

Coopetition-Driven Innovation in Malaysian Woodworking Environment: Strategic Partnerships for Industry Advancement

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Abstract

Coopetition is defined as made up of competitiveness and cooperation. Both of the opposing parties want to enhance the sharing of the partnership's profits. The aim of this research was to investigate coopetition strategies in Malaysia's woodworking sector. The research tackles a number of problems, including low productivity in the woodworking sector, personnel shortages, transportation costs, and raw material availability. The researcher used a purposive sample of nine owners or managers in the woodworking business in Johor and Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia, to conduct in-depth qualitative interviews in order to address these issues. The strategies were the main topic of the interview questions. Thematic analysis was conducted using Microsoft Word. Important changes were made to the procedures for data preparation, the collection time, and data collecting and analysis techniques. The results, which came from a variety of sources, included a thorough examination of the claims as well as participant profiles and attributes. While one participant had no recommendations for coopetition strategies, the other eight participants all supported themes that fit the coopetition theory in the context of the woodworking industries in Negeri Sembilan and Johor. This demonstrates that one person opposed coopetition because it seemed that competitors would never work together and would always be rivals. The study concludes by examining the dynamics of coopetition in the woodworking sector in Gemas, Negeri Sembilan, and Segamat, Johor, Malaysia. Strategies include building relationships, market demand and communication, and trust and integrity. This study successfully accomplishes its objectives by offering solid proof of coopetition dynamics in the woodworking industry environment, especially to the insights obtained from interviews with nine participants.

Keywords: Coopetition, Strategies, Woodworking Industry Environment, Malaysia

Introduction

Globally, in Malaysia, the rising demand for wood-based products in public and residential buildings, as well as in landscape design, has sparked a steady growth in this sector. This surge

in demand presents an ideal opportunity to explore innovative business strategies that could further enhance sustainability and competitiveness in the industry. The woodworking industry environment is a broad and innovative field that includes many different types of crafts and professions. Carpenters, artisans, furniture builders, and woodworkers use wood to produce beautiful and useful items. The age-old craft of woodworking blends talent, imagination, and a respect for the natural beauty of timber (P-themes, 2023).

Coopetition can be characterized as a combination of cooperation and competition. The desire to increase their share of the alliance's revenue is shared by both the antagonistic parties (Zhang et al., 2020; Seepana et al., 2021). The main objective is to establish profitable relationships and increase value for both parties (Park and Kim, 2020; Nalebuff and Brandenburger, 1997). However, the idea of coopetition is not new. This method has been used for several years by businesses from a variety of sectors to accomplish various strategic goals (Chai et al., 2020).

In the dynamic world, coopetition has become a popular business strategy in strong economies such as the United Kingdom, United States, and China. For instance, International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) collaborated with Microsoft (Dowling et al., 1996; Kessler, 1998), and Dell Computers and IBM (Albert, 1999) in the information technology (IT) sector. Similarly, Tesco and the Royal Bank of Scotland have a competitive relationship in the UK (Martinelli and Sparks, 2003). Apple and Google (Raza-Ullah et al., 2014) and Ritala and Huizingh (2014) both highlight the cooperative-competitive partnership between Amazon and Apple in the US. While this concept has been thoroughly explored in fields like information technology, such as IBM and Microsoft, or Apple and Google, its potential in Malaysia's woodworking industry remains largely underexplored.

This research aims to study the advantages of collaborating with competitors in Malaysia's woodworking industry environment. It also contributes uniquely by focusing on an under-researched area, as there is limited literature on coopetition efforts among manufacturing companies in Malaysia. The woodworking sector is specifically selected for this study due to its potential to be transformed by coopetition forces, especially given the significantly increased demand for board products used in the construction of homes, facilities, gardens, and animal boarding spaces.

This study is crucial because it addresses a significant gap in research: the often-overlooked role of coopetition strategies in Malaysian manufacturing, particularly within the woodworking sector. By focusing on this area, the study aims to explore how businesses in this well-established yet evolving industry can leverage coopetition tactics—such as digital referrals or location-based business networks—to boost productivity, expand customer reach, and foster innovation.

