

Dark Sides of Intra-Organizational Coopetition. Perspective of Coopetition Within Business Groups

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Abstract

Purpose: Coopetition is a relationship that arises both between independent companies and within complex organizations. It is seen as a success factor generating many benefits for the parties involved. However, at the same time, it is a risky relationship that does have its downsides. The purpose of this study is to identify the main dark sides that appear in coopetitive relationships between subsidiaries within business groups.

Design/methodology/approach: This study follows the quantitative approach. A computer-assisted diagnostic questionnaire survey was used and data were collected from 121 parent companies of large business groups listed on the Warsaw Stock Exchange.

Findings: The findings prove that coopetition at the intra-organizational level does not generate many negative effects. Those that appear are similar to the negative effects of inter-organizational coopetition. The most important three dark sides of intra-organizational coopetition are: loss of trust, conflicts, and asymmetry in benefits distribution.

Research limitations/implications: This study offers a more profound insight into intra-organizational coopetition and its dark side. However, it has some limitations which may indicate directions for further research. The limitations refer to the sample size and its origin as well as the adopted perspective of the parent company.

Originality/value: The value of the paper is to draw attention to the dark sides of intra-organizational coopetition. The study provided contribution to the literature on both coopetition and business groups as so far only a few studies have comprehensively dealt with the dark sides of coopetition, especially at the intra-organizational level.

Keywords: intra-organizational coopetition, business groups, drawbacks.

JEL: L10, L20, M16

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Ciemne strony kooperacji wewnątrzorganizacyjnej. Perspektywa kooperacji w grupach kapitałowych

Streszczenie

Cel: kooperacja jest relacją pojawiającą się zarówno między niezależnymi przedsiębiorstwami, jak i wewnątrz złożonych organizacji. Jest ona postrzegana jako czynnik sukcesu, generujący wiele korzyści dla zaangażowanych stron. Jednak równocześnie jest to ryzykowna relacja, której towarzyszą negatywne zjawiska. Celem przedstawionych w artykule badań jest identyfikacja głównych niekorzyści, jakie pojawiają się w relacjach kooperacji między spółkami w grupach kapitałowych.

Metodologia: przedstawione w artykule badanie jest zgodne z podejściem ilościowym. Wykorzystano wspomagany komputerowo kwestionariusz diagnostyczny, a próbę badawczą stanowiło 121 respondentów ze spółek-matek dużych grup kapitałowych notowanych na Giełdzie Papierów Wartościowych w Warszawie.

Wyniki: wyniki zrealizowanych badań dowodzą, że kooperacja na poziomie wewnątrzorganizacyjnym nie generuje wielu negatywnych efektów, a te które pojawiają się są zbliżone do występujących w kooperacji międzyorganizacyjnej. Trzy najważniejsze ciemne strony kooperacji wewnątrzorganizacyjnej to: utrata zaufania, konflikty i asymetria w dystrybucji korzyści.

Ograniczenia/implikacje badawcze: przedstawione wyniki badań pozwalają lepiej zrozumieć kooperację wewnątrzorganizacyjną i jej negatywne zjawiska. Mają jednak pewne ograniczenia, które mogą wskazywać kierunki dalszych badań. Ograniczenia dotyczą wielkości próby i jej pochodzenia oraz przyjętej perspektywy firmy macierzystej.

Oryginalność/wartość: wartością artykułu jest zwrócenie uwagi na ciemne strony kooperacji wewnątrzorganizacyjnej. Badanie wnosi wkład zarówno do literatury dotyczącej kooperacji, jak i grup kapitałowych, gdyż dotychczas tylko nieliczne opracowania kompleksowo zajmowały się tym zagadnieniem kooperacji, zwłaszcza na poziomie wewnątrzorganizacyjnym.

Słowa kluczowe: kooperacja wewnątrzorganizacyjna, grupy kapitałowe, niekorzyści.

1. Introduction

Coopetition is a relationship defined as an interplay between competition and cooperation (Gnyawali & Ryan-Charleton, 2018). It is a paradoxical relationship in which competition and cooperation occur at the same time and between the same actors (Luo, 2005; Czakon et al., 2020). Brandenburger and Nalebuff (1996) present coopetition as a revolutionary mindset that enables the creation of a win-win situation. That is because cooperating with competitors allows a company to achieve innovation-related and strategy-related positive outcomes (Kraus et al., 2019) which improves its competitive position and performance (Estrada et al., 2016; Gnyawali & Park, 2011). However, beside the benefits that coopetition brings to its participants, one must also be aware of its dangers. In strategic terms, coopetition is sometimes referred to as a double-edged sword (Bouncken & Fredrich, 2012). On the one hand, it has a positive impact on the company's growth, competitive position and innovativeness, as well as its capacity for dealing with a turbulent environment. On the other hand, it causes negative impacts such as opportunism, misunderstandings and asymmetry of the relationship. These negative factors are capable of diminishing the positive

impact on innovation or performance, during the company's cooperation with a competitor (Boucken et al., 2015).

