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RELATIONSHIPS

Motives for Developing Interorganisational Relationships – an Analysis of the University of
Stavanger's Networks and Partnerships

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MOTIVES FOR DEVELOPING INTERORGANISATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS



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<p>TITLE:</p> <p>Motives for Developing Interorganisational Relationships – an Analysis of the University of Stavanger's Networks and Partnerships</p>

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Foreword

The phenomenon I am addressing in this master thesis is interorganisational relationships, the importance of working with and not against other organisations and the motives for entering such relationships.

I would like to thank my advisor, Ass. Professor Dag Osmundsen, for his guidance and helpful advice throughout the process. He has been highly available, and questions that turned up along the way were always answered in very short time. His constructive feedback and support have been crucial for the completing of this task.

Next, I would like to thank the respondents in the interviewing process. Your contributions were important for the outcome and results found in this thesis. I am very grateful for you sharing your valuable time and knowledge with me.

My family, friends and boyfriend also deserve my thanks, for their support and for encouraging me along the way.

Last but not least; I give my thanks to the University of Stavanger for giving me the opportunity to finish my master degree here at this wonderful university.

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Abstract

This study explores the motives for an organisation to establish partnerships with others and create networks. The University of Stavanger is the main focus and has been analysed by using previous research and new data collected through interviews and qualitative documents. The study is an exploratory study. The aim of this thesis is to get a deeper understanding of why organisations need each other to reach higher goals, and what motivates them to enter such relationships. These relationships are referred to as IORs (interorganisational relationships). Relevant literature has been gathered and key persons at the University have been interviewed to investigate the research problem. A conceptual framework that includes motives carried out by Oliver (1990) has been developed. The motives are necessity, asymmetry, efficiency, reciprocity, stability and legitimacy. The findings of this study suggest that the motives necessity, reciprocity, stability and legitimacy are more important for the University of Stavanger than asymmetry and efficiency when deciding to cooperate with other organisations.

Key words: organisational networks, cooperation, interorganisational relationships

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List of abbreviations

IORs - Interorganisational relationships

UiS - The University of Stavanger

NVivo - qualitative data analysis software for researchers

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The University of Stavanger with its many faculties and departments has a strong link with the government, other universities, and society - regional, national and international. The university is a strong building block for the development of the Stavanger-region (Universitetet i Stavanger, 2017). What drives or motivates the organisation into cooperating with others is the topic of this study.

It has been claimed that cooperating has become part of the main organising principles for many organisations (Hennart & Zeng, 2005; Babiak, 2007). It is important for a company to build a social business network, because it will improve their number of clients, shareholders, suppliers, workforce, business associates, and lead them to achieve more technical and market knowledge (Farinda, Kamarulzaman, Abdullah, & Ahmad, 2009). Farinda et al. (2009) also claim that it strengthens the company's trustworthiness, business guidance and problem solving.

This study examines the motives and interests for departments at the University of Stavanger to enter interorganisational relationships (IORs). IORs are created constantly, but the issue is that little is known about the reasons for the UiS to cooperate. Therefore, I found it is interesting to investigate what motives there are for cooperation and which benefits can be obtained by developing IORs. To limit the thesis, the main focus will be on two of the departments, namely the Norwegian School of Hotel Management and UiS Business School.

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The study leans on previous studies about what motivates people to build organisational networks and create interorganisational relationships with each other. In previous studies there has evolved some specific factors that influence the motivation process, these will be further explained later.

1.2 Research Question

The research question is what motivates the University of Stavanger to enter IORs and why they need IORs to deliver a higher performance and a better product. The main focus of the thesis is the University of Stavanger and their networks, because I find it interesting to learn more about the university I am a student at, and what makes their work successful. The UiS was also chosen because they are an organisation that both have to, and wishes to cooperate (Lovdata, 2016; Universitetet i Stavanger, 2017).

1.3 Research Objective

The main objective of this study is to examine what motivates the employees at the University of Stavanger to develop IORs with external organisations. Why they enter such IORs is the main focus and the perspective is from the university's side and how and why the different departments of the University seek partnerships and networks.

1.4 Importance of the Study

The subject of this study is highly important in today's society, because more and more organisations are embracing the seeking and establishing of interorganisational relationships

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(Babiak, 2007). This study can be helpful in gaining insight into strategies used to explore organisations way of using the resources available outside the frameworks of the organisation. It can also help showing how working together can contribute to reaching higher goals. To find out which motives that are present for the university, can be important for learning more about what drives such organisations to work together with organisations outside their own walls.

1.5 Contribution of the Research

This study is relevant for the disciplines of leadership, management, entrepreneurship, and innovation. This study can be used to help manage interorganisational relationships and to learn more about the motives that are important for relationship formation. The study can help organisations find a path to follow, instead of not knowing what to do when they are alone and the business is not going so good. The study shows the advantages of cooperating and how an organisation through targeting this phenomenon can become a stronger organisation. By knowing these things, the organisation can also consider the advantages and disadvantages of their organisation. It may also be important for organisations and businesses to start relying on others and share knowledge.

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

The thesis contains of 6 chapters. Chapter 1 is an introduction which contains background information, reason for the choice of topic, research question , objective, why the phenomena is important and what it can contribute to the disciplines. Chapter 2 has an overview of

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important literature and theory of the main concepts. Chapter 3 is an explanation of the method used in the research and reasons for the choice of method. Chapter 4 is a presentation of the results gathered in the study and also contains an analysis of the determinants and a hypothesis testing. Chapter 5 contains a discussion of the results. Chapter 6 is a conclusion with the implications and limitations of the study. After this references and appendices used in the research is presented.

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2 Literature Review

This section contains a collection of relevant literature, where the purpose is to reach a broad understanding of what the subject of this thesis is. Peer reviewed literature about interorganisational relationships, organisations, networks and motives for cooperating are included in the following pages.