The motivation for selecting this article stems from previous research in other countries that outlined strategies for working with competitors across different industries, sparking the researcher's interest in further exploration. There are several advantages of collaborating with competitors, such as business-to-business referrals through digital coopetition strategies, including networks based on location and digital referrals. For Malaysian woodworking companies aiming for sustainable growth in a competitive international

market, understanding these dynamics is essential. Moreover, industry professionals, trade organizations, and government bodies looking to foster collaborative environments that support shared success among local businesses can greatly benefit from the insights this study offers.

Problem Statement

In this study, researcher recognise the problems discovered in the latest news about Malaysia's woodworking sector came from various sources. According to the "Malaysian Timber Industry Board aims to hit RM28 billion worth of timber exports by 2025," its chairman Datuk Hishamuddin Abdul Karim said. The news was found on Malay Mail Latest News and Headlines. (Malay Mail, 2022, September 22)

The Malaysian Timber Industry Board (MTIB), and the article was published on 2022. MITB will always place a high priority on empowering the growth of the nation's wood sector when dealing with current problems and challenges, such as those involving the availability of raw materials, labour shortages, shipping prices, and low productivity. Following the previous announcement of the 2022 Eastern Region Wood & Lifestyle Fair, MTIB spoke to the media to explain that it is now actively promoting the use of wood in the local market through advertising campaigns in the media, participation in exhibitions, and the organisation of exhibitions like the Wood & Lifestyle Fair, which it began branding in 2016.

According to Mariani, M. M., & Belitski, M. (2022), the authors stated the future studies may also consider the degree to which digital capabilities and technologies are used by businesses to innovate (Mariani & Nambisan, 2021) before their rivals. Last but not least, future studies might additionally consider the geographical area that some coopetition researchers have found to interact with the relationship between coopetition and innovation performance results (such as Pereira and Leito, 2016).

According to Burström, Kock and Wincent, (2022), the researchers suggest that multibrand platform development remain the primary focus of future research on innovation impediments. Research in these kinds of environments offers important chances to examine the specifics that are frequently discovered and talked about in simpler development efforts. Researchers believe that the relationships between the market's significant participants may be used to identify these settings. Considering their capacity to gain insight into a variety of businesses, we believe that the future growth of digital or artificial intelligence platforms may provide a useful background for research.

Theoretical Background and Conceptual Framework

Concept of Coopetition

Coopetition, as defined by Bengtsson and Kock (2014), is a complex relationship where actors engage in simultaneous cooperation and competition, whether horizontally or vertically. This concept is strategically motivated, allowing both cooperation and competition to coexist without diminishing each other (Bengtsson et al., 2016). Coopetition spans multiple levels, including municipal, governmental, and organizational, and is a dynamic process influenced by evolving market conditions and objectives (Crick & Crick, 2019; Bouncken et al., 2015). It contributes to value creation and innovation (Bicen et al., 2021; Ritala, 2009) and often arises from the need to reduce costs and access complementary resources (Luo et al., 2007; Garaffo

& Rocco, 2009). Coopetitive alliances also carry high failure rates or may yield unsatisfactory outcomes (Dussauge et al., 2000; Bengtsson et al., 2020).

Historical of Woodworking Industry Environment in Malaysia

The Malaysian Investment Development Authority (2023) highlights that Malaysia is the world's leading exporter of wooden furniture and a major player in the global market for tropical wood and other wood products. Over the past two decades, Malaysia's economy has significantly benefited from the production of sawn timber, veneer, panel products (such as plywood, particleboard, chipboard, and fibreboard), mouldings, builder joinery and carpentry (BJC), as well as furniture and furniture components.

Overview of Woodworking Industry Environment in Malaysia

The export value of the country's timber products climbed by 3% in 2021 to RM22.74 billion from RM22.07 billion in 2020, according to Mail, M. (2022). The country's timber industry saw a 14% increase in exports between January and June of this year, reaching RM13.2 billion from RM11.6 billion during the same time in 2021.

The reason Malaysia was chosen as a research country is because, after the pandemic COVID-19, the demand for woodworking industry products was increasingly frequent, whether in Malaysia's domestic market or the international market, and the woodworking sector had the potential to gain a wider profit. Malaysia is in the top ten countries that produce and export furniture and furnishing, and its successes achieved a higher profit of RM10.41 billion. Malaysia exported the most to the following countries: The United States, Japan, Singapore, the United Kingdom, and Australia.

