



**University of  
Zurich<sup>UZH</sup>**

**Chair of Organization and Management**

*Distinguished Scholars PhD Seminar Series*  
*«Current Topics in Organization Theory and Strategy»*  
*Fall Term 2026*

**«Emotional Foundations of Strategy»**

**Timo O. Vuori**

Professor of Strategic Management  
Aalto University School of Science

**Lecturer:** Professor Timo Vuori  
**Dates:** November 2-4, 2026  
**Times:** 9:30-16:30h  
**Location:** UZH Campus Central  
**Language:** English  
**Application:** To apply, please send your CV and a short motivational statement to [om@business.uzh.ch](mailto:om@business.uzh.ch) by **August 31th, 2026**

## **MODULE OVERVIEW**

Emotions are fundamental drivers of strategic thinking, decision-making, and organizational action. While traditional strategy research has emphasized rational analysis and cognitive processes, a fast-growing stream of work demonstrates that emotions shape what leaders notice, how they interpret situations, how boards deliberate, and how organizations mobilize for change.

This module introduces PhD students to the emerging research frontier on the emotional foundations of strategy. We explore emotions as mechanisms in strategic decision-making, strategy execution, collaboration, and organizational adaptation. Across sessions, we review contemporary research, analyze illustrative cases, and discuss methodological approaches for studying emotions in high-stakes strategic contexts.

The module blends conceptual inputs, group discussion, and hands-on analytic exercises. Participants will learn how to position emotions within broader strategy and organization theory conversations, how to identify emotional mechanisms in empirical materials, and how to theorize emotion-based processes in their own research.

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

In the sessions, we will discuss each article and build shared understanding of the emotion literature, with the ultimate goal of producing clear understanding of

- How emotions are relevant for strategy
- How emotions can be managed in strategy
- What relevant dynamics we still do not know about emotions and strategy
- Which kind of research would most likely develop highly relevant new theory of emotions and strategy

## PREPARATION

1. Read all the articles assigned to the sessions
2. Prepare a one-page document including:
  - Name
  - Stage in PhD
  - Research topic and methodology
  - How emotions might be relevant to your project
  - Where do you see the biggest inconsistencies or relevant gaps in the strategy-emotion literature?
  - How might you address some of these inconsistencies or gaps?
3. In addition, consider the methodological papers listed after the session readings and read those that seem relevant to you. We will discuss the methods of the session papers, and these additional readings provide further detail and insight.
4. Please submit your one-page to [timo.vuori@aalto.fi](mailto:timo.vuori@aalto.fi) by **October 31**.

## COURSE INSTRUCTOR

Professor **Timo O. Vuori** is a leading scholar on the role of emotions in strategic management. His work combines cognitive perspectives with emotion theory to explain how leaders and organizations make decisions under pressure, how they navigate strategic transformations, and how emotional dynamics shape attention and adaptation. His research has been published in *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *Academy of Management Journal*, *Strategic Management Journal*, and other leading outlets. He also collaborates closely with companies on strategy processes and leadership development and has co-authored two books on strategy and emotions.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS FOR ECTS

If you require ECTS for this seminar, we ask you to submit an improved version of one of your papers or of your PhD thesis project. The project or paper that you submit needs to be at least 30 pages long and clearly show an improvement compared to previous works (50%). Alternatively, you can submit a synthesis of the topics discussed in the seminar (minimum 5 pages). Please send your submission as a PDF file to [om@business.uzh.ch](mailto:om@business.uzh.ch).

Deadline for submission: **December 31, 2026**.

## SEMINAR SCHEDULE AND READINGS

### **DAY 1: Emotions in strategic decision making**

#### **Morning: How emotions shape strategic decisions**

- Hodgkinson, G.P. & Healey, M.P., 2011. Psychological foundations of dynamic capabilities: Reflexion and reflection in strategic management. *Strategic Management Journal*, 32(13), 1500-1516.
- Vuori, T. O., & Tushman, M. L. 2024. Strategic decision-making at platform transitions: The case of Nokia (2010–2011). *Strategic Management Journal*, 45(10), 2018–2062.
- van den Oever, K., & Shropshire, C. 2024. More than a feeling: How board member displays of anger and happiness influence strategic decisions. *Academy of Management Journal*, 67(6), 1525–1552.

#### **Afternoon: Regulating emotions in strategic decision making**

- Vuori, T. O., & Huy, Q. N. 2022. Regulating top managers' emotions during strategy making: Nokia's socially distributed approach enabling radical change from mobile phones to networks in 2007–2013. *Academy of Management Journal*, 65(1), 331–361.
- Healey, M. P., & Hodgkinson, G. P. 2024. Overcoming strategic persistence: Effects of multiple scenario analysis on strategic reorientation. *Strategic Management Journal*, 45(8), 1423–1445.
- Tuggle, C. S., Borgholthaus, C. J., Harms, P. D., & O'Brien, J. P. 2024. Setting the tone to get their way: An attention-based approach to how narcissistic CEOs influence the board of directors to take more risk. *Strategic Management Journal*, 45(10), 2095-2121.