2.1 Interorganisational Relationships (IORs)

Development is an important area for an organisation. One way of developing ones organisation is to reach out to other organisations and cooperate to reach higher goals and to gain more knowledge (Farinda et al., 2009). An IOR is a relationship, linkage, flow or transaction that happens between or among organisations (Oliver, 1990). Networks, strategic alliances, partnerships, franchises, coalitions, and joint ventures are all examples of IORs (Ring & Van de Ven, 1994; Parmigiani & Rivera-Santos, 2011). Previous studies have shown that entering such relationships enables value creation and gives organisations more opportunities for larger achievements (van Fenema & Loebbecke, 2014; Farinda et al., 2009). Other advantages that have been claimed are that organisations are sharing their knowledge and combining resources, which can help them reach out to new markets and getting more developed in their existing markets (Barringer & Harrison, 2000). Even though there are a lot of positive sides to entering IORs, there are also some negative sides to it; to meet the expectations of their participants is one of them (Barringer & Harrison, 2000). One organization might gain more advantages than the other one, and the transactions between them can have different consequences, which gives a higher level of outcome for one of them.

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This example can lead to one of the organisations not getting their expectations met. There are also other reasons for IORs failing, such as being too optimistic about the benefits of the cooperation or how to manage the alliance, which can be a challenge (Barringer & Harrison, 2000; Forbes, Isabella, MacAvoy & Spekman, 1998).

Ring and Van de Ven (1994) have several propositions why IORs emerge. The first one is that the likelihood of creating an IOR arises when the parties have a congruent sense making between them. The second proposition is that congruent psychological contracts among the organisations increase the likelihood of them cooperating through IORs. Another proposition is that informal understandings and commitments will be formalized when the temporal duration of IORs is expected to exceed the tenure of agents (Ring & Van de Ven, 1994). These propositions tend to explain that the organisations have a mutual understanding of why they need each other to gain more success than they could have done on their own.

IORs can also evolve between organisations and stakeholders and their connections can grow stronger. Relational contracts between the parties will, according to Busch, et al. (2010), stabilise the coalition and thereby reduce opportunities for undesirable variations (Busch, et al., 2010). Alliances and networks can also be used to promote organisations own interests. Busch, et al. (2010) describes this situation as a “power source” for one of the parties, because one can make significant influence through others. This can evolve because one knows “the right person” or if the organisations have a formal cooperation to each other (Busch, et al., 2010).

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Oliver (1990) explains that there are many different types of IORs, such as “trade associations, agency federations, joint ventures, social service joint programs, corporate-financial interlocks, and agency-sponsor linkages” (Oliver, 1990, p. 242).

2.1.1 Why Interorganisational Relationships Matter

Partnership and cooperation is a key factor for development and reaching common goals in and for organisations (Robinson, Hewitt & Harriss, 2000). Development is defined as “the expansion of capabilities” (Robinson, et al., 2000, p. 2), which is a way for organisations to reach their potentials and enriching the human lives of the people in the organisation. Robinson et al. (2000) claim that there are three ways of organising IORs: competition, co-ordination, and co-operation. It is claimed that many may relate competition to conflict over limited resources, but it could also be a positive aspect of the market where the individuals get more choice in an institutional framework. Competition can therefore be seen as a way of better development in a society. Even when organisations are in competition with each other, they are in some sort of interorganisational relationships. Co-ordination on the other hand has to do with legal requirements by the state. If the organisations do not follow such co-ordination there might be chaos and no structure in the system. Co-operation is the third way of managing IORs, where organisations work together and learn and participate in each other’s work (Robinson, et al., 2000).

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2.2 Organisations

Organisations play an important part in people's everyday life. Busch, Vanebo and Dehlin (2010) divide them into two categories: private and public. Organisations in the public sector, such as schools, hospitals, kindergartens, and others cover needs and produce goods for the population. The goods cover areas from people's childhood to growing old and cover the interests of the community in both political and community rules and regulations. Organisations are also central in the private sector as both consumers and employees deal with them through shops, voluntary organisations, tourism businesses etc. (Busch, et al., 2010). There are many types of organisations, but what defines an organisation in general is a group of individuals who interact in a coordinated manner in order to realize certain goals or tasks (Askeland, 2013).

Organisations can use a range of strategies for expanding and improving. One way is through targeting the strategies towards the stakeholders (Busch, et al., 2010). Cooperation strategies can be used by contacting and working with the stakeholders in the organisations network, which is the main focus of this study. Networks will be further explained later.

2.2.1 The University of Stavanger

This study addresses the University of Stavanger as an organisation. The university is central in the public sector and offers a diversity of teaching, research- and development activities. The university offers a range from basic studies to PHDs, and has currently 10 888 students and 1 600 employees (Universitetet i Stavanger 1, 2017). The University of

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Stavanger is divided into three faculties and one museum: Arts and Education, Social Sciences, Science and Technology and the Museum of Archaeology. In addition the university has many other research centres. The university has a strong, rich and diverse interplay with the society and businesses (Universitetet i Stavanger 2, 2017).

2.3 Networks

The focus of this study is networks that are goal-directed and created for concrete member benefits for the organisations, rather than serendipitous networks that have no distinct purpose and are created by chance meetings and arises from members' social relationships (Kilduff & Tsai, 2003; Parmigiani & Rivera-Santos, 2011). In this setting a network is a "long-term cooperative relationship among organizations in which each entity retains control over its own resources but jointly decides on their use" (Saz-Carranza & Ospina, 2010, p. 329). The main purpose of such networks is not only to achieve their own goals, but also a collective goal (Saz-Carranza & Ospina, 2010).

2.4 IOR Motives

Oliver (1990) has developed a theory with six motives or determinants that she claims are essential for a business that wishes to cooperate with others and develop IORs. These underlying determinants are also referred to as *reasons* for relationship formation, and can therefore be seen as the cause of the relationships to arise (Oliver, 1990). Oliver's (1990) theory about the motives was chosen for this study, because the determinants are generalizable. These six determinants are necessity, asymmetry, efficiency, reciprocity,

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stability, and legitimacy. These determinants can also be seen as what organisations base their decisions to initiate relations on (Goes and Park, 1997).

2.4.1 Necessity

The first motive is necessity, which includes necessary legal or regulatory requirements an organisation has to meet (Oliver, 1990). This motive is the only one that explains why organisations are required to form relations to each other, in other words, it is not voluntary (Varadarajan & Cunningham, 1995). The actions of the organisations are influenced by involvement from the government, because penalties and incentives can be used if the regulations aren't followed (Provan, Isett & Milward, 2004; Babiak, 2007).

