Coevolution and coexistence of cooperation and competition in interorganizational collaboration

Evidences from Indian management consulting industry

Debadutta Kumar Panda

Department of Economics and Strategy, Institute of Management Technology, Hyderabad, India

Abstract

Purpose – This study aims to understand the coevolution and coexistence of cooperation and competition in the interorganizational collaboration of management consulting firms (MCFs) in India.

Design/methodology/approach – The narrative inquiry method was applied to understand the central phenomenon. The narrative inquiry method was found pertinent because the aim of the research was to inquire human-based phenomenon, especially life experiences, tensions, feeling, thought processes, emotions and personal puzzles. Narrations from 47 respondents from 32 MCFs from various consortiums were collected to make textual and phenomenal narrative inquiry. Finally, causal relationships were designed using the mapping method.

Findings – The study noticed coevolution and coexistence of cooperation and competition in the MCF consortiums. Cooperation was higher than the competition at the entry level, and the competition was higher than cooperation at the operational level of the consortium life cycle. Organizational side of coopetition was higher than human side of coopetition at the entry level, and human side of coopetition was higher than organizational side of coopetition at the operational level. A higher level of competition (than cooperation) pushes the consortium beyond the threshold level, creating a lesser value creation. Further higher level of competition (than cooperation) shoved the consortium beyond the injury limit, leading the consortium to collapse.

Research limitations/implications – This study paid major attention on the human side and organizational side of coopetition from the life cycle perspective, but the findings and discussions concentrated more on entry level and operational level. The study, in fact, did not capture the status of coopetition at the termination phase of the consortium.

Originality/value – This study is one of the few studies that examined cooperation and competition as a single construct in interorganizational collaboration in the management consulting industry. This study is unique in two ways, one, examination from the human side of coopetition and organizational side of coopetition, and two, life cycle analysis of the consortium from the perspective of coopetition.

Keywords Qualitative, Coopetition, Economic and social systems, Management consulting, Organizational collaboration

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

The management consulting[1] industry (MCI) has occupied a paramount importance in the corporate, public and development sector worldwide. Organizations such as McKinsey, Boston Consulting Group and Price Waterhouse Coopers have been engaged in helping businesses in the provision of strategic and advisory services including corporate restructuring, business model development, product development, cost control, market

development, diagnostic studies and firm's positioning. Globalization has triggered competition among management consulting firms (MCFs). However, the MCI is yet to occupy substantial space in the management and strategy literature. Srinivasan (2014) brought out a significant note on the landscape of the MCI in India. The literature not only highlighted the dearth of research in the subject of management consulting[2], but also diligently captured the practices, challenges and state of affair of firms in the MCI. Management, organization and strategy scholars did not include MCI to empirically test their hypothesis. In fact, management consulting is not properly studied as an industry like automobile or pharmaceutical or banking in the management literature. Of course, there are many studies conducted in the MCI. For example, Christensen and Klyver (2006) studied the interactive perspectives of management consulting, that is the dynamics of management consulting processes for small firms; de Jong and Eekelen (1999) explored the importance and process of catalytic intervention of management consultants with their clients. Still, there is a need to understand the dynamic process and complexities of the MCI.

Competition and cooperation among firms have been vividly discussed in the field of economics, organization, management, strategy, political science, biology and law. Past studies have debated competition and cooperation as two separate and distinct subjects (Nutter and Moore, 1976). In the past, studies understood competition and cooperation as overlapping constructs in the field of management, organization and strategy (Czakon et al., 2014). However, the investigations on coexistence of cooperation and competition among organizations were not intensely discussed in the existing literature.

Management literature has emphasized on coopetition as an important subject. Coopetition is broadly understood as collaboration among competitors. Coopetition explains simultaneity of cooperation and competition where firms supplement or complement one another by pooling resources and capabilities to achieve a competitive advantage. There are significant studies conducted on competitors' cooperation (Lewis, 2009; Barnett, 2004; Song, 2000). Coopetition is a subject discussed from the perspective of the game theory, organizational alliances, transaction cost economics, resource-based view of the firm, networks and competitions. Studies on coopetition broadly concentrated, particularly on the six themes, namely, simultaneous, mutual benefit, complexity, variability, managerial challenges and industry reshaping (Czakon et al., 2014).

The current body of literature is devoid of studies on coopetition from network level and firm level (Czakon et al., 2014). On one side, there are not enough investigations of the evolution and existence of coopetition, and on the other side, there are lesser significant examinations on balancing forces of cooperation and competition in the coopetition dynamics. Although investigations centered around the dominant sides in the coopetition arrangements, that is cooperation dominated relationships, competition dominated relationships and equal relationships (Czakon et al., 2014), but the causalities of these relationships remain unexplored. Most of the studies on coopetition discussed the alliance outcomes and formation rationale, but empirical examinations from sectoral industries are still missing in the management literature (Morris et al., 2007). There is a research gap in finding emergence and development of coopetition, and what kinds of learning do firms experience under coopetition (Osarenkhoe, 2010).

Czakon et al. (2014) found that coopetition is more of human action than strategy, so an inquiry into coopetition from the human side is the need of the hour. The dynamics of coopetition need to unfold over time is a needed focus (Majchrzak et al., 2015), and there is a need for examinations of "coopetition" from the life cycle perspective. Organizational collaborations are discussed from many perspectives (Panda, 2016, 2015a), for example transaction cost perspectives (Menard, 2004), resource-based view (Gulati, 1999), stakeholder

theory (Chia-Hui, 2007) and agency theory (Grossman and Hart, 1983). However, there is no significant investigation made in the life cycle approach of organizational collaborations. In an attempt to address the literature gap, this study was conducted to understand the dynamic process and complexities of the MCI in India, focusing on the investigation on coexistence of cooperation and competition among MCFs, and examination of the balancing forces of cooperation and competition in the coopetition dynamics. This study uses the life cycle approach of organizational collaborations in the Indian MCI to understand the emergence and development of coopetition, and the significant learning from the coopetition behaviors.

The manuscript is divided into *eight* sections. The *introduction section* introduced the subject, the research gaps and key contribution of the study. Literature and propositions for further verification are included in the *literature section*. Sampling and data collection, rationale behind the selection of method, data analysis, processing of raw data and dependability and credibility test are vividly discussed in the *methodology section*. The *data section* contained significant data derived from the narrative inquiry. The results of the study and the discussion on the results are presented in the *findings and discussion* section. The manuscript concluded the study in the *conclusion section*. Further, the limitations and the research gap of this study are presented in the *limitations and the research gap section* to encourage scholars to undertake future researches. The *last section* included the practical implications of the results of this study.

Literature

Cooperation and competition are metaphors, especially in the subject of economics. Competition establishes the winning of the best cooperators in the market economy. The purpose of competition is not to harm the competitors, but to identify the successful competitor who can cooperate with other economic agents (Rubin, 2014). Cooperation is a thorough investigated construct in economics and management. It was studied from various perspectives, that is:

- stakeholder theory, that is a relational network approach between firm and it's stakeholder set (Garriga, 2009);
- transaction cost perspective, that is social embeddedness of economic transaction (Blumberg, 2001);
- group dynamics, that is organizational cooperation is dependent upon the composition of group members and group characteristics of collaborative organizations (Dettmann *et al.*, 2015);
- business environment and intra-firm trust and expectations (Obadia, 2008);
- commonalities and complementarities (Fenger and Kok, 2001; Sun and Lo, 2014);
- hybridity and structural complexities (Panda, 2015a);
- causalities and relational dynamics in partnerships (Panda, 2016); and
- opportunistic behaviors and contract mechanisms (Panda, 2016; Blumberg, 2001).