Coopetition is usually examined at the inter-organizational level, i.e. as occurring between legally independent companies (Gnyawali & Park, 2009) and sometimes among networks of companies (Peng & Bourne, 2009). At the intra-organizational level, however, the same relationship can also be found between functions or departments (Benig et al., 2018), business and organizational units (Sera et al., 2016), subsidiaries (Liu et al., 2019) or project teams (An & Kreutzer, 2020).

So far, the bulk of the literature has been devoted to inter-organizational competition (Chen & Tsuo, 2020; Bendig et al., 2018). Unfortunately, researchers have not paid enough attention to intra-organizational competition (Gernsheimer et al., 2021; Becker-Ritterspach & Dörrenbächer, 2011), even though it is an important and promising area for research. Generally, previous studies are theoretical, without quantitative verification, focusing mostly on antecedents, processes and benefits of coopetition (Luo, 2005; Bengtsson & Raza-Ullah, 2016). Few studies delve into the tensions and methods of managing intra-organizational competition (Amata et al., 2021; Chiambaretto et al., 2019). Such studies are qualitative analyses not verifiable on large samples (Amata et al., 2021, Chiambaretto et al., 2019). There is a limited number of studies offering a comprehensive analysis of various potential negative sides of internal competition (Chambers, 2015). This article fills the gap on the dark sides of intra-organizational competition by answering the question: *What are the main dark sides of intra-organizational competition in managers' perceptions?*

This study focuses on simultaneous cooperation and competition within business groups as a type of intra-organizational competition. Business groups operate through subsidiaries, often in different geographical markets and industries (Almeida et al., 2011; Iacobucci & Rosa, 2005). It is not difficult to pinpoint competitive relationships within the business group. Subsidiaries often compete for limited central resources, corporate support and attention, delegation of power, market expansion and position within the group structure (Lagerström et al., 2021; Luo, 2005; Tippmann et al., 2018; Chambers, 2015), while cooperating in technological, operational, organizational and financial areas at the same time (Luo, 2005). Tippmann et al. (2018) claim that competition is the central topic in relationships within multinational corporations. It can, on the one hand, generate positive outcomes by creating value for the group as a whole and for each individual subsidiary. On the other hand, it can also be a driver of destruction of value.

Dark sides of competition are perceived as tensions, conflicts or opportunism, which are all related to behavioral aspects of the competition process. Thus, in this study we focus on the perceptions of managers of parent companies in business groups (Boucken et al., 2015). We ask them about the negative sides of internal competition. It allows us to identify the

dark sides of intra-organizational cooptation. This paper contributes to strategic management by offering reflection on the drawbacks of cooptation at the intra-organizational level and in turn providing evidence with regards to the negative sides of this relationship.

The remainder of the article is organized as follows: based on literature review, section 2 provides conceptual framework discussing the general dark sides of cooptation and the ones that occur at the intra-organizational level. Section 3 presents the research sample and research method. Sections 4 and 5 present and discuss the research results, while section 6 delivers conclusions, limitations and directions for further research.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Dark Sides of Cooptation

This paper uses the term “dark sides of cooptation” to capture the broadest scope of negative factors related to cooptative relationships, such as risks (Boucken et al., 2015), challenges (Gernsheimer et al., 2021), disadvantages (Cygler & Sroka, 2017), and drawbacks (Cygler et al., 2018). They appear during the formation of such relationships and throughout their existence; all the more so that cooptation is recognized as a challenging, dynamic, and complex process (Bengtsson & Raza-Ullah, 2016). Previous systematic literature reviews regarding cooptation provided a comprehensive outlook on prior efforts to identify the dark sides of this relationships (Table 1). Below we briefly discuss the most frequently mentioned negative sides of cooptative relationships.

Table 1
Dark Sides of Cooptation Identified in the Systematic Literature Reviews

	Gernsheimer et al. (2021)	Dorn et al. (2016)	Boucken et al. (2015)	Bengtsson & Raza-Ullah (2016)	Czakon & Mucha-Kuś (2014)
Dark sides of cooptation	Tensions Distrust Opportunism	Tensions Conflicts Knowledge leakage	Tensions Conflicts Loss of flexibility and freedom Deterioration of competitive advantage Deterioration of performance Opportunism	Tensions Conflicts Opportunism Knowledge leakage	Tensions Conflicts Power asymmetries Unfair value distribution among actors Opportunism Instabilities

Source: This table was compiled by the author of this study.