2.4.2 Asymmetry

Oliver's (1990) second motive is asymmetry, which refers to the differences between the two parties. One organisation has the power and control over the other one. One of the reasons for this is that they don't share the same resources and abilities (Varadarajan & Cunningham, 1995). This is a motive based on a power approach which includes decision-making freedom, rather than gaining financial resources (Oliver, 1990).

2.4.3 Efficiency

Efficiency refers to the organisations desire to enter IORs, the main reason for the desire is to reduce costs (Varadarajan & Cunningham, 1995). Other benefits of this motivation are to improve their internal input or output ratio (Koch, 2002). It is the organisations

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economic wealth that is the priority for enter IORs under this motive (Fiedler & Deegan, 2007).

2.4.4 Reciprocity

Reciprocity, the fourth motive focuses on the desire to collaborate and cooperate, which is the opposite of asymmetry motive. To emphasize the common goals and interests of both parties is crucial. Being equal and working together benefits the organisations (Oliver, 1990; Varadarajan & Cunningham, 1995; Fiedler & Deegan, 2007).

2.4.5 Stability

The next motive that is critical for relationship formation is stability, and has to do with environmental uncertainty (Oliver, 1990; Koch, 2002). An important aspect here is to have coping strategies and the ability to manage and rely on others when unforeseen things happen. The organisation therefore becomes more predictable when cooperating with external organisations (Koch, 2002).

2.4.6 Legitimacy

The last motive for interconnecting is legitimacy, which refers to an organisation's wish to improve its image and reputation. The organisation can do this by for example cooperating with prestigious organisations or have respected external members to sit in their board (Oliver, 1990).

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2.5 Additional Motives

In addition to the six previously mentioned motives, there are also other motives discussed by other authors. The reason why I'd like to include these as well is to get a broader perspective on the issue.

Whipple and Gentry (2000) claim that organisations benefit from enter IORs because of financial, technological, managerial and strategic reasons. The financial motive is similar to the efficiency motive by Oliver (1990), it is about increasing profit and reducing costs in the supply process. Technological motives focus on facilitating the supply process by sharing technology and developing products together. The managerial motives help simplifying the supply process and the strategic reasons are to create growth opportunities or to consider competition issues (Whipple & Gentry, 2000).

Parmigiani and Rivera-Santos (2011) go deeper into specific motives such as the ability to gain information and knowledge through entering IORs or creating a new tie or solidify a present IOR. They also claim that "Stronger, long-term relationships will result in greater trust and collaboration, with a more extensive exchange of social capital and transfer of more complex knowledge" (Parmigiani & Rivera-Santos, 2011, p. 8-9). This has to do with strengthening the trust to get a greater development of the relationship. Parmigiani and Rivera-Santos (2011) also have legitimacy as a motive. Legitimacy strengthens the organisation's reputation and image by collaborating with a connection that may be higher stated than the other.

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Chi and Holsapple (2005) include eight motives instead of six. In addition to necessity, asymmetry, efficiency, reciprocity, stability, and legitimacy, they include agility and innovation. By agility they refer to the environmental changes and the skills to increase agility and responsiveness through entering an IOR. Innovation is about creating value through the IOR and leading the organisation into improvement (Chi & Holsapple, 2005).

2.6 Two Studies that Support the Theory

Two authors that use Oliver's (1990) motives in their studies are Babiak (2007) and Diaz-Ramirez (2015). In this paragraph the findings from their studies will be presented to show the relevance of the motives in today's society.

Babiak (2007) conducted a study about a Canadian non-profit sport organisation and their determinants for interorganisational relationships. She used document analysis, meeting observations and interviews in her study. Her main findings suggested that the most important motives were legitimacy, stability, reciprocity and efficiency (Babiak, 2007).

Diaz-Ramirez's (2015) study explored the motives of small businesses for establishing linkages with non-profit organisations. Interviews were conducted to understand why the organisations were thinking of or had established collaboration. Her findings suggested that the IORs developed by a combination of the motives of the owner-manager, the surroundings and development of the small businesses. The motives of the owner-manager refer to the determinants developed by Oliver (1990) (Diaz-Ramirez, 2015).

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Both of the studies use motives that are somewhat consistent with each other. However, as the context they investigated differs from each other and the ones used in this study, the findings are not completely equal. The key difference is therefore the type of organisations they are investigating, whilst the similarities are the motives used. These two studies were presented in this study to show that the motives are applicable and relevant for use in research even though they were developed in 1990.

2.7 Conceptual Model and Hypothesis

The determinants are presented in a conceptual model to sum up and give a better understanding of the study. The model is based on Oliver's (1990) motives that have an impact on organisations choice of entering or not entering IORs. The proposed hypothesis is based on the literature review and the two studies that support Oliver's (1990) theory that were previously presented.

Purposed hypothesis: All the 6 determinants, necessity, asymmetry, efficiency, reciprocity, stability and legitimacy, have an impact on the development of IORs for the University of Stavanger.

