

Exploring Current Relationships between Private Jordanian Universities: An Empirical Study

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In strategic management literature the hybrid relationships comprising competition and cooperation has been named co-competition. Co-competition strategy means organisations cooperate and compete with each other simultaneously. Research studies have examined this strategy in various industries in different contexts, and even though researchers have emphasised the increasing importance and benefits of co-competition for business today, there has been comparatively little attention paid to co-competition relationships in the tertiary educational sector, and in particular in Jordan education sector. This paper reports on a study that explored the current relationships (competition or cooperation or co-competition) between selected private Jordanian universities. The study used a sequential mixed method research approach. The qualitative phase (Phase one) data collection consisted of semi-structured in-depth interviews organised with 18 participants, self-selected by voluntarily completing the interview. All participants came from the Dean's councils of nine private Jordanian universities. The interviews explored the current organisational relationships. From the Phase one findings a questionnaire was developed and used to collect data from 355 participants who can be deemed to be involved in strategic decision making in the universities. During this phase (phase two), the survey was used to confirm or otherwise phase one results as well as providing further understanding on the outcomes from phase one. This study found that co-competition relationships were used between private Jordanian universities to achieve advantages such as: reducing risk and cost, sharing resources, especially knowledge and staff capabilities, enhancing universities reputation. This study contributes to the research-based literature regarding the co-competition relationships studies in educational organisations.

Keywords: Co-competition, Competition, Cooperation, Jordanian universities

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