Tensions and conflicts. A coopetitive relationship inevitably leads to tensions. This points out that to manage coopetition is to manage tensions (Czakon et al., 2020). The term “tensions” is used rather flexibly (Bengtsson & Raza-Ullah, 2016), although it is generally conceptualized as conflicts (Tidström, 2014). The amplified risk of conflicts is a consequence of a contradictory logic and paradoxical nature of the coopetitive relationship (Dorn et al., 2016; Raza-Ullah et al., 2014). Tensions are traditionally perceived as harmful to coopetition and its outcomes. However, recent research interprets them as stimulating in the process of coopetition (Gernsheimer et al., 2021). Nonetheless, tensions require additional commitment to the development of methods dealing with, preventing and managing conflicts.

Opportunism. Opportunism is a behavioral attribute embodied in economic actors and is predominantly rooted in Transaction Cost Economics (Yu, 2019). Sharing resources and knowledge can encourage competing partners to develop an opportunistic way of thinking (Bouncken et al., 2015) and to take advantage of the situation. The stronger partner could force the other parties to act in a way that is only in its best interests. Alternatively, the stronger partner could reap the benefits of jointly developed knowledge at the expense of other parties (Boucken & Kraus, 2013). The inclination towards opportunistic behaviors is often a consequence of fear of the competitor and the lack of trust (Nieto & Santamaria, 2007).

Distrust. Distrust, like tensions, is viewed as both a negative and positive element of a coopetitive relationship. A deficit of trust may be one of the major barriers to the flow of knowledge and cooperation among competitors (Lascaux, 2020; Czernek & Czakon, 2016). However, Raza-Ullah and Kostis (2020) argue that distrust positively influences the association between coopetition intensity and relationship performance.

Knowledge leakage. One of the derivatives of tensions and opportunism behaviors is knowledge leakage (Bengtsson & Raza-Ullah, 2016; Dorn et al., 2016). A coopetitive relationship can result in uncontrolled leaks of strategic knowledge due to the opportunistic behaviors of partners (Gnyawali & Park, 2009). For this reason, researchers identify knowledge management as one of the key elements of coopetitive relationships (Bengtsson & Raza-Ullah, 2016).

Unfair value distribution among actors. One of the key disadvantages of competition is the disproportion between the benefits and contributions of a given coopetitor (Dagnino & Padula, 2002; Czakon & Mucha-Kuś, 2014). The threat relating to coopetitive asymmetry may be the consequence of mistakes made in establishing relationship. It can also arise from inaccurate reading of the partner's strength, or underestimation of the contributions to be made. A considerably strong partner may dominate the relationship, which would then turn into a zero-sum game. Additionally, larger partners,

with greater bargaining strength and capacity for control, can force smaller entities to incur greater risks (Sulej et al., 2001).

Loss of flexibility. Mutual dependence of the partners and the interactions taking place between them may also lead to the loss of flexibility (Baumard, 2009). Arrangements regulating cooperative relationships can significantly restrict the freedom of both parties. Additionally, flexibility is reduced by the increased dependence on the dominant partner, which may pose a significant threat to small and medium enterprises entering the cooperation with larger actors (Gnyawali & Park, 2009).

Deterioration of overall performance. Tensions and conflicts may lead to increased transaction costs for the entire project – this may lead to less effective cooperation between the competitors. Diminished effectiveness of operation, along with growing operation costs and partners' opportunism, are the most frequently mentioned risks of entering the cooperative relationships among companies from the high-tech sector (Cygler & Sroka, 2017). Cooperation entails not only significant costs in establishing relationship but also the cost of monitoring it throughout its existence. The company's decrease of effectiveness may be especially damaging when cooperating with multiple competitors, since each party will want to maximize its own profits (Ritala et al., 2008).

Deterioration of competitive advantage. Potential dangers related to cooperation also include an abatement of competitive advantage. That particular risk is the consequence of other risks existing in cooperation. The fear of losing competitive advantage may also pose a barrier to entering the cooperation (Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2014). In analyzing the dangers of mutual dependence between competitors, Afuah (2000) concludes that the degradation of competitive advantage in network partners had a negative impact on the company's competitive advantage and performance. This means that engagement in cooperative network needs adoption of an analytical perspective of resources and competitive advantages throughout the network and not only of the resources and advantages of one's own company.

2.2. Dark Sides of Intra-Organizational Cooperation

Similarly to inter-organizational cooperation, in intra-organizational cooperation balance is sought in the interplay between cooperation and competition (Gnyawali & Ryan-Charleton, 2018). According to Schleimer and Riege (2009), healthy cooperation has a positive impact on the operations of various units within a complex organization. However, an excess of competition may lead to deterioration of the total performance due to the cooperative drawbacks. Birkinshaw (2001) writes about the optimum competition level, which means that too little competition will fail to generate added value, while too much of it may result in the destruction of value. Table 2 presents the most frequently mentioned dark sides of cooperation, found in the literature that address intra-organizational cooperation.

