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*Incorporating coopetition
into the entrepreneurial
marketing literature:
Directions for future
research*

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Incorporating Coopetition Into The Entrepreneurial Marketing Literature: Directions For Future Research

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INCORPORATING COOPETITION INTO THE ENTREPRENEURIAL MARKETING LITERATURE: DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to extend the entrepreneurial marketing literature to account for coopetition (the interplay between cooperation and competition). This paper is also designed to highlight the research gaps surrounding coopetition, so that academics, working at the marketing/entrepreneurship interface, can undertake more investigations linked with this topic.

Design/methodology/approach – The entrepreneurial marketing literature was reviewed to develop a conceptual framework, guided by three research propositions, examining the antecedents and consequences of coopetition, as well as the boundaries of the coopetition – organisational performance relationship.

Findings – Coopetition activities are driven by an organisation-wide coopetition-oriented mind-set - the degree to which managers and employees believe in the importance of cooperating with competitors. Also, coopetition can help entrepreneurs to access new resources and capabilities from their competitors; however, “too much” coopetition can lead to tensions between such rival firms. Additionally, it is proposed that the relationship between coopetition activities and organisational performance is moderated by competitive intensity (a facet of the competitive business environment). That is, with higher-levels of competitive intensity, entrepreneurs are less likely to improve their performance from coopetition activities. That is, the competitive business environment can affect the delicate balance between the forces of cooperativeness and competitiveness.

Originality/value – Entrepreneurial marketing research has concentrated on individualistic perspectives concerning how entrepreneurs operate their businesses. In this viewpoint, the competitive assumptions of the marketing/entrepreneurship interface are extended to account for coopetition. This paper also outlines the areas within the coopetition literature that entrepreneurial marketing scholars should appreciate. Specifically, entrepreneurial marketing scholars are recommended to examine the antecedents and consequences of coopetition, coupled with the moderating role of competitive intensity (a facet of the competitive business environment) in the coopetition – organisational performance relationship. This article ends a recommended methodology for academics to test the conceptual framework in future empirical research.

Key words – Coopetition, entrepreneurial marketing, marketing/entrepreneurship interface, organisational performance, competitive intensity.

Classification – Viewpoint.

Introduction

The objective of this viewpoint is to explore how coopetition (the interplay between cooperation and competition) can be incorporated into the entrepreneurial marketing literature. Entrepreneurial marketing (also known as the marketing/entrepreneurship

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2
3 interface) is a cross-disciplinary domain that has expanded, in terms of research, over
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5 the last thirty years (Davis, Hills and LaForge, 1985; Carson, 1990; Collinson and
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7 Shaw, 2001; Hills, Hultman and Miles, 2008; Jones and Rowley, 2011; O’Cass and
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9 Morrish, 2016; Thompson-Whiteside, Turnbull and Howe-Walsh, 2018).
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11 Entrepreneurial marketing integrates the forces of market orientation and
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13 entrepreneurial orientation (Miles and Arnold, 1991). Market orientation is the
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15 implementation of the marketing concept, through the organisation-wide: generation
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17 of, dissemination of, and responsiveness to market intelligence, whereas,
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19 entrepreneurial orientation is the degree to which firms engage in: risk-taking,
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21 innovative, and proactive behaviours (Lumpkin and Dess, 1996; Baker and Sinkula,
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23 2009; Boso, Story and Cadogan, 2013). While there is some disagreement in the
24
25 extant literature concerning how entrepreneurial marketing should be defined and
26
27 conceptualised, it has been established that the marketing/entrepreneurship interface
28
29 is comprised of: risk-taking, proactive, and innovative behaviours that firms use to
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31 create value for customers (Whalen, Uslay, Pascal, Omura, McAuley, Kasouf, Jones,
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33 Hultman, Hills, Hansen, Gilmore, Giglierano, Eggers and Deacon, 2016).
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41 Like other topics in the broader management literature, entrepreneurial marketing has
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43 typically been examined from an individualistic perspective, whereby, authors have
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45 examined various business strategies that are driven by the resources and capabilities
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47 of entrepreneurs in their own companies (Duus, 1997; O’Donnell, Gilmore, Carson and
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49 Cummis, 2002; Mort, Weerawardena and Liesch, 2012; Crick and Crick, 2015). The
50
51 marketing/entrepreneurship interface has scarcely considered the notion of
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53 coopetition (also referred to as coopetition activities or strategies) (Alves and
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55 Meneses, 2015; Crick and Crick, 2016; Crick, 2018a; Daidj and Egert, 2018), in which
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57 entrepreneurs cooperate with their competitors to perform superiorly than if they
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operated on an individualistic basis (see Chetty and Wilson, 2003; Ang, 2008; Rusko, 2011; Ritala, 2012). In this viewpoint, coopetition is explored to help entrepreneurial marketing scholars to appreciate how such theory could be better-served with insights into collaborative business strategies (Alves and Meneses, 2015; Crick and Crick, 2016; Crick, 2018a; Daidj and Egert, 2018).

Coopetition has been formally defined as “a dynamic and paradoxical relationship, which arises when two companies cooperate together in some areas, such as strategic alliances, but compete with each other in other areas” (Bengtsson and Kock, 2000, p. 411). Coopetition is a well-established topic in the broader management literature (Lechner and Leyronas, 2009; Mathias, Huyghe, Frid and Galloway, 2018). Scholars have found that by collaborating with competitors, entrepreneurs provide themselves with access to: resources, capabilities, and opportunities that would not be available if they operated on an individualistic-level (Park, Srivastava and Gnyawali, 2014). Through coopetition, entrepreneurs are likely to improve their organisations’ performance, due to possessing new ways of competing within their business environment (Ritala, Golnam and Wegmann, 2014; Le Roy and Czakon, 2016). Yet, limited research surrounds the antecedents of coopetition, namely, the factors that are likely to help entrepreneurs to engage in coopetition activities (see Crick, 2018a). Also, the nature of the relationship between coopetition and organisational performance has been scarcely studied (Ang, 2008; Ritala, 2012). Specifically, it is of interest to explore whether this link is non-linear and moderated by factors, like the competitive business environment.

