

## **Importing theories to enable collaborative work in higher education**

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The rise of the knowledge economy in the 21st century requires higher education to enhance collaborations both locally and internationally in order to enhance its ability to create and disseminate new knowledge and to maximize its impact in society. This emerging trend calls on managers in higher education to shift their focus from supporting individual work to facilitating collaborative work. Yet, research is scant on how to enable higher education institutes to conduct collaborative work. In this paper, I use examples to reveal an endeavour that imports theories from various disciplines for building collaborations in higher education. Such an endeavour contributes to the advancement of higher education as an emerging field of research as well as a field of practice for enhancing the knowledge economy. Discussions are made from both the theoretical and practical perspectives. From the theoretical perspective, the limitations of import theories are discussed as an opportunity for bootstrapping research on higher education as an emerging field of research. From the practical perspective, implications for higher education management practice are highlighted which include challenges specific to the examples presented in this paper as well as issues to deal with when importing theories from other disciplines.