & Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee, & Ulgado, 2007; Schoenherr & Wagner, 2016; Seyedghorban et al., 2021; Jiang et al., 2015
Customer loyalty		“influence customer loyalty”	13	2, <b>Selnes &amp; Gønhaug, 2000</b> ; Zhang & Li, 2019
Purchase intention		“benevolence reduced purchase intentions”	3	1, <b>Gefen &amp; Straub, 2004</b>
Opportunism		“may open the door to complacent or opportunistic behavior”	5	2, <b>Schoenherr &amp; Wagner, 2016</b> ; Wang & Jap, 2017
Feelings of indebtedness		“have feelings of indebtedness”	4	4, <b>Lee, Lee, &amp; Ulgado, 2007</b> ; Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2004; Lee, Lee, & Suh, 2007
...				

After analysing the key words, these were then grouped to form higher level themes. These themes are represented in Table 24 (Appendix 7). An excerpt of the grouped themes can be seen in Table 14. The green shading represents the positive impacts, and the red shading represents the negative impacts.

Table 14. Excerpt of themes of the data regarding impacts

Theme – level 0	Theme – level 1	Theme – level 2	Theme – level 3		
Influences mental activities	Gratitude				
	Reciprocity				
	Liking of firm				
	Indebtedness				
	Positive affection				
	Cognitive responses to ‘do something’				
	Delight				
	Excitement				
	Friendly act				
	Pleasure				
	Sense of friendship				
	Warmth				
	Relationship impacts independent of relationship duration			Improve relationship performance	Improve relationship performance
Relationship satisfaction		Improve relationship satisfaction			
		Partner satisfaction			
Relationship quality		Improve relationship quality			
		Increase perception of exchange quality			
Customer perspective	Customer loyalty	Frequent interactions			
		Personal Loyalty			
		Future purchase loyalty			
		Customer loyalty			
		Purchase intention			
Feelings of indebtedness					
				Opportunism	Complacent or opportunistic behaviour
					Vulnerability to opportunism
					May open door to opportunistic behaviour
More opportunistic behaviour					
Financial perspective	Purchasing behaviour	Ignorant purchase risk-taking			
		Negative effect on purchase risk			
		Purchase intention			

Hereafter, categories were derived from grouping the themes of level 0. The positive impacts could be classified under three main categories, namely positive activities an act of benevolence can achieve concerning the customer’s behaviour, the positive impacts on relationships, and the positive return

on benevolent investments (RoBI). The positive activities an act of benevolence can achieve concerning the customer's behaviour refer to the positive consequences of acts of benevolence regarding the attitude of the customer. The positive impacts on relationships refer to the positive consequences benevolence has on relationships, existing and new. The positive RoBI can be classified into three sub-categories: the customer perspective, the financial perspective, and the overall firm reputation. RoBI need not be only financial or monetary return. In this case the RoBI include financial return, but also return regarding the customer and the firm itself.

The negative impacts of benevolence were classified under three main themes, namely the negative mental activities of an act of benevolence, the negative impacts on relationships, and the harmful outcomes of benevolent investments. The negative mental activities of an act of benevolence refer to the negative mental consequences a benevolent act can have. The negative impacts on relationships refer to the negative consequences benevolence has on relationships. The harmful outcomes of benevolent investments refer to the negative RoBI and can be sub-classified as the customer perspective, the financial perspective, and the overall firm reputation.

Afterwards, it could be seen that both the negative and positive impacts could be categorised into three stages: emotions, relationship, and performance. Stage 1 captures the emotional outcomes experienced by the customer from a benevolent act. Stage 2 captures the relationship characteristics (for both new and formed relationships between the customer and the firm) that are influenced by benevolence. As a result of the changed relationship, there is potential influence on the return for the organisation – depicted in stage 3. An overview of these categories and stages is presented in Table 25 (Appendix 8). Figure 14 depicts a visual representation of the stages, which are elaborated on in the following paragraphs. Each stage describes both the positive and negative impacts.

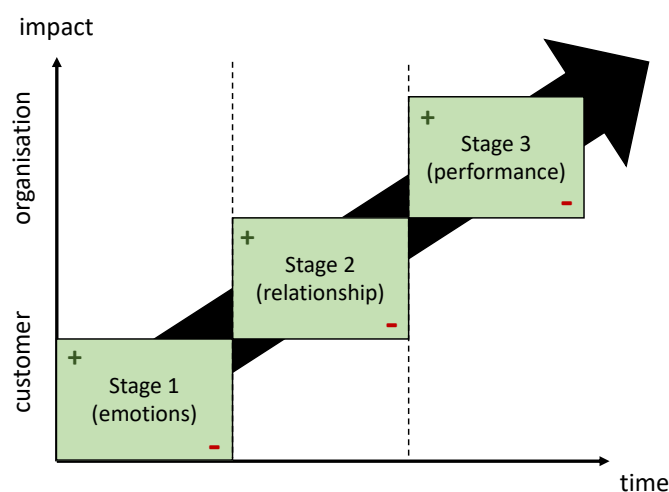


Figure 14. Impacts of benevolence in routine business processes over time.

#### 4.5.1. Stage 1: Emotional Effects Impacting the Customer

The first stage, emotional effects impacting the customer, have positive and negative themes. The positive themes can be classified under seven themes:

- (i) Alleviate customers perceived risk, which refers to the factors that can lower or eliminate the perceived risk of the customer

- (ii) Enhance trust, which refers to factors that increase the trustworthiness of the customer in the firm
- (iii) Sense of credibility, which refers to the factors that increase reliability, integrity, and validity
- (iv) Influences mental activities, which refers to the factors that have positive effects on the mental activities of a customer
- (v) Reciprocity, which refers to the factors that leads that the customer will also act benevolently towards the firm
- (vi) Reduce social uncertainty, which refers to the factors that leads to a diminished social uncertainty for the customer
- (vii) Increase intimate disclosure, which refers to the factors that has an enhanced affectionate disclosure

The negative impacts can be classified under four themes:

- (i) Feeling of indebtedness, which refers to the factors that lead to the customer having a feeling of indebtedness
- (ii) Obligation to reciprocate, which refers to the factors for which the customer will be left feeling forced to also act benevolently
- (iii) Unfilled anticipations, which refers to the factors that result into the feeling of unmet anticipation
- (iv) Overconfidence, which refers to the customer feeling overconfident within the business relationship

All these categories may potentially be related to each other and might overlap and are thus not mutually exclusive. For example, the positive feeling of reciprocity can turn into an obliged feeling of reciprocity. An overview of stage 1 can be seen in Figure 15 and the corresponding themes can be seen in

Table 15, which are elaborated on in the following sub-sections.

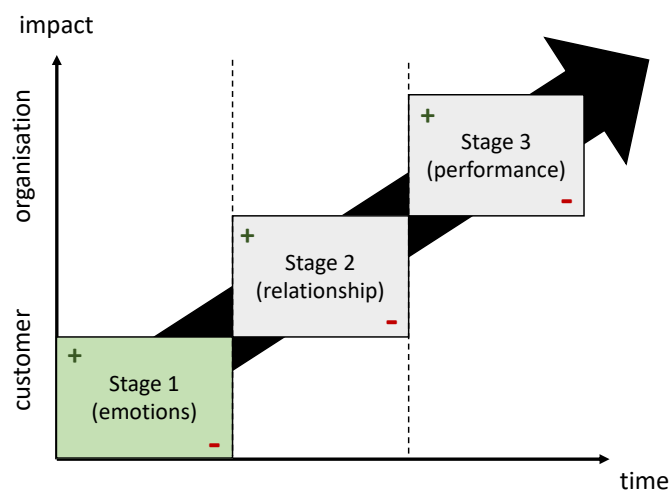


Figure 15. Impacts of benevolence in stage 1.

Table 15. Impacts of benevolence in stage 1.

Positive		Negative
Theme	Sub-Theme	Theme
Alleviate customers perceived risk		Feeling of indebtedness
Enhance trust		Obligation to reciprocate
Sense of credibility	Social media usage	Unfilled anticipations
Influences mental activities	Cognitive responses to 'do something'	Overconfidence
	Warmth	
	Pleasure	
	Delight	
	Indebtedness	
	Gratitude	
	Friendly act	
	Sense of friendship	
	Positive affection	
	Excitement	
Liking of firm		
Reciprocity		
Reduce social uncertainty		
Increase intimate disclosure		

*Positive impacts*

An act of benevolence can be categorised into six main positive aspects. First, it can **alleviate customer’s perceived risks** of the exchange process. Seyedghorban et al. (2021) points out that a customer that observed trustworthiness will create trust between the buyer and the organisation, which will alleviate their perceived risk to the exchange process. This is a result of benevolence being a dimension of trustworthiness. Moreover, Zhang & Li (2019) argues that a customer’s trust belief in a rep’s benevolence can reduce purchase risk, which in turn will increase customer loyalty. Further, this trust in benevolence will prevent excessive precautionary measures from being taken by the buyer during collaboration.

Second, an act of benevolence can **enhance trust**. Benevolence trust is a key criterion for increasing commitment between customers and organisations despite the differences between sellers and buyers (Gu et al., 2019). The research by Gu et al. (2019) confirms that benevolence trust positively affects the customer’s commitment to the organisation’s rep. This in return enhances the firm’s sales revenue and purchase share from the customer. Moreover, benevolence trust is positively associated with customer loyalty (Zhang & Li, 2019). Zhang & Li (2019) also argue that social media usage increases a customer’s benevolence trust and trust overall in the organisation, which in turn increase customer loyalty. Furthermore, benevolent and less self-occupied partners have a higher chance of being trusted in situations where the business relationship has few monitoring options and where

better outcomes may be yielded from activities and initiatives (Dowell et al., 2015). In addition, Leeman & Reynolds (2012) argue that trust and benevolence influence buyer satisfaction and increase intimate disclosure by the consumer. Likewise, trust in a partner's benevolence creates confidence where it is expected that the partner would not exploit one's vulnerabilities (Jiang et al., 2015). Gefen & Straub (2004) point out that trust in a firm's benevolence will rule out the possibility of undesirable behaviour from the organisation, such as the organisation acting in a short-term opportunistic profit motive while the other party is acting in a long-term orientation.

Third, an act of benevolence can give a **sense of credibility**, which can be achieved **through social media**. Benevolence trust mediates the influences of social media usage on customer loyalty Zhang & Li (2019), where social media usage facilitates trust beliefs in benevolence which in turn improves customer loyalty. Furthermore, Stutz et al. (2022) pinpoint that benevolence perceptions give firms a credibility advantage over other firms that are not benevolent.

Fourth, an act of benevolence can influence several **positive mental activities**: cognitive responses to 'do something', warmth, pleasure, delight, indebtedness, gratitude, reciprocity, friendly act, sense of friendship, positive affection, excitement, and liking of firm. Showing benevolence in a relationship in the sense of doing something beyond the usual service requirement may result in a **cognitive response of "was not that a nice thing to do?"** and a dominant feeling of **warmth** towards the partner (Franklin & Marshall, 2019). Moreover, benevolence can lead to emotional responses such as **pleasure, delight**, and desire to build a relationship (Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014), **indebtedness** (Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2004) and **gratitude** (Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014; Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000), especially if the act is perceived as "not a duty-based obligation" or contractual requirement (Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014). Examples of actions to amplify customer gratitude are adapting store policies, personalising communications, providing 'small favours', or 'bending the rules' within set boundaries, which demonstrates that an organisation's intention is to do whatever is best for the customer (Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014). (Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000) posit that showing benevolence has a high chance of causing positive mental activity, such as gratitude and **friendly act** or a **sense of friendship** such as "he did not have to help me, but he did", which is likely to cause **positive affective** arousal and **excitement**. Likewise, Schoenherr & Wagner (2016) argue that benevolence influences positive effect and satisfaction with the business exchange due to its ability to serve as a motivator in elevating the relationship, which was also supported by Selnes & Gønhaug (2000). Additionally, benevolence is proved to enhance positive affective towards the organisation, which in turn influences behavioural intention to be loyal (Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000). Wang & Jap (2017) also suggest that benevolence creates a positive affection and **liking for the organisation**. Moreover, experienced benevolence by the customer increases the feeling of liking of the organisation that may create a kind of bonding to the organisation, which promotes loyalty that is independent of customer satisfaction with the organisation (Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000; Wang & Jap, 2017).

Acts of benevolence can result in **reciprocity**. Bove et al. (2009) reason that benevolent acts could lead to the partner being more willing to reciprocate by making sacrifices or expending energy for the organisation. Moreover, the feeling of gratitude that is a result of a benevolent act stimulates the norm of reciprocity (Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014). Lee et al. (2004) also argue that reciprocity increases relationship performance in the sense of increased mutual understanding and shared norms, which in the end leads to a relationship characterized as particularistic and effective. Lee et al. (2004) also postulate that even though altruistic benevolence does not involve an expectation of payback.



However, it is likely that a moral obligation to mutual reciprocation will form. On the contrary, reciprocity is expected under mutualistic benevolence unlike altruistic benevolence. Furthermore, Wang & Jap (2017) claim that reciprocity can be seen in the firm's commitment to the other party, concessions offered, and their idiosyncratic investments.

Fifth, an act of benevolence can **reduce social uncertainty**. Benevolence reduces social uncertainty by preventing undesirable behaviour from occurring, such as short-term opportunistic profit motive by the trusted party while the trusting party has a long-term orientation (Gefen & Straub, 2004).

Lastly, an act of benevolence can **increase intimate disclosures** from the customer. Leeman & Reynolds (2012) pinpoint that benevolence enhances intimate disclosure from the customer. Moreover, they also argue that trust is fostered by, among others, benevolence in a relationship.

#### *Negative impacts*

An act of benevolence can lead to four identified types of negative mental activities: the feeling of indebtedness, the obligation to reciprocate, unfilled anticipations, and overconfidence. First, an act of benevolence can lead to the feeling **indebtedness**. Even though there are positive mental activities such as delight and gratitude, some researchers argue that there is a negative side to the feeling of indebtedness (Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2004; Lee, Lee, & Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee, & Ulgado, 2007; Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000). Second, an act of benevolence can also lead to the moral **obligation to reciprocate**. Several researchers pinpoint that acts of altruistic benevolence lead to the moral obligation to reciprocate (Lee et al., 2004; Lee, Lee, & Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee, & Ulgado, 2007; Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000). Additionally, Lee, Lee, & Ulgado (2007) also claim that positive attitudes towards the organisation and the feeling of indebtedness motivate the partner to reciprocate the benevolence that is received from the organisation. Third, an act of benevolence may lead to **unfilled anticipation**. Wang & Jap (2017) suggest that benevolence signals unilateral action that anticipates reciprocity without its guarantee. Lastly, an act of benevolence may lead to **overconfidence**. Overconfidence in the benevolent act of the organisation's rep may lead to ignorant purchase risk from the buyer (Zhang & Li, 2019).

#### 4.5.2. Stage 2: Impacts Influencing the Customer-firm Relationship

The second stage, impacts influencing the customer-firm relationship, have positive and negative themes. The positive themes can be classified under three themes:

- (i) Creation of new relationships, which refers to the formation of relationships that did not exist before
- (ii) Strengthening of existing relationships, which refers a higher degree of consolidation of current relationships.
- (iii) Relationship impacts are independent of relationship duration, which means that relationship period have no effect on the relationships

The negative impacts can be classified under three themes:

- (i) Opportunism, which refers to actions that are regardless of the sacrifice of ethical principles

- (ii) Reduced involvement, which refers one of the party cutting back their involvement in the business relationships
- (iii) Openings for negative behaviours, which refers to possibilities to act unfavourably to the other party

All these categories may potentially be related to each other and might overlap and are thus not mutually exclusive. For example, better communication can lead to overcommunication. An overview of stage 2 can be seen in Figure 16 and the corresponding themes can be seen in Table 16, which are elaborated on in the following sub-sections.

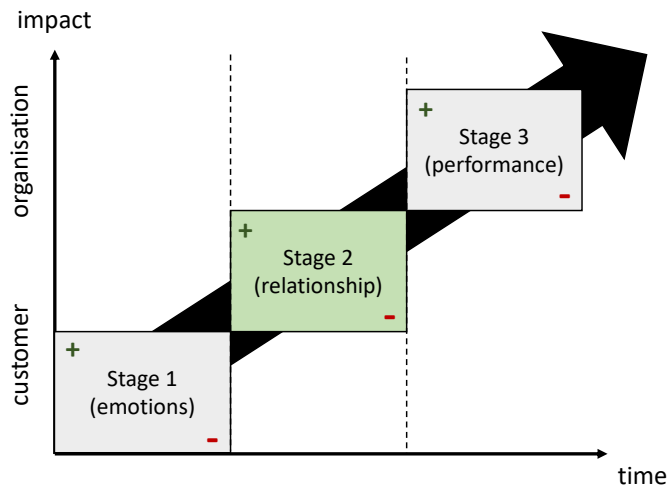


Figure 16. Impacts of benevolence in stage 2.

Table 16. Impacts of benevolence in stage 2.

Positive			Negative	
Theme	Sub-Theme	Sub-sub theme	Theme	Sub-Theme
Create a new relationship	Develop relations		Opportunism	Complacent or opportunistic behaviour
	Get project started			More opportunistic behaviour
	Didactic relationships			May open door to opportunistic behaviour
	Long-term relationships		Reduce involvement	Reduce ability to become involved
Strengthen existing relationships	Deepen commitment			Reduce willingness to get involved
	Strengthen relationships		Openings for negative behaviours	Misuse or manipulations
	Expending energy			Overcommunication
	Relationship effectiveness			Non-constructive responses
	Increase mutual understanding			Seize short-term advantage offered
	Relationship retention			
	Strengthen relationships			
	Long-term relationships			
Sustain relationships during crisis				

Relationship impacts independent of relationship duration	Better communication	Enhance persuasion
		Reduced confusion
		Unexpected actions are not negatively interpreted
	Commitment	
	Facilitate cooperative relationship	Facilitate coordination
		Collaboration
		Engage in cooperative behaviours
		Promotes cooperation
		Reduce opportunistic tendencies
	Improve relationship performance	Improve relationship performance
		Frequent interactions
		Relationship quality
		Relationship satisfaction
	Shared norms and outcomes	Shared norms
		Higher joint outcomes
	Reduce relationship challenges	Confidence
Reduce conflicts		
Reduce friction		

*Positive impacts*

A benevolent act can lead to three positive aspects concerning relationships: new relationships, strengthening of existing relationships, and aspects of relationships that are independent of relationship duration or maturity.