Table 2
Dark Sides of Coopetition Regarding Intra-Organizational Coopetition

References	Level of analysis	Covering the issue of coopetition dark sides	Dark side type
Seran et al. (2016)	Business units	Yes	Tensions
Jacobs (2015)	Departments within organization	Yes	Tensions
Seran & Bez (2021)	Business units	Yes	Tensions
Tsai (2002)	Business units within multiunit organization	No	-
Chiambaretto et al. (2019)	Business units	Yes	Tensions Problems with knowledge sharing Conflicts Costs Loss of position and competitive advantage
Luo et al. (2006)	Departments within organization	No	-
Liu et al. (2019)	Subsidiaries	Yes	Pressures Tensions
Tippman et al. (2018)	Subsidiaries	No	-
Song et al. (2016)	Subunits	Yes	Conflicts Costs
Luo (2005)	Subunits	No	-
Chambers (2015)	Subsidiaries	Yes	Tensions Lack of trust Hostility Asymmetrical relationship
Amata et al. (2021)	Divisions	Yes	Tensions Instability Undesired knowledge transfer Asymmetrical learning Opportunistic behavior
Strese et al. (2016)	Departments	Yes	Tensions Conflicts Hostility Unwillingness to share knowledge

Source: This table was compiled by the author of this study.

Tensions and conflicts. Many studies regarding the negative sides of intra-organizational cooptation focus on the analysis of various types of tensions and conflicts emerging mainly because of rivalry. If they are excessive or out of control, they may jeopardize the positive effects and lead to the destruction of value due to the unit managers' focus on antagonisms rather than value creation (Jacobs, 2015). In order to reduce the tensions in cooptation among the units, divisions, or subsidiaries, corporations introduce integration-friendly management models, as well as formal and informal mechanisms of coordination (Seran et al., 2016). Another possible solution is to train the managers to have cooptation skills, that is, teach them how to achieve a full understanding of the cooptation paradox (Jacobs, 2015).

Unwillingness to share knowledge and other resources. Internal cooptative tensions arise from divergent goals and contradictions among the units. In intra-organizational cooptation units compete for internal resources or external markets; in principle, their goals are competition-driven (Tsai, 2002; Luo, 2005). The most important tensions arising in cooptation are those linked to knowledge sharing and protection. Units may exhibit reluctance to share knowledge and other resources, sparking enmity among the other units (Seran et al., 2016). Unwillingness to share knowledge may also result from regarding it as a strategic resource of the unit's competitive advantage (Chiambaretto et al., 2019). Potential conflicts in cooptation may stem from the fear that the knowledge shared in a joint project may be used in different competing projects. Sharing knowledge with competing units may result in the loss of strategic resources, especially if other units have high absorption capacity. That is a particularly high risk for the units operating in the same industry and geographical market (Liu et al., 2019).

Degradation of the position. In cooptation among divisions, subunits, or subsidiaries, one of the downsides is the degradation of the entity's position through the degradation of its performance or loss of key skills and competitive advantages (Chiambaretto et al., 2019). Cooperation with competing units that exhibit opportunistic behaviors, or are stronger, may result in a resource drain. This is especially true if one of the units sees its knowledge as an idiosyncratic resource, useful in achieving better results than the competing units (Chiambaretto et al., 2019). As a result, it will not only be disinclined to share that knowledge, but it may exhibit strongly competitive behaviors in order to appropriate knowledge and other resources for the purpose of building its position within the group structure. Becker-Ritterspach and Dörrenbächer (2009) note that competition with other units within the same organization entails not only opportunities to improve one's position but also a threat of its degradation within the internal corporate network.

Asymmetry of the relationship. An asymmetric configuration of the internal cooptative relationship is also a risk (Chambers, 2015; Amata et al., 2021). For corporations made up of divisions, subunits, and subsidiaries,

the partners' relationships are characterized by an asymmetry of strength, understood as the ability to impose the actor's individual will over the contrary desires of the others (Czakon, 2009). Due to its position and direct or indirect shareholding, the parent company is in a position to force its will upon its subsidiaries. Similar asymmetries can, however, form in horizontal relationships between units differing in their respective strength within the group.

Cost and lower performance. Unbalanced competition with too intense intra-organizational competition may lead to the destruction of value. This happens due to the multiplication of certain activities and the growing costs of coordination (Birkinshaw & Lingblad, 2005). Instead of adding value, fierce rivalry for the customers and market shares may result in the degradation of collective performance. That is especially true for the units operating in the same geographical market, with competition between them being driven by the will to survive (Liu et al., 2019).

The above-listed dark sides of intra-organizational coopetition do not exhaust the issue. Coopetition is a complicated relationship with numerous positive and negative sides. It turns out that the expected results do not always materialize. That is why the right balance within the constituent relationship, i.e., between competition and cooperation, is of great importance (Gnyawali & Ryan-Charleton, 2018). Both the leadership styles and the formal organizational structures can be used as instruments helping to keep the balance (Strese et al., 2016).

