

DOKTORITÖÖ TEEMAD SISSEASTUJATELE 2024 / PhD TOPICS FOR APPLICANTS IN 2024

ÄRIJUHTIMINE/BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

Juhendaja(d) /Supervisor(s)	Teema/Topic	Teema kirjeldus/Description of the topic	Language (ESTonian, ENGLISH)
Krista Jaakson krista.jaakson@ut.ee	Succession planning and transfer of control in family businesses in the Baltic countries.	<p>Family businesses are the most prevalent type of business organization in global economy (Rovelli, Ferasso, De Massis, & Kraus, 2022). In the Baltic countries more than 5000 companies can be considered family firms according to the most stringent definition. Many of these firms were established in early 1990-s and are now facing the pressing need for the second generation involvement if these are to continue as family businesses. It is argued that only around 30% of family businesses reach the second generation and a mere 10% of family businesses endure to the third generation (Scheffold, 2014). The objective of the thesis is to study the factors that support and hinder the family business succession in the Baltic States, given the countries' socio-cultural and historical context. The project should employ qualitative and quantitative data and methods. Baltic Family Firm Institute (BFFI) offers data on family-firm status in the Baltics and network of family business scholars all over the world.</p>	ENG/EST
Kurmet Kivipõld kurmet.kivipold@ut.ee	Innovative behaviour relation with collectivistic leadership and organizational effectiveness	<p>The objective of this PhD project is to investigate how collectivistic leadership as a coordination mechanism among organizational members relates with innovation behaviour in organizations. From one hand innovative behaviour of organizational members creates collectivistic leadership and from other this collectivistic leadership behaviour fosters innovation in organizations. In the focus will be knowledge and technology intensive organizations where knowledge transformation is most intensive. The study could combines quantitative as well as qualitative methods (triangulation) and divided into different subparts. The student is expected to do literature review about the relationship between collectivistic leadership and innovative behaviour. The second, to make the research about flows (relationship) between innovative behaviour of organizational members and collectivistic leadership of an organization. Finally, to explore how collectivistic leadership and innovative behaviour influence organizational effectiveness.</p>	EST/ENG

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Andres Kuusik andres.kuusik@ut.ee	Cross-cultural differences in brand communication adaption - neuromarketing approach	There have been various papers on cross-cultural differences in Europe and the differences that culture plays in marketing. Some specific differences in how brand communications can be done, have also been researched. Neuromarketing experiments can contribute to the literature by adding to the conversations on brand communication differences. This thesis will build on comparing Estonian brand communication to the same communications in Germany. Different case studies will be conducted and neuromarketing experiments will be run both in Estonia and Germany.	ENG/EST
Andres Kuusik andres.kuusik@ut.ee	Validating Science-based startups using creative destructions lab as an example	The goal of this research is to find out how investors approach science-based startups to determine whether the idea itself could be done. We hypothesize that there are a lot of gut-feeling approaches that can easily lead to failures. As a result a framework is developed to validate science-based startups. The project is linked to Creative Destructions Lab program, and aims to build on the approaches and best practices used in the program.	ENG/EST
Liina Joller-Vahter liina.joller@ut.ee Maaja Vadi maaja.vadi@ut.ee	Platforms' governance and communication patterns	Organizational setup of a platform firm differs from a non-platform firm in several ways. Their competitive advantage may be rooted, among others, in their communication patterns, distribution of power, strategies of economies of scale or scope, knowledge accumulation, etc. Firms employing the platform-based business model are increasingly seen to take market lead in more and more sectors, while at the same time competing also against each other. While being a relatively new research domain, it calls for a fresh look in the framework of the dominant management theory.	EST/ENG
Liina Joller-Vahter liina.joller@ut.ee Urmas Varblane urmas.varblane@ut.ee	Innovation in healthcare: barriers and approaches to overcome them	Innovation and innovation diffusion in healthcare differs from other industries manifold. It is more conservative, research intensive, and the roles of client/end-user/payer are diffused, just to name a few. Recently, the data privacy related issues have become an important obstacle in new health-tech solutions development. The research may address start-ups as well as incumbent firms, all phases across the innovation process. It may address both technological and non-technological innovations, and their combinations. The research should take a global or pan-European perspective. A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods will likely be feasible. The candidate should have a good background overview of the sector. It is possible to have also an external supervisor/advisor from the health field.	EST/ENG

