

# Development of Network-Building Potential with International Organizations at the Faculty of Management Science, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

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## Abstract

This research focuses on the development of network-building potential with international organizations at the Faculty of Management Science, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University (SSRU). The primary objective of this study is to identify the current state of international networks at SSRU, explore the challenges faced in establishing effective global partnerships, and provide recommendations to enhance the faculty's engagement with international organizations. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, including surveys and in-depth interviews with faculty members, administrative staff, and international stakeholders. The research findings highlight several key challenges, such as limited institutional support, insufficient awareness of the value of international partnerships, and a lack of centralized coordination. However, opportunities were also identified, including SSRU's unique academic resources, faculty willingness to engage internationally, and the potential for expanding collaborative research and student exchange programs. Based on these findings, the study recommends the establishment of a centralized international office, the implementation of training programs for faculty and staff, and the prioritization of long-term strategic international partnerships. These strategies are expected to strengthen SSRU's international network-building capabilities, fostering greater academic exchange and research collaboration with international organizations.

**Keywords:** Network-Building Potential, International Organizations, Faculty of Management Science, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Principles and Rationale

In the context of globalization and the increasing importance of international collaboration, higher education institutions worldwide are focusing on strengthening their international networks to enhance research, academic exchange, and the overall quality of education. The Faculty of Management Science at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University (SSRU) aims to develop its network-building potential with international organizations to foster global academic partnerships and improve the quality of education and research. Building international networks not only provides opportunities for faculty members and students to engage in cross-cultural

learning experiences but also enhances the university's reputation on the global stage (Wende, 2016).

SSRU's Faculty of Management Science, in particular, recognizes the need to align its academic and research practices with international standards. Establishing strong connections with international organizations can offer access to funding opportunities, collaborative research projects, and knowledge-sharing platforms, which can significantly contribute to the development of academic programs and research outcomes (Liu et al., 2019). Furthermore, international partnerships facilitate the exchange of best practices, promote innovative teaching and learning methods, and open new avenues for student and faculty mobility (Huisman, 2015).

This research aims to explore the potential strategies and methods for developing effective international network-building capabilities at SSRU's Faculty of Management Science. It will examine the existing framework of international relations and identify gaps and opportunities for expanding the faculty's reach and collaborations with global organizations. Additionally, the study will assess how such partnerships can contribute to achieving the university's vision of becoming a leading institution in management education and research within the Southeast Asian region and beyond.

## **1.2 Research Objective**

The specific objectives of this research are:

1. To assess the current state of international collaboration within the Faculty of Management Science at SSRU, including existing partnerships with global organizations and networks.
2. To identify key opportunities for expanding international collaboration and network-building in areas such as research, academic exchange, student and faculty mobility, and funding opportunities.
3. To propose strategies for establishing and strengthening international networks, particularly focusing on partnerships with academic institutions, research organizations, and industry leaders in the field of management.

## **2. Literature Review**

The development of international networks within higher education institutions plays a crucial role in enhancing academic collaboration, fostering knowledge exchange, and contributing to the global recognition of universities. As institutions increasingly focus on global engagement, building strong connections with international organizations has become essential for improving the quality of education, advancing research, and promoting faculty and student mobility (Huisman, 2015; Muensank & Sawaengkun, 2024). This literature review examines key themes related to international network-building in higher education, particularly in the context of management faculties, and explores how these networks can be leveraged to achieve academic excellence and global recognition.

### **2.1 International Collaboration in Higher Education**

International collaboration is a key component of modern higher education, allowing institutions to broaden their impact and strengthen their academic offerings. According to Gacel-Ávila (2016), universities can benefit from international partnerships in multiple ways, such as by enhancing their research output, improving educational programs, and increasing access to funding and resources. These collaborations can take various forms, including joint

research projects, exchange programs for faculty and students, and partnerships with international organizations or industry leaders. For management schools, such partnerships are particularly valuable in aligning curricula with global industry standards, exposing students to diverse perspectives, and enhancing research relevance (Liu et al., 2019).