Cooperation among the firms was discussed from the perspective of merger, alliances and joint venture in the management literature. Chen and Boggs (1998) found mutual trust, cultural similarity and market uncertainty as the causalities of cooperation in the joint venture. Similarly, competition was also studied in both economics and management. Organizational competition was illustrated from the resource-based view [i.e. structural

capital, behavioral assets, etc. to compete for resource acquisition (Hunt, 2000)] and product-based view [i.e. market competition (Chang and Harrington, 2003)].

Competition among organizations always remained as a zero sum game, that is what one firm receives from the market, the other firms do not get and one firm cannot be better off by not making the other firm worse off (Lewis, 2009). However, complementary assets and capabilities encourage organizations to cooperate among themselves, and further they enter into organizational partnerships (Panda, 2015a). Goal commonalities, organizational reciprocity and symbiotic relationships moderate to cooperative behaviors in organizations (Fenger and Kok, 2001). Cooperation among firms is subject to their opportunistic behaviors and the contractual commitments, which holds firm together under the mutual cooperation. So, the contractual mechanisms can be designed based on the social embeddedness (Blumberg, 2001). Structural integration and technological complementarities promote cooperation among firms (Sun and Lo, 2014). Coopetition has an association with rent seeking, interfirm relations (Soppe et al., 2014; Lado et al., 1997) and interdependence (Song, 2000). A low level of competition and high level of cooperation among firms express collaborative rent seeking behaviors (Lado et al., 1997). Goal, task, reward and resource interdependence hold firm together for coopetition. The dynamism lies within the institutional structures of the system which allows coexistence of competition and collaboration (Harding, 2001; Morris et al., 2007). Cooperation norms are fostered by trust, commitment, mutual benefit and continuity expectations among firms (Obadia, 2008), but at the same time differential organizational intents, interests, constraints, attributes and orientations lead to a complex interaction among organizations in the collaborative arrangements (Panda, 2015a). Cooperative or competitive behavior-based firm interactions are always subjected to the level of stake (Van den Assem et al., 2012). There are three distinct dimensions of value creation in interfirm alliance, that is common benefit, private benefit cooperation, private benefit competition (Rai, 2013). Similarly, Barnett (2004) studied the cooperation among competitors to gain short-term economic advantages by altering their institutional environment.

Further organization and management literature discussed critical success factors of coopetition. For that matter, Chin et al. (2008) found that resource allocation, vision, mission, risk sharing, knowledge sharing, conflict resolution, trust and common goals are the critical success factor of coopetition strategy. Similarly, Lewis (2009) identified constructs related to the willingness to cooperate with competitors, and those constructs were:

- respect for the skill and competence of the management in the other small company;
- benevolence of the other company's management;
- honesty;
- dependability and integrity;
- fairness;
- reciprocity or exchange behaviors;
- friendship with the other company's management;
- identification with the other company and its management; and
- individual propensity to trust other people.

Thomason et al. (2013) argued that the success of coopetition was related to the financial resources of collaborative firms, and firms' perception of difficulties of market entry.

The literatures have identified what is cooperation and competition, the causalities of cooperation and competition and why cooperation and competition coexist, but did not probe

into step by step of evolution of cooperation or competition or both. For example, the coexistence of cooperation and competition, which starts first? Is it cooperation or competition? What happens in the beginning, do cooperating firms compete or competing firms cooperate? These questions probably resemble questions such as first egg or chicken. Perhaps, there is a need to examine the evolutionary process of coopetition. Further, most literature discussed cooperation and competition as generic phenomena. However, a recent study by Geraudel and Salvetat (2014) discussed the antecedent of coopetition from the human side, especially with respect to network positions and personality traits. Their study noticed that the propensity to cooperate or to compete is predicted by the manager's degree of agreeableness, conscientiousness, extrovert, anxiousness and centrality. Simoni and Caiazza (2012) studied coopetition among firms from the corporate governance point of view, and found that the facilitations of deeper relationships among top managements or directors of competitor firms lead to coopetition.

So, the review of literature posited three important propositions for further verification. The propositions are as follows:

P1. Definition of cooperation and competition vary according to institutional design, organizational attributes, level of interdependence and value creation.

P2. Cooperation and competition are distinct organizational and human phenomenon.

P3. Cooperation and competition are evolutionary processes, and evolve at the same time or at a different time in the coopetition life cycle.

Method
Sampling and data collection
This study closely examined the narratives pertaining to coopetition in the consortium of MCFs in India (the unit of analysis was the consortium of MCFs). The main motive of this study was to bring out managerial interpretations concerning cooperation and competition in the consortiums. This study did not find any structured secondary information on consortium of MCFs in delivering strategic support services. In the absence of structured and readily available information, it was very difficult to understand the exact number of consortium of MCFs that existed in India or those that are existing in India. Over and above that, there were consortiums which consisted of both Indian as well as non-Indian MCFs. So, in the first phase, an attempt was made to find out the consortiums which existed or are existing in India from surfing the internet and discussion with people associated with MCFs. So, a list of consortiums was drawn, and from the list, the consortium partners were identified. Then, the firms were contacted to understand if they have any other existing consortium or completed any consortium-based management consulting project in the recent past. In this process, 56 firms (from 21 consortiums) of different sizes (based on annual turnover and employee size) and types (based on functional/sectoral expertise and nationality) were identified. From the list of 56 firms, two members, who were associated with MCF consortiums, were identified and contacted to gather the responses. Out of the 112 members, only 63 members from 40 firms agreed to respond. However, out of 63 respondents, 16 contacts backed out during data collection, citing their internal organizational compliance rules. However, at the end, 47 respondents from 32 firms finally agreed to share the information required for this study.

The methodology clearly focused on three questions which were constructed according to the literature review. The questions were, *one*, what is the definition of cooperation and competition based on the institutional design, organizational attributes, level of interdependence and value creation in the consortium of MCFs, *two*, are cooperation and

competition two distinct organizational and human phenomena (in the MCF consortiums), and *three*, how do cooperation and competition evolve and exist in the various phases of consortium (of MCFs) life cycle. In the second phase, respondents were requested to narrate different accounts of competition and cooperation in their consortiums from the initiation to the completion of the consortium projects, keeping the three above questions in view. The data collection was done through personal meeting and telephonic discussions. There were instances where the respondents finished their stories in a small paragraph concluding one or couple of events. In that case, to understand reality and truth, content probing to an event or activity was made by using WHY, HOW, WHEN, WHERE, WHAT IF NOT, WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE AND AFTER, etc. Also questions were probed to inquire specific timing of specific events (Sosulski *et al.*, 2010), their causalities, outcomes, intermediating situations and contexts (Panda, 2016). All narrations were transcribed. In the third phase, narratives were carefully read and analyzed, and along with the findings, pictorial representations were designed in the fourth phase.

