

# Intra-organizational Coopetition: Antecedents, Dynamics, and Outcomes of the Interplay between Cooperation and Competition

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## Abstract

Most studies on coopetition strategy concentrate on the inter-organizational level. Lately, a growing literature has focused on cooperative strategies within organizations, opening new windows for the study of the phenomenon. This article is part of this new context. The main objective is to design a research framework of the antecedents, dynamics, and outcomes of intra-organizational coopetition. We conducted qualitative and exploratory research, collecting evidence through a focus group with managers from a large educational institution. Our findings grouped categories of antecedents, dynamics, and outcomes into an intra-organizational coopetition framework, designed to support future research and management decisions. The findings also contribute to the advancement of the coopetition literature in the service sector, describing the interplay between cooperation and competition in the education industry. We hope that our findings will spark further research into intra-organizational coopetition strategies.

**Keywords:** coopetition, intra-organizational relations, framework, educational institutions, focus group

## 1. Introduction

The dynamic relationship between cooperation and competition underpins the coopetition strategy. It is a concurrent relationship of strategic links that can develop at different levels (Luo, 2005). This study explores the coopetition strategy in an educational institution, with emphasis on the intra-organizational level. Both the level and the business segment addressed have received little attention in the coopetition literature (Dorn et al., 2016). In this article, we aim to reduce this gap. To achieve this aim, our study presents analytical categories of the antecedents, the dynamics, and the outcomes of intra-organizational coopetition, combining them in a research framework and demonstrating their effects in a large educational institution.

The coopetition strategy is adopted at the individual, intra-organizational, inter-organizational, and even network levels from a multilevel perspective (Tidström & Rajala, 2016). Because of their strategic emphasis, the seminal works and most studies on coopetition have concentrated on the inter-organizational level (Dorn et al., 2016). Converging with the increased interest in this phenomenon, new research has been broadening the scope to other levels of cooperative relationships (Czakon et al., 2019; Dorn et al., 2016). These studies have paved the way for empirical research on intra-organizational coopetition (Czakon et al., 2019).

Intra-organizational coopetition is still in the consolidation stage. There is no universal terminology. In some studies, it has been named inter-functional, inter-departmental, or multifunctional coopetition (Luo et al., 2006), coopetition between subunits (Luo, 2005), competition between a network of units or inter-units (Tsai, 2002), and intra-firm competition (Dorn et al., 2016). This article employs the term intra-organizational coopetition to refer to cooperative relationships within organizations, whether they be units, centers, sectors, departments, or teams (Bouncken et al., 2015).

We propose that light can be shed on intra-organizational coopetition by understanding the motivations that precede it, the dynamics that occur, and the outcomes that result from the interplay between cooperation and competition. Hence, the main objective of this article is to design a research framework of the antecedents, dynamics, and outcomes of intra-organizational coopetition. We built our framework based on an extensive literature review complemented by the perceptions of managers who have been directly involved in executing competitive and cooperative strategies simultaneously. We conducted a focus group composed of managers of a

large educational institution, consisting of 35 schools, 11 educational centers, two higher education units, and one distance learning business unit.

Our study makes contributions to theoretical and applied knowledge. It seeks to fill the research gap in the study field of coopetition in the intra-organizational level, which is still little explored in literature (Dorn et al., 2016) and which is still emergent (Czakon et al., 2019). About the contributions, the first one comprises the identification of analytical categories of intra-organizational coopetition's antecedents, dynamics, and outcomes. The second contribution is the organization of an intra-organizational coopetition framework, designed to support future research and management decisions. Finally, we describe the interplay between cooperation and competition in the education industry, contributing to the advancement of the coopetition literature in the service sector.