## **DAY 2: Emotions in strategy execution**

### **Morning: How emotions influence strategy execution and innovation**

- Fitzsimons, D., Petriglieri, J.L. & Petriglieri, G. 2025. The fury beneath the morphing: a theory of defensive organizing. *Academy of Management Journal*, 68(2), 409-435.
- Stephenson, K. A., Cornelissen, J. P., & Khapova, S. N. 2024. Upbeat or off-the-mark? How work rhythms affect strategic change. *Journal of Management Studies*, 61(8), 3653–3683.
- Kudesia, R. S. 2021. Emergent strategy from spontaneous anger: Crowd dynamics in the first 48 hours of the ferguson shooting. *Organization Science*, 32(5), 1210–1234.

### **Afternoon: Managing emotions during strategy execution**

- Vuori, T. O. 2024. Emotions and attentional engagement in the attention-based view of the firm. *Strategic Organization*, 22(4), 661–687.
- Franck, H., Gylfe, P., Vuori, T. O., & Vaara, E. 2025. Middle managers' regulation of the emotions of others in strategy implementation: A process perspective. *Journal of Management Studies*, advance online publication.
- Golding, C., Morton, J., & Zorina, A. 2024. Opening up emotionally: How top managers use peripheral actors' emotional expressions during inclusive strategy Formulation. *Long Range Planning*, 57(6), 102482.

### **DAY 3: Emotions in partnerships and among stakeholders**

#### **Morning: How emotions shape partnerships and relationships with stakeholders**

Aversa, P., Furnari, S., & Jenkins, M. 2022. The primordial soup: Exploring the emotional microfoundations of cluster genesis. *Organization Science*, 33(4), 1340–1371.

Gamache, D. L., Pfarrer, M. D., & Curran, K. 2024. Organizational hubris: Its antecedents and consequences for stakeholder relationships. *Strategic Management Journal*, 45(7), 1366–1392.

Marcel, J. J., & Cowen, A. P. 2026. Legacies of shareholder activism: The dynamics and consequences of emotion in the boardroom. *Academy of Management Review*, 51(1), 5-24.

#### **Afternoon: Influencing stakeholder emotions**

Momtaz, P. P. 2021. CEO emotions and firm valuation in initial coin offerings: an artificial emotional intelligence approach. *Strategic Management Journal*, 42(3), 558-578.

Kouamé, S., Hafsi, T., Oliver, D., & Langley, A. 2022. Creating and sustaining stakeholder emotional resonance with organizational identity in social mission-driven organizations. *Academy of Management Journal*, 65(6), 1864–1893.

Jonassen, Z., He, V. F., & von Krogh, G. 2025. Good lessons despite bad feelings: How boundary-spanning teams learn from collaboration failure. *Organization Science*, advance online publication.

## **ADDITIONAL METHODOLOGICAL READINGS**

We will also discuss methodological choices during the seminar. Please take a quick look at these papers and read those that seem relevant to you in more detail.

Kouamé, S. & Liu, F., 2021. Capturing emotions in qualitative strategic organization research. *Strategic Organization*, 19(1), 97-112.

Lajante, M., & Lux, G. (2020). Perspective: Why organizational researchers should consider psychophysiology when investigating emotion. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, 1705.

Matthews, S.H., Wang, D.D. & Kelemen, T.K., 2024. No access? No problem! Taking stock of unobtrusive measures for executives' deep-level characteristics. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 35(1), 101754.

Hillebrand, L., Raisch, S. & Schad, J., 2025. Managing with artificial intelligence: An integrative framework. *Academy of Management Annals*, 19(1), 343-375. (\* not a method article, but gives ideas of how AI might be used for emotion research in strategy)

Harvey, J. F., & Kudesia, R. S., 2023. Experimentation in the face of ambiguity: How mindful leaders develop emotional capabilities for change in teams. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 44(4), 573-589. (\* not a method article, but a good example)

Wang, L., Lin, Y., Jiang, W., Yang, H., & Zhao, H., 2023. Does CEO emotion matter? CEO affectivity and corporate social responsibility. *Strategic Management Journal*, 44(7), 1820-1835. (\* not a method article, but a good example)

Laureiro-Martínez, D., Brusoni, S., Canessa, N. & Zollo, M., 2015. Understanding the exploration–exploitation dilemma: An fMRI study of attention control and decision-making performance. *Strategic Management Journal*, 36(3), 319-338. (\* not a method article, but a good example)