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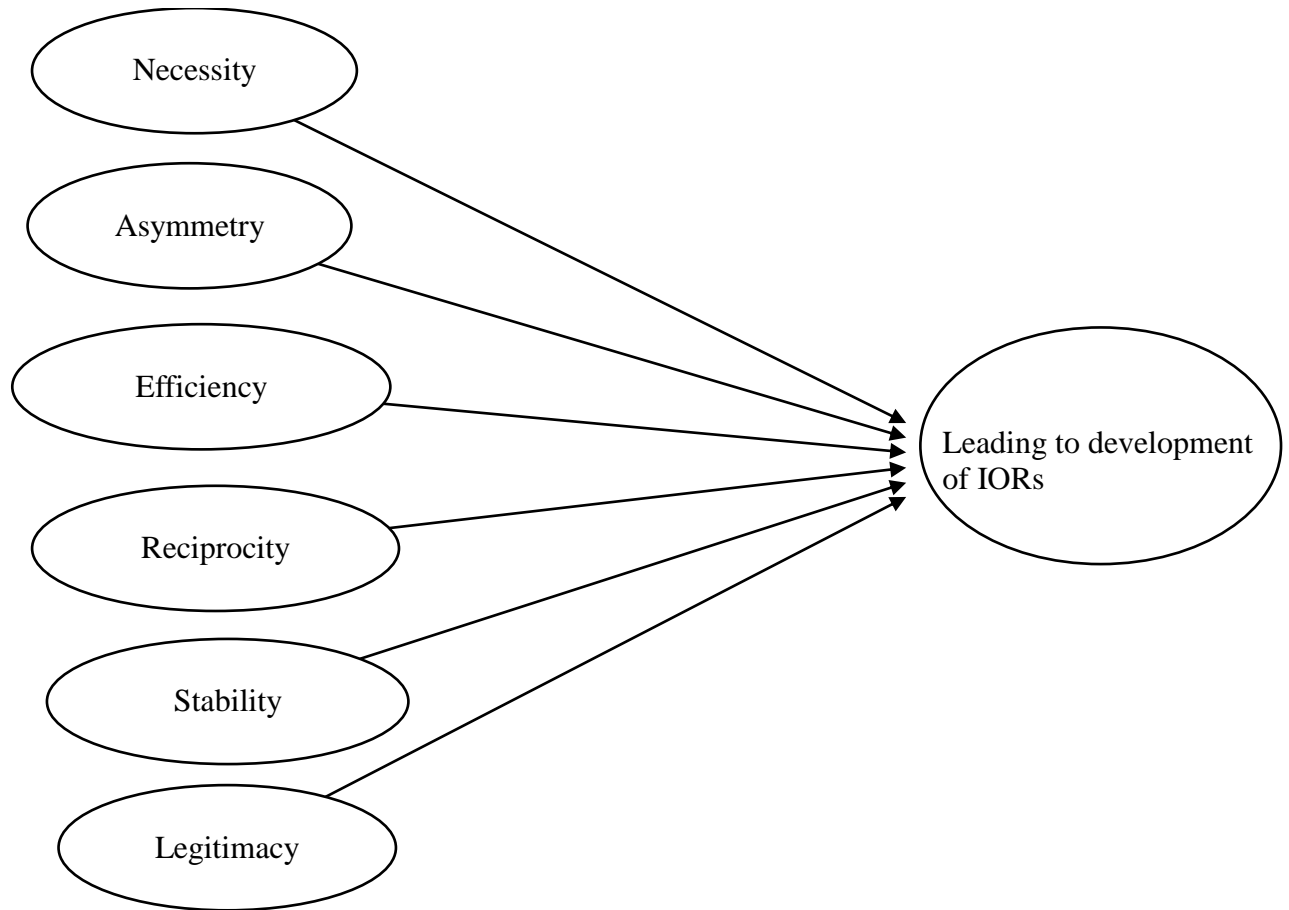


Figure 1. Conceptual model.

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3 Method

Based on the literature review I have chosen 6 motives that influence organisations to create networks and cooperate. These motives are necessity, asymmetry, efficiency, reciprocity, stability and legitimacy. They are the motives that are the focus in the analysing process that is further described in this chapter.

3.1 Research Design

This study is a qualitative, exploratory study. This approach gives the opportunity to cope with a range of motives connected to the university's way of entering partnerships and collaboration. The purpose of the research is to understand the university's point of view; therefore 4 in depth interviews were conducted. The interviews were open ended semi-structured and were conducted in Norwegian with average length of half an hour. The questions focused on cooperation that UiS contribute in and why. Document analysis was also used, to get a broader insight of the university.

3.2 Sampling

The sample of this study is planned, non-random, with a size of 4 people. The respondents were chosen based on the respondents' insight and understanding of the problem. The criteria for participating were that the interview object was part of the university staff and that they in some way are working with or have been working with IORs and networks at the university, as well as having expertise and knowledge in this kind of work. The reason for this

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choice is that it is likely that they hold relevant knowledge about the chosen topic, because they work closely with networks in their occupations. The respondents were reached both through e-mail and by personal appearance at their offices to arrange time and place for the actual interview. To get a broader overview of the different networks and IORs, people from different areas at campus were chosen.

3.3 Data Collection

Boundary specification was considered. The boundary specification refers to where to set the limits when collecting data (Knoke & Yang, 2008). The boundary was set at including the Norwegian School of Hotel Management and UiS Business School, because of the big scale of faculties and departments at the university and their networks. The reason for this choice is because these departments are representative for my field of study and to be realistic about the amount of information and the time limit. However, one of the respondents had more of an overview of the whole school and was contacted to get broader information.

The interviews of personnel at the University of Stavanger took place in Stavanger, at the university. Data was collected during the spring semester in the period between January and June 2017.

3.4 Measurements

Measurements were conducted by performing interviews. The questions were designed to answer the research questions and to get a wide flow of information from the respondents.

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In the beginning the questions focused on who and which organisations and networks the respondents worked with, how they work with them and how they start. The reason for these questions was to get an overview of the processes connected to entering IORs. Thereafter the focus was on why, how the transactions work and who does what for each other. These questions were asked to answer the research question, which was to find out what motivates organisations to enter IORs and why they need IORs to deliver higher performance and a better product. At the end the respondents were given the opportunity to add other relevant information about the phenomena. A complete overview of the questions is to be found in Appendix A.

3.5 Data Analysis

Both deductive and inductive reasoning were used to analyse the data. The results were analysed by using a qualitative program called Nvivo11. This program is adapted to qualitative research and helps structure the collected data (Houghton, Murphy, Meehan, Thomas, Brooker & Casey, 2017). I chose this program because after structuring and conducting data extraction of the collected data it was easier to get an overview and create a clearer result. More specifically I interpreted the data I collected into the program, structured the data into codes and then was able to find the most important details that I needed for this research. The result follows in the next chapter.

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4 Results

4.1 Sample Description

A total of 4 informants participated in the study. Several others were contacted but unfortunately they did not have the opportunity to join the research. The participants represented different departments and networks at the university. They were Anne Selnes, strategy and communication director at the University of Stavanger, Truls Engstrøm, Head of the Norwegian School of Hotel Management, Jan Fick, professor at UiS Business School and Kai Victor Hansen, associate professor at the Norwegian School of Hotel Management.

The informants from the 4 interviews had similar content, and the variance was small, therefore it was logic not to conduct additional interviews. The results showed matching information about the reasons for the university to cooperate with others. One of the informant also gave me access to the university's annual report, the strategy from 2013-2020 and the development agreement between the university and the ministry of education.

4.2 Data Description

Each of the departments at the University of Stavanger has their own IORs. There are networks between universities, they exchange students and teachers and they contribute in research. The focus of the received data involves information about the Norwegian School of Hotel Management and UiS Business School, which are two departments of UiS's faculty of science.