This article is divided into four sections beyond this introduction. The next session discusses our theoretical background and is divided into two subsections. First, we present the logic of coopetition strategy. Then, we provide a detailed description of coopetition at the intra-organizational level. The third section presents our methodological choices and the data collection and analysis procedures. Afterward, the results are discussed in depth, grouping, and analyzing the main elements of intra-organizational coopetition's antecedents, dynamics, and outcomes. In the fifth section, concluding remarks are made, contemplating a summary of the findings, the limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

### 2.1 Coopetition Strategy

The logics of cooperation and competition contradict each other in their conceptual definitions. However, when implemented concurrently by organizations, they create a coopetitive paradox (Raza-Ullah et al., 2014). Coopetition is a strategic process that stems from the search for a balance of opportunities in which all those engaged both win and lose (Brandenburger & Nalebuff, 1995). Working together has the goal of creating value (cooperation) and splitting this value (competition) (Bouncken et al., 2015). This action creates strategic interdependence between organizations, in which individual interests add up and rely on collective efforts to generate value (Hidalgo et al., 2020). According to scholars such as Luo et al. (2006), organizations that cooperate wish to maximize their profitability while also strengthening their market position. These coopetitive organizations adopt cooperation to create value and competition to capture as much of this value as possible. This win-win situation is one of the primary motivators of the coopetitive relationship between competitors (Bouncken et al., 2015).

Among the benefits of coopetition, scholars have highlighted access to resources as a factor that contributes to gaining a competitive advantage because sharing can generate access to new technologies and resources (Scaravonatto et al., 2021) as well as gains in scale, bargaining power, improved operational efficiency, cost reduction, and even risk mitigation (Bengtsson & Kock, 2000).

Coopetition is defined as the interaction of cooperative and competitive strategies. However, such interaction is not always perfectly balanced. According to Bengtsson and Kock (2000), one type of interaction will always predominate, and the intensity of the relationship will increase as a result. When competition is predominant, cooperation will be weaker, and vice versa. Given the intrinsic complexity of the coopetitive relationship, analyzing it by isolating cooperation and competition tactics is challenging (Dal Soto & Monticelli, 2017). The coopetition paradox introduces challenges, such as an increase in the level of cooperation in the pursuit of better results in competition, which is compounded by the risk of exploitative behavior by the competitor. As a result, the quality of this relationship will determine whether the outcome is positive or negative (Gernsheimer et al., 2021). Excessive rivalry is harmful to competitors' performance achievements (Crick & Crick, 2020; Raza-Ullah et al., 2014).

The challenges of coopetition between companies also include the adaptation that participants frequently need to make with respect to conflicting structures and objectives (Tidström, 2009), which makes adhering to individual strategies difficult (Bengtsson & Kock, 2000). Furthermore, relationships break down when there is perceived disparity in advantages among those engaged (Dal Soto & Monticelli, 2017). Finally, the competitor's opportunistic behavior may impair the organization's ability to generate innovation and knowledge (Do Canto et al., 2017). In this sense, the partners' relationship is founded on mutual trust (Raza-Ullah et al., 2014).

Despite advances in organizational coopetition, research that has reviewed this field of study has shown gaps regarding coopetition within companies (Bouncken et al., 2015; Dorn et al., 2016). This deficiency has also been observed in recent studies (Czakon et al., 2020; Gernsheimer et al., 2021). Intra-organizational coopetition is

thus still an emerging and understudied subject in organizational studies (Dorn et al., 2016).

## 2.2 *Coopetition at the Intra-Organizational Level*

Using cooperative strength in conjunction with competition within an organization to achieve departmental objectives and encourage value generation and capture is an intra-organizational coopetitive strategy (Bouncken et al., 2015). Prior to the implementation of this approach, the organization should define guidelines and motivators for its actions, which will encourage, through cooperation and competition, a broader diffusion of knowledge, technological advancement, and overall development of the organization's units (Tsai, 2002).

Cooperation between sectors can take several forms, including sharing resources and administrative infrastructure (Bengtsson & Kock, 2000), fostering synergy, improving communication, and encouraging increased social engagement among actors (Tsai, 2002). However, it appears that some degree of trust is required for these exchange flows to occur (Gernsheimer et al., 2021). Internal social events promote intra-organizational trust (Tsai, 2002) because trust between sectors is dependent on employee trust (Gernsheimer et al., 2021).

The dynamics of coopetition, similar to the cooperative movement, involve competition within the organization. As a result, it may engage in rivalry-focused competitive behaviors aimed at achieving individual gains for the department (Luo et al., 2006), disputes over headquarters' resources (Dorn et al., 2016) or for the demonstration of greater efficiency, the achievement of better internal positions, and market expansion (Luo, 2005). Tsai (2002), on the other hand, underlined that, when the sectors of an organization compete, they aim at a good relationship with others as they seek as much information as possible and want to be prepared for the results of competition.