The Pioneer of Coopetition Research

The pioneer of written the coopetition research are Gary Hamel, Yves Doz, and C.K. Prahalad (1989), and this research created from Brighton, Massachusetts. Competition-related cooperation is appealing. The authors of this article provided a number of situations, including the manufacturing of automobiles by Toyota and General Motors, semiconductors by Siemens and Philips, photocopiers supplied to Kodak by Canon, and videocassette recorders made by Thomson in France and JVC in Japan. However, some people have expressed concern over the long-term repercussions of the expansion of what researchers refer to as "competitive collaboration"—joint ventures, outsourcing contracts, product licencing, and cooperative research. Strategic collaboration may reduce competition between the partners' businesses while strengthening both companies' barriers against external threats. It seems in particular that collaborations between Western rivals and Asian companies work against the Western partner. Collaboration offers new rivals a low-cost way to acquire access to technologies and markets.

The Strategies Working together with Competitors

Business-To-Business Referral as Digital Coopetition Strategy

Academics and practitioners have focused a lot of attention on the importance of business-to-business relationships as a determinant of an organization's profitability (Bathelt and Glückler, 2003; Corsaro et al., 2012; Fang et al., 2016; Thornton et al., 2015). A company must be a part of a network of businesses in order to create mutually beneficial, long-term relationships in order for it to be productive and profitable (Ferreira et al., 2013). These

connections strengthen each company's ability to meet its goals for performance since they are integrated into interorganizational networks (Ansari and Stahl, 2011; Stephen and Toubia, 2010; Van den Bulte and Wuyts, 2007). According to the requirement of joining business networks, some companies traditionally prefer to participate in the many kinds of geographically based business communities (Porter, 1990). These companies frequently develop connections with similar companies that are positioned near to one another in order to get a competitive edge (Porter, 1998a; Saxenian, 1994).

The conventional means of establishing business relationships through in-person meetings have been replaced over time by computer-mediated communications such as emails, electronic data exchange, and video conference calls since the beginning of the twenty-first century (Ganesan et al., 2005). Through digital platforms based on digitalized business technology, companies may now interact with their suppliers, distributors, consumers, and partners without being limited by geographic distance (Bughin and Zeebroeck, 2017). In addition to online communities where businesses can interact, various technologies integrated within digital platforms, such as hyperlinks, can provide a direct, cost-effective way for organisations to interact, communicate, and network with one another (Kannan and Li, 2017).

Digital connections built into various platforms serve as a primary source of traffic in the online world once the links are clicked (Ennew et al., 2005). Digital referral is defined in the context of digital marketing as a strategy made by a company to drive attention to the digital platforms of other companies (Google Analytics, 2017). A company might carry out digital referral activities in a business-to-business setting by encoding digital hyperlinks that point to the digital platforms of another company in its digital content (Google Analytics, 2017). Traffic from referrals, which begins with visitors clicking on a referral the link, is one of the three primary sources of organic traffic into a business's digital platforms. The other two sources are search traffic and direct traffic, both of which are brought about by browsers bookmarking the domain name (Bashara, 2018). In a consequence, a firm likely to have greater online visibility and attract more potential customers the more referral hyperlinks that point to it are present online. Firms are encouraged to create digital connections with other firms to boost the amount of exposure and possible visitors to the digital domain in order to increase referral traffic to their digital platforms (Elgin, 2015; Neal, 2014). This results in the formation of referral-based digital business networks (Raisi et al., 2018; Ying et al., 2016). A substantial portion of social networks are digital networks made possible by referrers' outgoing hyperlinks to the incoming platforms (Park, 2003; Yi and Scholz, 2016).

Business Network Based on Location

According to earlier studies, businesses in a particular region frequently organise into groupings in order to increase productivity, obtain competitive advantages, and succeed (Porter, 1990, 1998c). Business groupings develop amongst suppliers, manufacturers, service providers, trade organisations, professional organisations, and universities in a broader sense (Porter, 1998a). In a more focused sense, it is advantageous for peer companies in the same region to join a business group in order to increase the competitive advantage of the region's entire business sector, facilitate innovation among the interdependent partners, and improve supply chain efficiency (Porter, 1998c).