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Networks that arose when collection data were Hotel Schools of Distinction, Delice, ICCAS, Nordic Symposium, NCE, CHRIE/EuroCHRIE, APMS, UIIN and ECIU, which are presented in figure 2.

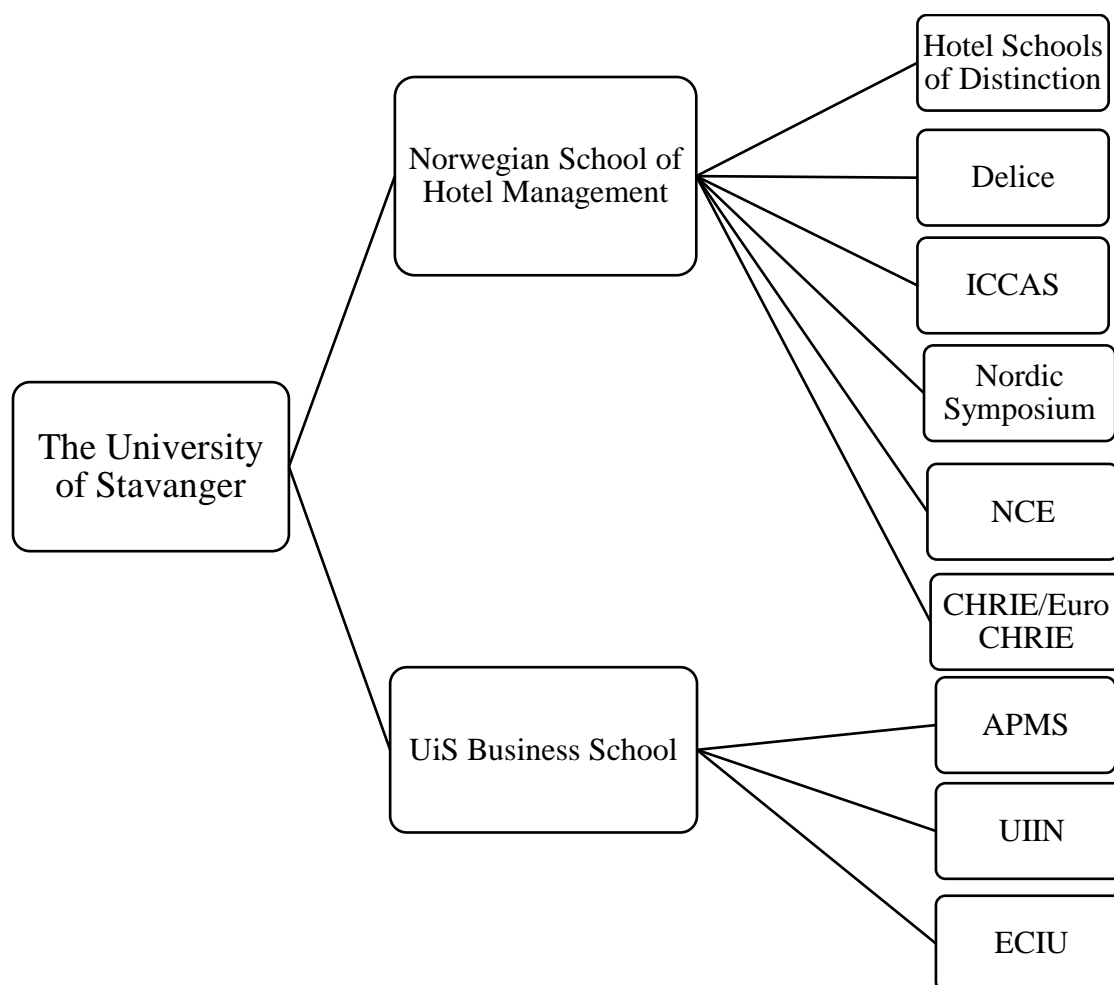


Figure 2. Network Overview.

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4.2.1 Interview 1

In the interview with Anne Selnes (2017), who is the strategy and communication director at the University of Stavanger, there was high focus on the rules and regulations connected to cooperation. This means first of all that the University is required by law to interact with the society in form of research, professional and artistic development work, as well as contribute to innovation and value creation for the society (Lovdata, 2016). This shows that the University needs to work with organisations outside the University to spread the results that arise within campus. Secondly, the University is also required, by law, to facilitate that the employees and students have the opportunity to participate in the social debate. Furthermore, the University is required to cooperate with other universities and colleges etc. in other countries, locally, and regional society- and the working community. The University is also required to cooperate with public administration and international organisations. In addition to this the University needs to offer after- and further education inside the organization's scope (Lovdata, 2016; Selnes, 2017).

Another important aspect that developed from the interview was the wealth creation of the university, where both the rector and student leaders participate in external organisations. The goal is to convey and participate in innovation (Selnes, 2017).

4.2.2 Interview 2

The Head of the Norwegian School of Hotel Management at the University of Stavanger focused on other aspects within the IOR process. "Hotel Schools of Distinction"

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was an important network that he mentioned, which is a gathering of 11 of the major hotel schools around the world. The Norwegian school of Hotel Management participated in initiating it about 10 years ago. The purpose of this network is to develop the quality, student cooperation and to create a global standard. The next network he mentioned was CHRIE or EuroCHRIE (Council on Hotel, Restaurant & Institutional Education), where the Norwegian school of Hotel Management represents Norway. This network operates both on a global and European basis. They hold a conference every year and cooperate with academic working groups amongst researchers. This gives the opportunity for scientists to stay up to date. The next network was Nordic Symposium for all the Nordic scientists within hospitality and tourism. National Norwegian Centre of Expertise (NCE) was also mentioned. This network focuses on tourism and includes 150 tourism businesses and 7 research environments from the West of Norway. Engstrøm (2017) claims that cooperation focus on exchange of expertise, research collaboration, student exchange, collecting money for research and applying for funds. The IORs can start as a result from individuals making conversation and from friendships and people one has knowledge of.