Conflicts are inherent to the dynamics of coopetition (Tidström, 2009). Unlike the interaction between corporations, intra-organizational coopetition, because it is internal and has the organization's macro purpose in mind, does not usually create dangers of disruption (Bengtsson & Kock, 2000; Tsai, 2002) or intense rivalry (Luo et al., 2006). It can, however, produce tensions due to instances of appropriation of individual value and non-recognition of results (Dorn et al., 2016) as well as disputes emerging from the interdependence of those engaged (Raza-Ullah et al., 2014). Intra-organizational coopetition also causes managers difficulties in coordinating the dynamic relationship between units. Prahalad and Hamel (1990) revealed a collaboration difficulty when managers must assign team members to other units due to an organizational need. For any organization, balancing competitiveness and cooperation is a challenging management task (Eriksson & Laan, 2007).

Regardless of these factors, the outcomes of intra-organizational coopetition, such as collective gains and benefits, tend to outweigh the hurdles as long as suitable infrastructure is in place (Luo, 2005). The transmission of knowledge within the organization is also emphasized (Luo et al., 2006) because cooperation brings together sectors that can learn from one another and improve procedures (Tsai, 2002). Coopetition also improves process innovation, product development, and process and product quality control among related businesses (Luo, 2005).

## 3. Method

For the development of this study, exploratory qualitative research was conducted. A focus group was used as the data collection method. The data were gathered through the interaction of a selected group in response to the questions determined by the researchers (Morgan, 1996). The proposed interaction in this study intended to explain how coopetition relationships developed at the intra-organizational level. The focus group was composed by seven professionals from an educational network, including directors, managers as well as course and area coordinators. Such participants were selected due to their representativity in the decisions which influence the coopetition dynamics in the institution. For the definition of the participants, the following criteria were considered: 1 - hierarchical position: those who had direct influence over the network's strategic and operational decisions; 2 - mastery of the institutional strategic planning: those who had knowledge about the strategic planning process proposed by the educational network; 3 - responsibility for the results: those who were directly responsible for the accountability of the results achieved; and 4 - positioning among the schools: those who had the best results in the network's general performance ranking.

The diversity and representativeness of areas and activities was considered as a condition for participation in the focus group (Trad, 2009). Managers of the network's regional administration with experience in strategic planning, managers of the business nucleus with a marketing perspective, and managers of the human resource center were chosen as participants. Operation managers were also selected at the network's many educational levels, including open and technical courses, high school, higher education, and distance education units. Table 1 summarizes the profile of the seven focus group participants.

An application protocol was created to direct and ensure debate stimulus in the focus group. According to the theoretical framework used, definitions of cooperation, competition, and cooptation were included in the protocol. The definitions were provided to the participants, and they were interspersed with open questions about their perceptions of how these concepts were used in practice across the education network's sectors. There were also inquiries into the difficulties of and motivations for cooperating and competing. Following the focus group protocol, it was possible to debate and identify the many aspects of intra-organizational cooptation in the researched institution.

The focus group technique was used in accordance with the literature; thus, the meeting was held in a room or environment in which all of the participants are gathered in person and the researchers are observers in an external environment, while the moderator leads the discussion on the presented topics (Trad, 2009). It is important to note that the focus group was held remotely, via the Zoom Meeting platform, due to health precautions against the COVID-19 virus. It should also be emphasized that the use of a remote format for holding the focus group meeting contributed to bringing together participants from different activity areas, who also belong to different geographic regions. Furthermore, the participants' comparable profiles, as well as their extensive experience in the educational institution, aided the development of an adequate level of argumentation and discussion on the proposed topics. In addition to the perceptions gathered directly through the focus group, data were collected in parallel through documents, internal reports, promotional materials, and the educational network's institutional websites.