Interestingly, there has been a recent body of entrepreneurial marketing research that has examined the role of network members (and collaboration) in helping entrepreneurs to compete within their markets and create superior value for their

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2
3 customers. Specifically, in an entrepreneurial marketing-themed special issue of
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5 *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, various papers examined how
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7 entrepreneurs might be better-served by networking with certain stakeholders to
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9 improve their performance (see Andersson, Evers and Gliga, 2018; Crick, 2018a;
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11 Foster and Brindley, 2018). These papers examined different issues associated with
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13 entrepreneurial networks, such as: firms cooperating with certain stakeholders in the
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15 Far-East (Andersson *et al.*, 2018), cooperation in agricultural markets (Crick, 2018a),
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17 and the networking of female entrepreneurs in the services sector (Foster and
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19 Brindley, 2018). Consequently, this viewpoint addresses a current call for research,
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21 examining the role of networks in entrepreneurial marketing strategies, with a focus
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23 on cooperation activities.
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29 The aim of this paper is to highlight these under-researched areas surrounding the
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31 cooperation literature and link them with entrepreneurial marketing theory. Guided by
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33 a series of research propositions, some directions for future research are suggested.
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35 Further, this viewpoint is designed to inform scholars, working at the
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37 marketing/entrepreneurship interface, on how entrepreneurial marketing can
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39 strengthen the cooperation literature (i.e., fill certain research gaps). As such, this study
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41 is divided into the following four sections. First, the entrepreneurial marketing literature
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43 is reviewed and linked with theory surrounding cooperation. Second, to explore the
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45 research gaps pertaining to the cooperation literature, a conceptual framework, with
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47 three research propositions, is developed to examine the antecedents and
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49 consequences of cooperation activities, as well as the boundaries of the cooperation –
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51 organisational performance relationship. Third, some directions for future research are
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53 suggested to highlight how entrepreneurial marketing theory can be used to address
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3 the under-researched issues associated with the competition literature. Fourth, the
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5 paper is concluded.
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8 **Framing literature**

9 *Market orientation and entrepreneurial orientation*

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14 Entrepreneurial marketing is positioned at the interface between the marketing and
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16 entrepreneurship literature (Hills *et al.*, 2008; Miles, Gilmore, Harrigan, Lewis and
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18 Sethna, 2015; O’Cass and Morrish, 2016). Underpinning these two strands of literature
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20 is the forces of market orientation and entrepreneurial orientation (Miles and Arnold,
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22 1991). Market orientation is the implementation of the marketing concept and the
23
24 organisation-wide creation of customer value (Jaworski and Kohli, 1993). Market
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26 orientation has been conceptualised and operationalised in numerous respects, with
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28 some authors describing it as a set of firm-level behaviours (e.g., Kohli and Jaworski,
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30 1990; Cadogan, Souchon and Procter, 2008; Cadogan, Kuivalainen and Sundqvist,
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32 2009), whereas, other academics have studied it as a corporate culture (e.g., Narver
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34 and Slater, 1990; Slater and Narver, 1994; Homburg and Pflesser, 2000). Regardless
35
36 of how market orientation is conceptualised or operationalised, a consensus in the
37
38 extant body of knowledge is that it involves information-processing activities (Cadogan
39
40 and Diamantopoulos, 1995), in which firms obtain and react to information pertaining
41
42 to their customers and competitors and create superior forms of customer value (Crick,
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44 2018b).
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52 Entrepreneurial orientation is the “strategy-making processes that provide
53
54 organisations with a basis for entrepreneurial decisions and actions” (Rauch, Wiklund,
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56 Lumpkin and Frese, 2009, p. 762). There have been different conceptualisations and
57
58 operationalisations of entrepreneurial orientation, but scholars have agreed that it is a
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3 multi-dimensional construct, comprised of: risk-taking, innovative, and proactive
4 behaviours (Lumpkin and Dess, 1996; Boso *et al.*, 2013). Indeed, certain scholars
5 have considered competitive aggressiveness and autonomy as facets of
6 entrepreneurial orientation (George and Marino, 2011; Sundqvist, Kylaheiko,
7 Kuivalainen and Cadogan, 2012). Both market orientation and entrepreneurial
8 orientation have been found to help companies to improve their performance (e.g.,
9 sales) (Mentzer and Ozsomer, 2002; Baker and Sinkula, 2009). As mentioned earlier,
10 the forces of market orientation and entrepreneurial orientation are used to
11 conceptualise the marketing/entrepreneurship interface (Hills *et al.*, 2008; Miles *et al.*,
12 2015; O’Cass and Morrish, 2016). The dimensions of entrepreneurial marketing are
13 discussed in the following section.