Rationale behind selection of method
The narrative method of qualitative research was engaged by following Feldman *et al.* (2004) to make an interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA). IPA is a psychological dimension to explore the meaning and significance of a pertinent experience to a given respondent to gain insights into psychosocial processes (Ritchie *et al.*, 2013). Narrative analysis helps the researchers to identify a latent phenomenon by capturing experiences of people as a method of storytelling. Narrative analysis methods are used to collect peoples' experiences, thematic and contextual, through collecting peoples' experiences in the form of narratives, both descriptive and explanatory, to investigate how human beings understand and enact in their lives (Sandelowski 1991). This method of qualitative research is built on the understanding that:

- texts as a linguistic structure, that is words, sentences and topical cohesiveness;
- texts as a cognitive structure, that is plots, themes and coherence; and
- beyond the text, that is why this story here and now.

The skeleton of the narrative framework is plotted through four categories, that is orientation, abstract, complicating actions and resolutions. The power of narrative analysis is its ability to generalize, that is the story or narrative may not represent absolute truth or reality, but reduces data or information to a generalized pattern of events (Richmond, 2002).

Analyzing stories or narrations is important for researchers because stories provide a sense of organizational life and reveals information relevant to organizational administration and decision-making. Narrations illustrate the series of experiences and actions undergone by people by revealing the hidden aspects of situations. These narrations may not warrant the absolute trust, but certainly identifies the peoples' thinking, emotions, feelings, psychology, etc. Narrative inquiries help researchers to understand the human side organizational phenomenon, not only day-to-day activities but also historic understanding of human actions-reactions in organizational administrations (Feldman *et al.*, 2004). The narrative inquiry method is pertinent when researchers aim to inquire human-based phenomenon, especially life experiences, tensions and personal puzzles. This method is even more pertinent when peoples' behaviors are paradoxical and changing (Clandinin and Huber, in press).

Narrative inquiry has been engaged as a methodological framework for researches in public health, sociology and psychology (Feldman *et al.*, 2004; Richmond, 2002). Of late, narrative methods have been used in the organization and management studies (Panda,

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2015a). A collection of narratives in the form of stories, and analysis of those helps in gaining access to deeper realities in organizations (Gabriel and Griffiths, 2004). Narratives help in understanding the causalities of various outcomes because the truth is reclaimed from logical positivism. Narratives have important human elements; people dream in narratives, daydream in narratives, remember, anticipate, hope, despair, believe, doubt, plan, revise, criticize, construct, gossip, learn, hate and love in narratives. Narratives structure the human mind and rationality. Narrative is a representational element because it is the mirror of lived experiences. However, deceptions in narrative cannot be fully ignored, but can be corrected by triangulations (Robert and Shenhav, 2014). Sandelowski (1991) explained the importance of narrative truth. Sandelowski's (1991, pp. 164-165) explanation is as follows:

> Narrative truth is distinguished from other kind of formal science truths by its emphasis on the life-like, intelligible and plausible story. Stories typically reflects a coherence (as opposed to correspondence) theory of truth in that a narrator strives for narrative probability – a story that makes sense; narrative fidelity- a story that consistent with past experiences or other stories; and aesthetic finality – a story with satisfaction, closure and representative appeal. Narrators in a remembering moment, strive to achieve the most internally consistent interpretation of the past –in –the-present, the experienced present and the anticipated –in-the-present future.

Following the propositions of Sandelowski (1991) and Robert and Shenhav (2014), the narrative method can be used as an analytical approach to process empirical data. The narrative inquiry can be applied to examine peoples' understanding and feeling of people-based sensitive organizational issues in the organization life cycle. This method will help in the investigation of the life cycle of organizations even before the organization completes all phases of its life cycle.
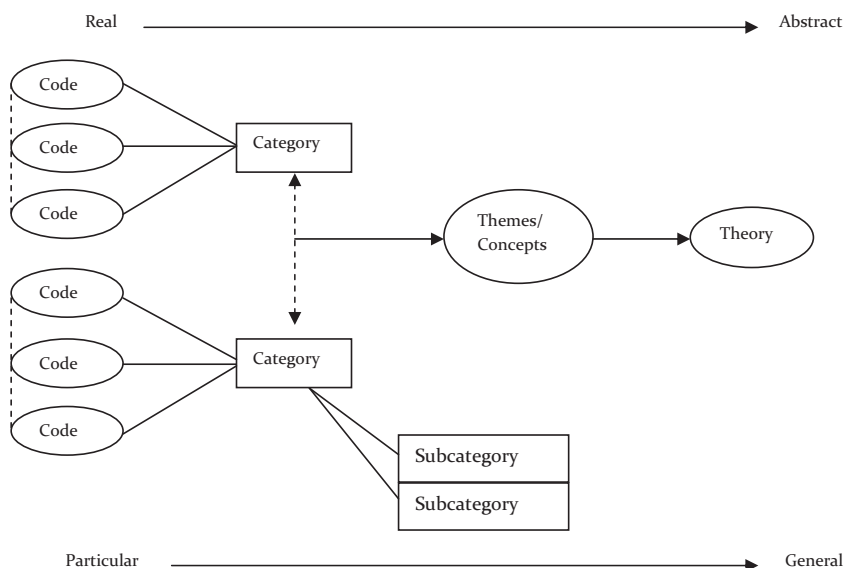
Method of data analysis
Data analysis was done following the classic three step method. In the first step, the raw data were reduced to codes and concepts, and in the second step, the possible connection of data was done to find out how one concept may influence or relate to another concept. Concepts were legitimized by corroborating similar concepts and evaluating alternative and negative explanations in the third step.

Data reduction was done following Spencer *et al.* (2003), Dawson (2002) and Dey (1993). All the narratives were thoroughly read, and statements were paired down to their core meaning to reach to the thematic summaries of the contents. Key themes and concepts or categories were identified. A comparative analysis method was adopted in which narratives were compared and contrasted until no new issues were visible. Coding was done to bring observation which was similar or related, may be belonging to a particular set or class or group, etc. Code represents the central meaning of a sentence or multiple sentences or a paragraph. Coding is done to reduce data to meaningful codes. Coding of narrations followed the coding technique of Saldana (2009). In the process of content analysis, the narrations were assigned different codes where codes were represented by a word or multiple words. The codes were further reduced to categories following Saldana (2009) and Dey (1993). Similar codes were clustered together in certain categories which were grounded conceptually. The narrations were coded and categorized to develop theories. The code-to-theory model was used following Saldana (2009) (see Figure 1).