Positive impacts regarding creating new business relationships can be further classified under four sub-categories, namely developing relationships, getting a project started, leading to a didactic relationship, and leading to a long-term relationship. First, a benevolent act can lead to the **development of new relationships**. Benevolent acts result in feelings of pleasure and gratitude which in turn leads to a desire to build a relationship with the organisation (Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014) based on kindness (Leeman & Reynolds, 2012), trust and commitment (Kumar et al., 1995b; Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000). Similarly, Schoenherr & Wagner (2016) argue that benevolent acts foster involvement, especially in a supplier-buyer relationship. Second, an act of benevolence is suggested to serve as a key element for closer involvement in a business relationship which should be beneficial for a **project to get started** (Schoenherr & Wagner, 2016). Third, a benevolent act can lead to a **didactic relationship** through shared commitment and mutual trust (Hausman, 2001; Leeman & Reynolds, 2012). Lastly, a benevolent act can lead to **long-term relationships**. Additionally, (Hausman (2001) and Leeman & Reynolds 2012) point out that a didactic relationship will result in a long-term relationship. Remarkably, a long-term relationship has a chance of forming when the organisation’s rep puts the partner’s needs first and engages in mutual benefit (Gu et al., 2019). Moreover, other researchers also

support the notion that benevolence is a critical factor affecting the long-term relational exchange (Lee, Lee, & Ulgado, 2007) and the continued intention to stay in the relationship (Zhang & Li, 2019).

Positive impacts regarding strengthening the existing business relationships can be further classified into nine sub-categories, namely deepening the commitment to the organisation, elevating the relationship, expending energy, improving relationship effectiveness, increasing mutual understanding, prolonging intention to stay in the relationship, strengthening of relationships, leading to long-term relationships, and sustaining relationships during a crisis.

First, benevolent acts can be mutually beneficial by providing concessions to the partner in the short term, where the partner will **deepen its commitment** to the organisation (Wang & Jap, 2017). Second, Schoenherr & Wagner (2016) argue that benevolence serves as a motivator in **elevating relationships** which influences positive affection and satisfaction with the relationship exchange. Third, when a customer perceives the organisation's rep to be benevolent, there is a higher chance that the customer will reciprocate by making sacrifices or **expending energy** for the rep (Bove et al., 2009). Fourth, trust beliefs in benevolence can improve the relationship performances (Dowell et al., 2015; Zhang & Li, 2019), **relationship effectiveness**, relationship satisfaction, and commitment (Zhang & Li, 2019). Fifth, benevolence trust can reduce the negative impact of cultural distance between the partner and the organisation by having the organisation's rep take actions to demonstrate his trustworthiness (Gu et al., 2019). Moreover, as the business relationship matures, the exchange partners develop a higher degree of **mutual understanding** and shared norms (Lee et al., 2004). Sixth, (Zhang & Li, 2019) also pinpoint that trust beliefs in benevolence can improve the **continued intention to stay in the relationship**. Seventh, benevolence promotes trust, which in turn **strengthens the business relationship** and consumer confidence in the organisation (Leeman & Reynolds, 2012). Additionally, when perceived benevolence is high, the relationship between perceived relationship marketing investments and consumer gratitude is stronger (Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014). Eighth, benevolence can lead to a **long-term relational exchange** (Hausman, 2001; Lee, Lee, & Ulgado, 2007; Leeman & Reynolds, 2012). Lastly, Liff & Wahlström (2017) suggested that benevolence also seemed to **sustain a business relationship during a crisis**.

Positive impacts regarding the aspects of relationships that are independent of relationship duration or maturity can be further classified into six sub-categories, namely better communication, commitment, facilitating of cooperative relationships, improving relationship performance, reducing relationship challenges, and shared norms and outcomes.

First, benevolence which is to be interested in the partner's best interest as opposed to the organisation's own interest, enhances persuasion (Choo, 1964; Doney & Cannon, 1997). Additionally, benevolent behaviours could lead to a reduction of confusion and keep the partner informed and satisfied (Gu et al., 2019). Furthermore, when the perceived benevolence from the organisation is high, the partners are unlikely to negatively interpret the organisation's unexpected actions (Jiang et al., 2015). These all contribute to **better communication** and more open business exchanges (Gu et al., 2019)

Second, Gu et al. (2019) prove that an organisation's rep benevolence is positively related to the partner's **commitment** to the organisation's rep, which in return enhances the organisation's sales revenue and purchase share from the buyer. They also suggest that when there is a higher cultural distance, benevolence plays a more important role in developing commitment. Moreover, Wang &

Jap (2017) also imply that perceived benevolence not only motivates the partner to reciprocate with commitment (which suggests that benevolence is a powerful signal in a business exchange) but also behavioural and economic stakes. Similarly, Zhang & Li (2019) pinpoint that trust belief in benevolence improves commitment. Likewise, Hausman (2001) and Leeman & Reynolds (2012) argue that benevolence, values and effective communications influence shared commitment to the business relationship.

Third, benevolence can **facilitate cooperative relationships** in the sense of friction reduction and coordination activities facilitation (Lee et al., 2004), leading to improved alliance performance (Jiang et al., 2015). Acquah et al. (2021) argue that high levels of benevolence lead to a high level of collaboration. Moreover, Bove et al. (2009) reason that if a customer perceives the organisation to be benevolent, then the customer has a higher chance to engage in desirable, cooperative behaviours based on reciprocity and feelings of empathy. Furthermore, benevolence promotes cooperation in the business relationship (Lee et al., 2004; Schoenherr & Wagner, 2016), such as proactively sharing expertise and information, and effectively coordinating activities, which reduces operating costs and leads to lower transaction costs (Lee et al., 2004). Benevolence has been suggested to enhance collaboration by reducing the tendency of opportunistic behaviours amongst the partner organisations (Acquah et al., 2021), taking a win-win view of the relationship to reduce the potential risk of opportunism (Wang & Jap, 2017).

Fourth, both mutualistic and altruistic benevolence may have a strong positive effect on **relationship performance** if the relationship is more appreciated and reciprocated (Lee et al., 2004; Lee, Lee, & Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee, & Ulgado, 2007). (Lee et al. (2004), Lee, Lee, & Suh (2007), and Lee, Lee, & Ulgado (2007) explain that benevolence can lead to shared norms such as bilateral information exchange, mutual identification or solidarity, and flexibility which in turn positively affects relationship performance. The business relationship satisfaction and commitment could enhance the relationship performance (Lee, Lee, & Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee, & Ulgado, 2007). Benevolent considerations, such as caring, concerns, and goodwill, can lead to relationship performance and longevity (Seyedghorban et al., 2021). Jiang et al. (2015) point out that benevolence can lead to alliance performance which is more likely to value interactions within the partnership and interact more frequently. Moreover, benevolence could improve the quality of relationships, such as positive perceptions of relationship values and future purchase loyalty (Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014). Benevolence promotes the effective functioning of the relationship (Lee et al., 2004; Zhang & Li, 2019). Benevolence trust can increase the perception of exchange quality, such as better communication and more open business exchanges (Gu et al., 2019). In addition, trust belief in benevolence can improve relationship satisfaction (Zhang & Li, 2019), can reduce confusion (Gu et al., 2019; Schoenherr & Wagner, 2016) and improve partner satisfaction (Gu et al., 2019; Schoenherr & Wagner, 2016; Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000).

Fifth, benevolence leads to **shared norms and outcomes**. As such, benevolent partners engage in more problem-solving and achieve joint outcomes (Wang & Jap, 2017). Moreover, in a situation where less monitoring is possible, there is a higher chance that the partner will trust the organisation, yielding better outcomes (Dowell et al., 2015; Ganesan, 1994).

Lastly, benevolence can **reduce relationship challenges** such as confidence and reduce conflicts and friction. Trust in an organisation's benevolence leads to confidence that the organisation will not exploit the partner's vulnerabilities (Jiang et al., 2015). Benevolence can help to reduce the scope,

intensity, and frequency of dysfunctional conflict in the business relationship (Jiang et al., 2015; Schoenherr & Wagner, 2016). Besides, mutual reciprocation of benevolence can reduce friction in the business relationship and thus increase operating efficiency (Lee et al., 2004).

#### *Negative impacts*

A benevolent act can lead to three negative aspects concerning relationships, namely opportunism, reduced involvement, and openings for other negative behaviour.

First, benevolence could lead to **opportunism** in several ways. A partner's benevolence may open doors to complacent or opportunistic behaviour from the organisation, which in turn can hamper the involvement (Schoenherr & Wagner, 2016). Besides opportunism, benevolence can also lead to non-constructive responses and over-communication, which can also lead to opportunism opportunities (Wang & Jap, 2017). For example, a customer may be so trusting that they will communicate too much of their information, allowing the organisation to take advantage of them. Therefore, Wang & Jap (2017) argue that benevolence signals trust in the partner, which also increases the vulnerability to opportunism. Moreover, Schoenherr & Wagner (2016) also argue that the negative effects benevolence could have under high levels of market turbulence can be interpreted by the partner as a risk of betrayal or opportunistic behaviour due to the more constrained and restricted environment.

Second, benevolence could lead to **reduced involvement** in two ways: reduced ability to become involved and reduced willingness to get involved. If benevolence is not deemed beneficial for the partner involvement, it may hamper the involvement under high levels of market turbulence, which will lead to the partner being less willing to get involved with the organisation (Schoenherr & Wagner, 2016).

Lastly, benevolence could also lead to **other negative behaviour**. Benevolence could open the doors for abuse, such as misuse, manipulation, opportunism, over-communication, and non-constructive responses (Wang & Jap, 2017). Moreover, a partner might respond to the organisation's benevolence by reducing its own investment, seizing the short-term advantage offered by a unilateral concession when reciprocity is neither an implied nor explicit expectation, thus when the benevolence is altruistic (Wang & Jap, 2017). Benevolence could also be used to opportunistically exploit external stakeholders and disenfranchise minority (Stutz et al., 2022).

#### 4.5.3. Stage 3: Impacts Directly Related to Firm Performance

The third stage, impacts directly related to firm performance, have positive and negative themes. The positive themes can be classified under three themes:

- (i) Customer perspective, which refers to the firm's positive performance according to the customer
- (ii) Financial perspective, which refers to the firm's positive financial performance
- (iii) Overall firm reputation, which refers to the firm's performance based on the overall positive reputation

The negative impacts can be classified under three themes:

- (iv) Customer perspective, which refers to the firm’s negative performance according to the customer
- (v) Financial perspective, which refers to the firm’s negative financial performance
- (i) Overall firm reputation, which refers to the firm’s performance based on the overall negative reputation

All these categories may potentially be related to each other and might overlap and are thus not mutually exclusive. For example, customer loyalty of the positive customer perspective go hand in hand with purchase share of the positive financial perspective. An overview of stage 3 can be seen in Figure 17 and the corresponding themes can be seen in Table 17, which are elaborated on in the following sub-sections.

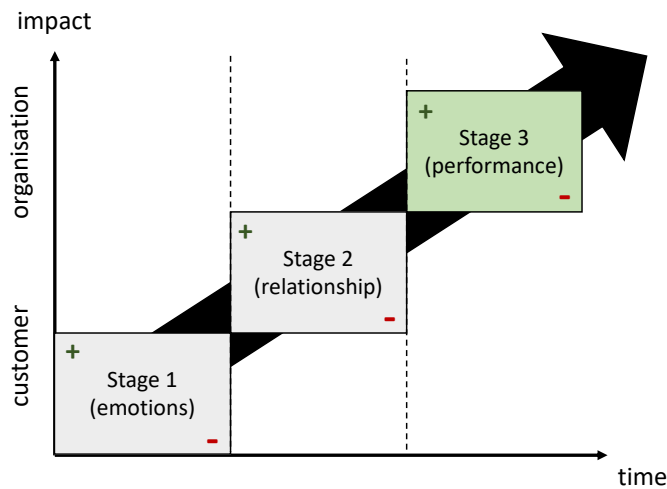


Figure 17. Impacts of benevolence in stage 3.

Table 17. Impacts of benevolence in stage 3.

Positive			Negative		
Theme	Sub-Theme	Sub-sub theme	Theme	Sub-Theme	Sub-sub theme
Customer perspective	Customer loyalty	Customer loyalty	Customer perspective	Undermine trust	
		Future purchase loyalty	Financial perspective	Purchasing behaviour	Ignorant purchase risk-taking
		Personal loyalty			Negative effect on purchase risk
		Purchase intention			Purchase intention
		Customer retention	Overall firm reputation	Benevolent dictatorship	
	Customer satisfaction	Customer satisfaction			
		Influence customer satisfaction			
	Customers' willingness to do extra for the firm	Go beyond prescribed roles			
		Customer OCB			
		Expend energy			
		Make sacrifices			

Financial perspective	Idiosyncratic investments		
	Purchase share	Future purchase loyalty	
	Sales revenue		
	Overall performance	Enhances firm's performance	
		Improve alliance performance	
	Reduce costs	Operating costs	
		Transaction costs	
		Cooperative interaction costs	
		Compliance costs	
		Coordination costs	
Resource efficiency	Enable firms to devote resource to more productive activities		
	Engage in more problem-solving		
	Operating efficiency		
Overall firm reputation	Reputational challenge		
	Credibility	Credibility	
		Information credibility	
		Increased credibility - external perspective	
		Absorb corporate information	
Trust producing factor			

### Positive impacts

The positive impacts related to firm performance can be classified into three categories, namely customer perspective, financial perspective, and overall firm reputation. These positive impacts can be called the RoBI. The positive impacts related to customer perspective are related to three aspects: customer loyalty, customer satisfaction, and customers' willingness to do extra for the firm.

First, benevolence can influence **customer loyalty** indirectly through positive affection (Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000; Zhang & Li, 2019). Moreover, benevolence seems to create a liking for the organisation that promotes loyal behaviour independent of customer satisfaction (Wang & Jap, 2017). Additionally, benevolence can reduce purchase risk, indirectly increasing customer loyalty (Zhang & Li, 2019). Fazal e Hasan et al. (2014) argue that demonstration of benevolence has a higher chance of leading to future purchase loyalty. Likewise, Bove et al. (2009) claim that benevolence is associated with greater personal loyalty to the organisation's rep. Benevolence could impact the customer's intention to purchase (Oliveira et al., 2017; White & Yuan, 2012). Showing benevolent behaviour, such as caring, increases customer satisfaction and retention (Gefen & Straub, 2004). Second, benevolence can lead to **business relationship satisfaction** since it serves as a motivator in elevating relationships (Gefen & Straub, 2004; Leeman & Reynolds, 2012; Schoenherr & Wagner, 2016; Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000). Third, benevolence can lead to the **customer's willingness to do extra for the firm**. When customers perceive the organisation to be benevolent, they are motivated to go beyond their



prescribed roles, which can be seen as customer organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB) (Bove et al., 2009). Likewise, when the organisation is affectively committed to the relationships, they tend to define their roles more broadly and are willing to provide help for their exchange partners beyond the prescribed contractual roles (Lee, Lee, & Suh, 2007). Additionally, Bove et al. (2009) also point out that a customer may be more willing to reciprocate the benevolence received by making sacrifices and expending energy.

The positive impacts related to the financial perspective are related to six aspects: idiosyncratic investments, buyer purchase share, sales revenue, overall performance enhancement, costs, and resource efficiency.

First, perceived benevolence by the partner can motivate them to reciprocate with economic stakes or **idiosyncratic investments** (Wang & Jap, 2017). Second, an organisation's rep who is trusted to be benevolent has a higher chance to increase commitment which leads to increased buyer **purchase share**, future purchase loyalty, and intention to purchase (Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014; Hong & Cho, 2011; Wang & Jap, 2017). Third, an organisation's rep who is trusted to be benevolent has a higher chance to increase commitment which will lead to increased **sales revenue** and other financial outcomes in the business relationship (Gu et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2004). Fourth, an organisation's rep who is trusted to be benevolent has a higher chance to increase commitment which leads to an increase in the **organisation's performance** (Gu et al., 2019). Moreover, benevolence can facilitate cooperative relationships, which leads to improved alliance performance (Jiang et al., 2015). Fifth, benevolence could lead to several **cost reductions**. Information sharing and flexible accommodation as part of benevolent acts reduce operating costs and lower transaction costs in a business relationship (Lee et al., 2004; Lee, Lee, & Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee, & Ulgado, 2007). Benevolence among alliance organisations reduces the scope, intensity, and frequency of conflicts which reduces compliance and coordination costs, which in turn increases alliance performance (Jiang et al., 2015). Lastly, benevolence can lead to **efficient resource** allocation. It can lead to organisations allocating resources to more productive activities (Lee, Lee, & Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee, & Ulgado, 2007), engaging in more problem-solving (Wang & Jap, 2017), increasing operating efficiency (Lee et al., 2004).

The positive impacts related to overall firm reputation are related to three aspects: reputational challenge, credibility, and trust-building. First, the presence of benevolence could prevent any **reputational (social media) challenge** (Rosemann et al., 2023).

Second, benevolent organisations have a **credibility** advantage over non-benevolent organisations, increasing their reputation, information credibility, and their credibility of sustainability reporting from an external perspective (Stutz et al., 2022). Additionally, when a buyer is confident about an organisation's rep benevolence, the buyer would be more likely to process information from the rep (Zhang & Li, 2019).

Lastly, benevolence can **build trust** in several ways. Benevolence is likely to a trust-producing factor which has positive effects to build trust and that benevolence fosters trust (Cho, 2006; Ganesan, 1994; Jiang et al., 2015; Liff & Wahlström, 2017; Nikolova et al., 2015; Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000; Seyedghorban et al., 2021). Besides, benevolence trust reduces the negative impact cultural distance has in personal attachment between the organisation and its partners (Gu et al., 2019). Additionally, a consumer who believes that an organisation meets his expectations in benevolence has a higher chance to trust to the organisation and has a higher purchase intention (Hong & Cho, 2011). Likewise,

organisation's benevolence creates trust by demonstrating intention to care for the wellbeing of its partner above immediate revenue opportunities (Doney & Cannon, 1997; Fatima & Di Mascio, 2018; Lee et al., 2004; Rosemann et al., 2023), which influences the customer's purchase intention (Oliveira et al., 2017). Furthermore, Seyedghorban et al. (2021) point out that emotionally oriented factors as caring, likeability, best-interest, and professionalism are key in building trust in business relationships. Moreover, Zhang & Li (2019) claim that an organisation's rep can use social media to improve customer loyalty by increasing customer's perceived benevolence trust and by reducing purchase risk. Also, Hausman (2001) and Leeman & Reynolds (2012) argue that benevolence leads to intimate disclosures by the customer, confidence in an organisation, mutual trust, and shared commitment, which in turn strengthen didactic relationships and consumer confidence. What is more, Stutz et al. (2022) indicate that higher levels of benevolence and problem-solving skills leads to higher consumer trust.