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Ülle Päril ylleparl@ut.ee	Dialogical Turn of Accounting and Accountability. Linking Non-financial and Financial Sustainability in (Integrated) Reporting.	<p>Fundamental changes have taken place in both accounting and reporting. Financial data and -reports are still important (for investors), but non-financial information (NFI) plays an increasingly important role and more attention is paid to a wider range of information users. Different frameworks are used to complete reports, and the use of frameworks and methods varies by country and region. Studies have shown that NFI (voluntary) disclosure may be even more important and necessary for the non-profit and public sector organizations than for the business sector. The disclosure of information and its quality affects the reliability of the business environment and thus investments and competitiveness. Therefore, it is very important to study and, with based on the research results, improving quality of reporting and the use of information in the (Estonian) for-profit and non-profit business sector, both in creating credibility and improving the quality of information-based management decisions. Main challenges and research questions in the field: 1) Better reporting and reports i.e. easier to read reports for a wider range of information users. RQ: How do the reports and the information reflected there reach to the target groups (availability, readability, etc.) 2) To draw attention and influence perceptions and management decisions through reporting . RQ: How does the preparation of (sustainability) reports and the availability of information affect the organization's strategy, management and the behavior of its members. 3) Better reporting creates a more reliable business environment. RQ: What is the impact of the implementation of the EU NFI disclosure directives on the (Estonian) business environment and companies.</p>	ENG/EST
Mervi Raudsaar mervi.raudsaar@ut.ee	The Role and Differences of Pre-incubation Models in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs): A Focus on Pre-incubation Programs in Entrepreneurship Education in Estonia	<p>Entrepreneurship is gaining increasing recognition as a vital driver of economic growth, innovation, and job creation. In this context, higher education institutions (HEIs) play a crucial role in fostering entrepreneurship and supporting the development of students' entrepreneurial skills and ventures. Pre-incubation programs have emerged as effective tools within HEIs to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and practical entrepreneurial experiences. This Ph.D. research aims to investigate the need for and differences among pre-incubation models in the context of entrepreneurship education in Estonia.</p>	EST

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Anne Reino anne.reino@ut.ee	Whistleblowing in an organization	An effective whistleblowing system is crucial for developing an ethical climate in an organization. Nevertheless, not many companies have put the system into practice. Reasons for refusing to adopt a whistleblowing system by organizations have not been studied extensively. Resistance and ignoring the topic can be noticed even on a societal level: the content of EU directive on whistleblower protection is not reflected in the national legislation system of many countries, Estonia included. The absence of a whistleblower protection system can be one of the reasons why individuals decide not to blow a whistle. Whistleblowing is a psychological process that involves many stages influenced by several factors. The doctoral thesis should focus on a critical examination of the contextual and individual factors of the whistleblowing process.	ENG
Tiia Vissak, tiia.vissak@ut.ee Oliver Lukason oliver.lukason@ut.ee	Firms' internationalization and performance in the (non-) VUCA environment	You will conduct qualitative (case study) and/or quantitative research and study how (Estonian or other) firms have internationalized in VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) and non-VUCA environments (during more stable times) and how this has affected their international (e.g., foreign market entries, exits and re-entries) and overall (including financial) performance. You will also find out how firms have measured their export and financial performance, if these measures have changed due to VUCA and how they assess their success or failure.	ENG
Maaja Vadi maaja.vadi@ut.ee Jaanika Meriküll jaanika.merikull@ut.ee	Karjääriankrud ja nende roll soolise palgalõhe kujunemises (Career anchors and their role in the development of the gender wage gap)	Karjääriankur iseloomustab, kuidas isik mõistab oma annet ja oskusi, tajub motive, hoiakuid ja väärtusi (Schein 1996). Algses karjääriankrute käsitluses eritatakse kaheksa komponenti, mis käsitlevad töötajate kogemusi ja seda, kuidas tajutakse ümbritsevas keskkonnas toimivaid väärtusi. Inimestel võib üheaegselt olla mitu karjäärisuunitlust, põlvkondlikud erinevused peegelduvad valikutes, kuid ka individuaalsed väärtused ning orientatsioonid ilmnevad karjääri valikus. Sel moel annab karjääriankrute käsitlus võimaluse analüüsida tööelu valiku printsiipe indiviidi tasandil ning see omakorda loob eeldused soolise palgalõhe põhjuste paremaks selgitamiseks. Uurimistöö eesmärgiks on välja tuua, mil määral ja kuidas karjääriga seotud valikud (siin hinnatuna karjääriankrute vaatest) näitavad soolise palgalõhe tekkimise mehhanisme. Empiirilise materjali kogumiseks rakendatakse nii kvalitatiivseid kui ka kvantitatiivseid uurimismeetodeid. Sooline palgalõhe tekkepõhjuste parem mõistmine toetab ühiskonna jaoks valulise praktilise probleemi lahendamist.	EST