According to other studies (Della Corte and Aria, 2016; Felzensztein et al., 2018; Lindstrom and Polsa, 2016), a cooperative strategy amongst competitive peer enterprises in a regional group or business network can produce a variety of beneficial outcomes. The term "coopetition" refers to this tactic, which entails both increasing the pie by cooperating (with an emphasis on market growth) and splitting it up among the companies by competing (with an emphasis on market share) (Bengtsson and Raza-Ullah, 2016, p. 26).

Despite the fact that competition between close to peer companies always exists, numerous studies have shown the benefits of physical nearness for encouraging productive business relationships, knowledge transfer, and learning facilitation (Cantu, 2010; Green and McNaughton, 2000; Rosenfeld, 1997; Saxenian, 1994). Removing physical restrictions to promote productivity growth is other important advantage of being close to (Porter, 1998b). Being near one another has also been demonstrated to encourage information sharing (Sternberg, 1999; Uzzi, 1997), as well as to facilitate the diffusion of ideas and invention (Breschi and Lissoni, 2001; Scheel, 2002). Peer companies that are near to one another generally absorb innovations more quickly than those that are further away (D'Aunno et al., 2000; Rao et al., 2000) and are less concerned with immediate competition (McEvily and Zaheer, 1999).

Business Network Based on Digital Referral

According to Hofacker et al. (2016) and Kannan and Li (2017), digital marketing has significantly decreased the cost of information interaction and also changed how businesses manage interorganizational communications. Since therefore, companies need to maintain both their physical and virtual connections on the internet (Obal and Lancioni, 2013; Park, 2003). Businesses might openly demonstrate their business relationships by using information from other businesses in their own digital material (Park, 2003). A virtual business network is created as a result of connected companies (Park, 2003; Park and Thelwall, 2003).

Digital recommendations can generally be thought of as friendships, partnerships, and professional relationships that offer a "public display of connection" (Donath and Boyd, 2004). A company can display commercial relationships regardless of location or other limitations by collecting digital recommendations that are showed by other companies (Park, 2003). At the micro level, earlier studies (Vaughan, 2004; Vaughan and Wu, 2004; Vaughan and You, 2006; Ying et al., 2016) described a variety of favourable effects for participating in digital business networks. Therefore, despite the fact that China and the USA had fairly different connected network structures, there was a significant correlation between corporate revenue and the number of connections the company's website received in both countries (Vaughan, 2004). More recent studies (Vaughan and Yang, 2013) have proven that there is a positive relationship between the financial health of a business and the overall number of digital referral connections made online. These connections can ultimately improve a company's bottom line. It is becoming increasingly clear to businesses that creating digital business networks may increase referral traffic, and that having more referral traffic on their digital platforms is profitable for these companies.

In addition, earlier studies have examined social behaviours associated with the use of digital connections (Bakker and Hellsten, 2013; Elgin, 2015; Kim, 2012; Neal, 2014; Shumate and

Dewitt, 2008), especially in relation to how digital business networks are set up to achieve strategic goals (Ennew et al., 2005; Raisi et al., 2018; Vaughan, 2004; Ying et al., 2016). A business can recommend each of a limitless number of persons, and promoting digital referrals in digital material has a nearly zero direct cost, therefore decisions concerning digital referrals are more planned than random (Jackson, 1997). There can be additional expenses related to the referral action. For instance, a digital recommendation for a business with a bad reputation may negatively impact the referrer's reputation. By leaving the site via the referral hyperlinks and visiting other businesses, content browsers may reduce the effectiveness of content marketing. As a result, more caution should be used when making decisions about digital recommendations. Researchers describe how peer firms across regions show referral-based digital business networks because digital referrals between peers have not been thoroughly studied.

Conceptual Framework

The research framework outlines the steps to keep the study focused. Figure 1 presents the operational framework for this study.