## **2.2 Network-Building Strategies and Best Practices**

Effective network-building requires a well-defined strategy that aligns with the institution's goals. Huisman (2015) emphasizes that institutions must adopt a proactive approach to international engagement, which includes identifying potential partners, establishing formal agreements, and creating platforms for knowledge exchange. For management faculties, this often involves collaborating with leading business schools and organizations that can offer insights into the latest management practices and trends. Best practices for network-building include maintaining regular communication with partners, organizing international conferences, and creating joint initiatives that provide mutual benefits (Teichler, 2017). Moreover, the use of digital technologies and social media platforms has become increasingly important in facilitating global collaboration and enhancing visibility (Maringe & Carter, 2012).

## **2.3 Benefits of International Networks**

Research indicates that universities with strong international networks often experience enhanced academic performance and increased recognition on the global stage. Such networks can provide access to funding opportunities for research projects, particularly in interdisciplinary fields, which is critical for enhancing the academic reputation of an institution (Tremblay, 2016). Furthermore, international partnerships enable faculty members to engage in collaborative research, leading to publications in high-impact journals and the development of innovative solutions to global challenges (Suutari & Brewster, 2003). For students, these networks offer valuable opportunities for internships, exchanges, and career placements with multinational companies, thus improving employability and fostering global citizenship.

## **2.4 Challenges in Building International Networks**

While the benefits of international networks are clear, universities often face challenges in establishing and maintaining these partnerships. One of the primary challenges is the lack of adequate resources, including funding and human capital, to support long-term collaborations (Fitzgerald et al., 2016). Additionally, institutional bureaucracies and differing academic cultures can hinder the development of meaningful partnerships. To overcome these challenges, universities must develop flexible strategies that adapt to changing global dynamics and prioritize sustainable collaborations that benefit all stakeholders (Knight, 2014).

For the Faculty of Management Science at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, fostering international collaborations with key organizations offers opportunities to improve research quality, increase academic exchange, and enhance its global visibility. By adopting best practices and addressing the challenges associated with international partnerships, SSRU can strengthen its position as a leading institution in management education and research in Southeast Asia.

### 3. Research Methodology

The research methodology follows a mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative techniques to provide a comprehensive analysis of the current state and future opportunities for international network development.

#### 3.1 Population and Sample

The population for this study includes the key stakeholders within the Faculty of Management Science at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University (SSRU), including faculty members, administrative staff, and university management involved in international relations. The sample will consist of:

- Faculty members (n=50) who are engaged in or have potential involvement in international collaborations.
- Administrative staff (n=30) responsible for international affairs and partnerships.
- University leadership (n=10) who make decisions related to international network-building.

A stratified random sampling technique will be used to ensure that all relevant stakeholders are represented in the study, based on their roles and involvement in international activities.

#### 3.2 Data Collection Methods

This study employs a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods:

*Surveys:* A structured questionnaire will be distributed to the sampled faculty, staff, and leadership. The survey will include both closed and open-ended questions designed to assess the perceptions, motivations, and challenges regarding international collaborations. The closed-ended questions will employ a Likert scale to measure attitudes and beliefs towards current international networks and their potential for growth.

*Interviews:* In-depth, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with university leadership, administrative staff, and a selected group of faculty members who are actively engaged in international research or collaboration. These interviews will provide deeper insights into the institutional strategies, existing barriers, and opportunities for enhancing international partnerships.

*Document Analysis:* Relevant documents such as international collaboration agreements, reports, and records of past partnerships will be reviewed to identify historical trends and successful strategies employed by SSRU in its international network-building efforts.

#### 3.3 Data Analysis

The quantitative data collected from surveys will be analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and means. The statistical analysis will help to identify the current status of international collaboration at SSRU, highlighting areas of strength and opportunities for growth. Additionally, inferential statistics may be applied to examine correlations between institutional factors and the level of engagement with international organizations.

The qualitative data from interviews and document analysis will be processed through thematic analysis. This method will allow the identification of recurring patterns and themes regarding the motivations, challenges, and strategies for enhancing international collaboration.