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<p>Maaja Vadi maaja.vadi@ut.ee</p> <p>Mark Kantšukov ecomark@ut.ee</p>	<p>Linking organizational values with financial performance – the case of Estonian fintech companies</p>	<p>Proposed topic holds importance for advancing knowledge in multiple domains, including organizational behavior, strategic management, fintech innovation, corporate governance, and sustainability. Organizational values play a crucial role in shaping the culture, behavior, and decision-making processes within companies. Understanding how these values influence financial performance can provide valuable insights into the inner workings of organizations, particularly in dynamic and innovative sectors like fintech. By exploring this relationship it will be possible to comprehend how values drive strategic decisions, ultimately impacting financial outcomes.</p> <p>The fintech industry is rapidly growing and evolving, disrupting traditional financial services through technological innovation. Studying the relationship between organizational values and financial performance within Estonian fintech companies offers a unique perspective on how values contribute to competitive advantage and sustainability in this sector. Fintech companies often operate in highly regulated environments, facing various challenges and opportunities. Examining how organizational values align with regulatory compliance, customer trust, and innovation can offer valuable lessons for both academia and industry practitioners.</p> <p>Estonia has emerged as a prominent hub for fintech innovation, boasting a supportive regulatory environment, a thriving startup ecosystem, and a culture of digital entrepreneurship. By focusing on Estonian fintech companies, the research can provide valuable insights that are relevant not only to the local context but also to the broader fintech landscape globally. Understanding the specific cultural, regulatory, and market dynamics in Estonia can shed light on the generalizability of findings and inform best practices for fintech firms operating in diverse environments.</p>	<p>ENG</p>

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<p>Maaja Vadi maaja.vadi@ut.ee</p> <p>Anne Reino anne.reino@ut.ee</p>	<p>Juhtimisvaldkonnad ja nende käsitlemine Eestis (knowledge of Estonian language required)</p>	<p>Juhtimine on valdkond, mis on seotud laiemate globaalsete ja lokaalsete ühiskondlike protsessidega. Kui ajas tagasi liikuda, siis saab välja tuua, et Eesti juhtimispraktikat ja -paradigmasid on mõjutanud nii anglo-ameerika koolkonnad, Skandinaavia, saksakeelne kultuuriruum, kuid oma jälje on jätnud ka ka endine Nõukogude Liit ja selle ideoloogia. Siiani puudub Eesti juhtimisteaduse, sh eestikeelse terminoloogia arengu süstemaatiline teaduslik retrospektiivne käsitlus. Omakeelse mõtte arengu kaardistus ning käsitlus on oluline rahvuskultuuri säilimise ja tuleviku perspektiivist.</p> <p>Doktoritöö skoop hõlmab: (1)juhtimisteaduslike teemakäsitluste kaardistamine Eestis; (2) omakeelsete terminite arengu ning sellega seotud debattide kaardistamine; (3) institutsionaalset konteksti analüüs ja selle mõju Eesti juhtimisteaduse arengus (ülikoolide, katusorganisatsioonide roll, teaduskonverentsid jm); (4) mõjukamate Eesti juhtimisteaduste ülevaate koostamist (elulugu, kujunemine, panus juhtimisteadusse). Doktoritöös kasutatakse peamiselt kvalitatiivseid meetodeid (dokumendianalüüs, narratiivid, intervjuud jm) ning töö valmib eesti keeles.</p>	<p>EST</p>
<p>Urmas Varblane urmas.varblane@ut.ee</p> <p>Maaja Vadi maaja.vadi@ut.ee</p>	<p>The change/dynamics of mandate of Estonian subsidiaries of MNCs in the process of restructuring of global value chains</p>	<p>The headquarter-subsidiary relationship is crucial for the overall functioning of MNCs (Kostova et al, 2016). According to literature, the degree of integration of a subsidiary in the MNC seems to be the most important factor affecting the autonomy of managers. The autonomy of subsidiaries depends critically on the existing capacities and their evolution. The better a subsidiary is performing in comparison to other corporate units, the more autonomy its managers could enjoy. A subsidiary managers' initiative is closely linked with power creation. Power can be gained by having an ability or a capability or by possessing something with which it is possible to control somebody else. Power within a functional specialization may be labeled "functional power", while power related to the strategic direction of the MNC as a whole may be termed "strategic power". (Mudambi et al. 2014)</p> <p>This study focuses on the Estonian subsidiaries of MNCs and it targets dynamics of their mandate which is associated with their autonomy and functional or strategic power. The rationale for that study derives from notion that managing a subsidiary effectively is not simply about carrying out the mandate awarded by the parent company, but rather about fulfilling the current mandate in a superior way and taking strategic initiatives which add new</p>	<p>ENG</p>

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		<p>value to the corporation. (Delany 2000).</p> <p>Data</p> <p>We have extensive data deposit for analyzing of MNC subsidiaries during the period 1996-2022. Since 1996 in cooperation with the Estonian Foreign Investment Agency seven surveys “Foreign Investor ” have been conducted. These surveys have covered among other themes (motivation, innovation, transfer of technology and management experience etc.) also the autonomy of local managers within the multinational corporations. In 2009 and 2020 semi-structured interviews (in total around 80) were also held with the CEOs of subsidiaries of foreign owned firms in Estonia. Among the other issues also autonomy questions were asked. (PLEASE ASK MORE DETAILED DESCRIPTION FROM POTENTIAL SUPERVISORS)</p>	