Table 1. Profile of focus group participants

Participant	Position	Time with the Institution (In Years)	Gender	Education	Education Level	Work Unit	Number of Subordinates
1	Manager	8	Male	Industrial Management	Production Master's degree	Management Center	16
2	Director	17	Female	Pedagogy - Master's in Education	Master's degree	Educational Unit	28
3	Manager	17	Male	Computer Science - Master's in Creative Industry	Master's degree	Business Center of the Institution	53
4	Director	14	Male	Management	Specialization	Educational Unit	60
5	Coordinator	14	Female	Psychology	Specialization	Human Resources Center	10
6	Director	5	Male	Quality management	Specialization	Distance Education Unit	260
7	Coordinator	4	Female	Marketing Technologist	PhD Applicant	University Pedagogical Unit	25

During the analysis stage, a thorough transcription of the focus group meeting recording was made. The meeting began with the presentation of the moderator and observer researchers, followed by the presentation of the guests, referred to as "interviewees" for research purposes. Following this initial presentation, the theoretical concepts were provided to contrast them with the participants' perceptions of the concept in the investigated educational institution. In total, seven questions were posed to the participants, who interacted during their responses. The focus group meeting lasted 1 hour and 56 minutes in total.

The researchers, who were not present during the focus group, conducted the content analysis, as proposed by Bardin (2016), by first organizing the evidence in a table format to analyze the responses, their connections, and the patterns. Next, the gathered material was subjected to a pre-analysis. Subsequently, we proceeded to the material exploration phase to create categories (Bardin, 2016). The categories were created inductively, which means that they arose from the data collected (Pope et al., 2000). The initial categories emerged based on the main themes of the participants' speeches. The final categories were defined after analyzing secondary data, cross-referencing it with the primary data, confirming similarities and differences between narratives, and analyzing and triangulating the statements, observations, and questions arising in the focus group meeting about competition, cooperation, and cooptation.

Following the completion of the process of developing analytical categories based on empirical evidence (Trad, 2009), the third phase of content analysis was carried out, which included the process of treating, inferring, and interpreting the data as well as obtaining the coding (Bardin, 2016). At this stage, the answers were grouped and

related to the study topic based on the findings (Pope et al., 2000). Table 2 was created to account for the occurrence of initial and final codes, facilitating visualization for evidence analysis.

Table 2. Incidence of codes

Final Categories		Competition	Cooperation	Coopetition as a strategy
Antecedents	Recognition / Valuing people / Awards (13)	Organizational Indicators / Management System (11)	Team performance / result achievement (05)	Organizational culture (02)
			Sharing of good practices/ experiences (09)	Recognition / Valuing people / Awards (09)
Initial Categories	Social events / interactions (04)	Trust (02)	Organization al culture (01)	Social events / interactions (01)
Dynamics	Equality in competition (11)	Healthy competition (08)	Stimulus to compete (05)	Stimulus to cooperate (03)
			Cooperation - How it happens (09)	Formal structure (04)
Results	Team Engagement / People Satisfaction (05)	People development (03)	Customer satisfaction (02)	Customer satisfaction (02)
			Resource sharing (10)	Networking (03)
				Challenge (04)
				Motivation (14)

The coded data were analyzed by the focus group moderator and the researcher, who observed the group (online and with the camera turned off). Individual observations were recorded by the researchers, who moderated and observed the focus group meeting. Individual observations were compared to confer a greater degree of reliability on the reported results.

The study’s four researchers analyzed the data based on the findings and incidences of the categories, comparing them to the those in the literature on coopetition. The next section presents the results and research findings.

**4. Results and Discussion**

This section describes the analyses performed on the empirical data collected. From the analysis of the empirical findings of this research, a framework which contributes to the theoretical field is presented, categorizing data, relating it to antecedents, dynamics and results of intra-organizational coopetition. Other highlights include the practical contribution to organizations in the service sector, where intra-organizational coopetition has been little studied (Dorn et. al., 2016), as well as the benefits and difficulties that the adoption of the coopetitive strategy may bring to managers. In order to evidence the research findings, the participants of the interview were identified along the text by the initial “P” followed by the order number, as seen on table 1.

*4.1 Antecedents of Intra-Organizational Coopetition*

One of the antecedents of intra-organizational coopetition is the organization’s strategy. It was observed that the strategy in an education institution defines the parameters for the organization’s actions, in addition to highlighting problems and opportunities for action (Carvalho, Amorim, & Araújo, 2022). The organization’s studied strategy is manifested in a Management Contract with indicators and a system of awards and recognition for outstanding performance. These are triggers that, whether intentionally or not, cause cooperation and, at the same time, competition amongst sectors.

