

01.4.2026

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**Title**

Transnational Higher Education Partnerships and the Role of Operational Faculty Members:  
Developing an Alternative Theoretical Approach for Empirical Research / Claudia M. Bordogna.

**Publication year**

2018

**Source/Footnote**

In: Journal of studies in international education : a publication of the Association for Studies in  
International Education (ASIE). - 22 (2018) 1, S. 3 - 19

**Inventory number**

46939

**Keywords**

Hochschule : Idee und Aufgabe ; Internationalität

**Abstract**

For too long, transnational higher education (TNE) has been linked to discourse predominately focused upon strategic implementation, quality assurance, and pedagogy. While these aspects are important when designing and managing overseas provisions, there is a lack of research focusing on the social interactions that influence the pace and development of TNE partnerships. This gap is particularly evident at the operational phase of TNE partnerships. This conceptual article therefore offers an alternative way in which to research TNE partnerships, in relation to the interactions of faculty members delivering at the operational level. It provides an integrated theoretical framework, comprising of three different theoretical approaches to provide a conceptual tool in which to investigate and evaluate TNE partnership development. The article concludes that by understanding how relationships develop between faculty members tasked with delivering TNE, international partnerships can be significantly strengthened in terms of their progression and value. (HRK /

**01.4.2026**

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