#### *Negative impacts*

Like the positive impacts, the negative impacts related to firm performance can be classified into three categories, namely customer perspective, financial perspective, and overall firm reputation. First, the negative impacts related to customer perspective are related to **trust undermining**. Mayer et al. (1995) argue that benevolence alone is insufficient to cause trust, and besides the organisation must also have the ability to conduct business. A lack of benevolence or ability might undermine the trust the partner has for the organisation. Second, the negative impacts related to the financial perspective are related to **purchasing behaviour**. Zhang & Li (2019) claim that the influence of trust in purchase risk implies that overconfidence in the organisation's rep benevolence may lead to ignorance of purchase risk. However, they also proved that benevolence could reduce the negative effect of purchase risk. Gefen & Straub (2004) point out that benevolence reduces the purchase intention of experienced customers of e-Vendors. Third, the negative impacts related to the overall firm reputation are related to **'benevolent dictatorship'**. Beveridge & Höllerer (2023) reason that there might be a potential dark side to benevolence where in paternalistic cultures, the organisations might take away partner's voices by not allowing them to participate in discussions around what is good for them. In the extreme case, this would deprive the partner of their freedom for their 'own' good, which is known as a 'benevolent dictator'.

#### 4.5.4. The staged progression of the impacts

The findings in section above show that a benevolent act results in different effects over time, with implications for both the customer and organisation. Three distinct stages are identified, with positive and negative impacts possible in all three stages. Stage 1 captures the emotional outcomes experienced by the customer from a benevolent act. Stage 2 captures the relationship characteristics for both new and formed relationships between the customer and the firm that are influenced by benevolence. As a result of the changed relationship, there is potential influence on the return for the organisation, which is depicted in stage 3 in Figure 14. The different progressions between the stages are elaborated in the following paragraphs.

#### Positive stage 1 → positive stage 2 → positive stage 3

Literature presents how a company's benevolent act towards a customer can initially leads to positive emotions on the part of the customer (stage 1). Emotions generated at the beginning (stage 1) can

affect the relationship and behaviour towards one another (stage 2), and subsequently also influence a firm's performance (stage 3) via increased firm reputation (Rosemann et al., 2023), increased sales through loyal customers (Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000), and reduced costs (Jiang et al., 2015) among others. For example, Fazal e Hasan et al. (2014) describe how benevolence "results in pleasure and develops feelings of gratitude in the beneficiary, as well as the desire to build a relationship with the benefactor" (p. 790); evident of the flow between stage 1 and 2. Bove et al. (2009) describe that a firm's perceived benevolence by the customer [stage 1] may lead to reciprocity by making sacrifices or expending energy in the relationship [stage 2]. Schoenherr & Wagner (2016) point out that positive affect [stage 1] leads to satisfaction with the business relationship and elevates the relationship in a higher degree [stage 2]. Moreover, Lee et al. (2004) show that mutual reciprocity reduces friction and facilitates coordination activities [stage 2], which increases operating efficiency [stage 3]. Gu et al. (2019) describe how perceived trustworthiness from an act of benevolence [stage 1], is likely to cultivate relationship commitment [stage 2], which can significantly enhance the firm's performance in terms of sales revenue and purchase share from the buyer [stage 3]. Wang & Jap (2017) pinpoint that perceived benevolence [stage 1] can lead to deepened commitment and reciprocating the behaviour [stage 2], and thus leading to idiosyncratic investments [stage 3]. Thus, illustrating the flow-on effects from Stages 1-to-2-to-3. While the literature alludes to progressions across of the stages; there is no guarantee that a benevolent act will reach the effects across all three stages. The vertical lines of Figure 14 are meant to indicate this and show that there may not be any progress from one stage to another.

#### Negative stage 1 → negative stage 2 → negative stage 3

A firm's benevolent act may also trigger negative feelings in a customer such as moral obligation (Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000), forced reciprocity (Wang & Jap, 2017), and indebtedness (Lee et al., 2004). These negative feelings can negatively influence customer relationship and subsequent firm performance with a flow-on effects across the stages - similar as described above. For example, customers may feel patronized by the behaviour (Beveridge & Höllerer, 2023) which worsens the relationship and influences future buying behaviour and thus the "return" in Stage 3. Schoenherr & Wagner (2016) describe how a buyer's perception of a benevolent act [Stage 1] "may open the door to complacent or opportunistic behaviour" (p .109) [Stage 2], thus hamper the relationship and future business [Stage 3].

#### Stage 1 → stage 3

A firm's benevolent act may also affect its performance directly. For example, (Gu et al., 2019) described that a firm who is perceived as benevolent by the buyer may enhance the firm's performance by increasing the sales revenue and purchase share.

Contrary to some studies, in this literature study there is no evidence that a positive emotion [stage 1] may lead to a negative aspect on relationships [stage 2] and therefore negative effects on a firm's performance [stage 3]. Moreover, there is no evidence in this literature study that a positive effect on relationships [stage 2] may lead to negative effects on a firm's performance [stage 3]. On another note, no evidence is found that effects on relationship [stage 2] could lead to an increase or decrease of emotional aspects [stage 1].

#### 4.6. A summary overview

All of the abovementioned sections lead to the following BBP framework portrayed in Figure 18. This framework captures the antecedents, measures, characteristics of benevolence, contextual variables, and the impacts. The antecedents have been categorised by their perspective: client, firm, and external. The characteristics of benevolence consist of an act between a giver and a receiver, what it is not, that it goes beyond a contract, and the drivers behind benevolence. The contextual variables capture cultural factors, market turbulence, relationship maturity, perception of benevolence, and family firm. The impacts of benevolence consist of three stages: (1) emotions, (2) relationships, and (3) performance.

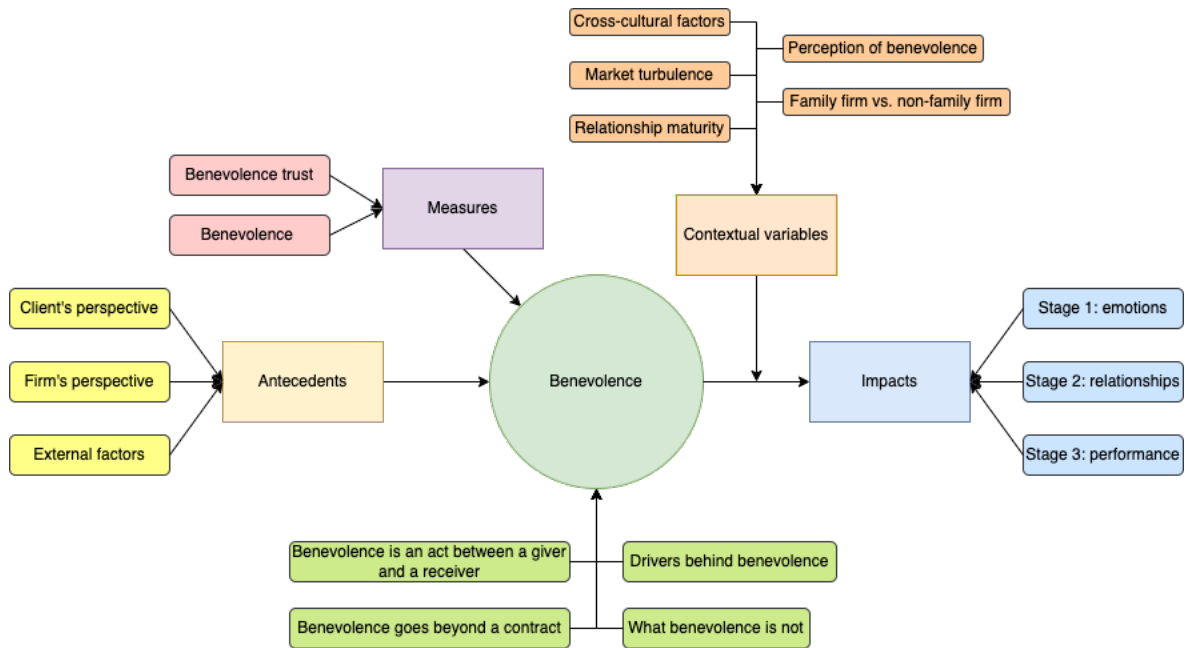


Figure 18. The BBP framework.

## 5. Discussion

In this SLR, over 160 journal papers were screened, and 36 papers were selected which contained qualitative information about the understanding of benevolence in a for-profit corporate setting. While the BPM discipline is mature in the areas of performance and compliance, it lacks expertise in integrating "doing good" into everyday business, despite the increasing demand for more human-centric processes driven by trends such as Industry 5.0. There is a need and opportunity for integrating benevolence in a for-profit context into routine business processes to enable organizations to commit to their customers' well-being with the aim of later payoffs. This approach is in contrast to many existing studies that focus on benevolence in a non-for-profit context. Organisations today are more aware of the potential of non-financial value on profit than ever. However, technology-adoption and digitalization are still largely associated with a focus on profits and efficiency rather than prioritizing human-centeredness or kindness.

A deep conceptual understanding of the notion of BBP in a for-profit corporate setting is much needed to enable its design, execution, and evaluation. This research is a part of a larger project that aims to establish a deep conceptual understanding of business process benevolence with the aims to operationalize and measuring it, and design guidelines to scale up benevolence within routine business processes. Importantly, this research is a first step in realizing this vision, not providing a distinct process view or model, but laying the foundation for rethinking benevolence in a business context. Following a SLR approach, prior work on corporate benevolence is synthesized and extended using tool-supported qualitative data analysis techniques, to derive an evidence-based, holistic conceptualisation of BBP. The conceptual understanding of BBP has been focused on defining BBP, measures, antecedents, contextual factors, and the impacts of benevolence.

This thorough research on benevolence gives a comprehensive understanding underlining the different aspects of benevolence to answer the research question: "How can benevolence become an integral part of an organisations' operational processes?". Benevolence is a broad concept that have different antecedents related to the customer and firm that can help benevolence prevail and eventually lead the impacts that can be seen on different stages: emotions, relationship, and performance. In the following paragraphs the sections of this research will be discussed based on Sandberg & Alvesson (2010) method on gap-spotting, which includes spotting of confusion, neglect, and application. Confusion spotting refers to competing explanations in the literature. Neglect spotting refers to overlooked areas, under-researched areas, and lack of empirical support in the literature. Application spotting refers to extending and complementing existing literature. Using this as a frame-of-reference the method applied in this thesis (Chapter 3) and the findings presented (Chapter 4) are discussed further, highlighting and acknowledging identifying their strengths and weaknesses. This analysis also was used as the base to derive future research and practice implications.

### 5.1. Definitions

One key aspect of benevolence is its characteristics and definition. From direct definitions, the prominent characteristics of benevolence were traced. Based on these characteristics, a more integrated and more complete definition of benevolence has been proposed. However, this had not been validated, which should be definitely conducted in future research. Moreover, when trying to

conceptualise and define benevolence, only direct definitions were used for this conceptualisation. Nonetheless, more aspects regarding benevolence could have been lost in indirect definitions. Some definitions used terms which are shared with other concepts such as altruism and goodwill which Wacker (2004) regard as improper definitions.

The direct definitions presented in section 4.1 revealed that the definitions by the different papers did not include all the aspects that belong to benevolence and therefore a more integrated definition of benevolence is needed. After synthesising and analysing the keywords to come forward from the direct definition, four main categories were detected: (1) what benevolence is not, (2) benevolence is an act between a giver and a receiver, (3) beyond a contract, and (4) driver behind benevolence. These categories seemed appropriate as it captured the essence of benevolence. Moreover, to what extent should the aspects that does not belong to benevolence be captured. Some aspects are clearly not about what benevolence is: behavioural aspects that are relationship harming or negative – such as negative impacts from actions or exploiting the partner. However, there are lots of negative aspects that could belong to a for-profit corporate setting. This should be scoped very clearly to avoid misunderstanding. Furthermore, the category that benevolence goes beyond a contract should be investigated further. For example, when should a firm go beyond a contract and when not or to what extent should a firm go beyond a contract. These are topics that has not been researched yet. Additionally, there are not concrete examples given in the literature about the categories detected. Thus, most of the themes and sub-themes remain very high level and might therefore be misinterpreted. For example, benevolent is acting in a partner's interests, where no concrete examples were given. The interpretation of what is acting in a partner's interests is vague and can vary among different people, organisations, and researchers. Different aspects were captured that represent benevolence in this research. An attempt was made to define this broad concept into a single definition. Since no empirical research have been conducted, validation and reliability test need to be conducted in future research.

## 5.2. Measures

In the measures section, the different measures used to measure benevolence in prior studies were analysed. The key aspects that were measured was captured to make comparison across the studies. One aspect that came forward was that the benevolence types of Wang & Jap (2017), namely affective, calculative, and normative, have not been used or referenced after Wang's research. A reason for this is that they did not define the different types of benevolence that they proposed, and which other researchers may find lacking. There has not been any support on the measure items beside the reliability testing. Comparing to studies who had measure item for benevolence in general, a distinction between general benevolence and the types proposed by Wang & Jap (2017) is lacking. The benevolence types of Lee et al. (2004), Lee, Lee, & Suh (2007), and Lee, Lee, & Ulgado (2007) are presented in three different studies that have some similarities. However, they have not been investigated for their reliability and validity by other researchers.

Moreover, the measures have been assessed by their reliability but not their validity. The reliability has been assessed by Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, and the average variance extracted of the construct. Most of the measure items has been assessed as appropriate by the reliability items. It must be noted that measure items of Cho (2006), Oliveira et al. (2017), and Schoenherr & Wagner (2016) has a very high composite reliability, which means that the measure items are overfitting and

may be redundant. These items cannot be considered appropriate and need to be improved to measure benevolence. The same can be said of altruistic and mutualistic benevolence. Moreover, some authors claim to have measured benevolence, while other topics were covered, for example, Kumar et al. (1995b) in fact the relationship quality in their research and not benevolence. Furthermore, Lee et al. (2004), Lee, Lee, & Suh (2007), Lee, Lee, & Ulgado (2007) have measured benevolence in a way that a firm is assessing themselves, which may give the wrong interpretation when measuring benevolence of a firm.

Importantly, the items of benevolence trust capture the same items as benevolence. One could argue that they are the same when looking at the items being measured. A clear distinction between benevolent trust and benevolence could not be made. On another note, the majority of measure items refer to retailer-supplier relationship, which gives the impression that more research has been conducted on a B2B context and that a B2C context lacks research on benevolence. Additionally, the measure only capture benevolence, but not the antecedents and impacts of benevolence, which can add much value to research on benevolence in a for-profit corporate setting and should be addressed in future research.

### 5.3. Antecedents

In the antecedent section, the different aspects that could lead to the creation of benevolence as well as aspects enhancing or decreasing the degree of benevolence were captured. These different antecedents were captured under keywords, which later lead to themes and sub-themes in order to detect possible categories for them. The antecedents of benevolence had three categories: the client's perspective, the firm's perspective, and external factors. Some proposed antecedents by other researchers remain vague and no explanation are given, such as the stance that benevolence is influenced by context, which is a very broad term. What is meant by context and examples are lacking in most of the literature studies on benevolence. Additionally, almost no negative antecedents have been presented in the literature. One needs to address possible negative effect of benevolence or malevolence. One reason might be that this research focused on benevolence and not malevolence. Therefore, the negative antecedents might be lacking since prior studies on benevolence have not addressed this. While evidence of what factors could enable benevolence were looked for, and what factors block or disable benevolence, the literature only spoke about the positive side. However, one could anticipate, for example, by being benevolent to one particular customer, that there could be ethical, non-benevolent perceptions yielding in other customer cohorts, which was not discussed in the literature. Looking at the themes of antecedents, some are overlapping. Depending on how the reader perceives it, it can be classified as a client's perspective or a firm's perspective.

### 5.4. Impacts

The impacts of benevolence are aspects that follow from a firm being benevolent towards the other party for both customers and business partners. The impacts of benevolence had been captured under keywords that were grouped into themes and sub-themes, and later into categories and stages. The impacts of benevolence were captured in stages that can progressed over time: (1) emotions, (2) relationship, and (3) performance. While there has been some evidence of how the stages progress in time, there is no guarantee that a benevolent act will reach effects across all three stages. Organisations may need to develop a benevolent strategy that ensures a flow of effects across stages.

Capturing and designing benevolent actions on a business process level is one way of achieving consistent benevolent actions that align with other organisational goals.

One key insight of this study, which can be seen in Figure 14, is that benevolent actions in for-profit context can yield performance-related outcomes, alleviating the focus that many organisations have on profit and efficiency and often perceived tension between pursuing good and being profit-oriented (Mercier & Deslandes, 2020). However, Figure 14 also indicates that performance-related outcomes are not guaranteed. Moreover, understanding contextual factors and the gradual emergence of impacts of benevolent actions over the three stages described in the conceptual model imply the need to be mindful that being benevolent and receiving RoBI is not something that may happen immediately. An awareness and appreciation that impacts of benevolent may occur with delay is needed. Impacts of benevolence need to be continually evaluated and may require various metrics (e.g., customers perceptions, increased response and transaction rates, and customer retention rates). Additionally, it becomes evident that if organisations intend to utilize benevolence as a practice with the goal of enhancing performance-related outcomes, they must seed and systematically incorporate benevolent actions into their business and strategic processes. This implies that not only all benevolent actions should align with overarching goals of organisations, but also be introduced consistently and systematically. A one-time benevolent action is likely to have little effect given the gradually developing impact of benevolence over the three stages, which emphasizes the relevance of a strategic and processual perspective on the topic.

Moreover, it is important to note that benevolence may not even elicit positive emotions and, under certain circumstances, can adversely affect the relationships between organisations and their customers. Some researchers argue that there is a negative side of benevolence such as the feeling of indebtedness (Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2004; Lee, Lee, & Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee, & Ulgado, 2007; Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000), however, this has not been explained what is meant by the feeling of indebtedness. One contradicting factors it that benevolence does not include any actions that could have negative impacts and no negative antecedents were found, while there are some negative impacts that came forward for this study. Furthermore, researchers have not addressed how benevolent mechanisms must be placed to minimize the negative impacts of benevolent acts. This implies identifying key points in the existing business processes where benevolence can be integrated and hypothesizing the expected effect and outcome on the customers as well as businesses side, which could be addressed in future research.