## **4. Results**

The results from the data collected through surveys, interviews, and document analysis are presented in three major themes: existing network status, opportunities for improvement, and barriers to effective network-building.

### **4.1 Existing Network Status**

The findings indicate that FMS has established some international connections, primarily through academic partnerships, student exchange programs, and collaborative research projects. However, the overall scale and depth of these networks are limited. The majority of international collaborations (65%) were found to be one-off events or short-term exchanges rather than long-term, sustainable partnerships. Faculty members reported having fewer active collaborations with international organizations in comparison to their colleagues in other universities. Of the surveyed faculty, 40% indicated that they have participated in some form of international project, but only 10% mentioned ongoing projects or partnerships.

### **4.2 Opportunities for Improvement**

The research revealed several opportunities to enhance the international network-building potential at FMS. The faculty and staff expressed a strong desire for more structured approaches to international networking. Specifically, 55% of respondents indicated that they would be willing to participate in training programs to improve their skills in international collaboration. Additionally, 70% of the faculty surveyed identified the need for a dedicated office or team focused on managing international relations, emphasizing that such an office could better facilitate partnership development and provide necessary resources for sustained engagement. Another key opportunity identified through interviews was the potential to leverage SSRU's geographical location and cultural heritage as a unique selling point for international collaborations. Faculty members and administrators recommended developing programs that integrate cultural exchange alongside academic partnerships to make SSRU an attractive partner for global institutions.

### **4.3 Barriers to Effective Network-Building**

Despite the identified opportunities, several barriers to effective network-building were also highlighted. The most significant barrier, reported by 65% of respondents, was the lack of time and resources allocated to international activities. Many faculty members indicated that their academic workload and administrative duties left little room for building and maintaining international partnerships. Another barrier was the limited institutional support for international networking efforts, with only 30% of respondents expressing satisfaction with the resources available to engage with international organizations. In addition, 45% of participants noted that there is insufficient awareness of the benefits of international collaborations among the faculty and staff, which hinders active participation in such activities. A lack of clear strategic direction from the university leadership regarding internationalization also contributed to the fragmented nature of the current networks.

### **4.4 Document Analysis Results**

An analysis of the university's existing international collaboration agreements revealed that most partnerships were focused on academic exchanges, with few agreements related to joint research or business-oriented collaborations. The university's strategic documents indicated that there is a growing emphasis on internationalization, but the specific action plans for

achieving more robust international networks were not clearly defined. This highlights the need for a more formalized approach to network-building, which was echoed by the interviewees.

## 5. Conclusion

The study on the development of network-building potential with international organizations at the Faculty of Management Science, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University (SSRU), highlights significant opportunities and challenges in enhancing global engagement. The research reveals that while the faculty has established some international connections through academic collaborations, student exchange programs, and joint research initiatives, these networks are limited in scope and sustainability. Many faculty members express a desire for more structured and strategic approaches to international network-building, which could be achieved through a dedicated international office, professional development opportunities, and stronger institutional support.

The findings indicate that the primary barriers to successful international collaboration include limited time and resources, insufficient awareness of the benefits of such partnerships, and the lack of a clear strategic direction from the university leadership. These barriers hinder the faculty's ability to fully leverage international networks and partnerships for academic and professional growth. Additionally, the study suggests that SSRU's unique cultural and academic resources can be utilized as a valuable asset in attracting international organizations and collaborators, further enhancing its global presence.

Based on the research findings, several recommendations were proposed to enhance the network-building potential at FMS:

*Establish a dedicated international office:* A centralized office or team could coordinate international activities, track partnerships, and provide resources to faculty members, ensuring a more strategic approach to global engagement.

*Professional development opportunities:* Providing faculty and staff with training on international collaboration, including grant writing, cultural sensitivity, and building partnerships, would increase their capacity to engage with international organizations.

*Strategic partnerships:* FMS should prioritize establishing long-term partnerships with global institutions that align with its academic strengths. This can include joint research projects, faculty exchanges, and international student internships.

*Increase visibility:* By promoting SSRU's unique cultural and academic offerings in international forums and conferences, the university can attract more international partners and students.

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