His focus pointed at the vocational side of motives for networking. The main reason for having transactions with other organisations is to maximise the outcome for both the students and the employees at the university (Engstrøm, 2017). He also saw the opportunity to get access to apply for external funding for research projects by being a member of the networks, and to partner up with other organisations. The third aspect from the interview was that the case of standing alone as a university without cooperating with the environment would be meaningless. The importance of sharing knowledge and thoughts was seen as a high

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priority (Engstrøm, 2017). The IORs are a part of the everyday life and are very important. The most important ones were those established by the researchers, the employees and the teachers. Engstrøm's (2017) last point was that everything they work with should have a consequence for the students and that the individuals involved can gather experience, new ideas and simply get better.

4.2.3 Interview 3

The third interview was with Jan Frick (2017), a professor at UiS Business School with broad experience in developing and building networks. He works with several networks such as Advances in Production Management Systems (APMS), University Industry Innovation Network (UIIN), System Dynamics Association, Erasmus and the European Consortium of Innovative Universities (ECIU). Amongst other tasks the members of the networks arrange conferences and create journals. Frick (2017) also mentioned trade unions and projects as types of networks. Being a part of networks results in one meeting lots of new people. In the context of UiS there are a high number of networks, some of these collaborations even result in businesses being created.

The parties involved in research cooperate by writing applications together with people that have the same perception and have similar knowledge as each other. The people involved meet and present what they come up with and there is also a social side to it. They can also be asked to review other's contributions. Frick (2017) claims that cooperation starts by meeting people in different contexts and develop projects together. This can be perceived as the cooperation being random, but some of the cooperation is planned as well. Sometimes

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the idea or the outcome is planned first and then the work is done afterwards. He also claims that the personal level is a good way to start the collaboration.

Frick (2017) believes there are several reasons for organisations to cooperate. One of them is because of the publications and professional development. Other reasons are to be sensors for each other, to pay attention to trends, or because one needs partners in projects and committees. One also needs project managers, chief editors or main writers in research projects (Frick, 2017).

Frick (2017) claimed that there are many networks in the context of UiS. He was very clear about the importance for universities to have a lot of networks at a lot of levels. Educational activity depends on good networks and cooperation with professionals, businesses and the public. The university survives by having networks (Frick, 2017).

4.2.4 Interview 4

The fourth and last interview was with Kai Victor Hansen (2017), associate professor at the Norwegian school of Hotel Management. He works with a network called “Delice”, a network that started in 2007, where Rogaland is the only Norwegian county that participates. The focus of this network is to use gastronomy in the marketing of the participating cities. Hansen (2017) represents the University of Stavanger and the Norwegian school of Hotel Management and participates as an expert on the gastronomy area. His perspective is that participating in networks is a way of keeping in touch with what is happening in the world, in other words, a way of following relevant trends. Another network he works with is called

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“ICCAS – The International Conference on Culinary Arts and Sciences”, which is a conference he participates in as a researcher within the food field. He also mentioned a network called “Nordic symposium” of tourism and hospitality research.

In addition to the formal networks mentioned previously, he also sees that informal and personal networks arise. Hansen (2017) claims that these networks can be used as a natural point of contact towards the industry.

Cooperation occurs by participating at conferences, sending in abstracts and thereafter participating with a paper. An important aspect in this setting is to be prepared to communicate with people, so that new cooperation can evolve. Participants can thereafter discuss collaborations and present their research, which others may be interested in. Hansen (2017) also claims that the networks occur when they are needed and that the reason for participating is to expand your own horizons, both on an academic and human level. The outcome can be inputs and ideas that one can seize. One of the advantages of participating is to be able to collect data. The university also allows the students to enjoy the cooperation by using guest speakers from all over the world through the networks, or using them as sensors within the right field of study. It is all about giving and receiving to create a better outcome (Hansen, 2017).

4.2.5 The University of Stavanger’s strategy plan 2013-2020

The University of Stavanger’s strategy plan refers to how the university plans on working with goals ahead. The content of this plan shows that the university works actively

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towards realising these goals. These goals are created to clarify the profile of the university and to achieve a further significant position in the national and international university landscape (UiS-styret, 2013). In 2012 the university gained international recognition by being recorded as a member in the European Consortium of Innovative Universities (ECIU). The strategy plan has high focus on contributing to society and states that they are supposed to seek interaction with working life, education- and research organisations regional, national and international, all this to help create mutual knowledge development (UiS-styret, 2013).

Figure 3 shows the prioritised relations the University of Stavanger are in. The figure is obtained from the strategy plan and translated from Norwegian into English. The abbreviations of the figure are: SUS = Stavanger University hospital, SAFER = Stavanger Acute medicine Foundation for Education and Research, HSH = Stord/Haugesund University College, MHS = Missionary College, UH-sector = University and College sector, UiA = University of Agder and UiN = University of Nordland. IRIS, Prekubator and Ipark (now Validè), StOr and SiS are relations within the university boundaries and are innovation and research organisations as well as student organisations and student service organisations (Valide, 2017). The figure shows the different levels of the UiS's relations and co-operators.