Another contradicting point is that trust is seen as an antecedent of benevolence, but also an impact of trust. There is a possibility that there is a difference in the type of trust between the two. This could be addressed in future research. Also, the perception of benevolence and relationship maturity are seen as impacts, but also as contextual factors. These two should be addressed accurately and investigate if they refer to the same concepts.

It is also interesting to show that there might be a reciprocal cycle among the stages of benevolent impacts. For example, feelings that follows from a benevolent act may lead to relationships either new or existing, which when it continues, enhances a certain feeling. However, there is not much evidence of a possible cycle. There is no proper existence of other circular patterns between stage two and stage one found in the literature. This could be addressed in future research by looking at more extensive literature or empirical research.



## 5.5. Limitations and future research

This research has several limitations and future research directions. First, this research is mainly focused on the positive side of benevolence as negative aspects were very limited in the literature. Future research should explore what the negative aspects are of benevolence. Such as aspects that could prevent benevolence from occurring, and negative implications of benevolence. Second, this research is solely based on existing literature. Future research should validate this research and perform empirical testing with qualitative methods. Third, this research did not propose measure items that capture the aspect of BBP which are the characteristics, antecedents, impacts, and contextual factors. These should be addressed in future research and would help to validate this research using quantitative methods. Fourth, prior studies have also addressed several future directions that could have not been tackled in this research but are still needed in future research. For example, how should business partners reciprocate benevolence and by much, how should business partners respond to a firm who is strategically benevolent (Wang & Jap, 2017). Last, future research should explore how technologies can incorporate benevolence on a business process level. This includes the process automation of firms where the organisational processes support and leverage benevolent acts. In the following sub-paragraphs, the limitations and future directions will be elaborated.

### 5.5.1. Research methodology

The SLR captured journal papers that had included benevolence in their title, abstract, or keywords and had been published from the year 2000. There were some papers included before the year 2000 after the backward searching, and two non-journal papers that were included from secondary sources. Benevolence in a for-profit corporate context is generally a new concept and has yet to be explored more in dept by more researchers. Many papers that were referenced in prior studies were papers published before the year 2000. Therefore, a broader period could have been used to capture more papers and more databases could have been included to capture all possible angles of benevolence in a for-profit corporate setting. Even, some studies in a not-for-profit corporate setting could contribute ideas and knowledge to research on benevolence in a for-profit context. Moreover, from the SLR it became evident that benevolence has been researched, but mostly as dimension of trust. Studies and theories on benevolence is still limited, however, this research is for first step for other researchers to continue investigating benevolence.

A SLR brings its own set of limitations. First, although an attempt to conduct a comprehensive literature search has been made, it is still a difficult task to include every relevant study. Access to a selected set of databases from the Queensland University of Technology and Eindhoven University of Technology, unpublished works, and inaccessible works can lead to incomplete coverage of the literature. Additionally, to maintain the rigour of this research as high as possible, only journal papers were included in the literature pool from primary sources. In the future, researchers should include a broader range of databases, and include conference papers and grey literature such as white papers. Second, the selection process of literature to be included can lead to biases. Studies that align with the researcher's ideas may be unintentionally included or literature with contradictory findings to the topic may be unintentionally excluded, which leads to a biased representation of the literature. Third, SLR use data from other studies, which means that there is no control over the data collection process. This could be validated by conducting empirical research as future research. Fourth, SLR does not

provide the same opportunity for an in-depth analysis and context of a primary research study since empirical research is absent. Therefore, in the future this research should be validated through qualitative methods. Moreover, this SLR involved extracting data from a large set of studies which is a challenging and time-consuming task. Errors in data extraction can introduce error into the findings. This has been addressed by using coder corroborators. Additionally, the researchers tried to remain as objective as possible, however, researcher's biases and interpretation may influence the analysis of the findings, which could lead to subjective conclusions. Last, there might be differences between the studies regarding research design, populations, context, and methodologies, which makes this heterogeneity difficult to compare and synthesise the findings across the studies. All the context of these studies were in a for-profit corporate context and as such this research also is this context.

### 5.5.2. Definitions

The existing theory and studies on benevolence is still vague to some extent. The category of 'benevolence goes beyond a contract' still needs more concrete support. Currently, prior studies mention keywords such as 'going beyond contractual terms', however, the studies do not explain nor give concrete examples what is meant by a contract in this context. Future research should dive deeper into making these categories clearer and construing more concrete examples to further solidify the base that this research has added for benevolence in a for-profit corporate context. As became apparent some researchers proposed types of benevolence without defining them, which would make it a challenging task to construct measure items. Future research should look into different type of benevolence proposed and validate them through qualitative methods. Additionally, this research attempt to define benevolence in a for-profit corporate setting, however, this has not been validated. Future research should validate this definition through qualitative methods.

### 5.5.3. Measures

All the different measure items only had reliability testing, but no validity testing. This something that future research should address before furthering research on BBP. In most studies, the measures were either categorised as benevolence or benevolence as a trust dimension, however, there is no clear distinction. Future research should address it by researching if there is a clear distinction or that they refer to the same concept as this research has assumed. Moreover, the measure items between benevolence and the types of benevolence are also lack a distinction between them. This could be the case since the types have not properly been defined and the measures items have been developed ad hoc, which other researcher should first attempt to define and see if the measure items need to be aligned to the definitions and improved to have a clear distinction with benevolence in general. Some measure items had a very high composite reliability, which means they are redundant. These items should be improved to measure benevolence more properly. More validity testing should be conducted on measure items to ensure they are not redundant, measure benevolence, and to ensure rigour and reliability. As the majority of research have been conducted in a B2B, more research on benevolence should be conducted in a B2C context to ensure the generalisability and validity. More appropriate measure items had to be developed to capture not only the degree of benevolent acts given but also the antecedents, impacts, and contextual factors. The antecedents will help validate that these indeed lead to benevolence, the impacts will help validate the implications of benevolence,

and the contextual factors will help validate how these will affect the relationship between benevolence and the impacts. This includes determining key performance indicators of antecedents and benevolence, and developing metrics that allow the quantification of impacts and contextual factors, which do not exist in the literature.

#### 5.5.4. Antecedents and contextual factors

Prior research addressed different antecedents, however, some of them remain vague with little to no explanation. Moreover, concrete examples of the different antecedents are still very much absent. These are aspects that could have been addressed in grey literature, however, the rigour of this research could have been questioned then. Moreover, negative antecedents were completely absent from the results of the SLR. It could be that papers that addressed these have not been published, or that this is something that has not been researched yet. Either way, more research on the negative aspects of benevolence should also be researched to have a more impartial and more complete understanding of benevolence. Future research should address how antecedents can be achieved in order for benevolence to be manifested.

The contextual factors are possible mediators and moderators that had an influence on the relation between benevolence and its impacts. The contextual variables that came forward were cross-cultural factors, market turbulence, family firms versus non-family firms, perception of benevolence, and relationship maturity. Much research on possible contextual factors has not been conducted. These are necessary to be able to have a more complete view and understanding of the concept of benevolence. Furthermore, future research should be dedicated to exploring more contextual factors as this have been very limited. This will also validate current contextual factors addressed in prior studies, such as economic conditions in which benevolent actions are embedded to recognise and mitigate any negative impacts is lacking and should be addressed in future research.

#### 5.5.5. Impacts

While there has been some evidence of how the stages progress in time, there is no guarantee that a benevolent act will reach effects across all three stages, which should be validated in future research. In the future, organisations may need to develop a benevolent strategy that ensures a flow of effects across stages. Capturing and designing benevolent actions on a business process level is one way of achieving consistent benevolent actions that align with other organisational goals. Moreover, the limited negative implications of benevolence should also be investigated and explored in future research. Furthermore, researchers have not addressed how benevolent mechanisms must be placed to minimize the negative impacts of benevolent acts. Future research should identify key points in the existing business processes where benevolence can be integrated and hypothesizing the expected effect and outcome on the customers as well as businesses side. Researchers must engage in developing a deeper understanding of how impacts of benevolence manifest across diverse contexts. This include empirical studies investigating which factors influence and are relevant to organisations and customers or business partners in perceiving benevolence and how they affect the consequent materialisation of impacts (e.g., timeliness and magnitude of effects). There might be potential impacts to different types of benevolence, where it might be characterised by the direct and indirect recipients of the benevolent act and the magnitude of short-term losses accepted by the organizations that performs the benevolent act. Importantly, benevolence has been measured in the past, however,

the impacts of benevolence have not been measured yet. Researchers can contribute to a better understanding of what comprises RoBI and how to achieve it by asking how impacts of benevolence can be measured? This includes determining key performance indicators of benevolence and developing metrics that allow the quantification of impacts, which do not exist in the literature yet.

## 6. Conclusion

### 6.1. Research summary

Nowadays digitalisation that focuses more on human-centred approach and societal needs together with the call to explore and shape BPM in different ways. Moreover, the call was formed on the stance that efficiency and effectiveness within BPM are no longer sufficient. The digitalisation transformation makes it possible to include more human centricity, going beyond profit merits, and showing customers and business partners that the firms care. This research views benevolence as a concept to realize the vision of human centricity in the digital age. An attempt is made to populate the idea of BBP, which holds a distinct focus on kindness and human-centricity demonstrated within the operational aspects of businesses, especially in relation to serving customers and business partners. In this research a SLR is conducted, which conceptualises the characteristics, antecedents, contextual factors, and the impacts of benevolent processes in a for-profit organisational context. The decision to limit the review to for-profit literature aligns with the business process lens, which assumes that a business's routine operations are driven by expectations of certain return. In this context, benevolence is seen as an organisation that demonstrates its commitment to the well-being of its customers and business partners by sacrificing short-term profits, with the aim of achieving a later payoff, such as increased customer loyalty or advocacy. From this an extensive SLR was performed to characterised and define benevolence, and identify the antecedents, contextual factors, and impacts of benevolence. Moreover, the current measurements on benevolence were also taken into account. All these different aspects were analysed by extracting data strings regarding benevolence in the literature. Afterwards keywords were formed and then grouped. Finally, categories and stages were developed for the characteristics, antecedents, and impacts. From this a conceptual model was developed for benevolence, which is depicted in Figure 10.

### 6.2. Implications for practice

The need for human-centricity in the digital age activated this SLR on benevolence in a for-profit context. This approach is in contrast to many existing studies that focus on benevolence in a non-for-profit context. Organisations today are more aware of the potential of non-financial value on profit than ever. However, technology-adoption and digitalisation are still largely associated with a focus on profits and efficiency rather than prioritizing human-centeredness or kindness. One of the contributions is that this research gives businesses a proposed model which incorporate key elements of BBP, which are the antecedents, characteristics, measures, contextual factors, and implications of benevolence. Based on these elements, practitioners will understand how and why it is important to have benevolence as an integral component in their BPM. Additionally, this could make organisations aware that they could be more humane towards their customers and business partners and the benefits this will have for the organisation. Moreover, the thinking will be shifted to a more helpful, cooperating mentality, such as "I want to do good" or "I want to help the other". The conceptualisation of BBP will help business be aware of all the impacts benevolence could have for the businesses, such as influence on loyalty of customers, purchase intentions, cooperation, and longevity of business relationships. This research shifts the focus from what organisations should do to how they should endorse and integrate benevolence into their organisational processes. The conceptualisation efforts include extracting and analysing measures of benevolence, generating a solid base for future operationalization efforts. The measures help practitioners to comprehend how they can evaluate not only the extent of their processes' degree

of benevolence, but also how benevolence can be manifested and the implications of benevolence. The detailed unpacking of antecedent and other influential contextual factors will act as input in planning, implementation, and monitoring of a firm's efforts to operationalize benevolence through their business processes.

### 6.3. Implications for research

This research had bridged the gap that currently exists in the literature, where it is unclear what a BBP is, how benevolence can be manifested and what the implication of benevolence could be. With the conceptualisation of the concept BBP, there is a better, more accurate, and more comprehensive definition of BBP. Benevolence has been defined in this research as *“an act that goes beyond contractual terms between a giver and a receiver that is beneficial, in the interest, welfare and wellbeing of the receiver, an act and entails behaviour of warmth, fairness, impartiality, patience, politeness, and tolerance from the giver”*. Moreover, the SLR gave a clear overview what other researchers has investigated so far about benevolence in a for-profit corporate setting. This research coincides with Gregor's (2006) work on 'theory of analysing' and provides an in-depth explanation of what benevolence within business processes entail, giving a clearer understanding of the notion. Through an extensive synthesis of current benevolence research and ways to conceptualise novel on benevolence on a business process level, this research provides a series of valuable theoretical directions to progress research on the topic of BBP. This SLR supported a more in-depth and comprehensive definition of benevolence and a deep conceptualisation of what a BBP is. Moreover, an a priori model of impacts of a BBP is proposed. Additionally, the current literature, definition, and current measurements are judged and used to for the understanding of current literature on benevolence. Following this research's unpacking of benevolence, researchers have now a solid base to further future directions on benevolence in a for-profit context. In the future the following questions should be addressed:

- How can the antecedents of a BBP be achieved?
- If any, what are contextual factors and its impacts on achieving benevolence?
- What are other contextual factors related to benevolence and what are their implications on the relationship between benevolence and its impacts?
- How can the BBP framework be measured?
- How can this research be validated using qualitative methods?
- How can the BBP framework be dissected processes such that it can implemented into business processes of organisations?

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1

Table 18. Overview of search log

Database	Search term
Scopus	TITLE-ABS- KEY ((benevolen* OR compassion* OR goodwill OR kind* OR car* OR humane OR social* AND conscious OR thoughtful* OR generous) AND (business OR corporat* OR company OR firm OR enterpris* OR industr* OR organi?ation OR process* OR operation* OR procedure* OR technique*))
	TITLE-ABS- KEY ((benevolen*) AND (business OR compan* OR firm OR industr* OR organi?ation* OR process OR technique* OR operation* OR corporat* OR enterprise* OR procedure*))
EBSCO	TI-AB-KW ((benevolen* OR compassion* OR goodwill OR kind* OR car* OR humane OR social* conscious OR thoughtful* OR generous) AND (business OR corporat* OR company OR firm OR enterpris* OR industr* OR organi?ation OR process* OR action* OR operation* OR procedure* OR technique*))
	TI-AB-KW (benevolen* AND (business OR compan* OR firm OR industr* OR corporat* OR process OR enterprise OR firm OR organi?ation OR procedure OR operation OR technique))
Proquest – business premium collection	ab-ti ((benevolen* OR compassion* OR goodwill OR kind* OR car* OR humane OR social* conscious OR thoughtful* OR generous) AND (business OR corporat* OR company OR firm OR enterpris* OR industr* OR organi?ation OR process* OR action* OR operation* OR procedure* OR technique*))
	ab-ti (benevolen* AND (business OR compan* OR firm OR industr* OR corporat* OR process OR enterprise OR firm OR organi?ation OR procedure OR operation OR technique))
Science Direct	Title, abstract, keyword: (benevolence OR compassion OR goodwill OR kind OR caring) AND (business OR corporate OR company OR firm)
	Title, abstract, keyword: (benevolence OR humane OR socially conscious OR thoughtful OR generous) AND (business OR corporation OR company OR firm)



	Title, abstract, keyword: (benevolence OR compassion OR goodwill OR kind OR caring) AND (organization OR corporation OR industry OR organisation)
	Title, abstract, keyword: (benevolence OR humane OR socially conscious OR thoughtful OR generous) AND (organization OR corporation OR industry OR organisation)
	Title, abstract, keyword: (benevolence OR benevolent) AND (business OR company OR firm OR process OR organization OR organisation OR corporation)
	Title, abstract, keyword: (benevolence OR benevolent) AND (enterprise OR industry OR procedure OR technique OR operation)
Emerald Insights – BPM Journal	Title, abstract: ((benevolen* OR compassion* OR goodwill OR kind* OR car* OR humane OR social* AND conscious OR thoughtful* OR generous) AND (business OR corporat* OR company OR firm OR enterpris* OR industr* OR organi?ation OR process* OR operation* OR procedure* OR technique*))
	Title, abstract: (benevolen*) AND (business process)
Emerald Insights	Title, abstract: ((benevolen* OR compassion* OR goodwill OR kind* OR car* OR humane OR social* AND conscious OR thoughtful* OR generous) AND (business OR corporat* OR company OR firm OR enterpris* OR industr* OR organi?ation OR process* OR operation* OR procedure* OR technique*))
	Title, abstract: (benevolen*) AND (business process)

## Appendix 2

Table 19. Overview of prior definitions of benevolence.