28 29 *Dimensions of entrepreneurial marketing*

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32 Entrepreneurial marketing has been conceptualised as a seven-component construct,
33 comprised of: a proactive orientation, opportunity-driven behaviours, customer
34 intensity factors, innovation-focused behaviours, risk management activities, resource
35 leveraging behaviours, and value creation factors (Morris, Schindehutte and LaForge,
36 2002). A proactive orientation is the degree to which entrepreneurs are prepared to
37 take bold steps when designing and executing their business strategies, so that they
38 influence their competitive business environment (Narver, Slater and MacLachlan,
39 2004; Eggers, Kraus, Hughes, Laraway and Snyckerski, 2013). The opportunity-driven
40 dimension of entrepreneurial marketing concerns the ways that entrepreneurs scan
41 their competitive business environment for new ways of achieving a competitive
42 advantage (Morrish, Miles and Deacon, 2010). Customer intensity refers to the extent
43 to which entrepreneurs develop and sustain relationships with their customers, such
44 as through collecting and responding to information about their wants and needs
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(Miles and Darroch, 2006). This is something that compares with a customer orientation, a key dimension of the market orientation construct (see Narver and Slater, 1990; Cadogan and Diamantopoulos, 1995).

Innovation-focused behaviours involve the ways that entrepreneurs design and implement creative and technological processes within their operations, e.g., developing new products to fulfil their customers' wants and needs (Morrish and Deacon, 2011; Hallback and Gabrielsson, 2013). Risk management concerns entrepreneurs' awareness of the chances of success, vis-à-vis, failure of their business strategies, as well as the steps that they take to mitigate risk, like managing their resources and capabilities to reduce financial losses (O'Donnell *et al.*, 2002; Gilmore, Carson and O'Donnell, 2004; Morrish *et al.*, 2010). Further, resource leveraging activities are those that entrepreneurs use to utilise their financial and non-financial assets, so that they can implement their competitive strategies (Kraus, Harms and Fink, 2009; Gross, Carson and Jones, 2014). Often, entrepreneurs in small companies, have a limited array of resources (including cash) at their disposal (Chaston, 2000; Wiklund and Shepherd, 2005; Gilmore, 2011). Resource leveraging activities help entrepreneurs to maximise their organisational performance through managing the correct resources in appropriate competitive strategies (Bjerke and Hultman, 2002; Morris *et al.*, 2002).

The value creation dimension of entrepreneurial marketing focuses on one of the most important issues in the broader marketing literature, namely, the ways that businesses can create value for their customers (Payne, Storbacka and Frow, 2008; Kumar and Reinartz, 2016). There are numerous methods to create customer value, like through market-oriented behaviours (generating, disseminating, and being responsive to market intelligence) (Jaworski and Kohli, 1993; Homburg and Pflesser, 2000; Cadogan

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3 *et al.*, 2008); hence, entrepreneurs must engage in customer **value-oriented** activities
4 that match their available resources and capabilities (Hills *et al.*, 2008; Guercini, 2012;
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et al., 2008); hence, entrepreneurs must engage in customer **value-oriented** activities that match their available resources and capabilities (Hills *et al.*, 2008; Guercini, 2012; Krisjanous and Carruthers, 2018). These seven dimensions of entrepreneurial marketing condense the marketing/entrepreneurship interface into a set of activities used to integrate the forces of market orientation and entrepreneurial orientation (Morris *et al.*, 2002; Whalen *et al.*, 2016; Crick, 2018a). In this **current** study, **the** theory surrounding the marketing/entrepreneurship interface is linked with some under-researched issues pertaining to the coopetition literature. Such conceptualisations are discussed as follows.

Coopetition and entrepreneurial marketing

As highlighted earlier, the entrepreneurial marketing domain has been approached using individualistic assumptions, such as entrepreneurs depending upon their own resources and capabilities to create value for **their** customers and not collaborating with their competitors (see Duus, 1997; Stokes, 2000; Gilmore, 2011; Mort *et al.*, 2012). For instance, Crick, Chaudhry and Crick (2018) examined a case study of a small business in tourism sector in the United Kingdom. In their paper, they found that the owner-manager was attempting to run a lifestyle-oriented firm, but due to: poor planning, changes to the local competitive business environment, and social factors, the business model was unsuccessful and firm-level performance suffered. Specifically, the owner-manager had not undertaken **enough** planning, as resources were scarce. **This meant** that the business model was not sustainable and may have been assisted by networking with the correct stakeholders. Although it is **common** for entrepreneurs to plan through using their own resources and capabilities (Crick and Crick, 2015), the coopetition literature suggests that companies are likely to improve

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3 their performance if the owner-managers collaborate with their competitors (Rusko,
4 2011; Ritala *et al.*, 2014; Le Roy and Czakon, 2016).
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8 In certain instances, collaborating with competitors is a positive **business** strategy for
9 entrepreneurs, due to providing them with: resources, capabilities, and opportunities
10 that would not exist under an individualistic business model (Ritala, 2012; Bengtsson
11 and Johansson, 2014; Mathias *et al.*, 2018). Collaborating with competitors could be
12 a risky strategy for entrepreneurs, **as there is** potential for tensions between rival firms,
13 as well as the chance of losing unique selling points that owner-managers might have
14 worked very hard to develop (Raza-Ullah, Bengtsson and Kock, 2014; Tidstrom,
15 2014). As the marketing/entrepreneurship interface deals with the ways that
16 entrepreneurs assess risk and engage in competitive strategies intended to create
17 value for customers (along other innovative and proactive behaviours) (Jones and
18 Rowley, 2011; Foster and Brindley, 2018), it is of interest to link coopetition with the
19 entrepreneurial marketing literature. By bridging the theoretical gap between these two
20 strands of literature, the prior-mentioned individualistic assumptions of the
21 entrepreneurial marketing perspective (as per Duus, 1997; Stokes, 2000; Miles and
22 Darroch, 2006; Gilmore, 2011) can be extended, so that the theory can account for a
23 collaborative business strategy (namely, coopetition) dimension.
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46 One of the few studies to link coopetition activities with entrepreneurial marketing was
47 written by Crick and Crick (2016), who used the empirical context of a Taekwondo
48 organisation in New Zealand to examine the multiple levels of coopetition. These
49 authors found that entrepreneurs can engage in three types of coopetition activities,
50 namely: local-level coopetition (where collaboration occurs with competitors within a
51 close geographic proximity), national-level coopetition (where collaboration occurs
52 with competitors across multiple regions of the same country), and organisation-level
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3 cooperation (where collaboration occurs with competitors across different sectors and
4 is not restricted to a certain country). Albeit examined in the context of a sporting
5 organisation, Crick and Crick (2016) argued that cooperation is a highly-suitable topic
6 for entrepreneurial marketing research, as it concerns the delicate balance between
7 the forces of competitiveness and cooperativeness. Henceforth, there is evidence to
8 suggest that cooperation can be theoretically-related to the entrepreneurial marketing
9 literature (supplementing Alves and Meneses, 2015; [Crick, 2018a](#); Daidj and Egert,
10 2018).

