

Master's Thesis in Global Management (20 cr)

Seminar I



Aalto University
School of Business

Perttu Kähäri

January 16, 2023

Agenda

- **Introductions**
- **Master's thesis process – recap**
- **Analyzing theses – what did you learn?**
- **Writing your preliminary research proposal**
- **Choosing a topic and formulating research questions**

Introductions

Who?

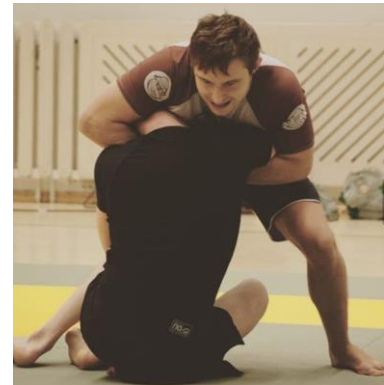


Aleksi Niittymies

Assistant Professor of International Business

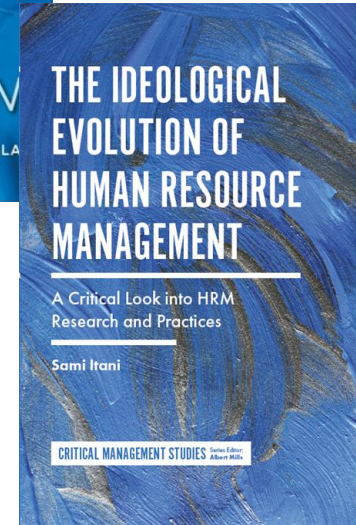
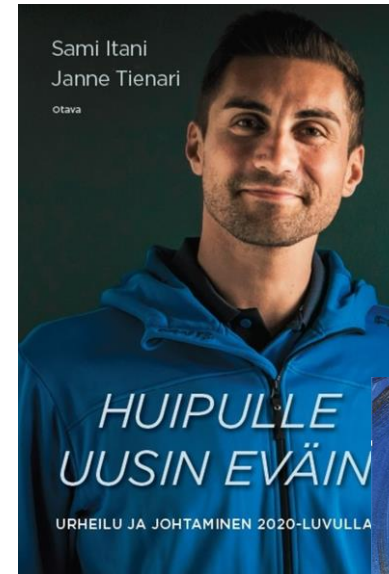
Research interests:

- (1) Firms' internationalization processes
 - (2) Managers' cognitions and psychological aspects - what happens inside the managers' heads when they make decisions
 - (3) Qualitative research methods
- ♥ Doing sports, especially submission wrestling



Sami Itani

- Professor of Practice at Aalto BIZ
- D.Sc. in International Business
- Professional background:
 - Several leadership roles and positions of trust in international business organizations and NGOs
- Expertise in terms of research and thesis supervision:
 - Critical research traditions (e.g. postmodernism, critical theory, post-colonialism...)
 - Corporate and NGO ethics and ideologies
 - Business and capitalism history
 - Human Resource Management –related themes (e.g. performance management, talent management, corporate culture...)
 - Mergers & Acquisitions
 - Qualitative methods



Hello to GM students from...

Nelli Markula (CEMS Programme Manager Arja's substitute until May 2023)



Who? Internationally experienced educational scientist and teacher, who, as a counterweight to work, challenges herself on the tennis court, working on traditional Finnish handicrafts (weaving rag rugs and forging knives) and a pandemic-induced bird watching hobby. **Reach me and Liisa at cems@aalto.fi.**

Master's thesis process in Global Management

Assignments

- ✓ **Assignment #1: initial research idea (10 Dec)**
- ✓ **Assignment #2: analysis and evaluation of an existing thesis (pass/fail) (10 Jan)**
- **Assignment #3: first draft of an individual research proposal (pass/fail) (24 Jan)**
- **Assignment #4: memo of the initial meeting with the thesis supervisor (pass/fail) (7 Feb)**
- **Assignment #5: final research proposal (pass/fail) (28 Feb)**
- **Assignment #6: oral and written constructive comments on proposals presented by other students (pass/fail) (7 Mar)**
- **Assignment #7: final thesis (grade 1-5) (29 May)**

Thesis timeline

January

- 10 Jan: Assignment 2
- 16 Jan: Seminar I
- 24 Jan: Assignment 3
- 30 Jan: Seminar II
- Supervisors appointed

March

- First Research Seminar
- 7 March: Assignment 6
- Methods courses
- Thesis work
- Meeting with supervisor every 2-3 weeks

May

- Third Research Seminar
- Thesis work
- Meeting with supervisor every 2-3 weeks
- 29 May: FINAL THESIS SUBMISSION

Jan

Feb

March

April

May

June

February

- Meeting with supervisor
- 7 Feb: Assignment 4
- 28 Feb: Assignment 5 (Research proposal)