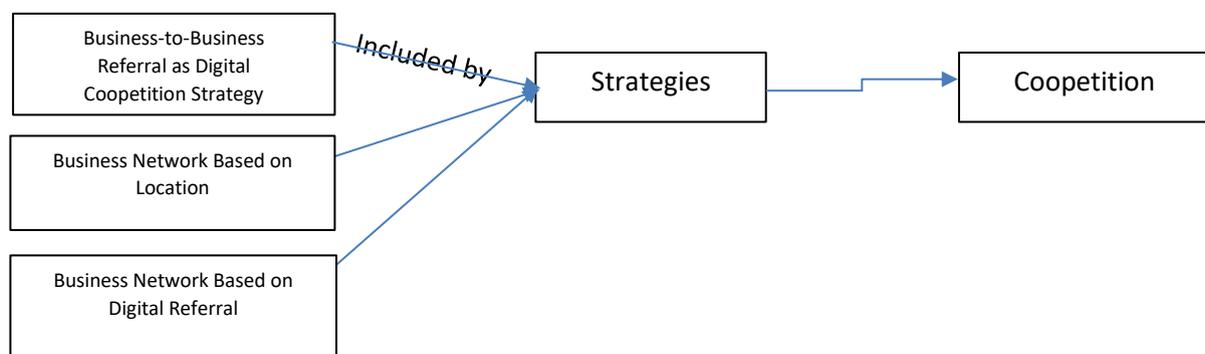


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

Numerous research methods can be used to gather rich data and in-depth knowledge of the area of study for case studies. The researcher employed both interviews and written materials for the purpose of this research. The respondents discussed the progress of the cooperative business partnership from a point of view of challenges during the interviews. There were a total number of nine owners or managers from the woodworking industries environment interviewed, with the locations being in Negeri Sembilan and Johor, Malaysia. Due to distance, 1 of the 9 personal interviews that were conducted was done over the phone. The interviews were conducted with those in positions of authority that are directly involved in the interactions between the woodworking businesses. In the study, the interviewer can be a general manager or director who served as an informant. Information from the intra-firm, inter-firm, and inter-individual levels could be gathered by interviewing persons in various positions within the organizations. The purposive sampling approach, a strategy used to choose the interviewer that have rich knowledge. According to Janesick (2000), the technique focuses on informants directing the researcher to further informants who could improve the current research. The interviews ranged in length from 10 to 45 minutes. All interviews were taped and written down. The researchers also gathered data from papers, such as meeting minutes from companies, in addition to conducting interviews.

The interview transcripts and the materials were both analysed similarly when it came to empirical material analysis because they were both viewed as equally essential.

Results and Discussion

Table 1

Result of cooperative strategies

Matrix coding query	Theme 1: Building relationships	Theme 2: Market demand and communication	Theme 3: Trust and integrity
Sources	1	3	4
Coding references	2	3	7

The study identifies key cooperation challenges in the woodworking industry environment. The most prominent cooperation strategy highlighted by four out of nine participants after collaborating with competitors in the woodworking industry was trust and integrity. The second most common cooperation strategy was market demand and communication, achieved by only three out of nine participants. The least common cooperation strategy, as stated by participants, was knowledge and communication, achieved by only one out of nine participants.

Theme 1: Building Relationships

The study identified several cooperation strategies, the researcher conducted studies and gathered a considerable number of primary and secondary research articles related to the topic. The exploration begins with the concept of business-to-business referral as digital cooperation strategy. Theme 1: The section on "business-to-business referral as digital cooperation strategy" directly corresponds to the concept of "building relationship" in the text since build a strong relationship with competitors will gain a win-win situation for establishing a common worldview. The insights gathered from the participants shed light on several key strategies, each with its unique approach and perceived effectiveness. Firstly, the strategy of building relationships with competitors, as emphasized by one participant, highlights the importance of a phased approach. Starting with smaller projects allows businesses to gradually build trust, set clear communication channels, and establish common objectives.

The illustrative case of two competitors collaborating on a research and development project further demonstrates that trust and synergy, when nurtured over time, can lead to expanded collaboration and industry leadership in sustainable practices. This strategy suggests that a patient and relationship-focused approach can contribute significantly to the effectiveness of collaboration in the woodworking industry. The first strategy that said by a single participant which from Participant 1 (KLS) is building relationships with competitors, he said: "Effective strategies often involve a phased approach. Starting with smaller, less critical projects allows businesses to build trust gradually. It's also important to establish clear communication channels and set common objectives from the outset. Additionally, creating personal relationships among key stakeholders can play a significant role in the success of cooperative efforts.