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22 Cooperation is likely to help entrepreneurs to improve their performance (e.g., sales),
23 as it allows them to access: resources, capabilities, and opportunities that would not
24 be available if they competed on an individualistic-level (Ritala, 2012; Bengtsson and
25 Johansson, 2014; Le Roy and Czakon, 2016). In the entrepreneurial marketing (and
26 entrepreneurship) literature, there is the underpinning assumption that the owner-
27 managers of small firms have limited resources and capabilities to invest into their
28 business strategies (Chaston, 2000; Wiklund and Shepherd, 2005; Gilmore, 2011;
29 [Crick and Crick, 2018a](#)). Due to their resource-disadvantages, entrepreneurs must find
30 dynamic ways to create value for their customers and make effective use of their
31 limited resource base (Westhead, Wright and Ucbasaran, 2001). If owner-managers
32 have access to limited resources and capabilities, cooperation (or similar collaborative
33 business strategies) could be highly-effective [activities](#) to help them [to](#): achieve their
34 objectives, maximise their performance (e.g., sales), and compete within the
35 competitive business environment (Chetty and Wilson, 2003; Andersson *et al.*, 2018).
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3 professional reasons and manage assets with strategic alliances, through utilising the
4 skills of the cooperation partners (namely, rival firms). Alves and Meneses (2015)
5 highlighted the importance of cooperating with competitors, so that entrepreneurs can
6 be provided with new: resources, capabilities, and opportunities. Network members
7 are critical stakeholders for entrepreneurs, as they might help them to operate
8 successfully in their market(s) (Hill, McGowan and Drummond, 1999; Rocks, Gilmore
9 and Carson, 2005; Andersson *et al.*, 2018; Foster and Brindley, 2018). It appears that
10 competitors can also be effective network members in the correct circumstances
11 (depending on firm-level and industry-level contingencies). Therefore, collaborating
12 with rivals should be incorporated into the research positioned at the
13 marketing/entrepreneurship interface (building upon Alves and Meneses, 2015; Crick
14 and Crick, 2016; Crick, 2018a; Daidj and Egert, 2018). The: facets, antecedents, and
15 consequences of cooperation are explored in the next section.

16 *Facets, antecedents, and consequences of cooperation*

17 Crick (2018a) explored the: facets, antecedents, and consequences of cooperation,
18 using three dimensions of entrepreneurial marketing, namely: a proactive orientation,
19 resource leveraging behaviours, and innovation-focused behaviours. While Crick
20 (2018a) highlighted that it would have been interesting to apply all seven dimensions
21 of entrepreneurial marketing to cooperation activities (Morris *et al.*, 2002; Whalen *et al.*,
22 2016), the three that were selected explained: how cooperation can be managed (the
23 facets of cooperation), the factors that motivate entrepreneurs to cooperate with their
24 competitors (the antecedents of cooperation), and the performance outcomes that such
25 strategies might yield (the consequences of cooperation). Crick (2018a) selected these
26 three dimensions of entrepreneurial marketing, as they were conceptually-related to
27 the cooperation literature (Bjerke and Hultman, 2002; Hills *et al.*, 2008; Morrish *et al.*,

2010). Consequently, as noted in the previous section, coopetition activities have been linked with the marketing/entrepreneurship interface (Alves and Meneses, 2015; Crick and Crick, 2016; Crick, 2018a; Daidj and Egert, 2018), but more research is needed to integrate these two strands of literature.

Crick's (2018a) study examined the link between coopetition, under an entrepreneurial marketing perspective, using qualitative insights from the New Zealand wine industry. This sector was chosen, as it manages high-degrees of cooperativeness and competitiveness, a key factor needed to study coopetition (Rusko, 2011; Bengtsson and Johansson, 2014). Regarding the facets of coopetition, the construct can occur in three forms, namely: resource-sharing activities (the lending and borrowing of equipment between competitors), capability-sharing activities (rival firms sharing their knowledge and experience), and regional-level coopetition (a combination of resource and capability-sharing activities within a certain geographic region) (Ritala *et al.*, 2014; Granata, Lasch, Le Roy and Dana, 2018). By managing such facets, owner-managers should be able to develop and implement performance-driving forms of coopetition, mainly, those that help them to achieve their business objectives (Crick, 2018a). By not engaging in coopetition, small businesses might struggle to create value for their customers, due to possessing a limited resource base (Crick, 2015).