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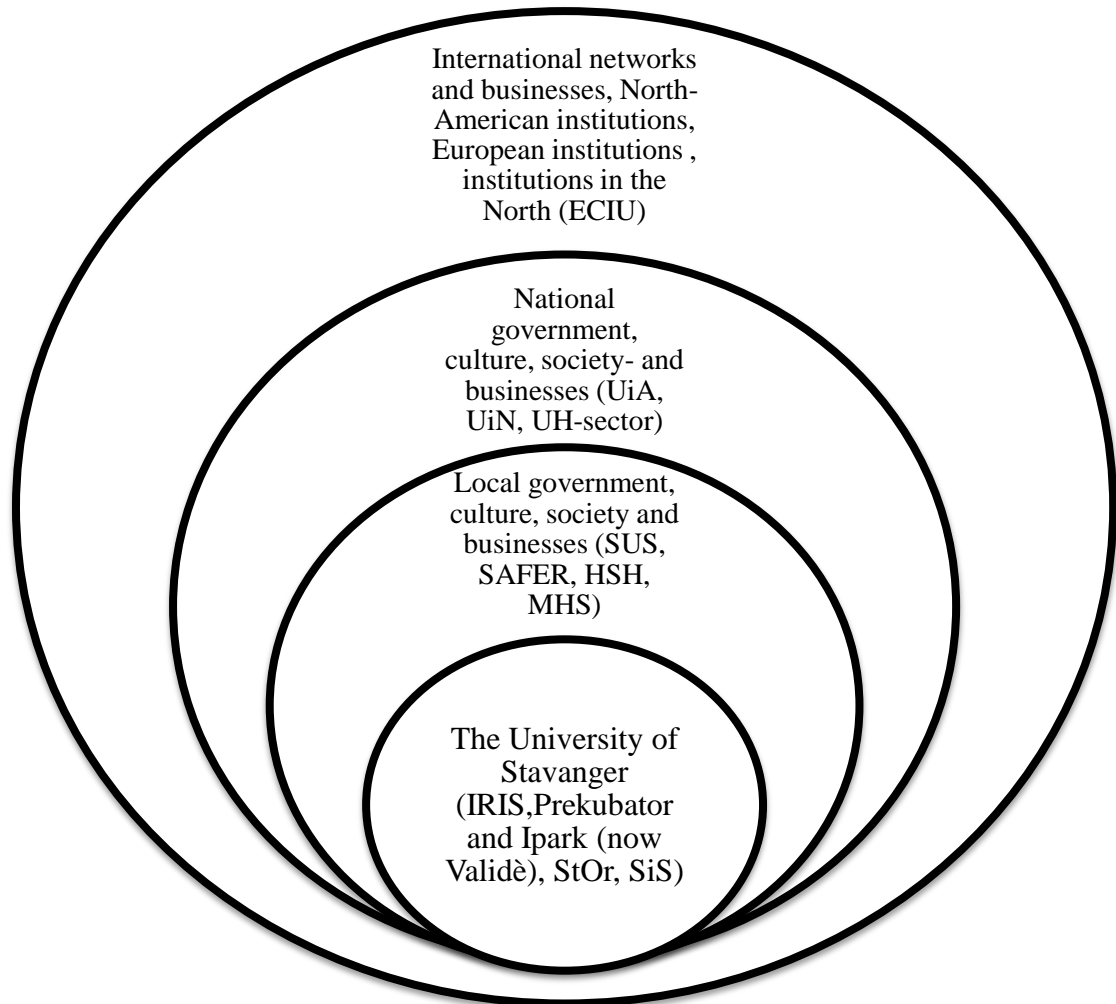


Figure 3. Map of relationships at the UiS (UiS-styret, 2013).

4.2.6 The University of Stavanger's annual report 2016-2017

The annual report sums up the activities of the university and how they are conveying and have contact with society. It emerges that the university has high influence opportunities in society and that they are visible in many channels and media. The UiS featured in over 4400 articles in Norwegian newspapers and published 69 cases on forskning.no in 2016 (UiS-

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styret, 2017). This report also focuses on value creation and describes interaction groups for innovation initiatives as important parts of cooperation between organisations.

4.2.7 Development agreement between the university and the Ministry of Education

This agreement includes several goals developed to benefit both of the organisations; the University of Stavanger and The Ministry of Education. These goals focus among others, on increased innovation, entrepreneurship, internationalisation in the teacher educations and higher attractiveness through student mobility (UiS-styret, 2016). The reasons evolved from this agreement were to reach goals and create value and development as well as giving the organisation a clearer profile.

4.3 Analyse of the Determinants

4.3.1 Necessity

The results showed a high degree of the necessity motive for entering IORs. The reason for this is because the university is required by law to cooperate with the society, working life and delivering research projects. This has been mentioned in interviews, the agreement, the strategy plan, and in the annual report.

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4.3.2 Asymmetry

This motive was not as strong as the others in this context. The University of Stavanger can be seen as quite small in comparison with the rest of the world's universities. From the investigations that have been done, it is therefore unlikely for them to use others to accentuate themselves. On the contrary the networks and IORs are helping the university to grow and get more renowned. Other universities are not the only co-operators of UiS. Other organisations are also contributing and are co-operators, but there is no sign of the university gaining more or using power and control over others.

4.3.3 Efficiency

The efficiency motive has to do with reducing costs and gaining higher profit, but this is not something that is mentioned in the interviews or the strategy plan. Seeing as the UiS is part of the public sector they receive most of their income from the government. They are therefore not an organisation that is dependent on making profit to survive (UiS-styret, 2017). The main focus of the university is therefore not to make money when entering IORs. Nevertheless, it occurs that they are interested in getting hold of financial support for research projects. This gives the impression that the value of what is produced in research is more important than the actual earning of money. It is what is given back to the employees, society and the students that are important. Therefore efficiency seems to be only partially a motive for the UiS to enter IORs.

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4.3.4 Reciprocity

This determinant is also one that is relevant for the university. It appears from the investigation that the organisations and networks contribute equally and are interested in achieving common goals through collaboration. It is also claimed that the parties give and take and help each other, not that one benefits more than the other from the IORs.

4.3.5 Stability

This is an important motive for the University of Stavanger because there are constant alterations in the environment. When something changes it is important to have good collaborators. One important issue is for example that employees at the UiS participate in conferences held by networks, to pay attention to upcoming trends in their study fields and be prepared to take new contents into their teaching. This area was frequently mentioned during the interviews. In other words it is important to be ahead and to be prepared, so that the future is more predictable and stable. It is also important to have a permanent position in society when crises occur, so as not to be on the sideline and to avoid being left behind. To be supported and support other organisations is therefore an essential part of the IORs at UiS.

4.3.6 Legitimacy

As mentioned earlier, UiS can be seen as a small university in the worldview. Therefore legitimacy is a motive that is relevant for this organisation. They have the opportunity to use other organisations to get out and about and to be noticed, and they use it well. An example of

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this is the “Delice” network, which has many members that are high prestige organisations and are known in many parts of the world. Seeing as the University of Stavanger is a member of the same network, their reputation and image can be strengthened and the possibility to get noticed internationally increases. Other networks can also help the university show that they work with well-established organisations, and others may think well of the UiS.

4.4 Hypothesis Testing

The proposed hypothesis was: All the 6 determinants, necessity, asymmetry, efficiency, reciprocity, stability and legitimacy, have an impact on the development of IORs for the University of Stavanger.

It may seem assertive to say that certain motives for developing IORs are significant for the UiS while others are not. However the findings in the results show that some of the motives are stronger and clearer than others. Two of the determinants are not as significant as the others. The university does not seem to enter IORs to reduce costs and increase profit, therefore the efficiency motive is not relevant. Asymmetry did not seem relevant for the UiS, due to the size of the university.

