

COOPETITION STRATEGY

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With its birth, in the years 1960, strategic management falls under the dominating economic paradigm. Insulated, in competition with all the firms of its industry, the firm must develop a durable competitive advantage which will allow its long-term competitiveness. From the middle of the years 1980, the multiplication of cooperation agreements between rival firms obliges to see under another angle competitive relations (Hamel et al., 1989). Today, firms are in competition on certain points and are in cooperation on others (Bengtsson and Kock, 1999). This phenomenon is qualified for the first time as “coopetition” by Nalebuff and Brandenburger in a world best-seller (Nalebuff and Brandenburger, 1996, 1997).

In the coopetitive perspective, firms adopt aggressive strategies, because they must adapt to a hypercompetitive universe, and must also carry out cooperative strategies, either to counter their competitors, or to mutualise their resources and to exchange knowledge (Lado et al., 1997). The paradox lies in the fact that the best partners are also the most dangerous competitors. So, Firms must compete and cooperate simultaneously with the same friends/foes. This situation leads to fundamentally change mental models of decision makers and managers, both in terms of choice of the relevant relational strategy with competitors and in terms of management of coopetitive structures (Le Roy and Yami, 2009).

Since 1996, a growing body of literature has been developed by scholars, and coopetition is now addressed considering different streams and perspectives. It is now the opportunity to review past research and to highlight new research questions and reflections on coopetition. Some of these questions are:

1. On the theory of coopetition:

- Is the cooperative relationships theory appropriate for the study of coopetition?
- Are there dedicated theoretical grounds for the study of coopetition?
- How to include both: (1) dynamics; and (2) the balance of cooperation and competition in competition studies?
- How to capture value creation and value appropriation in coopetition theory?

2. On the determinants of coopetitive strategies:

- What are the drivers of coopetitive strategies?
- Why firms chose to develop a coopetitive strategy rather than develop its own projects individually?
- Why firms chose to develop a coopetitive strategy rather than develop projects with its suppliers or clients?
- Are there industries more coopetitive than others and why?
- What are the challenges of coopetition in knowledge intensive industries?

3. On the forms of coopetitive strategies:

- What are the different types of coopetition (in terms of size, in terms of resources' complementarities, as regard the industry...)?
- How firms manage coopetition at different levels of analysis: interpersonal, organisational, dyadic, inter-organisational and networks?
- How to design knowledge creation and rent appropriation into a coopetitive relationship?

4. *On the performance of cooperative strategies:*

- What are the outcomes of cooperation?
- Are cooperative strategies more efficient than pure competitive or pure cooperative strategies?
- What are the main key success factors of cooperative strategies?
- Are these KSF the same for SMEs and large firms?
- Are they the same in different industrial contexts?

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