Concerning the antecedents of coopetition, Crick (2018a) found that an industry-wide cooperative mind-set and having access to competitors' resources and capabilities are necessary factors to help entrepreneurs to engage in coopetition activities. An industry-wide cooperative mind-set was described as when a large proportion of the competitors (or managers and employees in these entities) within a certain sector share the view that collaborating with competitors is likely to improve organisational performance. These findings support the argument that coopetition can only exist in

1
2
3 certain competitive business environments, where rivals are prepared to cooperate
4 with one another (Gnyawali and Park, 2011; Bengtsson, Raza-Ullah and Vanyushyn,
5 2016; Granata *et al.*, 2018). If owner-managers can foster these drivers of coopetition,
6 they should be able to add value to such collaborative arrangements, by sharing
7 resources and capabilities with competing organisations to mutually-benefit all parties
8 (Crick, 2018a). That said, Crick (2018a) stressed that the antecedents of coopetition
9 remains an under-researched area.

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20 In terms of the consequences of coopetition, Crick (2018a) found that coopetition
21 activities are likely to help entrepreneurs to perform better than if they operated an
22 individualistic business model. However, Crick (2018a) highlighted that entrepreneurs
23 have different performance objectives, such as market-level survival and sustainable
24 competitive advantages (as per Katsikeas, Morgan, Leonidou and Hult, 2016), for
25 which coopetition activities can yield various performance outcomes. Crick (2018a)
26 found that coopetition is only likely to drive sustainable competitive advantages if
27 entrepreneurs manage larger organisations, with more resources and capabilities to
28 invest in their various competitive strategies (Westhead *et al.*, 2001; Miles and
29 Darroch, 2006). Hence, although research has begun to examine the: facets,
30 antecedents, and consequences of coopetition under an entrepreneurial marketing
31 perspective (Alves and Meneses, 2015; Crick and Crick, 2016; Crick, 2018a; Daidj
32 and Egert, 2018), further studies are required to strengthen such theory. The role of
33 entrepreneurs in managing coopetition activities is explored in the following section.

34 *Role of entrepreneurs in managing coopetition activities*

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Coopetition is often studied at the firm-level, whereby, two or more businesses
collaborate to perform in ways that they would not be able to achieve if they had

operated individualistically (Chetty and Wilson, 2003; Ang, 2008; Le Roy and Czakon, 2016). However, within the companies engaging in coopetition strategies are entrepreneurs, who are the ones that are involved in: risk-taking, proactive, and innovative behaviours when collaborating with rival firms (Granata *et al.*, 2018). Entrepreneurs are the individuals that typically make the decision to collaborate with their competitors, so they need to be confident that they are working with correct rival firms (the ones that can provide them with superior assets and can be trusted in the short-term and long-term future) (Gnyawali and Park, 2011; Ritala, 2012; Mathias *et al.*, 2018). Yet, if entrepreneurs have a team of employees, they should ensure that the collaborative values that they possess (as owner-managers) are infused throughout their companies, so that such strategies are fully-implemented (Crick, 2015). In the next section, a series of research propositions are developed to examine some of the under-researched areas associated with the coopetition literature.

Research propositions

Conceptual framework

While there are certain issues surrounding the coopetition literature that are well-established (e.g., the performance consequences of coopetition) (Ang, 2008; Ritala, 2012; Le Roy and Czakon, 2016), there are other areas that are under-researched. In this viewpoint, three issues are highlighted, as important topics that have been scarcely studied. These issues are developed into a conceptual framework, guided by three research propositions (Figure 1). That is: an organisation-wide coopetition-oriented mind-set is anticipated to be a driver of coopetition activities (proposition 1), coopetition activities are expected to have a non-linear (inverted U-shaped) relationship with organisational performance (proposition 2), and competitive intensity

(a facet of the competitive business environment) is evaluated as a moderator in the competition – organisational performance relationship (proposition 3). These research propositions are developed as follows.

[Insert Figure 1 about here]

An organisation-wide cooperation-oriented mind-set and cooperation activities

Most research surrounding the cooperation literature has focused on the performance consequences of such strategies, rather than their antecedents (see Ang, 2008; Ritala, 2012; Le Roy and Czakon, 2016). The few studies that have examined the factors that motivate entrepreneurs to engage in cooperation activities have explored the mind-set driving these collaborative behaviours (e.g., Gnyawali and Park, 2011; Bengtsson *et al.*, 2016). An organisation-wide cooperation-oriented mind-set is the firm-level beliefs surrounding the importance of collaborating with competitors (Crick and Crick, 2018b). If entrepreneurs (and their employees) believe that they will improve their performance (e.g., sales) if they share resources and capabilities with rival firms, they *might* engage in behavioural forms of cooperation (Crick, 2015). As such, cooperation activities, like resource and capability-sharing activities (see Crick, 2018a), are likely to be manifestations of an organisation-wide cooperation-oriented mind-set (Gnyawali and Park, 2011; Bengtsson *et al.*, 2016). It is important that all members of a business share this organisation-wide cooperation-oriented mind-set (not just the owner-managers), as this may limit the extent to which cooperation-oriented behaviours are implemented (Crick and Crick, 2018b).

Outside of the cooperation literature, other studies have examined the link between organisation-wide mind-sets and firm-level behaviours. For instance, Kor and Mesko (2013) examined the notion of the firm's dominant logic (comparable with an

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3 organisation-wide mind-set), namely, the ways that management teams conceptualise
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5 their businesses and have assumptions about how their companies should be
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7 managed (Prahalad and Bettis, 1986; Obloj, Obloj and Pratt, 2010). If managers and
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9 employees believe that a certain activity is an important driver of organisational
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11 performance, they are likely to engage in firm-level behaviours that are in-sync with
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13 their dominant logic (Kor and Mesko, 2013). These authors discussed how resource
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15 investments (for instance, to certain departments of an organisation) are a behavioural
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17 manifestation of a dominant logic, whereby, a corporate culture directs firm-level
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19 behaviours (as per Homburg and Pflesser, 2000). Returning to the coopetition
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21 literature, if entrepreneurs and their employees believe that coopetition is a
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23 performance-driving business strategy, coopetition activities could be a behavioural
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25 manifestation of such an organisation-wide coopetition-oriented mind-set (Gnyawali
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27 and Park, 2011; Bengtsson *et al.*, 2016).