Processing of raw data: an example
Once codes were developed from transcriptions, they were numbered and imported to a fresh worksheet (Table I). Data searching in the narratives was done *by code* (see Hennink *et al.*, 2011) (suppose code 1 is "ego", then searching how many respondents talked about ego and

Source: Saldana (2009)

Tests	Phases of research	Tactics
Dependability/construct validity	Data collection	Methodological triangulation: narratives are recorded as well as transcribed to minimize leakage of information Information triangulation: contrasting of data by maintaining higher sample size
Dependability/internal validity	Data analysis	Using coding method and mapping method for interpretive phenomenological analysis
Analytical credibility	Data analysis	Coding process involved both line by line coding and paragraph by paragraph coding Engaging multiple coders to maintain inter-coder reliability Comparing codes following Hennink *et al.* (2011)
Theoretical credibility	Data analysis	The coding, categorizing and conceptualization followed seven iterations Followed cross-case comparison method, and comparison by typology method was adopted
Reliability	Data collection	Narrative inquiry involving both textual narrative and phenomenal narratives

different context of ego), *by topic* (for example, if the topic is "competition", then searching source and cause of competition, explanations of competition, consequences of competition, degrees of competition, dimensions of competitions, etc). and *by analytic search* (for example finding out a connection between cooperation and life cycle). The code comparison method was applied following Hennink *et al.* (2011). Once codes were developed in the code sheet, all codes were compared across the data set (cross-case comparison method) to identify a variety

of perspectives or experiences (for example, comparing a code "ego" across the narratives to ascertain the similar or unique experience of "ego"). Then, codes were compared by typology (for example, a typology for competition may include "Rights", "Interests", "Control", etc.). Then, the codes were clustered to develop categories (for example codes such as *ego, belief, rights are reduced to concepts like psychological factors/variables, human-based variables, cognitive variables, difficult to measurement, etc*). (To process data to concepts, see Feldman *et al.*, 2004; Sandelowski, 1991; Hennink *et al.*, 2011; Saldana, 2009). The refined data helped in addressing the depth of the central phenomenon (what is it, why it is and what makes it different), breadth of the central phenomenon (what are the different dimensions/variation to the central phenomenon) and the context of central phenomenon (what is the context, that is where, when; how did the respondents explain, for example emotion, words, expressions, etc.). The categories were then linked together to show the causal reasoning following the cognitive mapping method (Cassell and Symon, 2004, p. 76), mapping, link data connection method and matrix technique (Dey, 1993) to develop concepts (Hennink *et al.*, 2011).

Dependability and credibility test
The narrations are connected with the deep construct of human existence (Robert and Shenhav). This method captures the human thinking process and brings out the deep complexity associated with peoples' thinking. Narratives are synonymous to empirical data sets. Hence, the method needs to undergo the measurement of dependability and credibility. Sometimes, it is difficult to distinguish between truth and fictions in storytelling. In a storytelling, sometimes the storylines may be fictitious, but the emotions of the storytellers are true, for example overemphasis on something, angrily speaking, laughing, crying, withdrawing one's own statement, etc. So, the emotions were captured during transcribing narrations. Words, concepts, sentences, etc. stated with high human emotions were considered as important codes (synonymous with high-frequency data in quantitative method) (for example, a respondent says angrily *I do not agree*, then it means that these are high disagreement. So emotions helped in attaching a *degree* and *dimension* to a phenomenon or event.). There is no set standard to test reliability and validity in a qualitative study. However, the dependability and credibility test was conducted following Panda (2015b) and Charmaz and Bryant (2011). There may be a question of the trustworthiness of the information from respondents. It was difficult to understand the possibility of respondents' reason to lie, but the feeling and emotions from the respondents' perspectives were captured. Information can be hidden, but feeling and emotion are hard to hide. To minimize leakage of information, narrations were transcribed as well as audio recorded. The information was dependable and plausible because the respondents were not required to answer any question, rather a self-generating schema was created which helped in the transition from one event to another, where the respondents felt that each event was relevant to himself/herself. So, the description of an account is self-selection without fixation (Table I).

Data
While reading the narrations, two types of words were found to be repeated many times in all the narrations, *one*, "I, ME, MYSELF and MINE", and *the other*, "WE, OUR, OURSELVES and USA". "I, ME, MYSELF and MINE" together were repeated for 544 times and "WE, OUR, OURSELVES and USA" together were repeated for 499 times for 57 respondents (i.e. 57 narrations). Narrations explained peoples' experiences, thinking, feeling, etc. from a human side, cutting across individualism (I, ME, MYSELF and MINE) and collectivism (WE, OUR, OURSELVES and USA). Narrations revealed realities and trust from one's individual or own perspective (I, ME, MYSELF and MINE), and one's organizational perspective (WE, OUR,

OURSELVES and USA). Considering these high-frequency words, the entire analysis of the central phenomenon was conducted from human side and from the organizational side.

The study found 11 codes for cooperation among MCFs in the consortium. These codes were as follows:

   (1)   joint project planning/common identity;

   (2)   coordination;

   (3)   abiding by contracts;

   (4)   transparency;

   (5)   real time communications;

   (6)   compromising;

   (7)   team work;

   (8)   mutual respect and reciprocity;

   (9)   adaptation/creation of precondition;

 (10)   tolerance; and

 (11)   dependability.

Similarly, 12 codes were found for the concept competition, and these codes were as follows:

   (1)   team lead;

   (2)   task and role assignments;

   (3)   profit sharing;

   (4)   revenue sharing;

   (5)   power of control;

   (6)   sharing risk, uncertainty and opportunity;

   (7)   self-centeredness;

   (8)   competencies;

   (9)   ego;

 (10)   rights;

 (11)   incompatibility; and

 (12)   beliefs.

The definition/explanation of the codes is given in Table II. The codes for cooperation represented the cooperation phenomenon, and the codes for competition represented the competition phenomenon. The codes only explain a phenomenon, that is cooperation or competition.

The study identified the causalities of cooperation and competition in the MCF consortium. The causalities are called as "FORCES", that is cooperative forces or competitive forces. The forces were responsible for the occurrence of a phenomenon, that is cooperation or competition. The competitive forces included the following intensions:

  • to win the project contract;

  • to maximize the earnings of the firm;

  • to maximize quantum of activities in the firm;

  • to enhance the reputation of the firm; and

  • to increase client base of the firm.

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Table II.
Explanation of the terms used in the finding and discussions

No.	Terms	Explanation
1	Joint project planning/common identity	Partners in the consortium jointly plan and design the projects, and they share a common identity for the client they are serving
2	Coordination	MCFs integrate and synchronize people, activities and responsibilities. Jointly, MCFs design plan of action and carry out activities as per the plan
3	Abiding by contracts	The contract is the legal binding documents that keep all MCFs together. The contracts explain the organizational arrangement of firms in the consortium. It also states the contribution of firms to the consortium, the *modus operandi*, receivables, penalty, punishment, etc.
4	Transparency	Transparency indicates disclosure of all the project-related information to the consortium partners
5	Real time communications	MCFs pool human and other resources for the consortium. The human resources pooled from different MCFs work like a team, and often work in matrix structure. Because people are pooled from different organizations, MCFs need real time information not only for record but also for carrying out the assignments
6	Compromising	Compromising is a gesture of sacrifice. For example, firm B will start an activity only when firm A completes the previous activity. Suppose firm A delayed the completion of the activity due to some reasons, firm B waits for firm A's job completion without bringing a legal compliance notice
7	Team work	Irrespective of differences with respect to organizational belongingness, people work together efficiently and effectively
8	Mutual respect and reciprocity	People pooled from different firms respect each other, and exchange good will, benefits, favors and privileges. Respecting each other not only as resource persons from consortium partners, but also respect each other as a human being
9	Adaptation/creation of precondition	People learn from each other. In the process of co-working and inter-learning, people also understand liking and disliking of their colleagues. People create favorable precondition of their colleagues in the working environment. Following is one of the excerpt from the narrative data: "We are human emotional beings. Emotional human beings cannot be fitted like knot and bolt where you get a know from one brand and get a bolt from another brand and fit it. Our fitment is based on the level of welcoming, accepting, understanding and learning. For the same people create an ambiance to allow another to show them. Without discussion with or talking to somebody, I at least cannot claim the other person is good or bad"
10	Tolerance	People tolerate their co-workers from partner organizations. For example, following is one of the excerpt from the narrative data: "I do not like the way they talk and the way they work, but I ignore this since some of them are a good human being. Sometimes, you have to bear it, whether you like or do not like when compliance is a key component in the performance appraisal. It is your call, what do you want, compliance or performance?"
11	Dependability	One person can count on another person professionally or emotionally. For example, following is one of the excerpt from the narrative data: "To some extent I can count on him. I have to I can do the job, but he is better than me, and he is also cordial. One can expect the timely and correct deliverable from him. Because of that only we worked together"
12	Team lead	Team lead is the lead firm of the consortium. Team lead is responsible for overall management of the consortium. The team lead is in direct contact with the clients, and in many cases, it is the only recipient of commercials from clients, and later it distributes commercials to the partner MCFs
13	Task and role assignments	Allocation of tasks and assignment to partners. Many times, it leads to conflicts. Task allocation is done by the team lead in discussion with other firms as per the contract guidelines. Sometimes, the current task and role assignment may not match the expected task and role assignment drafted in the contract documents (due to causes internal and external to the system) "Who will do this task? Why should we do this? I think this should have been done by them. They are good at it. The current job description is not matching with the one we planned during consortium formation, so it will overrun cost"