3. Sample and Method

The subject of this study is intra-organizational coopetition among subsidiaries within a business group. A business group is understood as a collection of firms having a common owner (Almeida et al., 2011), or a collection of subsidiaries owned by a parent company (Iacobucci & Rosa, 2005).

The sampling procedure is as follows. During the preparatory stage in September and October 2018, all parent companies of the business groups listed on the Main Market of the WSE (Warsaw Stock Exchange) were identified. Those are 277 entities (after the exclusion of financial ones). Out of those, 121 parent companies were selected to serve as the sample for further study. The sample exhibits moderate diversification. The entities mainly originate from three sectors, according to NACE Rev. 2 main sections: C. Manufacturing (38.8%), G. Wholesale and Retail Trade; Repair of Motor Vehicles and Motorcycles (14.9%) and F. Construction (12.4%). They are predominantly large entities employing more than 250 people (61.2%). The controlling shareholder is usually a domestic one (81.0%), with a foreign major shareholder identified in 17.4%. Most of the entities

operate in international markets (66.9%), with only 25.6% solely in the domestic market.

This study follows the quantitative approach with the use of a computer-assisted diagnostic questionnaire survey. The perceptions of the managers of parent companies are the focal perspective. All data have been gathered via a questionnaire with top managers of the parent companies from November to December 2019. One top manager was interviewed in each of the parent companies. The surveys relied on closed questions encompassing a broad scope of intra-organizational cooperation, including its features, determinants and outcomes. This paper is dedicated to the presentation of just one of those aspects, that is, the dark sides of cooperation within business groups.

In order to identify the dark sides of intra-organizational cooperation, eleven assertions were formulated in the questionnaire. The respondents were asked to decide whether any of the negative sides of the blend of cooperation and competition existed among the subsidiaries of their business group. The binary scale was used in appraising dark sides of intra-organizational cooperation (1 for “yes” and 0 for “no”). Additionally, variables such as the type of a dominant shareholder, the geographic area of activity, the size of a business group, and the type of the business group’s activity are assessed as follow. The dominant shareholder is characterized by its origin which allows to distinguish business groups with domestic, foreign, and mixed shareholders. According to the geographic area of activity division, there are domestic and foreign business groups. The size of the business group is measured by the number of employees that: employing less than 50 people (small), employing between 50 and 250 people (medium) and employing over 250 people (large). Finally, the types of the business group’s activities are: production, trade, services and mixed activities. All additional data are acquired from the Amadeus database and financial statements published by the business groups.

4. Results

The dark sides of cooperation are indisputably more highlighted in inter-organizational cooperation involving actual competitors. However, they appear in intra-organizational cooperation, especially among subsidiaries in complex entities.

The study identifies 11 potential negative sides of simultaneous cooperation and competition among subsidiaries within a business group. These are: degradation of subsidiaries’ position within the business group; high costs of internal competition; mutual distrust among the subsidiaries; high costs of relationship coordination; benefit distribution disproportionate to the contributions; appropriation of the generated value by the parent company; loss of flexibility; loss of effectiveness; intensification

of internal conflicts; loss of competitive advantage; difficulties with solution and knowledge transfers among the subsidiaries. The respondents were supposed to decide whether or not in their perception the simultaneous cooperation and competition among the subsidiaries in the business group triggered the respective dark side (1 for “yes” and 0 for “no”). Table 3 shows the percentages of respondent identifications of each respective dark side.

Table 3

Dark Sides of Intra-Organizational Coopetition Indicated by the Surveyed Managers

Dark side of intra-organizational coopetition	Yes	No
Degradation of subsidiaries' position within the business group	16.5%	83.5%
High costs of internal competition	7.4%	92.6%
Mutual distrust among the subsidiaries	52.1%	47.9%
High costs of relationship coordination	19.0%	81.0%
Benefit distribution disproportionate to the contributions	28.9%	71.1%
Appropriation of generated value by the parent company	17.4%	82.6%
Loss of flexibility	16.5%	83.5%
Loss of effectiveness	15.7%	84.3%
Intensification of internal conflicts	35.5%	64.5%
Loss of competitive advantage	2.5%	97.5%
Difficulties with solution and knowledge transfers among subsidiaries	13.2%	86.8%

Source: As researched by the author of this study; original work (N = 121).

The majority of negative sides of simultaneous cooperation and competition within business groups are rarely indicated by surveyed managers. Only one negative effect of internal coopetition is chosen by more than a half of the respondents. The remaining ones are reported far less frequently. The most important three types of dark sides are: loss of trust (52.1%), conflicts (35.5%) and asymmetry in benefits distribution (28.9%). The other dark sides were chosen by far smaller shares of respondents.