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33 To stress a vital point, an organisation-wide coopetition-oriented mind-set is
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35 conceptualised as a firm-level construct, meaning that all members of a company
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37 should believe that coopetition is a positive driver of organisational performance (Crick
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39 and Crick, 2018b). If entrepreneurs (as owner-managers) possess assumptions about
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41 the importance of collaborating with competitors, but these assumptions are not
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43 infused throughout the company, it is argued that an organisation-wide coopetition-
44
45 oriented mind-set does not exist. Although entrepreneurs are key individuals in
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47 managing coopetition strategies (see Bengtsson and Johansson, 2014; Granata *et al.*,
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49 2018), functional-level employees also engage in certain forms of coopetition.
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51 Specifically, members of staff, that have an interface with customers, might
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53 recommend rival firms' offerings, if they cannot supply a good or service (demanded
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55 by a customer) themselves (Crick and Crick, 2018b). It would be interesting to test
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whether an organisation-wide coopetition-oriented mind-set drives coopetition activities (building upon Gnyawali and Park, 2011; Bengtsson *et al.*, 2016).

Henceforth, it is anticipated that:

P1. An organisation-wide coopetition-oriented mind-set has a positive relationship with coopetition activities.

Non-linear relationship between coopetition activities and organisational performance

To emphasise a previous point, various authors have examined the performance consequences of coopetition activities (Ang, 2008; Ritala, 2012; Le Roy and Czakon, 2016). Once again, prior work has highlighted that to overcome certain resource-disadvantages, entrepreneurs in small businesses, can access new: resources, capabilities, and opportunities from their competitors, meaning that coopetition activities can improve organisational performance (Lechner and Leyronas, 2009; Rusko, 2011; Ritala *et al.*, 2014). Furthermore, a commonly-used theory surrounding the marketing/entrepreneurship interface is the resource-based view of the firm (also known as resource-based theory) (see Kocak and Abimbola, 2009; Gross *et al.*, 2014; Khizindar and Darley, 2017; Crick, 2018a). This theoretical perspective suggests that organisational performance (conceptualised in numerous capacities) is driven by business' resources and capabilities (Nason and Wiklund, 2018). Therefore, resource-based theory has the key assumption that larger companies, with more assets at their disposal, are more likely to have higher-levels of performance than smaller firms, with fewer resources and capabilities (Westhead *et al.*, 2001).

Under the resource-based view, the resource and capability-sharing activities that comprise coopetition strategies are likely to help entrepreneurs, managing small companies, to perform in ways that would not be possible if they operated an