Paper	Context of Study	Defined benevolence	Definition given	Critique on definition	Related prior studies for definition	Frequency that paper was cited in another study	Cited in
<b>Generic benevolence</b>							
<b>Acquah et al. (2021)</b>	Supply chain collaboration and its antecedents	-	-	-	Minerbo et al., 2018; Nyaga et al., 2010		
<b>Beveridge &amp; Höllerer (2023)</b>	Theorising organisational benevolence	Organisational benevolence	An organization's inclination to <u>pursue the welfare</u> of an external constituency as an <u>end in itself</u> , manifested in a posture exhibiting actions that <u>aim to benefit</u> this constituency <u>as their ultimate goal</u> .	Not all terms are clear			
<b>Bove et al. (2009)</b>	Firm's rep role in customer organisational citizenship behaviour	-	-	-	Lengnick-Hall et al., 2000; Livnat, 2004		
<b>Cho (2006)</b>	Customer's evaluations effect on trustworthiness and its dimensions	Benevolence	The partner's <u>motives (e.g., goodwill intention, caring, and altruism)</u> , which serve as the bases of judgments that he/she will <u>show consideration for the needs and interests</u> of the other and will <u>promote the other's best interests</u> .	All rules are followed	Garbino & Lee, 2003		
<b>Doney &amp; Cannon (1997)</b>	Trust in buyer-seller relationship	Benevolence	The extent to which one partner is <u>genuinely interested in the other partner's welfare and well-being</u> and motivated to <u>seek joint gain</u>	All rules are followed		7	Gu et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2004; Lee, Lee & Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee & Ulgado, 2007; Seyedghorban et al., 2021;

							Wang & Jap, 2017; Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014*
<b>Dowell et al., 2015</b>	Affective trust and cognitive trust in B2B	-	-	-	Roy et al., 2004; Ganesan, 1994		
<b>Fazal et al. (2014)</b>	The role of customer gratitude and perceived benevolence in business relationships	Customer perceived benevolence	a customer's perception of the degree to which a seller is <u>sincerely interested in customer wellbeing</u> .	All rules are followed	Atuahene-Gima & Li, 2002		
<b>Franklin &amp; Marshall (2019)</b>	Antecedents of trust in B2B	Benevolence	The extent to which a trustee is believed <u>to want to do good</u> to the trustor, <u>aside from profit motive</u>	Too similar to goodwill Other aspects of benevolence are missing	Castaldo, 2007		
<b>Ganesan (1994)</b>	Determinants of long-term orientation in buyer-seller relationships	Benevolence	the extent to which the retailer believes that the vendor has <u>intentions and motives beneficial</u> to the retailer <u>when new conditions arise, conditions for which a commitment was not made</u> . It is based on <u>caring and making sacrifices</u> for the channel partner.	All rules are followed	Rempel et al., 1985	4	Kantsperger & Kunz, 2010; Lee et al., 2004; Wang & Jap, 2017; Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014*
<b>Gefen, 2002</b>	Effect of customisation on clients' perception and trust	Benevolence	a firm will not take <u>unfair advantage</u> of the client's dependability, that it will <u>refrain from opportunistic</u> behaviour, and that it will consider how its actions might affect the client.	All rules are followed Other aspects of benevolence are missing			
<b>Gu et al. (2019)</b>	The role of benevolence as an antecedent of commitment in B2B	Benevolence, benevolence trust	Benevolence indicates that the rep <u>cares about the importer's interests</u> and is motivated to seek <u>common ground</u> . Benevolence trust captures the "will-do" component of trustworthiness, or whether the importer believes that the sales rep will choose to use those skills and abilities to <u>act positively in the best interest</u> of the importer and emphasizes <u>goodwill and genuine concern</u> for the importer's <u>welfare</u> , in fostering <u>long-term oriented commitment</u> .	All rules are followed	Mayer et al., 1995; Doney & Cannon, 1997; Mayer & Davis, 1999; Anderson & Narus, 1990; Anderson & Weitz, 1989; Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002; Cullen et al., 2000		

<b>Hong &amp; Cho (2011)</b>	Consumer trust in B2C	Benevolence	The belief that a company holds <u>consumers' interests ahead of its own self-interest</u>	All rules are followed Other aspects of benevolence are missing	Mayer et al., 1995		
<b>Kantsperger &amp; Kunz (2010)</b>	Consumer trust in service companies	Customer perceived benevolence	the customer's perception that a supplier <u>is fair, has "good" intentions, and is acting without opportunistic behaviour.</u>	All rules are followed Other aspects of benevolence are missing	Kumar et al., 1995a; Ganesan, 1994		
<b>Kumar et al. (1995b)</b>	The effects of supplier fairness on vulnerable sellers	Benevolence	The perceived willingness of the supplier to behave in a way that <u>benefits the interest of both parties</u> and is willing to make an <u>extra effort when unexpected problems arise.</u>	All rules are followed Other aspects of benevolence are missing		2	Schoenherr & Wagner, 2016; Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000
<b>Lee et al. (2004)</b>	Importers' benevolence toward their foreign export suppliers	Benevolence	assistance (helping behaviour) administered by the trusted partner (the giving party) for the <u>benefit of an exchange partner</u> (the recipient)	All rules are followed Other aspects of benevolence are missing	Atuahene-Gima & Li, 2002; Ganesan, 1994; Doney & Cannon, 1997; Johnson et al., 1998; Mayer et al., 1995; Mayer & Davis, 1999; Jarvenpaa et al., 1998		
<b>Lee, Lee &amp; Suh (2007)</b>	Benevolence in the importer-exporter relationship	importer's benevolence towards its exporter	the importer's <u>extra-contractual helping behaviour beyond the call of duty to enhance the well-being</u> of its exporter exchange partners.	All rules are followed	Doney & Cannon, 1997; Mayer et al., 1995; Gao & Brown, 1997; Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000; Johnson et al., 1996; Jarvenpaa et al., 1998		
<b>Lee, Lee &amp; Ulgado (2007)</b>	Benevolence in the export-import relationship	importer's benevolence towards its exporter	<u>voluntary helping behaviours beyond the call of duty</u> motivated by <u>expectations of mutual gain as well as altruism</u> to enhance the <u>well-being</u> of its exporter exchange partners.	All rules are followed	Doney & Cannon, 1997; Mayer et al., 1995; Gao & Brown, 1997; Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000; Johnson et al., 1996		

<b>Leeman &amp; Reynolds (2012)</b>	how an organization's outsourcing efforts can be influenced by trust	Organisational benevolence	the extent to which a vendor, for reasons other than mere profit maximization, <u>wants to promote good, or the interests of others.</u>	All rules are followed	Brownell & Reynolds, 2002; Bell et al., 2002		
<b>Liff &amp; Wahlström (2017)</b>	The importance of benevolence in interbank relations	Benevolence	trustee's keeping the trustor's <u>interest in mind and refrains from opportunistic behaviour</u>	All rules are followed Other aspects of benevolence are missing	Mayer et al., 1995		
<b>Mayer et al. (1995)</b>	Organisational trust	Benevolence	the extent to which a trustee is believed to <u>want to do good</u> to the trustor <u>from warm-heartedness</u> , aside from an <u>egocentric profit motive</u> . the perception of a <u>positive orientation</u> of the trustee toward the trustor. a trustee that helps a trustor <u>beyond what is prescribed in their formal agreements</u> and who consider the trustor's <u>interests and to refrain from opportunistic actions.</u>	All rules are followed		10	Gu et al., 2019; Hong & Cho, 2011; Lee et al., 2004; Lee, Lee & Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee & Ulgado, 2007; Mcknight et al., 2002; Seyedghorban et al., 2021; Wang & Jap, 2021; Zhang & Li, 2019; Liff & Wahlström, 2017
<b>McKnight et al. (2002)</b>	Trust measures for e-commerce	Benevolence	trustee <u>favourable motives</u> , is based on <u>altruism</u> and not <u>acting opportunistically or manipulatively.</u>	All rules are followed Other aspects of benevolence are missing	Mayer et al., 1995	1	Zhang & Li, 2019
<b>Oliveira et al. (2017)</b>	Consumer trust dimensions in e-commerce	Benevolence	the ability of a company to hold consumer <u>interests ahead of their own</u> self-interest and indicates a <u>sincere concern for the welfare</u> of customers.	All rules are followed			
<b>Schoenherr &amp; Wagner (2016)</b>	Supplier involvement in product development: homophily, benevolence, and market turbulence	-	-	-	Kumar et al., 1995b		

<b>Selnes &amp; Gønhaug (2000)</b>	Supplier reliability and benevolence in business marketing	Supplier benevolence	a perceived willingness of the supplier to behave in a way that <u>benefits the interest of both parties</u> in the relationship.	All rules are followed Other aspects of benevolence are missing	Kumar et al., 1995b	2	Lee, Lee & Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee & Ulgado, 2007
<b>Seyedghorban et al. (2021)</b>	Trust in early buyer-supplier relationship	-	-	-	Doney & Cannon, 1997; Mayer et al., 1995		
<b>Stutz et al. (2022)</b>	Credibility of family firms	Benevolence	the intention of the trustee to <u>do good</u> to or for the trustor	Too similar to goodwill Other aspects of benevolence are missing	-		
<b>Wang &amp; Jap (2017)</b>	Benevolent dictatorship and buyer-supplier exchange	-	-	-	Atuahene-Gima & Li, 2002		
<b>White &amp; Yuan (2012)</b>	Trust and low pricing policies	Benevolence belief	consumers' beliefs about whether firms are <u>capable of, and altruistically (versus egocentrically) motivated to</u>	Too similar to altruism Other aspects of benevolence are missing	Moorman et al., 1992; Schlosser et al., 2006		
<b>Zhang &amp; Li (2019)</b>	Social media usage in B2B	-	-	-	Mayer et al., 1995; McKnight et al., 2002; Pavlou, 2002		
<b>Types of benevolence</b>							
<b>Altruistic benevolence</b>							
<b>Lee et al. (2004)</b>	Importers' benevolence toward their foreign export suppliers	Altruistic benevolence	<u>Extracontractual helping behaviour</u> that enhances the partner's <u>well-being without an expectation of future gain</u> motivated by morality, the extent of help is determined by the need of the recipient	All rules are followed	Mayer et al., 1995; Jarvenpaa et al., 1998; Batson, 1991		
<b>Lee, Lee &amp; Suh (2007)</b>	Benevolence in the importer-exporter relationship	Altruistic benevolence	<u>extra-contractual helping behaviour</u> that enhances the partner's <u>well-being without an expectation of future gain</u> .	All rules are followed	Mayer et al., 1995; Jarvenpaa et al., 1998; Batson, 1991		
<b>Lee, Lee &amp; Ulgado (2007)</b>	Benevolence in the export-import relationship	Altruistic benevolence	<u>extracontractual helping behaviour</u> that enhances the partner's <u>wellbeing without an expectation of future gain</u> .	All rules are followed	Mayer et al., 1995; Jarvenpaa et al., 1998; Batson, 1991		

			A benevolent party may want to help its partner even though it is <u>not required to be helpful</u> , and it does not have any extrinsic motive				
<b>Mutualistic benevolence</b>							
<b>Lee et al. (2004)</b>	Importers' benevolence toward their foreign export suppliers	Mutualistic benevolence	the helping behaviour is motivated by the expectation of <u>mutual gain based on utilitarian motives</u> where <u>reciprocity by the recipient is expected</u>	All rules are followed	Doney & Cannon, 1997; Johnson et al., 1996		
<b>Lee, Lee &amp; Suh (2007)</b>	Benevolence in the importer-exporter relationship	Mutualistic benevolence	the helping behaviour is motivated by the expectation of mutual gain based on <u>utilitarian motives</u> where <u>reciprocity by the recipient is expected</u>	All rules are followed	Doney & Cannon, 1997; Johnson et al., 1996		
<b>Lee, Lee &amp; Ulgado (2007)</b>	Benevolence in the export-import relationship	Mutualistic benevolence	the helping behaviour is motivated by the expectation of mutual gain <u>based on utilitarian motives</u> where <u>reciprocity by the recipient is expected</u>	All rules are followed	Doney & Cannon, 1997; Johnson et al., 1996		
<b>Affective benevolence</b>							
<b>Wang &amp; Jap (2017)</b>	Benevolent dictatorship and buyer-supplier exchange	Affective benevolence	<u>affective orientation</u>	Not a definition, not uniquely defined	Mayer et al., 1995; Doney & Cannon, 1997; Johnston et al., 2004; Batson, 1991		
<b>Calculative benevolence</b>							
<b>Wang &amp; Jap (2017)</b>	Benevolent dictatorship and buyer-supplier exchange	Calculative benevolence	<u>calculative costs, idiosyncratic investments</u>	Not a definition, not uniquely defined	Doney & Cannon, 1997; Ganesan, 1994		
<b>Normative benevolence</b>							
<b>Wang &amp; Jap (2017)</b>	Benevolent dictatorship and buyer-supplier exchange	Normative benevolence	<u>sense of obligation or duty</u> , which is the motivation to do good once all calculative and affective motivations are accounted for	Not a definition, not uniquely defined	-		
<b>CITED paper</b>							

<b>Anderson and Narus (1990)</b>	Distributor and manufacturer partnerships	Benevolence trust	the belief that the rep will <u>not engage in opportunistic or unethical actions that might harm the importer</u>	All rules are followed Other aspects of benevolence are missing		1	Gu et al., 2019
<b>Anderson and Weitz (1989)</b>	Continuity in conventional industrial channel dyads	Benevolence trust	the belief that the rep will <u>not engage in opportunistic or unethical actions that might harm the importer</u>	All rules are followed Other aspects of benevolence are missing		1	Gu et al., 2019
<b>Atuahene-Gima and Li (2002)</b>	Effects of supervisee trust	Benevolence trust	retailers showing <u>consideration and sensitivity</u> to customers' needs and rights, to <u>protect customers' interests and refrain from exploiting customers</u>	All rules are followed		3	Fazal et al., 2015; Lee et al., 2004; Wang & Jap, 2017
<b>Batson (1991)</b>	Why we help one another	Altruistic benevolence	an <u>end in itself</u> , and <u>no reciprocity is expected</u>	Not a definition		1	Lee, Lee & Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee & Ulgado, 2007
<b>Bell et al. (2002)</b>	Trust Deterioration in an International Buyer-Supplier Relationship	Benevolence	the extent to which a trustee is believed to want <u>to do good</u> to the trustor ( <u>aside from an egocentric profit motive</u> )	Too similar to goodwill		1	Leeman & Reynolds, 2012
<b>Brownell and Reynolds (2002)</b>	Purchaser-Supplier Partnership	Vendor benevolence	a vendor's desire to operate <u>responsibly independently of profiting</u>	All rules are followed Other aspects of benevolence are missing		1	Leeman & Reynolds, 2012
<b>Castaldo (2007)</b>	Trust in marketing relationships	Benevolence	the extent to which a trustee is believed to <u>want to generally do good</u> to the trustor	Too similar to goodwill		1	Franklin & Marshall, 2019
<b>Cullen et al. (2000)</b>	Strategic alliance management through commitment and trust	Benevolence trust	emerges from one's beliefs regarding a partner's <u>caring about the relationship</u>	All rules are followed Other aspects of benevolence are missing		1	Gu et al., 2019
<b>Gao and Brown (1997)</b>	Relational citizenship behaviour and opportunism	Benevolence	the giving party <u>showing consideration and sensitivity</u> to the needs of the receiving party, acting in the way that <u>protects these interests and refraining from exploiting the receiving party</u> . At the centre of the inter-organizational benevolence is a firm's <u>willingness to help each other</u>	All rules are followed		1	Lee, Lee & Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee & Ulgado, 2007
<b>Garbarino and Lee (2003)</b>	Effects of dynamic pricing on consumer trust	Benevolence	the extent to which a partner is <u>genuinely interested in the other's welfare</u>	All rules are followed Other aspects of benevolence are missing		1	Cho, 2006



<b>Jarvenpaa et al. (1998)</b>	Trust in global virtual teams	Benevolence	the extent to which a trustee is believed to <u>feel interpersonal care and concern</u> , and the willingness to <u>do good</u> to the trustor <u>beyond an egocentric profit motive</u>	All rules are followed		1	Lee et al., 2004; Lee, Lee & Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee & Ulgado, 2007
<b>Johnson et al. (1996)</b>	Trust and Strategic Integration	Benevolence	the extent to which a firm in the relationship believes that its partner has <u>intentions of goodwill</u> and will <u>behave in a fashion beneficial to both</u>	Too similar to goodwill		1	Lee et al., 2004; Lee, Lee & Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee & Ulgado, 2007
<b>Johnston et al. (2004)</b>	Effects of supplier trust on performance of cooperative supplier relationships	Supplier's perception of buyer's benevolence	the belief that the other party would <u>act in the best interest</u> of the partner even if there was <u>no way of checking on or policing behaviour</u>	All rules are followed Other aspects of benevolence are missing		1	Wang & Jap, 2017
<b>Kumar et al. (1995a)</b>	The Effects of Perceived Interdependence on Dealer Attitudes	Benevolence	the extent to which the customer believes that the partner is <u>motivated to act in the interest of the customer's welfare</u> and that the partner is motivated to <u>seek joint gain</u> , subordinating self-interest to <u>the long-term aims</u> of the relationship	All rules are followed		1	Kantsperger & Kunz, 2010
<b>Lengnick-Hall et al. (2000)</b>	Customer roles and experienced outcomes	Benevolent acts of service facilitation	<u>kind, charitable acts</u> on the part of customers, within the immediate service exchange and <u>may include tolerance, patience and politeness</u>	Not a definition of benevolence itself Other aspects of benevolence are missing		1	Bove et al., 2009
<b>Livnat (2004)</b>	Nature of benevolence	Benevolent person	Tends <u>care</u> about other human beings, is <u>concerned about</u> other people's <u>well-being</u> , and is motivated to <u>perform acts aimed at doing good</u>	All rules are followed		1	Bove et al., 2009
<b>Mayer &amp; Davis, 1999</b>	Effect of the Performance Appraisal System on Trust	Benevolence	the extent to which a trustee is believed to want <u>to do good</u> to the trustor, <u>aside from an egocentric profit motive</u>	All rules are followed Other aspects of benevolence are missing		2	Gu et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2004
<b>Minerbo et al., 2018</b>	Supply chain trust	Benevolence	the extent to which an organisation expects <u>impartiality and fairness</u> from a powerful supply chain partner - an expectation, arising out of the <u>goodwill that partners will act objectively</u>	All rules are followed Other aspects of benevolence are missing		1	Acquah et al., 2021

<b>Moorman et al., 1992</b>	Trust Within and Between Organizations	Benevolence beliefs	consumers' confidence that firms are <u>well-intentioned</u> and go <u>over and above an egocentric profit motive</u>	All rules are followed Other aspects of benevolence are missing		1	White & Yuan, 2012
<b>Morgan &amp; Hunt, 1994</b>	Commitment-trust theory	Benevolent rep	trusted to take initiatives that <u>favour the buyer while refraining from self-serving opportunism</u> . Works <u>beyond explicit contractual terms</u> and serves customers with <u>pro-consumer motivations</u> and a willingness to assume <u>fiduciary responsibility</u>	Not all terms are clear Other aspects of benevolence are missing		1	Gu et al., 2019
<b>Nyaga et al., 2010</b>	Supply chain relationships	Benevolence	premised on the assumption that supply chain partners would behave in the partners' <u>utmost interest</u> , albeit these behaviours <u>cannot be monitored or verified independently</u>	All rules are followed Other aspects of benevolence are missing		1	Acquah et al., 2021
<b>Pavlou, 2002</b>	Institution-based trust in interorganizational exchange relationships	Benevolence	Benevolence signifies that the salesperson <u>cares about the buyer's welfare</u> and will take <u>extra initiatives to provide altruistic solutions</u> to achieve a <u>win-win situation</u>	All rules are followed Other aspects of benevolence are missing		1	Zhang & Li, 2019
<b>Rempel et al., 1985</b>	Trust in close relationships	Benevolence	The extent to which an individual is <u>genuinely interested in a partner's welfare</u> and motivated to <u>seek maximum joint gain</u>	All rules are followed		1	Ganesan, 1994
<b>Roy et al., 2004</b>	Supply Chain relationships	Benevolence trust	the degree to which one partner believes another will <u>look after their interests without a formal request</u>	All rules are followed Other aspects of benevolence are missing		1	Dowell et al., 2015
<b>Schlosser et al., 2006</b>	Effect of Web Site Investment on Consumer Trusting Beliefs	Benevolence beliefs	consumers' beliefs that the firm <u>cares about their welfare and well-being</u>	All rules are followed Other aspects of benevolence are missing		1	White & Yuan, 2012
<b>Sirdeshmukh et al., 2002</b>	Consumer trust, value, and loyalty in relational exchanges	Benevolent behaviour, operational benevolence	Benevolent behaviours are " <u>extra role</u> " actions that are performed at a <u>cost to the service provider with or without commensurate benefits</u> Operational benevolence is defined as behaviours that reflect an underlying motivation to place the <u>consumer's interest ahead of self-interest</u>	Not all terms are clear Other aspects of benevolence are missing		1	Gu et al., 2019