Additional analyses permitted the indications of the dark sides of intra-organizational coopetition to be distinguished on the basis of the main shareholders origin, the business group's geographic area, its size as measured by employment, and the type of business group activity (Table 4). In most cases, these four variables are not distinguishing factors in the indications of the dark sides of intra-organizational coopetition. Statistically,

Table 4
 Dark Sides of Intra-Organizational Competition Differentiated by Geographic Area of Activity, Major Shareholder, Size of Business Group and Type of Activity

Dark sides of intra-organizational competition	Type of dominant shareholder			Geographic area of activity		Size of business group by employment			Type of activity				
	domestic	foreign	mixed	domestic	foreign	50 or fewer	52-250	more than 250	production	trade	services	mixed	
Degradation of subsidiaries' position within the business group	no	85.6%	81.0%	33.3%	77.4%	86.4%	70.0%	89.5%	83.8%	85.2%	88.2%	82.1%	72.7%
	yes	14.4%	19.0%	66.7%	22.6%	13.6%	30.0%	10.5%	16.2%	14.8%	11.8%	17.9%	27.3%
	total	100.0% (N=7)	100.0% (N=21)	100.0% (N=3)	100.0% (N=31)	100.0% (N=81)	100.0% (N=10)	100.0% (N=19)	100.0% (N=74)	100.0% (N=54)	100.0% (N=17)	100.0% (N=39)	100.0% (N=11)
High costs of internal competition	no	91.8%	95.2%	100.0%	93.5%	93.8%	90.0%	89.5%	93.2%	90.7%	88.2%	94.9%	100.0%
	yes	8.2%	4.8%		6.5%	6.2%	10.0%	10.5%	6.8%	9.3%	11.8%	5.1%	
	total	100.0% (N=97)	100.0% (N=21)	100.0% (N=3)	100.0% (N=31)	100.0% (N=81)	100.0% (N=10)	100.0% (N=19)	100.0% (N=74)	100.0% (N=54)	100.0% (N=17)	100.0% (N=39)	100.0% (N=11)
Mutual distrust among the subsidiaries	no	47.4%	47.6%	66.7%	54.8%	43.2%	40.0%	47.4%	51.4%	40.7%	58.8%	53.8%	45.5%
	yes	52.6%	52.4%	33.3%	45.2%	56.8%	60.0%	52.6%	48.6%	59.3%	41.2%	46.2%	54.5%
	total	100.0% (N=97)	100.0% (N=21)	100.0% (N=3)	100.0% (N=31)	100.0% (N=81)	100.0% (N=10)	100.0% (N=19)	100.0% (N=74)	100.0% (N=54)	100.0% (N=17)	100.0% (N=39)	100.0% (N=11)
High costs of relationship coordination	no	79.4%	90.5%	66.7%	87.1%	77.8%	90.0%	94.7%	78.4%	81.5%	64.7%	84.6%	90.9%
	yes	20.6%	9.5%	33.3%	12.9%	22.2%	10.0%	5.3%	21.6%	18.5%	35.3%	15.4%	9.1%
	total	100.0% (N=97)	100.0% (N=21)	100.0% (N=3)	100.0% (N=31)	100.0% (N=81)	100.0% (N=10)	100.0% (N=19)	100.0% (N=74)	100.0% (N=54)	100.0% (N=17)	100.0% (N=39)	100.0% (N=11)
Benefit distribution disproportionate to the contributions	no	70.1%	81.0%	33.3%	67.7%	74.1%	50.0%	73.7%	74.3%	70.4%	76.5%	69.2%	72.7%
	yes	29.9%	19.0%	66.7%	32.3%	25.9%	50.0%	26.3%	25.7%	29.6%	23.5%	30.8%	27.3%
	total	100.0% (N=97)	100.0% (N=21)	100.0% (N=3)	100.0% (N=31)	100.0% (N=81)	100.0% (N=10)	100.0% (N=19)	100.0% (N=74)	100.0% (N=54)	100.0% (N=17)	100.0% (N=39)	100.0% (N=11)