The information gathered provided a detailed description of the strategic process that promotes intra-organizational coopetition in the education system. The Administrative Unit prepares the alignment of the organization’s strategic objectives, while the Educational Units deploy the tactical and operational objectives that are defined in the Management Contract. The directors of the Educational Units are responsible for achieving the established objectives. In this setting, the following actions emerge and were mentioned in the focus group: (I) the collection of indicators and goals to bring managers closer to Regional Directories promotes cooperation; (II) the creation of indicators such as the Customer Permanence Index (CPI) and the Sales Performance Index (SPI) promotes competition; and (III) the program for recognizing the best performing schools promotes competition.

This study’s evidence of intra-organizational coopetition is similar to that found in the research of Bouncken et

al. (2015), which identified the collaborative creation of value (cooperation) and the individual dispute for this value (competition). Taking this approach, it is worth noting that the school system management model increases motives to collaborate by encouraging principals to create cooperation and competition actions to meet the Management Contract's objectives. As it is evident in P6's talk: "I think that the greatest result would be the gathering of the micro-efforts in order for each one to be the best they can, and, in the end, the result ends up being important for all. When we talk, for instance, about a management contract, if each one achieves 100% of it, we end up achieving what the institution had planned".

The social interactions that occur in the education system are another antecedent of intra-organizational cooperation. Internal organizational events between educational units are prevalent, encouraging horizontal integration, which is favorable for cooperation (Tsai, 2002). Horizontal integration enhances synergy and communication among participants, increasing information exchange. Simultaneously, horizontal integration allows a mapping of the skills available in each educational unit. This motivates managers to compete for the greatest talent and resources in the organization.

There is a dilemma in the antecedents of social interactions. On the one hand, interaction is enabled by trust between those involved. It enables the flow of information and the sharing of resources within companies, as Gernsheimer et al. (2021) have already demonstrated; on the other hand, it facilitates the opportunistic behavior of more competitive managers. Leaders were mentioned multiple times by the focus group participants as mediators of this dilemma, as it can be seen in P4's and P5's talks, respectively: "I think that the cooperation between managers in hard moments is fundamental"; "(...) there is always an imbalance in the team. So, I think that the great management movement is to make everyone feel motivated to seek the result in a proper way. This is expressed day by day in people management." Such leadership action allied with the CEO's articulation, provides clarity and transparency on activities and expected results. Nonetheless, social interactions have cooperative dualism in that they contribute to both cooperation and competition between sectors of the education network.

#### *4.2 Dynamics of Intra-Organizational Cooperation*

Cooperative and competitive interactions generate the dynamics of intra-organizational cooperation relationships. The balance between these relationships is a challenge for management, according to the assumptions of Bengtsson and Kock (2000). The evidence found in this study supports such assumptions. The focus group interviewees' reports emphasize a misalignment of managerial actions, with a stronger emphasis on internal competitiveness: "we have the challenge to stimulate collaboration, too. We have metrics for competition, but we do not have collaboration metrics" (P5). Top management uses traditional motivating tactics, such as a reward system and sector and employee ranking. The information from the focus group supports this conclusion: "we compete for good things, such as organizational atmosphere and customer satisfaction; we are competing to see who has, I don't know, the largest contribution margin. We have solid strategies for competing" (P1). Some interviewees underlined the importance of internal competition in the school system management model: "(...) in our management system, one of the pillars is competition, it is one of our foundations" (P1). According to another interviewee (P2), these are the actions that ensure the organization's longevity in the market: "I believe that our management approach offers us competitiveness and helps us to be competitive."

Cooperative relationships, on the other hand, arise naturally from the bottom up between employees and operational unit managers. The findings in this study suggest that cooperation improves the performance of educational units, particularly in adverse scenarios that require resource optimization to keep the operation running. Some interviewees suggested that competition helps in achieving these goals: "So, I think that when these competitions are healthy, the two grow together, the three of them, or the entire institution" (P4). The majority of the interviewees believed that the organization lacks tools to maintain a balance between competitive and cooperative relationships: "I think that one of the challenges is to allow equality for everyone to compete (...) it is to create equal conditions for competition, for everyone to have the chance to win" (P4).