(continued)

No.	Terms	Explanation
14	Profit sharing	All consortium partners wish to maximize their profits. More firms jointly performing an activity indicate the sharing profit among them. In this case, firms wish to minimize the number of players to perform an activity
15	Revenue sharing	Revenue is an indicator of firm's capability to carry out a large-scale consulting project independently. So, it is an important element for firms to retain big clients. All consortium partners wish to maximize their revenues. More firms jointly performing an activity indicate the sharing of revenue among them. In this case, firms wish to minimize the number of players to perform an activity. Sometimes, firms lobby to perform a certain activity as a solo player
16	Power of control	The power of control represents the level of authority and decision-making capability an organization has in the consortium "When we decided the sample locations for data collection, why XXXX (an organization) at all need to change it? Is it so that XXXX is a principal consultant? But we were hired for our expertise in market research? It is we who should decide the locations for data collection."
17	Sharing risk, uncertainty and opportunity	Although the contract guidelines explain the sharing of risks, uncertainties and opportunities, the exact analysis and quantification of these are of risks, uncertainties and opportunities are made in the contract document (because these were unknown future statements with respect to the time of agreement for consortium partnership). So, there are always issues of sharing risk, uncertainty and opportunity
18	Self-centeredness	Thinking for only own self in the team. This signifies non-cooperation among team members for one self
19	Competencies	Mismatch of competencies leads to non-cooperative environment. For example, member A of an MCF wants structured data from member B from another MCF. The incompetency of member B to develop structured data develops a non-cooperative environment. Both A and B compete to establish their way of doing things in the system
20	Ego	A thinking process among people that "I am the best or we are the best" as compared to other people from our partner organization. Following is one of the excerpts from the narrative data: "I am the best, we are the best, it's for us the consortium exist, it is we who are important for the project, it is we who matters for the client"
21	Rights	An expectation to have the same facilities and respects in collaborative projects. Following is one of the excerpts from the narrative data: "Why people from partner organization get a better facilities than us? For example, why meeting dates, hotels for residing, venues etc. are decided as per their wishes, why our choices were not considered"
22	Incompatibility	Unable to work together in coherence. For example, following is one of the excerpts from the narrative data: "We are not in agreement or harmony. I do not know either I did not like their men or they did not like us. But for sure, there was no coordination, only questioning each other and blame game"
23	Beliefs	An assumption or conviction on people, process, event, outcome, etc. is held true by an individual or a group in the organization. Following is one of the excerpts from the narrative data: "I do not follow that culture. In fact, we never liked that culture. Networking my help in business development but not in performance improvement. We believe in performance and expertise. Without that we should not claim as consultant"

Table II.

Similarly, cooperative forces included the existence of the following conditions:

- asset complementarities among firms;
- assets commonalities among firms;
- compatibilities in organizational attributes among firms; and
- trust and confidence among firms.

Firms have complementary resources and capabilities. Resources broadly included the human and the technological resources. The capability included key capabilities such as networks, and function specific expertise and experiences. Firms have common resources and capabilities.

Finding and discussion
Human side and organizational side of coopetition
Organization can be viewed from two dimensions, one, mechanistic organization and, two, people-wise organization. These two dimensions are different with respect to principles, main thrust, time frame, competitive advantage, vulnerability and key job requirements (Spitzer and Tobia, 1994). This study obtained two interesting phenomena. *One*, the co-evolution of competition and cooperation among MCFs, and *second*, the human side and the organization side of competition and cooperation. Human side of competition or cooperation was different from the organizational side of cooperation and competition. For example, interdependence is an organizational phenomenon. Organizations exist in the collaboration due to their interdependent natures. The workers (employees) from the consortium organizations (those who are associated with the consortium project) were informed from their respective organization on the need for interdependence, and the structure of interdependence (in other words working with others), but the boundary of dependability in the interdependence is a human or psychological phenomenon. So, although interdependence is a cooperative action from an organization, the dependability is a human gesture in the collaboration.

> We understand that our company needs the help of YYYYY. This is the reason we joined with them in the consortium bidding. We are not designed for quantitative study. YYYYY is a market research firm. They are designed for this. But I do not know, sometimes I have a feel that the guys are not great at their jobs. Surely, I can do that as my statistical understanding is not sound, but they are also not great. They talk theory, but unable substantiate from the perspective of real life practice.

> Our client wanted an environmental and social impact assessment. Our partner organization is known for this. We cannot do that, we are in a different field. But what are they doing. Is it social impact assessment? I did not know this. If it is so, then it is not really great. I am unable to figure it out that where is the problem, in YYYYY or with the people of YYYYY. But, in my understanding, YYYYY is known for their job, and we really wanted their help but why did the firm select these people, who seemingly less experienced and immature.

The organizational side of cooperation and competition included *collective actions*, whereas the human side of cooperation and competition included *individual actions*. The organizational side of cooperative activities included the *joint project planning* and common identity among firms, coordination among firms, abiding by contract among the consortium partners, transparency, real time communications and compromising among collaborators. Similarly, the organizational side of competition among firms included the competition for team lead position; task and role assignments; profit

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sharing; revenue sharing; power of control; and sharing risk, uncertainty and opportunity. The human side of cooperation included team work, mutual respect and reciprocity, adaptation/creation of precondition, tolerance and dependability among people drawn from the consortium firms. At the same time, the human side competition included self-centered nature, comparison of competencies, ego, fight for right, feel of incompatibility and set of one's own beliefs (Figure 2).