Table 4 – continued

Dark sides of intra-organizational cooperation	Type of dominant shareholder			Geographic area of activity			Size of business group by employment			Type of activity			
	domestic	foreign	mixed	domestic	foreign	50 or fewer	52-250	more than 250	production	trade	services	mixed	
Appropriation of generated value by the parent company	no	82.5%	85.7%	66.7%	77.4%	86.4%	90.0%	68.4%	86.5%	83.3%	88.2%	79.5%	81.8%
	yes	17.5%	14.3%	33.3%	22.6%	13.6%	10.0%	31.6%	13.5%	16.7%	11.8%	20.5%	18.2%
	total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Loss of flexibility	no	88.7%	66.7%	33.3%	87.1%	84.0%	90.0%	89.5%	81.1%	81.5%	88.2%	82.1%	90.9%
	yes	11.3%	33.3%	66.7%	12.9%	16.0%	10.0%	10.5%	18.9%	18.5%	11.8%	17.9%	9.1%
	total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Loss of effectiveness	no	83.5%	85.7%	100.0%	74.2%	86.4%	90.0%	89.5%	82.4%	81.5%	94.1%	84.6%	81.8%
	yes	16.5%	14.3%		25.8%	13.6%	10.0%	10.5%	17.6%	18.5%	5.9%	15.4%	18.2%
	total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Intensification of internal conflicts	no	67.0%	47.6%	100.0%	83.9%	55.6%	70.0%	68.4%	59.5%	53.7%	58.8%	74.4%	90.9%
	yes	33.0%	52.4%		16.1%	44.4%	30.0%	31.6%	40.5%	46.3%	41.2%	25.6%	9.1%
	total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Loss of competitive advantage	no	96.9%	100.0%	100.0%	93.5%	98.8%	100.0%	100.0%	97.3%	98.1%	100.0%	100.0%	81.8%
	yes	3.1%			6.5%	1.2%			2.7%	1.9%			18.2%
	total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Difficulties with solution and knowledge transfers among subsidiaries	no	86.6%	85.7%	100.0%	90.3%	84.0%	90.0%	100.0%	82.4%	87.0%	88.2%	89.7%	72.7%
	yes	13.4%	14.3%		9.7%	16.0%	10.0%		17.6%	13.0%	11.8%	10.3%	27.3%
	total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: This table was compiled by the author of this study.

significant differences among the groups are reported in only three cases. First, loss of flexibility due to internal cooptation that was slightly more common in business groups with foreign or mixed shareholder (Kruskal-Wallis H test = 11.561, $df = 2$, $p = 0.003$). The second and third are linked to the intensification of internal conflicts as a result of intra-organizational cooptation in business groups, somewhat more frequently reported in business groups with international reach (Kruskal-Wallis H test = 7.711, $df = 1$, $p = 0.006$), as well as production and trade groups (Kruskal-Wallis H test = 7.924, $df=2$, $p=0.048$).

5. Discussion

Ranking first among the negative outcomes of intra-organizational cooptation is the emergence of distrust among the subsidiaries. More than half (52.07%) of the respondents observed that cooptation could lead to reciprocal distrust within the business group. The issue of trust in a cooptative relationship is an area of intense explorations by researchers (Lewicka & Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2020; Czernek & Czakon, 2016). Cooptation is a difficult relationship from the perspective of trust building among the participants. While cooperation is grounded in trust and reciprocation (mutuality), competition proceeds from the assumption that individual units act in order to maximize their own interests (Thomason et al., 2013). The diverging interests promote egoistic behavior, opportunism and lack of trust. In business groups, the natural relationship among the subsidiaries is cooperation. The paradigm of cooperation, as opposed to competition, presupposes that joining of resources and skills enables a win for all parties. Unfortunately, the emergence of competition among subsidiaries within a business group, may lead to a distortion of trust and translate into negative impacts on the cooperation. The latter was confirmed by this study as a negative impact of internal cooptation.

Ranking second among the negative outcomes was intensification of internal conflicts. Cooptation as a relationship combining contradictory dynamics with a large degree of codependence in the partners is characterized by a high intensity of potential conflict, simultaneously with substantial benefits (Gnyawali & Park, 2011). In this study, 35.54% respondents reported internal cooptation as leading to the intensification of conflict among the subsidiaries within the business group. Conflict in a business group is a complex phenomenon occurring on many levels: between the subsidiaries and third parties, among the subsidiaries, between the subsidiaries and the headquarters, as well as within each entity (Blazejewski & Becker-Ritterspach, 2011). The sources of intra-organizational conflict are many. For this reason, identifying and managing them is a key element of cooptation as a relationship (Rajala & Tidström, 2021). For transnational

corporations, the transfer of tasks and resources between competitors sparks tensions and may lead to the escalation of conflict (Becker-Ritterspach & Dörrenbächer, 2009). This is confirmed in this study as the intensification of conflicts is more frequently found in entities with international than purely domestic organizations. It must be noted that competition and the associated intra-group conflicts may be driven by the actions of subsidiaries. Their increasing self-sufficiency with decreasing dependence on the parent company may contribute to the implementation of more confrontational organizational policies (Schotter & Beamish, 2011). That may be especially visible in business groups from the production sectors, with subsidiaries competing in many areas of their activities, as reflected in this study. However, regardless of which entity initiates the internal competition, the latter must be characterized as a relationship marked by significant conflict potential, either a dysfunctional one, or the one that leads to positive outcomes (Rajala & Tidström, 2021).