## Appendix 3

Table 20. Overview of the different measures by previous researchers

Type of benevolence	Items measured	Measurements derivation	Actual measurement			Validity/ reliability	Critique
			Source	Survey items	How the items were measured		
Altruistic benevolence	Firm's or buyer's benevolence	Interviews with academicians and practitioners; adapted from Doney &	Lee et al., 2004; Lee, Lee & Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee & Ulgado, 2007	1. We were concerned about the supplier's welfare. Our feelings of concern are truly genuine, not economically motivated. 2. We helped this supplier beyond the call of duty, and we did not expect anything in return. 3. We helped this supplier not because we were expected to, but we just wanted to help.	Seven-point Likert scale from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7)	CR = 0.91	All items measure the mutualistic type of benevolence

Mutualistic benevolence	Firm's or Buyer's or importer's benevolence	Cannon (1997), Kumar et al. (1995a), and Kumar et al. (1995)		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We provided assistance to this supplier because doing so was mutually beneficial.</li> <li>2. We provided support to this supplier in one or more ways because we believed that a long-term relationship would be economically beneficial for both parties.</li> <li>3. We helped the exporter because of mutual gains.</li> </ol>		CR = 0.93	All items measure the mutualistic type of benevolence
Affective benevolence	Supplier's benevolence	Interviews with purchasing managers	Wang & Jap, 2017	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. This supplier has an emotional attachment to our company, that's one of the major reasons it cares about our welfare.</li> <li>2. Because this supplier likes doing business with our company, it cares about our company's success.</li> <li>3. The success of our relationship has a great deal of personal meaning to this supplier.</li> <li>4. This supplier's positive feelings towards our company are a strong force that motivates it to care about our company.</li> </ol>		$\alpha = CR = 0.88$	Point 2 does not measure the affective type of benevolence, but benevolence in general
Calculative benevolence				<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. This supplier cares about our company mainly because our company increases this supplier's profits.</li> <li>2. Because it is in its own interests, this supplier wants our company to do well.</li> <li>3. This supplier treats our company well because our company is valuable for the development of its own business.</li> <li>4. This supplier cares about our company's welfare for its own sake.</li> </ol>		$\alpha = CR = 0.74$	All items measure the calculative type of benevolence
Normative benevolence				<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. This supplier believes that it should care about its customers</li> <li>2. This supplier feels that it is its duty to be concerned about its customers' welfare.</li> <li>3. This supplier feels that it is essential for firms to care about the welfare of its customers</li> </ol>		$\alpha = CR = 0.89$	It is not clear if the items measure the normative type of benevolence or benevolence in general
Generic / general benevolence	Firm's or supplier's benevolence	Adapted from Kumar et al. (1995)	Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Willingness to support the customer if the environment causes changes</li> <li>2. Consideration of the customer's welfare when making important decisions</li> </ol>	Six-point Likert scale from "not at all" (1) to "very much" (6)	CR = 0.85 AVE = 0.65	All items measure firm's benevolence from the customer's perspective

				<p>3. Responding with understanding when problems arise</p> <p>4. Consideration of how future decisions and actions will affect the customer</p> <p>5. Dependable support on things that are important to the customer.</p>			
Firm's benevolence	Adapted from Ganesan (1994), McAllister (1995), and Garbarino and Johnson (1999)	Bove et al., 2009	<p>1. My ... has gone out of his/her way for me</p> <p>2. My ... always tries to do the right thing by me</p> <p>3. My... puts my interests before his/her own</p>	Seven-point Likert scale from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7)	$\alpha = 0.82$ CR = 0.83 AVE = 0.63	All items measure firm's benevolence from the customer's perspective	
Customer's benevolence	Adapted from Gruen (1995)		<p>1. I go out of my way to treat my...with kindness</p> <p>2. I try to do things to make my...job easier even though I do not have to</p> <p>3. If I was happy with my...service, I would let him/her know it</p>		$\alpha = 0.78$ CR = 0.76 AVE = 0.55	All items measure customer's benevolence from the customer's perspective	
Firm's benevolence	Adapted from Morgan and Hunt (1994), and Sirdeshmukh et al. (2002)	Cho, 2006	<p>The way they operate their business made me feel that</p> <p>1. They genuinely care about my welfare.</p> <p>2. They operate their business with goodwill intention.</p> <p>3. They keep my best interests in mind when dealing the business with me.</p>	Five-point Likert scale from "I have no such expectation" (1) to "I am extremely confident/certain/sure that this e-vendor will behave in this manner" (5)	CR = 0.94	All items measure firm's benevolence from the customer's perspective	
Supplier's benevolence	Adapted from Kumar et al. (1995)	Franklin & Marshall, 2019	<p>1. As circumstances change, I believe that my supplier will be ready and willing to offer me assistance and support</p> <p>2. When making important decisions, my supplier is concerned about our welfare</p> <p>3. When I share my problems with my supplier, I know that they will respond with understanding</p> <p>4. In the future, I can count on my supplier to consider how its decisions and actions will affect us</p> <p>5. When it comes to things that are important to me, I can depend on my supplier's support</p>	Seven-point Likert scale	$\alpha = 0.95$	All items measure supplier's benevolence from the customer's perspective	

Benevolence as a trust dimension	Supplier's benevolence	Adapted from Kumar et al. (1995)	Schoenherr & Wagner, 2016	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When environmental conditions change, the supplier is willing to help us</li> <li>2. When making important decisions, the supplier is considering both our as well as its well-being</li> <li>3. When problems arise, the supplier reacts sympathies</li> <li>4. When making important decisions, the supplier is considering the effect on our firm</li> <li>5. The supplier supports us fully in important issues</li> <li>6. The supplier is trustworthy</li> </ol>	Seven-point Likert scale from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7)	$\alpha = 0.86$ CR = 0.95 AVE = 0.77	All items measure supplier's benevolence from the customer's perspective
	Firm's benevolence	Adapted from Xie & Peng (2009)	Stutz et al., 2022	<p>Xie and Peng's (2009) version:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Judging from the corporate response, I believe the company has a great deal of benevolence.</li> <li>2. Judging from the corporate response, I am confident that when customers have problems, the company will respond constructively and with care.</li> <li>3. Judging from the corporate response, I rely on the company to favour the customer's best interest</li> <li>4. This company treats customers with respect in responding to negative publicity.</li> <li>5. This company is concerned about consumers.</li> </ol>	Seven-point Likert scale from "not agree" (1) to "fully agree" (7)	$\alpha = 0.94$ CR= 0.93 AVE= 0.81	All items measure firm's benevolence from the customer's perspective
	Supplier's rep's perceived benevolence	Adapted from Hojmosse et al. (2012), Doney & Cannon (1997), and Ganesan (1994)	Seyedghorban et al., 2021	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Brand "X" representative cares for us.</li> <li>2. In time of shortage, brand "X" representative would do more for our organization that we could possibly expect.</li> <li>3. Brand "X" representative is like a friend.</li> </ol>	-	$\alpha = 0.89$ CR= 0.899 AVE= 0.75	All items measure supplier's benevolence from the customer's perspective
	Firm's trust beliefs in benevolence	Adapted from Ganesan (1994), Morgan & Hunt (1994), Crosby et al.	Gefen, 2002	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. We can count on AA to consider how their decisions will affect us</li> <li>2. AA put customer's interests before their own</li> </ol>	-	$\alpha = 0.93$	The items do measure firm's benevolence to an extend but it is very restricted. More aspects of benevolence could have been incorporated

		(1990), Kumar et al. (1995), and Moorman et al. (1992)					
	Firm's benevolence dimension of trust	Adapted from Crosby et al. (1990), Ganesan (1994), Kumar et al. (1995), Moorman et al. (1992), and Morgan & Hunt (1994)	Gefen & Straub, 2004	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I expect I can count on Amazon.com to consider how its actions affect me</li> <li>2. I expect that Amazon.com intentions are benevolent</li> <li>3. I expect that Amazon.com puts customers' interests before their own</li> <li>4. I expect that Amazon.com is well meaning</li> </ol>	Seven-point Likert scale from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7)	AVE= 0.90	All items measure firm's benevolence from the customer's perspective
	Firm's benevolence trust	Adapted from Moorman et al. (1992), Garbarino & Johnson (1999), Sirdeshmukh et al. (2002), Munuera-Aleman et al. (2003), and Young and Albaum (2003)	Kantsperger & Kunz, 2010	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I believe that my bank is honest to me</li> <li>2. I think my bank is trustworthy</li> <li>3. My bank is very thoughtful about my well-being</li> <li>4. In critical situations I can rely on my bank</li> <li>5. I believe that my bank will point out the best alternative for me at any time</li> <li>6. The employees of my bank are strongly encouraged to solve my problems</li> </ol>	Seven-point Likert scale from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7)	$\alpha = 0.88$ CR= 0.87 AVE= 0.54	All items measure firm's benevolence from the customer's perspective. Trust is also included as an aspect of benevolence. Some author's may not agree with this.
	Supplier's trust in benevolence	Adapted from multi-item measures	Kumar et al., 1995b	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Though circumstances change, we believe that the supplier will be ready and willing to offer us assistance and support.</li> <li>2. When making important decisions, the supplier is concerned about our welfare.</li> <li>3. When we share our problems with the supplier, we know that they will respond with understanding.</li> <li>4. In the future we can count on the supplier to consider how its decisions and actions will affect us.</li> </ol>	Seven-point Likert scale from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7)	CR= 0.94	All items measure supplier's benevolence from the customer's perspective

				5. When it comes to things which are important to us, we can depend on the supplier's support.			
Firm's rep's disposition to benevolence trust	Adapted from Wrightsman (1991), Johnson-George and Swap (1982), and Rempel et al. (1985)	McKnight et al., 2002	Disposition to trust: 1. In general, people really do care about the well-being of others. 2. The typical person is sincerely concerned about the problems of others. 3. Most of the time, people care enough to try to be helpful, rather than just looking out for themselves	-	$\alpha = 0.84$	All items measure a person's benevolence	
Firm's institution-based benevolence trust			Institution-based trust: 1. I feel that most Internet vendors would act in a customers' best interest. 2. If a customer required help, most Internet vendors would do their best to help. 3. Most Internet vendors are interested in customer well-being, not just their own wellbeing	-	$\alpha = 0.96$	All items measure firm's benevolence from the customer's perspective but refer here to most firms and not a specific one.	
Firm's benevolence trusting beliefs			Trusting beliefs: 7. I believe that LegalAdvice.com would act in my best interest. 8. If I required help, LegalAdvice.com would do its best to help me. 9. LegalAdvice.com is interested in my well-being, not just its own	-	$\alpha = 0.91$	All items measure firm's benevolence from the customer's perspective	
Firm's benevolence dimension of trust	Adapted from Palvia (2009)	Oliveira et al., 2017	1. I believe this online vendor would act in my best interest. 2. If I required help, I believe this online vendor would do its best to help me.	Seven-point Likert scale from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7)	$\alpha = 0.814$ CR= 0.915 AVE= 0.843	The items do measure firm's benevolence to an extent but it is very restricted. More aspects of benevolence could have been incorporated	
Supplier's trust belief in benevolence	Adapted from Dowell et al. (2015) and Hojmosse et al. (2012)	Zhang & Li, 2019	1. This supplier's representative cares for us 2. This supplier's representative is like a friend 3. We feel that this supplier's representative has been on our side	Seven-point Likert scale from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (7)	$\alpha = 0.635$ CR= 0.804 AVE= 0.579	All items measure supplier's benevolence from the customer's perspective	



## Appendix 4

Table 21. Overview of the themes of the antecedents of benevolence.

Main keywords	Sub- key words	Example data extracted	Total coding References	# of supporting sources
Client's expectation		"Defining, negotiating and aligning to clients' expectations to demonstrate benevolence"	1	1, <b>Nikolova et al., 2015</b>
Attitude towards online shopping		"Attitude towards online shopping is one of the major sources of trust that influence the three dimensions of consumer trust, namely: competence, integrity and benevolence"	1	1, <b>Oliveira et al., 2017</b>
Propensity to trust		"Propensity to trust has a positive effect on benevolence"	2	1, <b>Kantsperger &amp; Kunz, 2010</b>
Trust stance		"Trust stance is one of the major sources of trust that influence the three dimensions of consumer trust, namely: competence, integrity and benevolence"	1	1, <b>Oliveira et al., 2017</b>
Message of trust		"Appeals that convey messages of trust will elevate levels of perceived benevolence"	1	1, <b>Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014</b>
Client's previous experience		"Perception of benevolence is mainly a result of the previous experience the customer has made with the service company"	1	1, <b>Kantsperger &amp; Kunz, 2010</b>
Satisfaction with past outcomes		"A retailer's satisfaction with outcomes will increase its perception of a vendor's benevolence"	5	3, <b>Ganesan, 1994; Kantsperger &amp; Kunz, 2010; Lee, Lee &amp; Suh, 2007</b>
Long-standing business relationship		"Long-standing business relationships also increase perceptions of benevolence"	2	1, <b>Liff &amp; Wahlström, 2017</b>
Brand recognition		"Brand recognition is one of the major sources of trust that influence the three dimensions of consumer trust, namely: competence, integrity and benevolence"	1	1, <b>Oliveira et al., 2017</b>
Integrity		"Lack of integrity is one of the major sources of trust that influence the three dimensions of consumer trust, namely: competence, integrity and benevolence"	1	1, <b>Oliveira et al., 2017</b>
Reputation		"The company's good reputation works as a signal for its benevolence"	8	3, <b>Kantsperger &amp; Kunz, 2010; Oliveira et al., 2017; Wang &amp; Jap, 2017</b>

<b>Reliability</b>		“Appeals that convey reliability will elevate levels of perceived benevolence.”	1	1, <b>Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014</b>
<b>Attitude towards clients</b>	Caring behaviour	“This impedes the development of caring attitude”	1	1, <b>Lee, Lee &amp; Suh, 2007</b>
	Favourable behaviour	“Exchange partners are likely to develop a favorable attitude towards their foreign exchange partners”	1	1, <b>Lee, Lee &amp; Ulgado, 2007</b>
	Helping behaviour	“Firms affectively committed to their relationships are likely to engage in helping behaviors”	1	1, <b>Lee, Lee &amp; Suh, 2007</b>
	Reassurance	“Clients need additional reassurance that they can trust a consultant”	1	1, <b>Nikolova et al., 2015</b>
	Making concessions	“The partner firm's concessions are positively related to the focal firm's perception of the partner firm's affective benevolence”	6	1, <b>Wang &amp; Jap, 2017</b>
	Tangible reward	“Both tangible reward and preferential treatment influenced benevolence more significantly”	1	1, <b>Cho, 2006</b>
	<b>Treatment of clients</b>	Social bonding	“Exporters should strive to enhance social bonding and affective commitment between the firms”	2
Preferential treatment		“Preferential treatment influenced benevolence more significantly”	1	1, <b>Cho, 2006</b>
Expected gain		“The expected gain from exchange with the partner can motivate benevolence”	1	1, <b>Wang &amp; Jap, 2017</b>
Concerns about partner's outcome		“Powerful firms send a powerful message that they are mutually oriented and concerned about the focal firm's outcomes”	1	1, <b>Wang &amp; Jap, 2017</b>
<b>Benefits to relationships</b>		“Exporters should make efforts to enhance importers' commitment by providing additional benefits to the relationship and/or reducing the cost of remaining in the relationship”	1	1, <b>Lee, Lee &amp; Suh, 2007</b>
<b>Cost reduction of continuing the relationships</b>				
<b>Relationship satisfaction</b>		“Among many potential antecedents of benevolence, two factors prove to be the most significant: (1) relationship satisfaction and (2) commitment”	1	1, <b>Lee, Lee &amp; Suh, 2007</b>
<b>Relationship wellbeing</b>		“Firms affectively committed to their relationships are likely to engage in helping behaviors”	1	1, <b>Lee, Lee &amp; Suh, 2007</b>

		to further the well-being of the relationship”		
Long-term orientation of firm		“Through communicating the goals and long-term orientation of the family firm in an affective and emotional way”	1	1, <b>Stutz et al., 2022</b>
Intention	Collective intention	“Collective commitment and collective intention as antecedents of such benevolent collective action”	1	1, <b>Beveridge &amp; Höllerer, 2023</b>
	Client’s best interest			
Obligation and duty		“Benevolence toward an exchange partner might arise from a sense of obligation or duty”	1	1, <b>Wang &amp; Jap, 2017</b>
Firm governance		“A positive effect of family firm governance on benevolence”	2	1, <b>Stutz et al., 2022</b>
Culture	Relationship orientation	“As opportunities to show benevolence are tied to unpredictable situations in the ongoing relationship”	1	1, <b>Selnes &amp; Gønhaug, 2000</b>
	Culture familiarity	“Inferences of benevolent intentions also can result when two parties develop shared values or norms”	5	4, <b>Doney &amp; Cannon, 1997</b> ; Lee, Lee & Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee & Ulgado, 2007; Wang & Jap, 2017
Core business operations		“Consumers infer an e-vendor’s competence and benevolence from its performance along two aspects: core business operations and relationship investments”	2	1, <b>Cho, 2006</b>
Core offerings		“Core offering and site design were found to influence benevolence”	2	1, <b>Cho, 2006</b>
Authority to provide clients with flexible solutions		“Higher levels of gratitude and perceived benevolence will be experienced in situations where a customer has genuinely made a purchase error and the retailer responds urgently to redress at all costs”	2	2, <b>Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014</b> ; Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000
Cost of action		“To communicate such a behavioral component of benevolence necessitates the cost of the action (or inaction)”	1	1, <b>Wang &amp; Jap, 2017</b>
Marketing strategy		“Exporters should make every attempt to facilitate benevolence by developing marketing programs”	3	3, <b>Lee, Lee &amp; Suh, 2007</b> ; Lee et al., 2004; Lee, Lee & Ulgado, 2007
Price strategy		“Pricing policies will differentially impact consumers’ benevolence beliefs”	8	1, <b>White &amp; Yuang, 2012</b>
Website strategy		“A high-quality Web site creates consumer beliefs that the vendor is not only	6	4,