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3 individualistic business model (Bengtsson and Johansson, 2014; Le Roy and Czakon,
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5 2016). That said, most authors examining the performance consequences of
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7 competition have only considered the linear relationship between these two constructs
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9 (e.g., Ritala, 2012). That is, while cooperation activities may provide entrepreneurs will
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11 a range of benefits, it is suggested that collaborating with competitors is only a positive
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13 competitive strategy up to a certain point. Specifically, if entrepreneurs collaborate with
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15 their competitors, they could reach a stage, in which they share “too many” resources
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17 and capabilities with rival firms, creating tensions between such competing entities
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19 (Raza-Ullah *et al.*, 2014). Tensions surrounding cooperation activities could include
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21 conflict and power imbalances, whereby, “too much” cooperation could create a
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23 diminishing-returns effect in the link with organisational performance (Tidstrom, 2014).
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29 With “too little” cooperation, entrepreneurs are forced to compete with a potentially
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31 limited volume of: resources, capabilities, and opportunities (Crick, 2015). As
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33 discussed throughout the entrepreneurial marketing literature, often, small firms do not
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35 have large-scale assets that can be invested into their business strategies (Carson,
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37 1990; O'Donnell *et al.*, 2002; Gilmore, 2011; Gross *et al.*, 2014). As such, if little
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39 networking occurs with competing companies, an individualistic business model can
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41 reduce the opportunities that entrepreneurs can strive for (Bengtsson and Johansson,
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43 2014; Granata *et al.*, 2018). Yet, with “too much” cooperation, as mentioned above,
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45 entrepreneurs risk creating tensions (e.g., conflict and power imbalances) with their
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47 competitors (Raza-Ullah *et al.*, 2014; Tidstrom, 2014). Thus, entrepreneurs are faced
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49 with the difficult task of engaging in the “optimal-level” of cooperation activities. If
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51 entrepreneurs exceed this inflection point, they risk becoming dependent on
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53 competitors' resources and capabilities - affecting the degree of conflict and power
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55 imbalances that are at play (Crick and Crick, 2018b). Consequently, it is expected that:
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3 P2. Coopetition activities have a non-linear (inverted U-shaped) relationship
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5 with organisational performance.
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8 *Moderating role of competitive intensity*
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11 In addition to scholars [predominately](#) examining the linear relationship between
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13 coopetition activities and organisational performance, such studies have scarcely
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15 considered the contingencies that could affect this link (Crick and Crick, 2016; Le Roy
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17 and Czakon, 2016; Granata *et al.*, 2018). While numerous contingencies could be
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19 explored, a limited area of research surrounds whether the competitive business
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21 environment affects the relationship between coopetition activities and organisational
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23 performance, with very few authors having examined this factor (e.g., Ang, 2008;
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25 Ritala, 2012). The competitive business environment concerns external (outside of the
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27 firm) market-level forces that shape how companies operate in their industries
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29 (Lumpkin and Dess, 1996; [Ferrier, 2001](#); Chung and Kuo, 2018). Moreover, there are
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31 different facets of the competitive business environment, such as: technological
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33 turbulence, market dynamism, and competitive intensity (Slater and Narver, 1994;
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35 Cadogan, Cui and Li, 2003). The latter is the area of focus in this viewpoint, as
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37 competitive intensity (the degree to which rivals are competitively fierce in their
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39 markets) (Jaworski and Kohli, 1993) is linked with coopetition activities (see Ang,
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41 2008).
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49 As a non-coopetition illustration, the competitive business environment has been a
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51 topic of great interest in the market orientation literature, whereby, scholars have
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53 debated over its moderating effect in the market orientation – organisational
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55 performance relationship (e.g., Slater and Narver, 1994; Murray, Gao and Kotabe,
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57 2011). The authors that have found a significant moderating effect have suggested
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3 that with lower-levels of environmental turbulence (which can include competitive
4 intensity), market orientation is more likely to lead to improvements in organisational
5 performance – due to fewer competitive distortions in the market, allowing companies
6 to create value for their customers (see Cadogan *et al.*, 2009). Yet, with higher-levels
7 of environmental turbulence (again, including competitive intensity), businesses might
8 struggle to differentiate their products and services from the increased magnitude of
9 rivals in the market (Cadogan *et al.*, 2003). Linking with the themes of this current
10 study, it is of interest to explore whether competitive intensity moderates the
11 cooperation – organisational performance relationship.
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25 As firms become competitively fierce within their markets, it could be that they become
26 less likely to share resources and capabilities with their rivals (Ang, 2008; Ritala,
27 2012). That is, cooperation involves the paradoxical relationship between the forces of
28 cooperativeness and competitiveness (Gnyawali and Park, 2011; Le Roy and Czakon,
29 2016; Granata *et al.*, 2018; Mathias *et al.*, 2018). Thus, even in the most cooperative
30 forms of cooperation, there will always be a rivalrous factor, influencing the networks
31 that are being managed by competing entities (Bengtsson and Kock, 2000). Therefore,
32 as the degree to which entrepreneurs exhibit competitive behaviours (through
33 competitive intensity) increases, they might reduce the cooperativeness within
34 cooperation activities, creating less-effective cooperation strategies. As such, it is
35 suggested that higher-degrees of competitive intensity could weaken the relationship
36 between cooperation activities and organisational performance. Yet, this moderating
37 effect has scarcely been studied (Ang, 2008; Ritala, 2012), creating scope for
38 additional investigations.
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57 Returning to the conceptualisation of the non-linear (inverted U-shaped) relationship
58 between cooperation activities and organisational performance (proposition 2), the
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reason that such a link occurs between two constructs is that a third variable is affecting the dynamics (see Cadogan *et al.*, 2009). As cooperation concerns the interplay between cooperation and competition (Chetty and Wilson, 2003; Rusko, 2011; Mathias *et al.*, 2018), it is likely that the competitiveness between two or more firms that engage in cooperation strategies, determines the non-linear link with organisational performance (Park *et al.*, 2014; Bengtsson *et al.*, 2016). Hence, a third variable that underpins the non-linear relationship between cooperation activities and organisational performance could be competitive intensity (a facet of the competitive business environment). It is argued that with an excessive magnitude of competitive intensity, explanations can be made surrounding the potentially non-linear relationship between cooperation activities and organisational performance. **Nevertheless, there is evidence to suggest that:**

P3. Competitive intensity **negatively** moderates the relationship between cooperation activities and organisational performance.

In the following section, these three research propositions are shaped into some directions for future research.

Directions for future research

Despite cooperation being a well-studied issue in the broader **management** literature, there are some important areas that need to be investigated. As cooperation activities have **scarcely** been incorporated into the entrepreneurial marketing literature (Alves and Meneses, 2015; Crick and Crick, 2016; **Crick, 2018a**; Daidj and Egert, 2018), it is proposed that scholars, exploring this field, can use their expertise to fill such research gaps. Further, the marketing/entrepreneurship interface is far from being a saturated research domain (i.e., there are plenty of issues that need to be addressed) (O'Donnell