The findings of this study suggest that the motives necessity, reciprocity, stability and legitimacy are more important for the University of Stavanger than asymmetry and efficiency when deciding to cooperate with other organisations. The hypothesis is therefore not completely supported

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5 Discussion

The research question is: what motivates the University of Stavanger to enter IORs and why do they need IORs to deliver a higher performance and a better product? First of all the findings suggest that some of the motives are stronger than others. As the hypothesis testing showed; what seems to characterise the University of Stavanger's interaction with other organisations are a mix of four of the six motives investigated. The results also show that there are many networks on different levels: personal, academic and institutional. The findings show that all the respondents show a positive attitude towards IORs, and that cooperation with others is making the university provide better products and performance in the form of sharing knowledge, creating stronger ties, both nationally and internationally, and getting guest speakers. All of these factors help the university to achieve a better standard for the students, the employees and society, who all benefit from the facilities the university provides. These are also factors that might help the university in gaining more success now and in the future.

The results from this research show that The University of Stavanger is an organisation that depends on other contributions to sustain. The organisation is therefore not only required to, but also dependent upon cooperating with the surroundings.

5.1 Reliability and Validity

The informants in this research had clear relevance for the research question, which strengthens the reliability and the validity of the results. The strategy plan and the

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development agreement documents were created by the university itself and make the data relevant and reliable.

Standardisation was taken into account, which means presenting the questions in the exact same manner to each of the respondents. By doing this, the reliability is stronger (Briggs, 1986). The questions presented in this study were the same, but some additional questions were added to get a deeper understanding and clearer perception of what the respondents actually meant when they responded.

5.1.1 The bias theory

A consideration to make when using the interviewing method is interviewer-induced bias, which can reduce the reliability and validity of the results (Briggs, 1986). It is important to strip the interview situation of factors such as age, gender, race, personality and political views, to avoid the responses to be biased. This was considered in this study. In addition, the informants asked me to send the contents from their interview to them after analysing it, so that they could agree upon the way I interpreted them and their opinions. In this way, both the respondents and I had a clear understanding of each other and the contents of the interviews.

5.2 Theoretical, methodological and management implications of my findings

A theoretical implication of this study can be the angle the task was presented from and the type of organisation that was investigated. This was a special organisation, because the purpose of a university is not to make profit, but to create benefits and welfare for the people

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who are using the organisation. Therefore, it was interesting to see how this type of organisation is working with IORs. Another theoretical implication is to get a deeper understanding of the motives and give opportunities to expand organisations and reach a broader market. The study also implicates theory about organisational networks, cooperation and interorganisational relationships.

Methodological implications were the importance of using specific people with specific tasks in the interviewing process. The informants were familiar with the topic, had experience and knowledge. The document analysis also helped in gaining a deeper understanding. This method helps achieving broader knowledge and more complementary and accurate answers to the questions asked, which was necessary for this thesis. However, this method may be vulnerable in the way of respondents withdrawing or not being available to attend.

This study can be used in management, because it may help managers of such institutions to see the benefits of cooperating with others, and start using the same methods as the University of Stavanger to become more successful. The thesis can help getting a broader understanding of the determinants, which can be helpful for both the University of Stavanger and other organisations. By cooperating, organisations can get ahead and gain advantage by following trends that one otherwise may not have heard of. Another advantage can be to strengthen ones image and reputation. Organisations can learn from this and use it in practice. Many industries can benefit from this study.

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6 Conclusion

A brief summary of the results will be presented here. All the respondents agreed upon having academic focus and do what is best for the students in developing IORs. I would also like to pinpoint that the University of Stavanger seems to benefit from being part of IORs and that the respondents were positive towards cooperating and being part of networks. The hypothesis was partially supported, as the proposed hypothesis suggested that all the determinants would have an impact, but the findings showed that the most important ones were a mix of necessity, reciprocity, stability and legitimacy. The motive necessity is relevant because the university is required by law to cooperate. Reciprocity is relevant for the desire to achieve common goals by cooperating. Stability is important for being ahead when changes in the environment occur. Legitimacy helps the UiS to strengthen its reputation and image.

The implications of these studies were to be found in the motives that were investigated, the qualitative use of method in this particular study, and how managers can benefit from using this study and what it contains in their organisations.

The research question of this master thesis has not been answered before as far as I am aware of. As mentioned in the introduction, the issue was that little appears to be known about the reasons for the UiS to cooperate. Now there is more information about this topic in the context of the University of Stavanger resulting from this thesis.

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6.1 Limitations

There were some limitations connected to this thesis. As the networks at the University of Stavanger are many, it was too comprehensive to get an overview over all the connections and relations that are there; therefore I had to choose only a few to investigate. The time frame for such a huge phenomenon was not manageable. Secondly, the determinants measured may only be a base of all the reasons there are for entering IORs, and might not give the full picture. The 6 chosen ones are relevant and important, but by using more detailed analyses, a wider insight into the phenomena may have been reached. Some of the resources were from the last decades, but there is still reason to believe that they are just as relevant today, as several present studies still use them.

Last, as the study doesn't cover all the departments at UiS, it may therefore be questionable if the respondents are representative enough. The findings are based on four respondents that had similar opinions. Other respondents may have given a different result. In addition to this the interviews were conducted in Norwegian and translated and presented in English, therefore the language may have an impact on how the study is interpreted.

6.2 Recommendations for Future Research

Investigating all of the university departments at the UiS would be too comprehensive for this thesis. Therefore I assume that there are still many aspects left to explore in this field. These could be comparing the different departments' reasons for cooperating with other organisations, finding out which motives are relevant for the different departments to develop

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IORs and what type of organisations they cooperate with. There may also be other organisations that are possible to focus on in future research. Other motives for developing IORs can also be included. One could also look more into potential risks and negative sides of cooperating with other organisations. These are aspects that can be investigated in future research.

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8 Appendices

Appendix A - Guide of Questions

1. Which type of organisations and networks do you cooperate with?
2. How do you cooperate with them?
3. How does the cooperation start?
4. Why are you cooperating with others?
5. What affects the decision process?
6. What kind of differences are there between the alliances you have?
7. Who does what for/with /on behalf of whom?
8. Could you tell me something about the other networks at UiS?
9. Would you like to add something about this topic?
10. Do you know anyone else I could talk to that can be relevant for this study?