Consortiums were governed by contractual and commercial factors. In fact, commercial and contractual factors were interrelated, and sometimes commercial factors were factored in the contractual agreement. Contractual agreements bound firms legally, thereby creating a contractual environment with a broad normative framework of law, customs and assumptions in which firm relationships are embedded (Arrighetti *et al.*, 1997). Collaboration of firms created an institutional environment which was broadly governed by human relations, and the interactions among human relations gave rise to the psychological environment. Deviation from contractual agreement was a commercial loss for firms in partnership (Panda, 2015a, 2016). The consortiums were organized on the basis of contractual agreements between MCFs. However, the respondents cited the cases on tri-party contracts, that is contract between MCFs in the consortium, and the contract between consortium and clients. Sometimes, a firm's exit from consortium makes the contract between consortium and client null and void. So, MCFs strived to make the consortium–client contract to exist. The contractual agreement included organizational structure of the consortium, revenue sharing, profit sharing, job descriptions, deliverables, etc.

Past studies found that assets specificity and assets complementarities are causalities of collaboration among firms (Panda, 2016, 2015a). Majchrzak *et al.* (2015) identified several multifaceted dynamics associated with inter-organizational collaborations, namely, goal dynamics, contract frame dynamics, interaction style dynamics, decision-making control dynamics, organizational structure dynamics and actor composition dynamics. This study observed that the competitive thinking and comparative analysis involving competitive forces and cooperative forces was the causality of firm collaborations, where asset specificity and assets complementarities were elements of cooperative forces. Events, actions and outcomes in organizations were human driven. The organizational dimensions were different from human dimensions on the logic that the organizational dimension is a human behavior under the norm of collective action, whereas the human dimension is a human behavior under individualistic view. The human behaviors under collective action were governed by norms of the organization from where they belong to. For instance, this study found that the organizational side of human behavior was broadly governed by contractual

	Cooperation	Competition	
Organizational Side	Joint project planning/common identity Coordination Abiding by contracts Transparency Real time communications Compromising	Team lead Task and role assignments Profit sharing Revenue sharing Power of control Sharing risk, uncertainty and opportunity	**Contractual and commercial factors**
Human Side	Team work Mutual respect and reciprocity Adaptation/creation of precondition Tolerance Dependability	Self-centered Competencies Ego Rights Incompatibility Beliefs	**Psychological factors**

Figure 2.
Human and organizational sides of cooperative and competitive forces in the consortium

and commercial factors. These behaviors might be forced, manipulative and collective, and they were evaluated from the lenses of their organizations. The human side of human behavior was governed by psychological factors. Hence, the human dimension was a human behavior which was independent and non-manipulative, and a representation of a person but not the organization.

Life cycle perspective of coopetition

The data analysis was done from the life cycle perspective of the consortium of MCFs. The consortium life cycle was divided into two major phases, *one*, entry-level phase, and *two*, operational-level phase. The initiation and planning phase of the consortium was represented as entry level. This phase included pre-consortium activities such as searching suitable firms for collaboration, planning the collaborative/consortium design, development of contractual agreement, devising the technical manual, cost-sharing mechanisms and commercial distribution mechanisms and the starting of the consortium project. There was no clear duration of the *entry-level phase* of the consortium. However, about 30 per cent of the project life fell in the entry-level phase. For example, one of the excerpts from the narrative data is as follows:

> All good people do good things, experts do great things. The project monitoring unit started 11 months back, last week all policy documents completed for a 29 month project. Good, it is all planning for a year, next one and at year is action, at least I hope so. But you never know, it may be the other way round. But in my experience I have not seen spending two-third time in planning and one-third time on action (Source: respondent).

The execution and closure of the consortium were represented as operational level. This was the actionable phase of the consortium. This phase took about two-third time of the project life. In the evolutionary phase (entry level), that is during the formation of a consortium of partners, two different forces existed. *One*, the competitive force, and *two*, the cooperative force. The two forces interacted among each other, and the collaboration among firms occurred only when the cooperative force was stronger than the competitive force (see Figure 3). Once the consortium of firms graduated from the evolutionary phase to the operational phase, there was development of human side and the organizational side of cooperation and competition in the consortiums (See Figures 2 and 3).

Past studies found that the decision-making control, changes in organization structure and interaction style and contract framework influence coopetition (Majchrzak *et al.*, 2015). However, this study found that the collaboration among MCFs was the result of cooperative forces and competitive force. The cooperative force and competitive force acted on each other, and the cooperative force dominated the competitive force to make the collaboration to exist. When the competitive forces are dominant over cooperative forces, the collaborative mechanisms toppled down, creating a certain outcome of collaborative failure. Weaker cooperative forces might be the causality of weak organizational partnership with respect to the poor asset complementarities or asset commonalities. Complementarities were not a sufficient condition for alliance success. Complementarities along with compatibility and commitments were key drivers for alliance success (Kale and Singh, 2009). The major assets in MCFs were people or consultants. The complementarity showed *completeness* (for example, firm A is strong in internal analysis of organizations, and firm B is strong in the industry and environment analysis of business), and commonality expressed the *quantity* (for example, firm A is strong in market research, and firm B is also strong in market research). Both relationships were subjected to cliental need (for example, the client wants a large-scale market research across regions; segments, etc. would be needing the *quantity* of
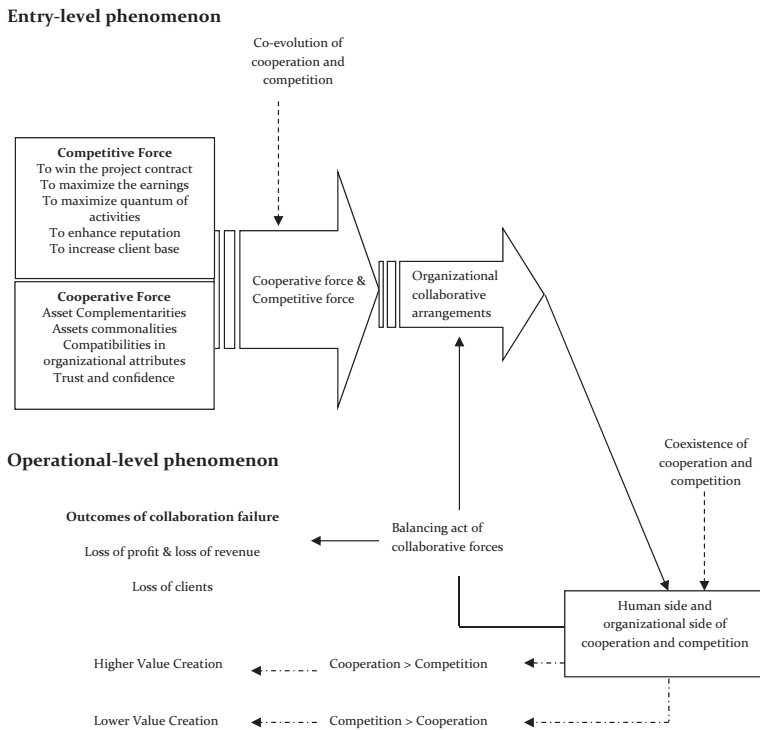
resources. Similarly, client wants the organizational analysis and industry analysis to be done together would be requiring *completeness or complete information* of resources base of MCFs.). The cooperative forces were also dependent on the level of compatibilities in organizational attributes (structure, style, system and processes) among MCFs and also the level of trust and confidence among people from collaborative parties. Panda (2016) found similar results in public–private partnerships in India. Inappropriate alignment created a structural hole in the collaborative arrangement which further weakened the cooperative forces. At the entry level, the likelihood of maximization of revenue, activities, reputation, etc. (competitive forces) was subjected to the *strength of the collaborative forces*. The outcomes of the collaborative failure were huge losses of revenue, profits, reputation, etc. At the entry level, it was the dominancy of collaborative force over competitive force, which made the collaboration to happen and exist, but in the operational level, it was the fear of the outcomes of the collaborative failures that make the collaboration to remain existing. However, cooperation and competition coexisted in the operational level without collapsing the consortium/ collaboration, but higher cooperative force over competitive force led to higher value creation and vice-versa. Value had two major dimensions: value for the organization and value for the client. Value for organization was understood from three different codes, namely, commercial gain, knowledge creation and transfer and reputational gain; value for client was understood from two different codes, namely, timely service delivery and completeness and perfection of the service.