The rivalry that occurs between groups, divisions, or sectors is a second category that is crucial to cooperative dynamics. Rivalry between companies has been highlighted by scholars such as Gernsheimer et al. (2021), who established its impact on the commitment of those involved as well as the outcomes of cooperative measures (Crick & Crick, 2020; Raza-Ullah et al., 2014). This study's findings suggest that rivalry influences the dynamics of intra-organizational cooperation. According to one of the focus group interviewees, rivalry damages the institutional atmosphere: "We fight a lot for this atmosphere. It's sometimes a competition, sometimes it's healthy, and sometimes not so much" (P6). The importance of top management choices was also highlighted in this category by the interviewees: "The management system is what will delimit and keep this competition

healthy; what we will value so that both collaboration and competition are respected” (P5).

Another category of intra-organizational coopetition dynamics is the formal structure established to achieve the institution’s goals. This is what the interviewees referred to as the management system, and it is connected to the formal aspects highlighted in the study by Dorn et al. (2016). The management structure in the school system studied is formalized by the Management Contract, which is signed by all directors as a commitment to achieve the institution’s objectives and goals. The Management Contract establishes performance indicators for the educational units, which are estimated quarterly. The formal structure clarifies objectives for educational unit managers while leaving the path of execution open for their realization. In this context, competitive and cooperative relationships alternate based on the circumstances and the executive profile of the manager in charge.

When educational units compete and cooperate to achieve their goals and a better position in the indicator ranking system, the dynamics of coopetition result from the formal structure established. One of the focus group interviewees described how the coopetitive dynamics are perceived by those involved: “often, we are discussing between two schools and sharing resources, but in the end, I want my competitor to be chosen and not the one of ‘school X’” (P4). Another interviewee noticed that the formal structure generates an interplay of competitive and cooperative relationships between different levels that work together: “(...) and I recall being the representative of ‘school Y’ and having to compete with the director of that school over who would register for the week, who would arrive first” (P3). The findings suggest that strategic interdependence in intra-organizational coopetition occurs similarly to that found in inter-organizational coopetition (Hidalgo et al., 2020; Tidström, 2009).

#### *4.3 Outcomes of Intra-Organizational Coopetition*

The focus group respondents perceived the benefits and costs of intra-organizational coopetition (Dorn et al., 2016). One of the advantages was mentioned in the knowledge management focus group as a result of the sharing of best practices. “for the schools which are references in some kind of practice or action to do this kind of cooperation, this exchange of practices” (P6); “the point of competition often generates a co-creative process inside the team, which pushes us into innovation” (P7). This finding is evident in the interviewees’ speeches when discussing gain situations such as knowledge expansion, innovation, and performance improvement through the sharing of best practices, in addition to providing team development and engagement through joint learning. It is worth noting that the interviewees value the educational institution’s structure, which allows them to use the practice of internal sharing before seeking knowledge from external sources.

Access to resources is another important category of coopetition outcome. The evidence from this study indicates that it is similar to the inter-organizational level because coopetitive strategies within the institution can generate access to both innovative technologies (Scaravonatto et al., 2021) and gains in scale, bargaining power, improved operational efficiency, and lowered costs and risks (Bengtsson & Kock, 2000; Dal Soto & Monticelli, 2017). Access to resources, according to the focus group interviewees, is also reflected in customer satisfaction: “customer satisfaction is a necessity that we seek with this understanding of cooperating” (P2), thus schools can offer solutions in line with students’ demands and with better market conditions.

Costs, on the other hand, were also observed in intra-organizational coopetition. The interviewees emphasized the lack of formal instruments to encourage cooperative actions. The formal structure’s competitive emphasis causes an effort imbalance: “we recognize competition, but we do not recognize, formally, collaboration” (P5). According to the interviewees, this imbalance has an impact on the managers and employees involved in the process, resulting in demotivation for those who are not awarded or recognized. This effect on work teams is an attribute of intra-organizational coopetition. Interorganizational studies on the balance of cooperation and competition do not emphasize such an effect (Bengtsson & Kock, 2000; Crick & Crick, 2020).

#### *4.4 Intra-organizational Coopetition Framework*

Figure 1 depicts the intra-organizational coopetition framework, which summarizes the findings of the background analysis, dynamics, and outcomes of the interplay between competition and cooperation. The framework presents the main findings and guides the discussion about the field of coopetition studies.