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3 *et al.*, 2002; Gilmore, 2011; Mort *et al.*, 2012; Gross *et al.*, 2014; Miles *et al.*, 2015;
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5 O’Cass and Morrish, 2016; Whalen *et al.*, 2016). Entrepreneurial marketing scholars
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7 should investigate cooperation activities, as well as their: antecedents, consequences,
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9 and boundaries to study how collaborating with competitors helps entrepreneurs to
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11 overcome certain resource-disadvantages by accessing new: resources, capabilities,
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13 and opportunities from their competitors (as per Bengtsson and Johansson, 2014;
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15 Granata *et al.*, 2018; Mathias *et al.*, 2018). Entrepreneurial marketing scholars should
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17 investigate the following issues when applying the marketing/entrepreneurship
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19 interface to the cooperation literature.
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24 First, entrepreneurial marketing scholars should examine whether an organisation-
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26 wide cooperation-oriented mind-set has a positive relationship with cooperation
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28 activities (building upon the work of Gnyawali and Park, 2011; Bengtsson *et al.*, 2016;
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30 Crick, 2018a). Second, research positioned at the marketing/entrepreneurship
31
32 interface should also address whether the relationship between cooperation activities
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34 and organisational performance is non-linear (inverted U-shaped) (extending research
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36 by Park *et al.*, 2014; Raza-Ullah *et al.*, 2014; Tidstrom, 2014). Third, entrepreneurial
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38 marketing scholars should examine the boundaries of cooperation activities; that is,
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40 whether the performance consequences of cooperation are negatively influenced by
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42 the degree of competitive intensity (see Ang, 2008; Ritala, 2012). Indeed, these
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44 directions for future research can only be studied through theory-testing quantitative
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46 research. Thus, entrepreneurial marketing scholars should use effective
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48 operationalisations and high-quality (reliable and valid) statistical data to test these
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50 conceptual assertions.
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57 Specifically, if entrepreneurial marketing scholars choose to test this paper’s
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59 conceptual framework, they should undertake a methodology that is based on the
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3 following data collection and data analysis techniques¹. In terms of an empirical
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5 context, it is important to study coopetition an industry (or industries) that is both highly-
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7 cooperative and highly-competitive (Bengtsson and Kock, 2000; Rusko, 2011;
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9 Bengtsson and Johansson, 2014). That is, coopetition is the interplay between
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11 cooperation and competition, meaning that it is important to investigate such activities
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13 where cooperative and competitive forces are at play (Crick, 2018c). For example,
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15 academics have studied coopetition in agricultural markets, such as the wine industry
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17 (see Crick, 2015; Granata *et al.*, 2018). Once researchers have selected an
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19 appropriate empirical context to study coopetition, a survey-based is recommended.
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21 Surveys could be used to collect data on the operationalisations of the constructs
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23 depicted within this paper's conceptual framework (e.g., coopetition activities,
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25 competitive intensity, and organisational performance).

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31 When operationalising the constructs used within the conceptual framework, scholars
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33 should attempt to use established measures, such as Ritala's (2012) adopted
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35 measurement scale of coopetition activities. Further, when developing a survey,
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37 academics are recommended to pre-test its content with a sample of academics and
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39 practitioners to ensure that it is readable and addresses the correct issues (Crick,
40
41 2018b). Then, if researchers decide to test the conceptual framework that was
42
43 developed within this viewpoint, they are recommended to do so using structural
44
45 equation modelling (SEM). SEM is a combination of multiple regression and factor
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47 analyses that addresses the quality of measurement scales, alongside testing
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49 hypothesised relationships (Sundqvist *et al.*, 2012). SEM is an appropriate technique,
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51 as the conceptual framework is relatively complex, as it involves multiple hypothesised
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53 paths and a moderation effect (in addition to any control variables that scholars might
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60 ¹ The author would like to thank one anonymous reviewer for raising this issue.

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3 wish to use, e.g., firm size). SEM allows researchers to test such models (Cadogan *et*
4 *al.*, 2008) and would be a suitable data analysis technique to employ in future
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8 research.

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11 Scholars, working at the marketing/entrepreneurship interface, should address the
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13 following areas of reliability and validity. Reliability is the extent to which researchers
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15 will obtain similar (or identical) results if they were to repeat their study in the same
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17 setting, whereas, validity to the degree to which researchers have measured what they
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19 intended to measure (Crick, 2015). Reliability can be addressed through using
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21 Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α), whereby, a reliable measure should yield a score of
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23 greater than 0.70 (see Eggers *et al.*, 2013). Moreover, academics can use the
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25 composite reliabilities (which should be above 0.60) and the average variance
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27 extracted (ideally, should be greater than 0.50) to assess the reliabilities of their
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29 measures (Cadogan *et al.*, 2008). Validity can be checked in multiple capacities. Face
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31 validity can be evaluated through pre-testing surveys with knowledgeable academics
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33 and practitioners (Crick, 2018b). Convergent validity can be checked through having
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35 high-quality measures, as indicated by the results in SEM software (e.g., high factor
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37 loadings and low error variances) (Murray *et al.*, 2011). Discriminant validity can be
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39 tested through Fornell and Larcker's (1981) tool to ensure that variables are not too
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41 highly-correlated to the extent where they are measuring the same construct.
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43 Researchers should also consider testing for common method variance in future
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45 research (see Boso *et al.*, 2013). This paper is concluded as follows.

52 53 **Conclusions**

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56 The objective of this viewpoint was to explore how coopetition (the interplay between
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58 cooperation and competition) can be incorporated into the entrepreneurial marketing
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3 literature. This objective was achieved through reviewing the respective literature
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5 associated with coopetition activities and entrepreneurial marketing. From this
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7 investigation, the following three conclusions are made. First, it is concluded that
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9 limited research surrounds the antecedents of coopetition, for which academics should
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11 examine whether an organisation-wide coopetition-oriented mind-set is a driver of
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13 coopetition activities. Second, it is also concluded that scholars should test the non-
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15 linear (inverted U-shaped) relationship between coopetition activities and
16
17 organisational performance. Third, it is finally concluded that competitive intensity (a
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19 facet of the competitive business environment) has minimally been examined as a
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21 moderator in the link between coopetition activities and organisational performance.
22
23 Thus, academics should test this [moderating relationship](#) in future research. In closing,
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25 it is argued that entrepreneurial marketing scholars are studying an appropriate
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27 domain that can be used to fill these research gaps surrounding the coopetition
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29 literature. Such academics should integrate these strands of literature to add a
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31 collaborative business strategy dimension into research positioned at the
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33 marketing/entrepreneurship interface.
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Figure 1. Conceptual framework