In a noteworthy case, two competitors decided to collaborate on a research and development project. They initiated the collaboration with a small-scale initiative to develop a new eco-friendly wood treatment process. Over time, as trust and synergy grew, they expanded their

collaboration into other areas, eventually becoming leaders in sustainable woodworking practices.”

Theme 2: Market Demand and Communication

Moreover, participants identified the market demand and communication as a strategy that can make managers or owners in the woodworking industry in Malaysia unsure to collaborate with competitors, echoing findings similar to the study by Farida and Setiawan, (2022). Theme 2: The section on “business network based on location” directly corresponds to the concept of “market demand and communication” since, in a more focused sense, it is advantageous for peer companies in the same region to join a business group in order to increase the competitive advantage of the region's entire business sector, facilitate innovation among the interdependent partners, and improve supply chain efficiency.

Market demand and communication emerged as a crucial strategy, according to three participants. The participants emphasize the need for greater market demand as a catalyst for cooperation. Sharing large orders can promote collaboration, with the condition that customer information remains confidential. Effective communication is identified as a key element, with open and idea-sharing dialogues highlighted as essential. The emphasis on effective communication aligns with the idea that cooperative efforts are strengthened when all parties involved share a common understanding and purpose.

The second strategy stated by participants is market demand in the woodworking industry and communication skill between each other’s. According to them:

Participant 4 (GFP): That is to say, there needs to be greater market demand. I can't think of anything other than this. It takes one party taking a large order to share to promote cooperation with competitors because the customer information of competitors is kept confidential. Both of Participant 5(LBKE) and 6(JNP): “Communication is the most important strategy to cooperate with competitors. The best example is the way researcher communicate with interviewee now. You need to talk and have the same ideas before starting the communication.”

Theme 3: Trust and Integrity

Furthermore, participants identified the market and competition as one of the strategies faced in the woodworking industry in Malaysia, which is similar to the market demand and communication highlighted in the research article by Hofacker et al. (2016) and Kannan and Li (2017). Theme 3: The section on “business network based on digital referral” directly corresponds to the concept of “trust and integrity” in the text. Trust and integrity emerged as a recurring and fundamental strategy, as articulated by four participants. Trust is deemed crucial in the woodworking industry, where customers rely on companies for high-quality products. Transparent transactions, guaranteed payment timelines, and a commitment to honesty are identified as elements contributing to trust. Openness and integrity are seen as key components that facilitate cooperation, including sharing recent orders, prices, and profit goals with competitors. The consensus among participants suggests that trust forms the foundation for successful collaboration, enabling businesses to navigate challenges and build long-term relationships. Notably, one participant did not provide a specific strategy but emphasized the uniqueness of approaches, indicating a diversity of perspectives within the industry.

The last strategy stated by participants is trust and integrity. According to participants: Participant 2 (JP): "Trust and integrity are crucial in the woodworking industry, as customers often trust and rely on the company for their products. This trust allows for a smooth transaction, with the company not compromising on quality or quantity. The company's goal is to attract customers with high-quality products, ensuring they are satisfied and have confidence in the company. This trust is not recorded in a black and white record but rather in the integrity of the transactions. The company guarantees payment within two weeks and maintains a transparent account system. Trust is also a key factor in the success of the business, as customers often trust the company to handle their goods and ensure they are paid fairly. This trust between customers and the company is essential for maintaining a strong business relationship." Participant 3 (YSTT): "Openness and integrity are key strategies in the woodworking industry. Share recent orders and prices with competitors and ask if they are interested in working together. Avoid hiding information to build a long-term good relationship. In the small circle of competitors, openly communicate your profit goals and inform them in advance. Intrigues are rare, but they can occur. To achieve better cooperation, openly disclose your desired profit and inform the other party in advance." Participant 7 (TLBWE): "Need to have the same target. Whatever you lose already, you need to collaborate with competitors to finish the order. If you finish the order, you can build a good relationship with a third party. Means that "be honest, be trusted." Participant 9 (GWR): "Only competitors with similar opinions have the opportunity to cooperate or do business. Just like our agents, they will only cooperate if they help us buy goods from competitors or purchase raw materials from competitors. The most important thing is "trust." Find someone you trust to do business with. Both need to trust each other." In this part, Participant 8 did not provide any strategy that may be effective for collaborating with competitors because she said, "everyone has their approach."