Coopetition from human side and organizational side from the life cycle perspective
The study noticed a change of the level of cooperation and competition, both from the human and the organizational side, from the entry level to the operational level of the consortium (see Figure 4). There were two overlapping phenomenon observed in the consortium life cycle; *one*, organizational side of cooperation and competition, and the human side of cooperation and competition, from the entry level to the operational level of the consortium (Figure 4, Panel A); and *two*, cooperation from human side and organizational side, and competition from human side and organizational side (Figure 4, Panel B). The organizational side of cooperation and competition was higher than the human side of cooperation and competition at the entry level. When the consortium progressed from the entry level to the operation level,
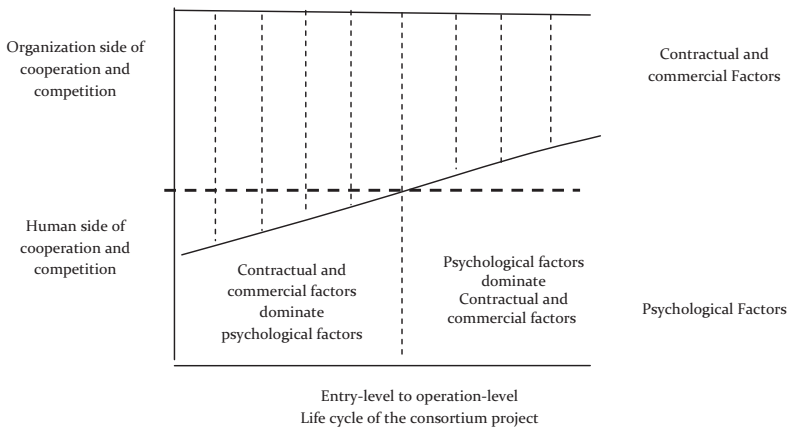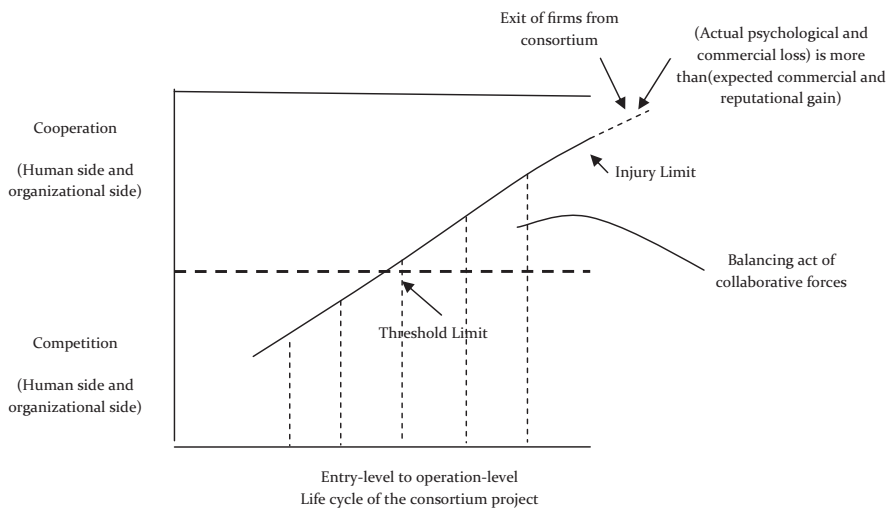

Figure 4.
Organizational side and human side of coopetition in the consortium life cycle

the human side of cooperation and competition became stronger, and the organizational side of cooperation and competition became weaker. In the operational level, human side of cooperation and competition was higher than the organizational side of cooperation and competition. Organizational side of cooperation and competition was governed by contractual and commercial factors, whereas human side of cooperation and competition was governed by psychological factors (Figure 4, Panel A). This indicates that the entry-level phenomenon was exhibited by stronger contractual and commercial factors than psychological factors, and the operational-level phenomenon was exhibited by stronger psychological factors than contractual and commercial factors. Psychological factors grow over time in the life cycle and overpower contractual and commercial factors. For example, with time, people developed a comfort zone with co-workers from partner organizations which increased the cooperation, and at the same time, some people developed enmity and hatred toward co-workers from partner organizations.

Overall, cooperation was higher than competition at the entry level. As discussed before, cooperation denoted the summation of human-side cooperation and organization-side cooperation, and competition denoted the summation of human-side competition and organization-side competition. So, the human and the organizational side of competition kept on increasing from entry level to the operational level, and the human and organizational side of cooperation kept on decreasing from the entry level to the operational level in the consortium (see Figure 4, Panel B). The consortium reached the threshold limit when competition exceeded the cooperation (*Threshold limit represents the boundary within which power of competitive forces was less than or equal to the power of cooperative forces. The resultant of the competitive forces and cooperative forces was zero at the threshold limit. Beyond the threshold limit, the power of competitive forces was higher than the power of cooperative forces leading injury to the collaboration of firms.*). Whenever the competition was higher than cooperation, the balancing act of collaborative forces maintained an equilibrium in the consortium. However, the failure of the collaborative forces led to the injury level in the consortium where the consortium partners developed a feeling that "the expected psychological and commercial loss is more than the excepted commercial and reputational gain for the firm". Beyond the injury limit, firms dropped out from the consortium. Past studies claimed organizational collaboration as a cooperative behavior (Hardy *et al.*, 2003), but the study argued that organizational collaboration has both cooperative behavior and competitive behavior, but the cooperative behavior was stronger than the competitive behavior.

As discussed previously, both cooperation and competition were two-dimensional in nature, that is human side of cooperation and competition, and the organizational side of cooperation and competition. The partner selection and fit were the first phase of alliance formation (Kale and Singh, 2009). This two-dimensional cooperation was higher than the two-dimensional competition in the entry level (initial phases of alliance formation). In other words, the resultant of the human side and organizational side of cooperation was higher than the resultant of the human side and organizational side of competition at the entry level of the consortium. However, the reverse was noticed at the operational level of the consortium. The human side of competition was higher than the human side of cooperation, and organizational side of competition was higher than the human side of cooperation at the operational level, whereas the reverse was happening at the entry level. This showed that competition grows with time, and managing this competition is crucial between the threshold limit and the injury limit. Following are few excerpts from respondents:

During consortium development, we just forgot everything except our collaboration agreements, both officially and unofficially. It continued for quite a sometime. First, our intention was to develop

the consortium, then bid the assignment, and then put things into action. There were only two things in the mind, one, find out the partners for consortium, and, two, must win the bid. Operations were smooth for some time. Later, we got into dogfights for nothing or everything. It is all blame game. Everybody now thinks him selves/her selves the best, but practically the output become poor (Source: respondent).