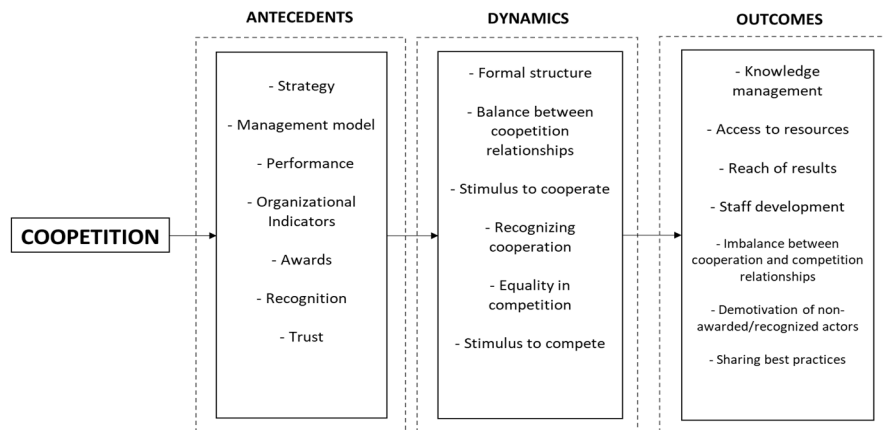


Figure 1: Intra-organizational coopetition framework

The framework groups the empirical field's categories into clusters that represent the antecedents, dynamics, and outcomes of coopetition. Among the antecedents are the institution's strategy and management model, with which indicators, awards, and recognition are associated, as well as social interactions that foster trust among those involved. The formal structure and the balance between cooperation and competition stand out in the categories related to the dynamics of coopetition. Because of top management stimuli and operational management needs, there is inconsistency in behavior between the former and the latter. The coopetition outcomes categories are listed in the final grouping. There is a perception of benefits and their reported costs, such as knowledge management, the sharing of best practices, and access to resources such as technology. Team imbalances and a lack of motivation are also negative outcomes of intra-organizational coopetition.

## 5. Conclusions

In this article, we propose that understanding the antecedents, dynamics, and outcomes of the interplay between cooperation and competition can shed light on intra-organizational coopetition. Based on an extensive literature review, complemented by the perceptions of managers from a large educational institution, we designed an intra-organizational coopetition research framework. Our findings showed that managers simultaneously compete and cooperate to meet corporate guidelines and ensure the commitment assumed in the management contract. Our findings also revealed that the sum of strategy, network performance, and organizational actors' relationships, as consolidated and structured in the organization's management model, provides a favorable environment for the interplay between cooperation and competition strategies between educational units.

The dynamics of coopetition are based on the interactions of cooperative and competitive strategies, which do not always occur in a balanced manner. According to Bengtsson and Kock (2000), there will be only one dominant force in the relationship. Our findings showed an intra-organizational competitive emphasis motivated by recognition and awards for achievements and the key performance indicators of units and individuals. This imbalance leads to team demotivation, especially when individual efforts for cooperation are not recognized (Dorn et al., 2016). On the other hand, cooperation relationships are preceded by a set of elements that reflect the need to achieve goals, becoming more dynamic as units focus on meeting the institution's standards, with a primary emphasis on sharing financial, human, and technological resources (Luo, 2005).

As for the study's limitations, it is worth noting that the research findings are limited to a single case study in the education industry, focused on a specific context. Despite the representativeness of the educational levels and expertise of the focus group participants, given the total number of managers in the institution, the research was limited to a single group, which should be expanded in future studies. Furthermore, an opportunity exists to enlarge the study with employees and professors in addition to allowing managers from lower levels to participate. Another important aspect of the study is that cooperative relationships were studied during a pandemic period; thus, a more in-depth consideration of the strategies adopted by the organization and managers was lacking. In terms of future research, this study did not provide evidence that, in the researched institution, coopetition relationships achieve results due to institutionalized arrangements in the institutional culture. Consequently, there are opportunities for future research to incorporate institutional theory assumptions into the context of intra-organizational coopetition. Similarly, new studies may incorporate organizational culture issues into this research's findings.



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