April

- Second Research Seminar
- Thesis work
- Meeting with supervisor every 2-3 weeks

June

- 9 June: Thesis evaluation completed



Methods courses

MNGT-E1003 Quantitative

Methods: <https://sisu.aalto.fi/student/courseunit/aalto-CU-1150932880-20220801/brochure>

MNGT-E1011 Qualitative

Methods: <https://sisu.aalto.fi/student/courseunit/aalto-CU-1150932940-20220801/brochure>

Thesis workload

- **20 credits = 540 hours of work = 13,5 weeks of 40 hours**
- **E.g. Jan-Feb 50% work on thesis = 160 hours**
March-May 75% work on thesis = 360 hours
520 hours
- **What is decisive to keep the workload at 20 credits?**
 - **Narrow scope**
 - **Realistic empirical design**
 - **Keeping the deadline(s)**

Analyzing theses – what did you learn?

Assignment #2

In this assignment you will analyze and evaluate an existing thesis relevant to your topic/methods/interests/ in terms of what was good and how the thesis could have been improved. First describe briefly the study (200-300 words). Then verbally evaluate it using the Master's Thesis Evaluation Rubric as your evaluation tool, writing a qualitative analysis of thesis (300-500 words). **In the end reflect what you learned from reading this (and other) theses** (200-300 words).

The MSc thesis evaluation rubric is attached here. Please note that you will be evaluating a 30cr thesis and the evaluation rubric is therefore also the one for 30cr theses (we will look at the 20cr rubric in January). In your analysis, give your own personal view of how you think this thesis would be different if it was a 20cr thesis.

Writing your preliminary research proposal (Assignment #3)

General

- You are strongly encouraged to meet at least once with another student while working on assignment 3.
- The research proposal should include your research problem, research question(s), research setting, key conceptual definitions, and ideas concerning your theoretical framework, and preliminary data collection and methodological choices.
- Make sure you follow academic writing standards in writing the text, i.e. make sure that you do not make claims without references i.e. every concept you use/claim you make regarding literature needs to be supported by reference(s).
- The length of the proposal is 800-1000 words excluding references.
- **NOTE: Supervisors will be appointed after assignment 3 has been submitted.**

What do you plan to accomplish?

Articulate clearly what is the research problem you intend to study.

- “In this thesis I examine strategizing in virtual worlds. That is, I study what people do when they work with strategy rather than examining which strategies as such lead to success or failure.” (Vesa, 2013)

Why do you want to do it?

- Describe briefly the background of your work. Why did you choose this topic? What problems will the research solve? Articulate clearly why the study is important and interesting to you, to practice and academically.
- Focus especially on articulating the academic relevance of the study by positioning your study within particular academic discussion(s).
- You can start by identifying a particular conversation in the field that interests you (e.g. Mergers and Acquisitions). Within this broader field you can identify the specific area you will focus on (e.g. Culture conflicts in mergers and acquisitions).
- Finally, your goal is to identify what is not yet known within this specific field. The final step demands substantial reading and is a hard task at this stage but you can give it a try.
- Make clear what is the cross-border aspect in your study

What are your research questions?

- Based on the background of your study, formulate the exact research questions your study intends to solve. Focus on making the questions as specific as possible, and formulate them in an academic language (i.e. avoid consultant jargon such as “solving problem X for company Y”). You may have a general question which is then divided into sub-questions.
- What, how, why?
- Make sure that the literature you refer to is relevant to your research questions. Make sure that you use the conceptual tools provided by the literature(s) in formulating your RQs.

What is the scholarly discussion you are engaging with?

- This is where you provide more detail about what others have done in the area, and what you propose to do.
- Give a brief description about prior research in your chosen area(s) that you consider relevant for your study. Consider especially research that is relevant for your chosen research questions.
- The literature should be up to date; try to report on the current understanding in the field. If you choose to only report on older studies, chances are you are missing something important.
- Acknowledge the work of others through referencing. Remember to include a complete list of citations at the end of your plan in academic format.

How are you going to do it?

- Report on the methods that you intend to use to conduct your fieldwork (i.e. interviews, case studies, surveys, ethnography, archival methods, mixed methods etc.).
- Justify the chosen method; how is it the best for answering your research questions?
- In case you do not know which methods you will use, discuss the pros and cons of the ones you consider most relevant.
- What is the timetable of the study? Present a realistic plan of how you will execute your thesis research.

Technical instructions for all the assignments

Please use:

- Times New Roman 12
- line spacing 1,5
- margins 2,5
- Harvard referencing system <http://libweb.anglia.ac.uk/referencing/harvard.htm>

Please provide:

- your name, student number, assignment number and the word count on the first page of your assignments

Choosing a topic and formulating research questions

-> see a separate slide deck