		competent, but also honest and benevolent”		<b>McKnight et al., 2002</b> ; Cho, 2006; Oliveira et al., 2017; Gefen & Straub, 2004
<b>Relationship investment</b>		“Consumers infer an e-vendor’s competence and benevolence from its performance along two aspects: core business operations and relationship investments”	5	1, <b>Cho, 2006</b>
<b>Transaction specific investment (TSI)</b>		“A retailer’s perception of vendor TSIs is positively related to the retailer’s perception of the vendor’s benevolence”	2	1, <b>Ganesan, 1994</b>
<b>Idiosyncratic investments</b>		“The partner firm’s idiosyncratic investments are positively related to the focal firm’s perception of the partner firm’s calculative benevolence”	6	1, <b>Wang &amp; Jap, 2017</b>
<b>Specific communication strategies</b>		“Perception of benevolence ... can also be actively indicated by specific communication strategies of the company”	1	1, <b>Kantsperger &amp; Kunz, 2010</b>
<b>Social media usage</b>		“Social media usage is positively related to trust belief in benevolence”	2	1, <b>Zhang &amp; Li, 2019</b>
<b>Customer interaction</b>		“The interactions between consumers and the firm positively influence the following perceptions of an Internet vendor: benevolence”	3	2, <b>Oliveira et al., 2017</b> ; Zhang et al., 2019
<b>Customised interpersonal interaction</b>		“Salespeople can demonstrate more easily predictable behaviors and benevolent intentions through customized interpersonal interaction with the customer”	1	1, <b>Doney &amp; Cannon, 1997</b>
<b>Sharing confidential information</b>		“The process of intentionality also could be invoked because sharing confidential information signals to the buyer that the supplier’s motives and intentions are benevolent”	1	1, <b>Doney &amp; Cannon, 1997</b>
<b>Rep’s personal information and details</b>		“The accumulated records of the salespersons’ personal information, daily life and significant events on social media imply their family background, cultural background, ethnicity and other personal characteristic (as the cue of benevolence)”	1	1, <b>Zhang &amp; Li, 2019</b>
<b>Collective commitment</b>		“Collective commitment and collective intention as antecedents of such	1	1, <b>Beveridge &amp; Höllerer, 2023</b>

		benevolent collective action”		
<b>Demonstrated commitment</b>		“Consultants demonstrated commitment to meeting clients’ needs, for instance, by making the client look good in internal presentations. This helped clients build positive judgments of consultants’ benevolence”	1	1, <b>Nikolova et al., 2015</b>
<b>Message of customer commitment</b>		“Appeals that convey messages of trust will elevate levels of perceived benevolence”	1	1, <b>Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014</b>
<b>Commitment to business relationship</b>		“A firm’s benevolence toward its exchange partner is a manifestation of its commitment to its relationship with that partner”	2	2, <b>Lee et al., 2004; Lee, Lee &amp; Suh, 2007</b>
<b>Affective commitment</b>		“An importer’s affective commitment does have a significant impact on its altruistic benevolence”	2	1, <b>Lee, Lee &amp; Ulgado, 2007</b>
<b>Calculative commitment</b>		“An importer’s calculative commitment does have a significant impact on its mutualistic benevolence”	2	1, <b>Lee, Lee &amp; Ulgado, 2007</b>
<b>Helpfulness in a crisis</b>		“During a serious crisis, a bank maintains a minimum number of relationships, and the evaluating bank exhibits greater benevolence to its counterparty if reciprocal benevolence has been received in the past”	2	1, <b>Liff &amp; Wahlström, 2017</b>
<b>Cause</b>		“Benevolence can arise from an affective, a self-interest, and/or a duty cause”	1	1, <b>Wang &amp; Jap, 2017</b>
<b>Circumstances</b>		“Antecedents of benevolence as a function of individual differences or circumstances”	1	1, <b>Wang &amp; Jap, 2017</b>
<b>Context</b>		“Perceived levels of benevolence also are influenced by context.”	1	1, <b>Mayer et al., 1995</b>

## Appendix 5

Table 22. Overview of the categories and themes of the antecedents of benevolence.

Categories	Theme – level 0	Theme – level 1	Theme – level 2
Client's perspective	Client's expectation and attitude	Client's expectation	
		Attitude towards online shopping	
	Client's trust	Propensity to trust	
		Trust stance	
		Message of trust	
	Client's prior history with firm	Client's previous experience	
		Satisfaction with past outcomes	
		Long-standing business relationship	
		Brand recognition	
	Client's perception of firm	Integrity	
		Reputation	
		Reliability	
	Firm's perspective	Firm's perception of client	Attitude towards clients
Favourable behaviour			
Helping behaviour			
Reassurance			
Making concessions			
Tangible reward			
Treatment of clients		Social bonding	
		Preferential treatment	
		Expected gain	
		Concerns about partner's outcome	
Firm's intended relationship		Benefits to relationships	
		Cost reduction of continuing the relationship	
		Relationship satisfaction	
		Relationship wellbeing	
		Long-term orientation of firm	
Firm's values and purposes		Firm's intention	Collective intention
			Client's best interest
		Obligation and duty	
		Firm governance	
Culture		Relationship orientation	
	Culture familiarity		
Firm's operations	Core business operations	Core offerings	
	Authority to provide flexible solutions		
	Cost of action		
	Firm's strategies	Marketing strategy	

<b>External factors</b>			Price strategy	
			Website strategy	
	<b>Firm's investment</b>	Relationship investment		
		Transaction specific investment (TSI)		
		Idiosyncratic investments		
	<b>Firm's communication</b>	Specific communication strategies		Social media usage
		Customer interaction		Customised interpersonal interaction
		Sharing confidential information		
		Rep's personal information and details		
	<b>Firm's commitment</b>	Demonstrated commitment		Collective commitment
				Message of customer commitment
		Commitment to business relationship		
		Affective commitment		
		Calculative commitment		
	<b>Helpfulness in a crisis</b>			
		<b>Framing of the situation</b>	Cause	
Circumstances				
Context				

## Appendix 6

Table 23. Overview of the keywords from data regarding impacts of benevolence.

Main key words	Sub- key words	Example data extracted	Total coding References	# of supporting sources
Alleviate customers perceived risks		"can then alleviate their perceived risk to the exchange process"	4	2, <b>Seyedghorban et al., 2021</b> ; Zhang & Li, 2019
Enhance trust		"Benevolence trust is an essential prerequisite"	14	6, <b>Gu et al., 2019</b> ; Zhang & Li, 2019; Dowell et al., 2015; Gefen & Straub, 2004; Jiang et al., 2015; Leeman & Reynolds, 2012
Enhance credibility	Social media usage	"The effect of social media usage on customer loyalty is mediated by integrity/benevolence"	5	2, <b>Zhang &amp; Li, 2019</b> ; Stutz et al., 2022
Increase intimate disclosure		"increase intimate disclosures"	1	1, <b>Leeman &amp; Reynolds, 2012</b>
Reduce social uncertainty		"Benevolence reduces social uncertainty"	1	1, <b>Gefen &amp; Straub, 2004</b>
Gratitude		"increase the level of gratitude"	11	2, <b>Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014</b> ; Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000
Reciprocity		"more willing to reciprocate"	13	4, <b>Bove et al., 2009</b> ; Fazal e Hasan et al, 2014; Lee et al., 2004; Wang & Jap, 2007
Liking of firm		"create a "liking" for the supplier"	3	2, <b>Selnes &amp; Gønhaug, 2000</b> ; Wang & Jap, 2017
Indebtedness		"Common emotional responses to receiving a benefit are delight, indebtedness and gratitude"	2	2, <b>Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014</b> ; Lee et al., 2004
Positive affection		"creates positive affect"	9	3, <b>Selnes &amp; Gønhaug, 2000</b> ; Wang & Jap, 2017; Schoenherr & Wagner, 2016
Cognitive responses to 'do something'		"The deliberate choice to do something over and above the usual service requirements (to behave benevolently) in a relationship may result in a cognitive response..."	1	1, <b>Franklin &amp; Marshall, 2009</b>
Delight		"Common emotional responses to receiving a benefit are delight"	1	1, <b>Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014</b>
Excitement		"create positive affective arousal and even excitement"	1	1, <b>Selnes &amp; Gønhaug, 2000</b>



Friendly act		“perceived as a friendly act”	1	1, <b>Selnes &amp; Gønhaug, 2000</b>
Pleasure		“results in pleasure”	1	1, <b>Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014</b>
Sense of friendship		“cause positive mental activity similar to gratitude and a sense of friendship”	1	1, <b>Selnes &amp; Gønhaug, 2000</b>
Warmth		“a more dominant (and even unrecognised) feeling of warmth toward the giver”	1	1, <b>Franklin &amp; Marshall, 2019</b>
Feelings of indebtedness		“have feelings of indebtedness”	4	4, <b>Lee, Lee, &amp; Ulgado, 2007</b> ; Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2004; Lee, Lee, & Suh, 2007
Obligation to reciprocate		“moral obligation to reciprocate”	3	3, <b>Lee et al., 2004</b> , Lee, Lee, & Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee, & Ulgado, 2007
Overconfidence		“implies that overconfidence”	1	1, <b>Zhang &amp; Li, 2019</b>
Reciprocity without guarantee		“anticipates the benefit of reciprocity without its guarantee”	1	1, <b>Wang &amp; Jap, 2017</b>
Develop relationships		“factors in developing relationships”	5	4, <b>Selnes &amp; Gønhaug, 2000</b> ; Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014; Schoenherr & Wagner, 2016; Leeman & Reynolds, 2012
Get project started		“to get the project started”	1	1, <b>Schoenherr &amp; Wagner, 2016</b>
Didactic relationships		“a didactic relationship resulting in long-term sustainability”	1	1, <b>Leeman &amp; Reynolds, 2012</b>
Long-term relationships		“long-term relationships are likely to form”	6	5, <b>Gu et al., 2019</b> ; Lee, Lee, & Ulgado, 2007; Zhang & Li, 2019; Gefen & Straub, 2004; Leeman & Reynolds, 2012
Deepen commitment		“by deepening its commitment to the partner firm”	1	1, <b>Wang &amp; Jap, 2017</b>
Expending energy		“expending energy for the service worker”	1	1, <b>Bove et al., 2009</b>
Increase mutual understanding		“develop an increased mutual understanding”	2	2, <b>Lee et al., 2004</b> ; Gu et al., 2019
Relationship effectiveness		“relationship effectiveness”	2	1, <b>Zhang &amp; Li, 2019</b>
Relationship retention		“continued intention to stay in the relationship”	1	1, <b>Zhang &amp; Li, 2019</b>
Elevate relationships		“motivator in elevating the relationship”	1	1, <b>Schoenherr &amp; Wagner, 2016</b>
Long-term relationships		“affecting long-term relational exchange”	2	2, <b>Lee, Lee, &amp; Ulgado, 2007</b> ; Leeman & Reynolds, 2012

Sustain relationships during crises		“sustain relationships during a crisis”	1	1, <b>Liff &amp; Wahlström, 2017</b>
Unexpected actions are not negatively interpreted		“unlikely to negatively interpret their partners' unexpected actions”	1	1, <b>Jiang et al., 2015</b>
Reduces confusion		“reduce confusion”	1	1, <b>Gu et al., 2019</b>
Better communication		“better communication”	2	1, <b>Gu et al., 2019</b>
Collaboration		“low levels of supply chain collaboration”	2	1, <b>Acquah et al., 2021</b>
Commitment		“developing rep-owned commitment”	15	5, <b>Gu et al., 2019</b> ; Lee et al., 2004; Wang & Jap, 2017; Zhang & Li, 2019; Leeman & Reynolds, 2012
Enhance persuasion		“enhances persuasion”	1	1, <b>Doney &amp; Cannon, 1997</b>
Engage in cooperative behaviours		“more likely to engage in desirable, cooperative behaviors”	2	2, <b>Bove et al., 2009</b> ; Wang & Jap, 2017
Promotes cooperation		“promotes cooperation in the relationship”	2	2, <b>Lee et al., 2004</b> ; Schoenherr & Wagner, 2016
Facilitate coordination		“facilitates coordination activities”	1	1, <b>Lee et al., 2004</b>
Reduce opportunistic tendencies		“reducing the tendency if opportunistic behaviours”	2	2, <b>Acquah et al., 2021</b> ; Wang & Jap, 2017
Improve relationship performance		“enhancing relationship performance”	35	6, <b>Lee et al., 2004</b> ; Lee, Lee, & Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee, & Ulgado, 2007; Schoenherr & Wagner, 2016; Seyedghorban et al., 2021; Jiang et al., 2015
Improve relationship satisfaction		“can improve ... relationship satisfaction”	2	1, <b>Zhang &amp; Li, 2019</b>
Partner satisfaction		“keep the other informed and satisfied”	2	2, <b>Gu et al., 2019</b> ; Schoenherr & Wagner, 2016
Improve relationship quality		“enhance their perceptions of the quality of their relationship with a retailer”	6	3, <b>Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014</b> ; Lee et al., 2004; Zhang & Li, 2019
Increase perception of exchange quality		“increase the perception of exchange quality”	2	1, <b>Gu et al., 2019</b>
Shared norms		“increased mutual understanding and shared norms”	1	2, <b>Lee et al., 2004</b>
Higher joint outcomes		“achieve higher joint outcomes”	2	2, <b>Wang &amp; Jap, 2017</b> ; Dowell et al., 2015
Strengthen relationships		“leading to strengthened relationships”	3	2, <b>Leeman &amp; Reynolds, 2012</b> ; Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014
Frequent interactions		“interact more frequently”	1	1, <b>Jiang et al., 2015</b>

Confidence		"creates confidence"	1	1, <b>Jiang et al., 2015</b>
Reduce conflicts		"able to reduce conflict"	3	3, <b>Schoenherr &amp; Wagner, 2016; Wang &amp; Jap, 2017; Jiang et al., 2015</b>
Reduce friction		"reduces friction"	1	1, <b>Lee et al., 2004</b>
Misuse or manipulation		"allow for its misuse or manipulation"	1	1, <b>Wang &amp; Jap, 2017</b>
Non-constructive responses		"can also invite opportunism or non-constructive responses"	1	1, <b>Wang &amp; Jap, 2017</b>
Overcommunication		"may lead to "over communication""	1	1, <b>Wang &amp; Jap, 2017</b>
Seize short-term advantage offered		"seizing the short term advantage offered by a unilateral concession when reciprocity is neither an implied or explicit expectation"	1	1, <b>Wang &amp; Jap, 2017</b>
Reduce involvement		"reduce the supplier's ability to become involved"	2	1, <b>Schoenherr &amp; Wagner, 2016</b>
Opportunism		"may open the door to complacent or opportunistic behavior"	5	2, <b>Schoenherr &amp; Wagner, 2016; Wang &amp; Jap, 2017</b>
Personal Loyalty		"would be associated with greater personal loyalty to the service worker"	3	1, <b>Bove et al., 2009</b>
Future purchase loyalty		"more likely to generate ... future purchase loyalty"	1	1, <b>Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014</b>
Customer loyalty		"influence customer loyalty"	13	2, <b>Selnes &amp; Gønhaug, 2000; Zhang &amp; Li, 2019</b>
Purchase intention		"impacting their intention to purchase online"	4	2, <b>Oliveira et al., 2017; White &amp; Yuan, 2012</b>
Customer retention		"increases customer satisfaction and retention"	2	1, <b>Gefen &amp; Straub, 2004</b>
Go beyond prescribed roles		"motivated to go beyond their prescribed roles"	3	2, <b>Bove et al., 2009; Lee, Lee, &amp; Suh, 2007</b>
Customer OCB		"positive association between customer OCBs and perceived benevolence"	2	1, <b>Bove et al., 2009</b>
Customer satisfaction		"increases customer satisfaction"	5	3, <b>Gefen &amp; Straub, 2004; Leeman &amp; Reynolds, 2012; Schoenherr &amp; Wagner, 2016</b>
Expend energy		"by making sacrifices or expending energy"	1	1, <b>Bove et al., 2009</b>
Make sacrifices		"by making sacrifices"	1	1, <b>Bove et al., 2009</b>

Idiosyncratic investments		“economic stakes (idiosyncratic investments)”	2	1, <b>Wang &amp; Jap, 2017</b>
Purchase share		“enhances the seller firm’s performance in terms of sales revenue and purchase share from the buyer”	1	1, <b>Gu et al., 2019</b> ; Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014
Sales revenue		“enhances the seller firm’s performance in terms of sales revenue”	4	3, <b>Gu et al., 2019</b> ; Hong & Cho, 2011; Lee et al., 2004
Overall performance		“enhances the seller firm’s performance”	2	2, <b>Gu et al., 2019</b> ; Jiang et al., 2015
Reduce costs		“benevolence leads to lower transaction costs”	7	4, <b>Lee et al., 2004</b> ; Lee, Lee, & Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee, & Ulgado, 2007; Jiang et al., 2015
Resource efficiency		“thereby increasing operating efficiency”	5	4, <b>Lee et al., 2004</b> ; Lee, Lee, & Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee, & Ulgado, 2007; Wang & Jap, 2017
Credibility		“increases the credibility”	8	1, <b>Stutz et al., 2022</b>
Reputational challenge		“any lack of benevolence can ... quickly escalate and become a reputational (social) media challenge”	1	1, <b>Rosemann et al., 2023</b>
Trust-producing factor		“benevolence is likely to be a trust-producing factor”	31	16, <b>Cho, 2006</b> ; Ganesan, 1994; Gu et al., 2019; Hong & Cho, 2011; Lee et al., 2004; Oliveira et al., 2017; Rosemann et al., 2023; Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000; Seyedghorban et al., 2021; Zhang & Li, 2019; Fatima & Di Mascio, 2018; Jiang et al., 2015; Leeman & Reynolds, 2012; Liff & Wahlström, 2017; Nikolova et al., 2015; Stutz et al., 2022
Undermine trust		“undermine trust”	1	1, <b>Mayer et al., 1995</b>
Purchase risk		“benevolence has a negative effect on purchase risk”	1	1, <b>Zhang &amp; Li, 2019</b>
Purchase intention		“benevolence reduced purchase intentions”	3	1, <b>Gefen &amp; Straub, 2004</b>
‘Benevolent dictatorship’		“depriving others of their freedom for their own ‘good’ – a common stance of the ‘benevolent dictator’”	1	1, <b>Beveridge &amp; Höllerer, 2023</b>

## Appendix 7

Table 24. Overview of the themes of the impacts of benevolence.