Now, poor communication, less transparency, no coordination exists among parties. The client is upset. I am upset. Sometime I feel getting out of this. This is high time for us to take a call. We are in this industry for about two decades and we are known for our expertise. They (partners) think they are better than us. Look at their languages, are they army commanders or what? We are always a preferred firm for clients. The person who has never designed a questionnaire will teach me how to conduct market research! So funny! As the team lead from my firm, I decided we will be exiting from the consortium. No matter what is the loss? Anyway, we are still a looser having remained with the consortium. It is cost for us (Source: respondent).

Successful organizations balance between the human side and the organization side (Lacovini, 1993). It was the relationship dynamics which helped the inter-organizational collaboration to exist (Panda, 2016). The uncontrollable competition beyond the injury limit collapsed the consortium. This study found that beyond the injury limit, the actual commercial and psychological loss was more than the expected commercial and reputation gain. Chin *et al.* (2008) found four coopetition models, that is mono-player (low competition and low cooperation), contender (high competition and low cooperation), partner (low competition and high cooperation) and adapter (high competition and high cooperation). This study found that the human side and organizational side of cooperation was higher than the human side and the organizational side of competition at the entry level of consortium, and the human side and organizational side of the competition was higher than the human side and organizational side of cooperation at the operational level of the consortium. In the consortium life cycle, MCFs followed the partner model of coopetition, and slowly, it was transformed to the contender model of coopetition. The contractual arrangement was the key factor for alliance success. Post-formation alliance management factored in coordination mechanisms, trust development and relational capital and conflict resolution techniques (Kale and Singh, 2009) which addressed the human side of competition in consortiums. Tregoe (1994) stated executives ignore the human side of the organization which leads to attitudinal issues among employees, and organizations should follow a structured way to approach them. Organizational contracts were not sufficient, there is a need for social contract (Spitzer and Tobia, 1994).

Conclusion
The narrative inquiry involving 47 respondents drawn from 32 firms disclosed the coevolution and coexistence of cooperation and competition in the consortium of MCFs in India. The competition and cooperation had two dimensions, *one*, organizational side and *two*, human side. The human side of coopetition was governed by psychological factors, whereas the organizational-side coopetition was governed by contractual and commercial factors. Evolution of coopetition in the entry level of the consortium included interaction between cooperative force and competitive force. Equilibrium between cooperation and competition was causality of the evolution of the collaborative consortium. The progression of the consortium from the entry level to the operational level has given rise to human side of coopetition and organizational side of coopetition. The collaborative forces maintained the equilibrium between human side of coopetition and the organizational side of coopetition in the operational level. The value creation by the consortium was predicted by the balance between cooperation and competition in the operational level.

Collaboration among MCFs to form the consortium was the manifestation of evolution of both competition and cooperation. Firms first competed among themselves to expand their businesses. This competition was not a physical one, but a perceptual computation of one's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Once they realized that they cannot carry out the business or an activity as a single entity, considering their internal capabilities and external requirement (although given a chance, each of the competitors would like to carry out the business activity as a standalone entity), they planned to cooperate with each other to address project needs. Subsequently, they pooled their resources and capabilities to enhance the strength of the collaborative organization with a motive to either neutralize possible environment treats or to leverage environmental opportunities.

The entry-level phenomenon of the collaboration was explained by the balance between cooperative force and competitive force. Any imbalance between cooperative force and competitive force was corrected by the collaborative forces. Consortium life cycle was governed by human side and organizational side of cooperation and competition. Entry-level collaboration was dominated by contractual and commercial intents of MCFs. The organizational side of cooperation and competition was higher than the human side of cooperation and competition. The causality of such an outcome was due to the compliance than the cognitive or psychological thought process. With time, when the consortium moved toward the maturity phase, the cognitive and psychological forces were dominant over organizational compliances. This showed that people give greater importance to their firm than themselves in the entry level of the consortium, and the reverse happens in the operational level.

Limitations and future research
This study used the classical grounded theory coding method for data analysis for generalization of concepts, but phenomenal narrations with self-selected schema along with more of cognitive dimensions provided more heterogeneity. The heterogeneity explains multidimensional phenomenon but questions the stronger basis conformity and generalizability. The future researchers are suggested to conduct similar studies with a higher sample size to maintain conformity and generalizability of the dynamic relationship in the multidimensional phenomenon. This study paid major attention on human side and organizational side of coopetition from the life cycle perspective, but the findings and discussions concentrated more on entry level and operational level. The study, in fact, did not capture the status of coopetition at the termination phase of the consortium. Future researchers can bridge this research gap by focusing more on the life cycle stages of coopetition. The complexity associated with collaboration among MCFs cannot be fully understood by qualitative research. There is a need for advance methodology, especially quantitative-based models to understand causalities and outcomes of various phenomena.

Practical implication
One of the important contribution of this study is the explanation of the underneath complexity of collaboration of competitive organizations. Consortiums should understand two important factors, one, psychological factor, and two, contractual and commercial factors. The importance of organizational attributes and contract management in the organization of partnership has been highlighted by Panda (2016, 2015a). This study emphasizes on the dynamic alignment between psychological factor and contractual factor in the consortiums. MCFs should understand another two important dimensions, *one*, the importance of human agents as a change agent, and *two*, institutional precondition of individuals (Schubert, 2012). In the absence of choice environments, human side of competition become heavier and difficult to manage, which takes the consortium to the

threshold limit. In a way, this study encourages MCFs to consider the psychological factor before designing contractual arrangements and commercial computations. Because competition and cooperation are dynamic evolutionary processes, the contractual arrangements should embed a flexibility element along with an alternative course of action. The lead consultant (lead consulting firm) along with partner MCFs should constantly monitor the performance, especially the dynamic alignment, and threshold limits to protect the consortium from future injuries.

Notes

1. There is no concrete definition of management consulting, but there are two approaches to understand it; *one*, helping an organization of the content, process and structure of a task/s without actually getting into doing the task (a process of enabling); and *two*, identifying, analyzing and resolving management problems, and implementation of management solutions (advisory services with management responsibilities) (Kubr, 2002). However, Kubr (2002) did not differentiate management consulting from consulting.

2. There is not enough available literature to differentiate management consulting from consulting. Firms in the consulting industry varied with respect to their domain expertise (management/ strategy, finance and auditing, market research, human resources, etc). and sector specificity (development sector, agricultural sector, telecom sector, automobile sector, etc.). Kubr (2002) considered consulting in all domains as management consulting. However, there are instances which considered consulting in general management and strategy as management consulting (Srinivasan, 2014) because consulting firms varied with respect to their specializations. Hence, following Kubr (2002) and Srinivasan (2014), this study defines management consulting as a process of enabling and provision of advisory services with management responsibilities in the domain of strategy and general management. The general management problems may be of three types: long-term, multi-functional and interdisciplinary; the strategic issues may be strategic visioning; industry analysis; technology analysis and innovation; merger and acquisitions; organizational attributes such as structures, systems and processes; and corporate governance (Kubr, 2002).

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Corresponding author
Debadutta Kumar Panda can be contacted at: debaduttakp@gmail.com