The third of the negative sides identified by the business groups surveyed refers to the distribution of the generated benefits being disproportionate to the subsidiaries' contributions. This answer was chosen by 28.93% of the respondents. The danger highlighted by them is linked to a different dark side of inter-organizational coopetition mentioned in the literature, which is the asymmetry of the relationship, manifested, e.g., in the asymmetrical split of benefits but also asymmetrical access to resources (Chambers, 2015; Amata et al., 2021). When the relationship is symmetrical, the coopetition is a win-win strategy, meaning benefits for all participants. Asymmetry in the relationship, however, may lead to a win-lose situation, in which the stronger party garners the generated value (Le Roy & Czakon, 2016). In inter-organizational coopetition aggressive opportunistic behaviors are identified as the sources of asymmetrical allocation of benefits (Cygler & Sroka, 2017). Deceitful activities, leading to companies individually reaping the jointly achieved benefits, can appear in business groups. Usually, the unequal splits arise from greater strength and better position of one of the subsidiaries. Disproportionate benefit sharing in a business group may favor the parent company as the entity enjoying the greatest strength and best opportunities to leverage it. However, this answer was given by only 17.4% of all respondents of this study.

The remaining negative sides of coopetition are identified with smaller fractions. These can be put in three categories. The first group of dark sides of internal coopetition includes dangers linked to increased costs with reduced effectiveness. This particular group includes high relationship coordination costs (19.01%), high costs of internal competition (7.44%), and reduced effectiveness (15.70%). The second group of dark sides refers to the group's external positioning and activities, including the loss of competitive advantage (2.48%) and loss of flexibility of operation (16.53%). The last group of negative sides of internal coopetition relates to the internal

functioning of a business group, with difficulties transferring the solutions and knowledge among the subsidiaries (13.22%) and degradation of some subsidiaries' positions (16.53%).

Decrease in effectiveness with increased additional costs, loss of flexibility and competitive advantage are more frequently observed in inter-organizational cooperation (Cygler & Sroka, 2017). Building competitive advantage and performance of the whole organization is the key issue for business groups (Chen & Tsou, 2020; Tippmann et al., 2018; Song et al., 2016), for which reason a cost increase or loss of competitive advantage or flexibility as dark sides of cooperation will appear only rarely. Rather, they can be observed at a single subsidiary level (Liu et al., 2019), where they tend to escape the perception of the top managers of the parent company, and are not felt at a group level. By contrast, the dark sides of intra-organizational cooperation relating to the internal functioning of the business group do not occur with such frequency due to the specificity of business groups, with the implementation of all sorts of coordination mechanisms (Carney et al., 2011) under single common administrative and financial control (Chang & Hong, 2002).

In summary, the respondents indicate a small number of negative sides of cooperation. Apart from one factor – distrust among the subsidiaries – others were listed by fewer than a half. Additionally, the most important three dangers of internal cooperation are the typical risks highlighted by researchers, irrespective of the type of cooperation (inter- or intra-organizational).

6. Conclusions

The literature primarily gives exposure to the benefits of entering the cooperative relationships. Those refer to filling the resource gap, splitting the risks, improving the competitive position, increasing the innovativeness, expanding the market share, reducing the costs, and increasing the market strength, etc. (Cygler et al., 2018). However, cooperating with competitors also entails a number of dark sides. The principal ones include restrictions related to the company's flexibility and independence, opportunism, conflicts of interest, and difficulties coordinating cooperation activities. All these negatives may cause a decrease in effectiveness and competitive advantage of the organizations (Baumard, 2009; Bonel & Rocco, 2007). At the same time, they make cooperation an action strategy that is difficult to implement properly.

In intra-organizational cooperation the dark sides may appear, albeit not to the same degree as in inter-organizational cooperation. This is the consequence of the specificity of the relationship among the various units belonging to one larger business organization. The findings of this study have

brought us closer to understanding the dark sides of intra-organizational competition. In the respondents' opinion, those appear only rarely. The majority of parent company top managers do not perceive any dark sides of coopetition. This may be linked to the specificity of business groups, wherein the parent company has a dominant influence on the shape of the relationships among the subsidiaries. It is in a position, therefore, to allow insignificant intensities of competition among them but intervene whenever dark sides appear, as so to prevent the subsidiaries from causing much damage to the effectiveness of the group as a whole.

This study has limitations, which may indicate directions for further research. The first limitation is the adoption of the parent perspective of the business group. It would be valuable to investigate other perspectives, i.e., the subsidiaries. Their managers could perceive the dark sides of intra-organizational coopetition in a different light. When combined, the two perspectives could provide the full picture of the analyzed problem. The next limitation is the relatively small size of the sample and its origin in just one country. Studies into business groups tend to be burdened with the risk relating to small samples. However, the inclusion of a cross-country perspective could on the one hand offset this risk, and on the other hand, round out the studies from an international perspective.

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