Conclusion

The three primary strategies this study identifies for promoting successful cooperation in the Malaysian woodworking sector are relationship-building, communication and market demand, and trust and integrity. First of all, establishing connections with competitors was regarded as a fundamental strategy. Participants underlined that collaborations take time to develop. However, companies might start carefully, with less important tasks, so that both sides may progressively gain trust in one another. By using a methodical approach, trust may develop slowly and both companies can learn about one other's expectations, beliefs, and work cultures. These connections may grow into more meaningful partnerships as mutual respect and trust develop, and these could even result in shared leadership and cooperative innovation in fields like sustainable practices. This demonstrates how businesses may achieve win-win results when they change their perspective from one of competition to one of strategic collaboration.

Furthermore, it was discovered that communication and market demand play a significant influence in determining whether or not businesses choose to work together. Businesses frequently have to collaborate because to high demand from customers, particularly when one company is unable to manage a sizable order on its own. Order sharing is required in certain situations, but only if private data, such as customer information, is protected. Another important component that was emphasized was open communication. Cooperation may quickly break down in a lack of open communication and mutual understanding.

Participants pointed out that the first step to a fruitful collaboration might be just striking up a discussion and being open and honest about objectives and difficulties. This supports the notion that fostering personal ties is just as important to collaboration as meeting corporate objectives.

Last but not least, trust and integrity were the most highlighted themes. Trust is necessary in a field where reputation and product quality are important. Participants discussed how customers greatly depend on businesses to provide them with truth and fairness in addition to goods. In this context, trust is not just acquired through formal agreements but also from regular behaviors, such as making payments on schedule, being upfront and honest about pricing and profits, and sharing orders when necessary. When competitors behave with integrity, they provide a secure environment that encourages enduring collaborations. It's about understanding that both parties are working towards mutual gain and that the other won't take advantage of anyone. The fear of abandonment or undercutting, which frequently discourages cooperation in the first place, is reduced by this degree of trust.

In conclusion, cooperation is an attitude rather than simply a strategy, as these three themes illustrate. Businesses must reconsider the conventional perspectives on competition and recognize the benefits of collaboration, particularly during periods of strong demand or shortages of resources. Businesses may open up new opportunities that would be hard to do on their own when they invest in relationships, speak honestly, and behave respectfully. Businesses in general and the woodworking industry in particular may gain a great deal by considering competitors as possible friends in advancement rather than as threats.

Limitations and Future Scope

There are a number of limitations that should be discovered, even though this study on cooperation strategies in the Malaysian woodworking sector provided insightful information. The findings of the research may not be as applicable to other industries or locations with differing competitive environments and cultural settings due to its exclusive focus on a specific industry and geographic area. Although informative, the rather small and uniform sample size could not adequately reflect the range of viewpoints within the sector. A degree of subjectivity is also introduced by the use of qualitative interviews as participants could have expressed enchanted opinions or concealed confidential competitive information. The results also represent a single point in time, so shifts in consumer preferences, industry trends, or technological advancements may make the techniques that were discovered less relevant.

Future studies can build on these findings in a number of ways. It may be possible to determine if cooperation strategies are generally successful or situation-specific through comparative research across several sectors or locations. The themes put out might be validated and the effects of factors like communication, trust, and market demand could be measured by using quantitative techniques like statistical modelling or large-scale surveys. Deeper understanding of how cooperation connections change over time and their long-term impacts on business results might also be possible with longitudinal research. Future studies might also examine how digital platforms and communication tools help or hinder cooperation in the digital era, given the increasing significance of technology. Understanding

would be further improved by looking at how culture and geography affect the development of trust and cooperative behaviour, particularly in varying socioeconomic contexts.

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