Theme – level 0	Theme – level 1	Theme – level 2	Theme – level 3	Example data extracted	Total coding References	# of supporting sources
Alleviate customers perceived risks				“can then alleviate their perceived risk to the exchange process”	4	2, <b>Seyedghorban et al., 2021</b> ; Zhang & Li, 2019
Enhance trust				“Benevolence trust is an essential prerequisite”	14	6, <b>Gu et al., 2019</b> ; Zhang & Li, 2019; Dowell et al., 2015; Gefen & Straub, 2004; Jiang et al., 2015; Leeman & Reynolds, 2012
Enhance credibility	Social media usage			“The effect of social media usage on customer loyalty is mediated by integrity/benevolence”	5	2, <b>Zhang &amp; Li, 2019</b> ; Stutz et al., 2022
Increase intimate disclosure				“increase intimate disclosures”	1	1, <b>Leeman &amp; Reynolds, 2012</b>
Reduce social uncertainty				“Benevolence reduces social uncertainty”	1	1, <b>Gefen &amp; Straub, 2004</b>
Influences mental activities	Gratitude			“increase the level of gratitude”	11	2, <b>Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014</b> ; Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000
	Reciprocity			“more willing to reciprocate”	13	4, <b>Bove et al., 2009</b> ; Fazal e Hasan et al, 2014; Lee et al., 2004; Wang & Jap, 2007
	Liking of firm			“create a “liking” for the supplier”	3	2, <b>Selnes &amp; Gønhaug, 2000</b> ; Wang & Jap, 2017
	Indebtedness			“Common emotional responses to receiving a benefit are delight, indebtedness and gratitude”	2	2, <b>Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014</b> ; Lee et al., 2004
	Positive affection			“creates positive affection”	9	3, <b>Selnes &amp; Gønhaug, 2000</b> ; Wang & Jap, 2017; Schoenherr & Wagner, 2016
	Cognitive responses to ‘do something’			“The deliberate choice to do something over and above the usual service requirements (to behave benevolently) in a relationship may result in a cognitive response...”	1	1, <b>Franklin &amp; Marshall, 2009</b>

	Delight			“Common emotional responses to receiving a benefit are delight”	1	1, <b>Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014</b>
	Excitement			“create positive affective arousal and even excitement”	1	1, <b>Selnes &amp; Gønhaug, 2000</b>
	Friendly act			“perceived as a friendly act”	1	1, <b>Selnes &amp; Gønhaug, 2000</b>
	Pleasure			“results in pleasure”	1	1, <b>Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014</b>
	Sense of friendship			“cause positive mental activity similar to gratitude and a sense of friendship”	1	1, <b>Selnes &amp; Gønhaug, 2000</b>
	Warmth			“a more dominant (and even unrecognised) feeling of warmth toward the giver”	1	1, <b>Franklin &amp; Marshall, 2019</b>
<b>Feelings of indebtedness</b>				“have feelings of indebtedness”	4	4, <b>Lee, Lee, &amp; Ulgado, 2007</b> ; Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2004; Lee, Lee, & Suh, 2007
<b>Obligation to reciprocate</b>				“moral obligation to reciprocate”	3	3, <b>Lee et al., 2004</b> , Lee, Lee, & Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee, & Ulgado, 2007
<b>Overconfidence</b>				“implies that overconfidence”	1	1, <b>Zhang &amp; Li, 2019</b>
<b>Unfilled anticipations</b>				“anticipates the benefit of reciprocity without its guarantee”	1	1, <b>Wang &amp; Jap, 2017</b>
<b>Create a new relationship</b>	Develop relationships			“factors in developing relationships”	5	4, <b>Selnes &amp; Gønhaug, 2000</b> ; Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014; Schoenherr & Wagner, 2016; Leeman & Reynolds, 2012
	Get project started			“to get the project started”	1	1, <b>Schoenherr &amp; Wagner, 2016</b>
	Didactic relationships			“a didactic relationship resulting in long-term sustainability”	1	1, <b>Leeman &amp; Reynolds, 2012</b>
	Long-term relationships			“long-term relationships are likely to form”	6	5, <b>Gu et al., 2019</b> ; Lee, Lee, & Ulgado, 2007; Zhang & Li, 2019; Gefen & Straub, 2004; Leeman & Reynolds, 2012

Strengthen existing relationships	Deepen commitment			“by deepening its commitment to the partner firm”	1	1, Wang & Jap, 2017
	Expending energy			“expending energy for the service worker”	1	1, Bove et al., 2009
	Increase mutual understanding			“develop an increased mutual understanding”	2	2, Lee et al., 2004; Gu et al., 2019
	Relationship effectiveness			“relationship effectiveness”	2	1, Zhang & Li, 2019
	Relationship retention			“continued intention to stay in the relationship”	1	1, Zhang & Li, 2019
	Elevate relationships			“motivator in elevating the relationship”	1	1, Schoenherr & Wagner, 2016
	Long-term relationships			“affecting long-term relational exchange”	2	2, Lee, Lee, & Ulgado, 2007; Leeman & Reynolds, 2012
	Strengthen relationships			“leading to strengthened relationships”	3	2, Leeman & Reynolds, 2012; Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014
	Sustain relationships during crises			“sustain relationships during a crisis”	1	1, Liff & Wahlström, 2017
Relationship impacts independent of relationship duration	Better communication	Unexpected actions are not negatively interpreted		“unlikely to negatively interpret their partners' unexpected actions”	1	1, Jiang et al., 2015
		Reduces confusion		“reduce confusion”	1	1, Gu et al., 2019
		Better communication		“better communication”	2	1, Gu et al., 2019
		Enhance persuasion		“enhances persuasion”	1	1, Doney & Cannon, 1997
	Commitment			“developing rep-owned commitment”	15	5, Gu et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2004; Wang & Jap, 2017; Zhang & Li, 2019; Leeman & Reynolds, 2012
		Collaboration		“low levels of supply chain collaboration”	2	1, Acquah et al., 2021

	Facilitate cooperative relationships	Engage in cooperative behaviours		“more likely to engage in desirable, cooperative behaviors”	2	2, <b>Bove et al., 2009; Wang &amp; Jap, 2017</b>	
		Promotes cooperation		“promotes cooperation in the relationship”	2	2, <b>Lee et al., 2004; Schoenherr &amp; Wagner, 2016</b>	
		Facilitate coordination		“facilitates coordination activities”	1	1, <b>Lee et al., 2004</b>	
		Reduce opportunistic tendencies		“reducing the tendency if opportunistic behaviours”	2	2, <b>Acquah et al., 2021; Wang &amp; Jap, 2017</b>	
	Improve relationship performance	Improve relationship performance		“enhancing relationship performance”	35	6, <b>Lee et al., 2004; Lee, Lee, &amp; Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee, &amp; Ulgado, 2007; Schoenherr &amp; Wagner, 2016; Seyedghorban et al., 2021; Jiang et al., 2015</b>	
		Relationship satisfaction	Improve relationship satisfaction		“can improve ... relationship satisfaction”	2	1, <b>Zhang &amp; Li, 2019</b>
			Partner satisfaction		“keep the other informed and satisfied”	2	2, <b>Gu et al., 2019; Schoenherr &amp; Wagner, 2016</b>
		Relationship quality	Improve relationship quality		“enhance their perceptions of the quality of their relationship with a retailer”	6	3, <b>Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014; Lee et al., 2004; Zhang &amp; Li, 2019</b>
			Increase perception of exchange quality		“increase the perception of exchange quality”	2	1, <b>Gu et al., 2019</b>
			Frequent interactions		“interact more frequently”	1	1, <b>Jiang et al., 2015</b>
		Shared norms and outcomes	Shared norms		“increased mutual understanding and shared norms”	1	2, <b>Lee et al., 2004</b>
	Higher joint outcomes			“achieve higher joint outcomes”	2	2, <b>Wang &amp; Jap, 2017; Dowell et al., 2015</b>	
	Reduce relationship challenges	Confidence		“creates confidence”	1	1, <b>Jiang et al., 2015</b>	
		Reduce conflicts		“able to reduce conflict”	3	3, <b>Schoenherr &amp; Wagner, 2016; Wang &amp; Jap, 2017; Jiang et al., 2015</b>	



		Reduce friction		“reduces friction”	1	1, <b>Lee et al., 2004</b>
<b>Openings for negative behaviours</b>	Misuse or manipulation			“allow for its misuse or manipulation”	1	1, <b>Wang &amp; Jap, 2017</b>
	Non-constructive responses			“can also invite opportunism or non-constructive responses”	1	1, <b>Wang &amp; Jap, 2017</b>
	Overcommunication			“may lead to “over communication””	1	1, <b>Wang &amp; Jap, 2017</b>
	Seize short-term advantage offered			“seizing the short term advantage offered by a unilateral concession when reciprocity is neither an implied or explicit expectation”	1	1, <b>Wang &amp; Jap, 2017</b>
<b>Reduce involvement</b>	Reduce ability to become involved			“reduce the supplier's ability to become involved”	2	1, <b>Schoenherr &amp; Wagner, 2016</b>
	Reduced willingness to get involved					
<b>Opportunism</b>	Complacent or opportunistic behaviour			“may open the door to complacent or opportunistic behavior”	5	2, <b>Schoenherr &amp; Wagner, 2016; Wang &amp; Jap, 2017</b>
	Vulnerability to opportunism					
	May open door to opportunistic behaviour					
	More opportunistic behaviour					
<b>Customer perspective</b>	Customer loyalty	Personal Loyalty		“would be associated with greater personal loyalty to the service worker”	3	1, <b>Bove et al., 2009</b>
		Future purchase loyalty		“more likely to generate ... future purchase loyalty”	1	1, <b>Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014</b>
		Customer loyalty		“influence customer loyalty”	13	2, <b>Selnes &amp; Gønhaug, 2000; Zhang &amp; Li, 2019</b>
		Purchase intention		“impacting their intention to purchase online”	4	2, <b>Oliveira et al., 2017; White &amp; Yuan, 2012</b>

		Customer retention		"increases customer satisfaction and retention"	2	1, <b>Gefen &amp; Straub, 2004</b>	
	Customer satisfaction	Customer satisfaction		"increases customer satisfaction"	5	3, <b>Gefen &amp; Straub, 2004</b> ; Leeman & Reynolds, 2012; Schoenherr & Wagner, 2016	
		Influence customer satisfaction					
	Customers' willingness to do extra for the firm	Go beyond prescribed roles			"motivated to go beyond their prescribed roles"	3	2, <b>Bove et al., 2009</b> ; Lee, Lee, & Suh, 2007
		Customer OCB			"positive association between customer OCBs and perceived benevolence"	2	1, <b>Bove et al., 2009</b>
		Expend energy			"by making sacrifices or expending energy"	1	1, <b>Bove et al., 2009</b>
		Make sacrifices			"by making sacrifices"	1	1, <b>Bove et al., 2009</b>
<b>Financial perspective</b>	Idiosyncratic investments			"economic stakes (idiosyncratic investments)"	2	1, <b>Wang &amp; Jap, 2017</b>	
	Purchase share	Future purchase loyalty		"enhances the seller firm's performance in terms of sales revenue and purchase share from the buyer"	1	1, <b>Gu et al., 2019</b> ; Fazal e Hasan et al., 2014	
	Sales revenue			"enhances the seller firm's performance in terms of sales revenue"	4	3, <b>Gu et al., 2019</b> ; Hong & Cho, 2011; Lee et al., 2004	
	Overall performance	Enhances firm's performance			"enhances the seller firm's performance"	2	2, <b>Gu et al., 2019</b> ; Jiang et al., 2015
		Improve alliance performance					
	Reduce costs	Transaction costs			"benevolence leads to lower transaction costs"	7	4, <b>Lee et al., 2004</b> ; Lee, Lee, & Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee, & Ulgado, 2007; Jiang et al., 2015
Operating costs							

		Cooperative interaction costs				
		Compliance costs				
		Coordination costs				
	Resource efficiency	Enable firms to devote resources to more productive activities		“thereby increasing operating efficiency”	5	4, <b>Lee et al., 2004</b> ; Lee, Lee, & Suh, 2007; Lee, Lee, & Ulgado, 2007; Wang & Jap, 2017
		Engage in more problem-solving				
		Operating efficiency				
<b>Overall firm reputation</b>	Credibility	Absorb corporate information		“increases the credibility”	8	1, <b>Stutz et al., 2022</b>
		Credibility				
		Information credibility				
			Increased credibility – external perspective			
	Reputational challenge			“any lack of benevolence can ... quickly escalate and become a reputational (social) media challenge”	1	1, <b>Rosemann et al., 2023</b>
	Trust-producing factor			“benevolence is likely to be a trust-producing factor”	31	16, <b>Cho, 2006</b> ; Ganesan, 1994; Gu et al., 2019; Hong & Cho, 2011; Lee et al., 2004; Oliveira et al., 2017; Rosemann et al., 2023; Selnes & Gønhaug, 2000; Seyedghorban et al., 2021; Zhang & Li, 2019; Fatima & Di Mascio, 2018; Jiang et

						al., 2015; Leeman & Reynolds, 2012; Liff & Wahlström, 2017; Nikolova et al., 2015; Stutz et al., 2022
<b>Customer perspective</b>	Undermine trust			“undermine trust”	1	1, <b>Mayer et al., 1995</b>
<b>Financial perspective</b>	Purchasing behaviour	Ignorant purchase risk-taking		“benevolence has a negative effect on purchase risk”	1	1, <b>Zhang &amp; Li, 2019</b>
		Negative effect on purchase risk				
		Purchase intention		“benevolence reduced purchase intentions”	3	1, <b>Gefen &amp; Straub, 2004</b>
<b>Firm reputation</b>	‘Benevolent dictatorship’			“depriving others of their freedom for their own ‘good’ – a common stance of the ‘benevolent dictator’”	1	1, <b>Beveridge &amp; Höllerer, 2023</b>

## Appendix 8

Table 25. Overview of the categories and stages of the impacts of benevolence.

Stages	Categories	Theme – level 0	Theme – level 1	Theme – level 2	Theme – level 3
1. Emotions	Positive activities an act of benevolence can create	Alleviate customers perceived risks	Alleviate customers perceived risks		
		Enhance trust	Enhance trust		
		Enhance credibility	Enhance credibility	Social media usage	
		Increase intimate disclosure	Increase intimate disclosure		
		Reduce social uncertainty	Reduce social uncertainty		
		Influences mental activities	Gratitude		
			Reciprocity		
			Liking of firm		
			Indebtedness		
			Positive affection		
			Cognitive responses to 'do something'		
			Delight		
			Excitement		
			Friendly act		
	Pleasure				
	Sense of friendship				
	Warmth				
	Negative mental activities an act of benevolence can create	Feelings of indebtedness	Feelings of indebtedness		
		Obligation to reciprocate	Obligation to reciprocate		
Overconfidence		Overconfidence			
Unfilled anticipations		Reciprocity without guarantee			
2. Relationship	Positive impacts of relationships	Create a new relationship	Develop relationships		
			Get project started		
			Didactic relationships		
			Long-term relationships		
	Strengthen existing relationships	Deepen commitment			
		Expending energy			
		Increase mutual understanding			

			Relationship effectiveness		
			Relationship retention		
			Elevate relationships		
			Long-term relationships		
			Strengthen relationships		
			Sustain relationships during crises		
		Relationship impacts independent of relationship duration	Better communication	Unexpected actions are not negatively interpreted	
				Reduces confusion	
				Better communication	
				Enhance persuasion	
			Commitment		
			Facilitate cooperative relationships	Collaboration	
				Engage in cooperative behaviours	
				Promotes cooperation	
				Facilitate coordination	
			Reduce opportunistic tendencies	Reduce opportunistic tendencies	
			Improve relationship performance	Improve relationship performance	
		Relationship satisfaction		Improve relationship satisfaction	
				Partner satisfaction	
		Relationship quality		Improve relationship quality	
				Increase perception of exchange quality	
		Frequent interactions	Frequent interactions		
Shared norms and outcomes	Shared norms				
	Higher joint outcomes				
Reduce relationship challenges	Confidence				
	Reduce conflicts				
	Reduce friction				
Harmful impacts on relationship	Openings for negative behaviours	Misuse or manipulation			
		Non-constructive responses			
		Overcommunication			

3. Performance	Positive return of benevolent investments		Seize short-term advantage offered		
		Reduce involvement	Reduce ability to become involved		
			Reduced willingness to get involved		
		Opportunism	Complacent or opportunistic behaviour		
			Vulnerability to opportunism		
			May open door to opportunistic behaviour		
			More opportunistic behaviour		
	Customer perspective	Customer loyalty	Customer loyalty	Personal Loyalty	
				Future purchase loyalty	
				Customer loyalty	
				Purchase intention	
				Customer retention	
		Customer satisfaction	Customer satisfaction	Customer satisfaction	
				Influence customer satisfaction	
			Customers' willingness to do extra for the firm	Go beyond prescribed roles	
Customer OCB					
Expend energy					
Financial perspective		Idiosyncratic investments			
			Purchase share	Future purchase loyalty	
		Sales revenue			
		Overall performance	Enhances firm's performance		
			Improve alliance performance		
		Reduce costs	Transaction costs		
			Operating costs		
			Cooperative interaction costs		
	Compliance costs				
	Resource efficiency	Coordination costs			
		Enable firms to devote resources to more productive activities			
		Engage in more problem-solving			
		Operating efficiency			

		Overall firm reputation	Credibility	Absorb corporate information	
				Credibility	
				Information credibility	
				Increased credibility – external perspective	
			Reputational challenge		
	Trust-producing factor				
	Harmful outcomes of benevolent investments	Customer perspective	Undermine trust		
		Financial perspective	Purchasing behaviour	Ignorant purchase risk-taking	
				Negative effect on purchase risk	
				Purchase intention	
Firm reputation		'Benevolent dictatorship'			