

THESIS

How to adapt the requirements of an expedition to meet customer competences

Polku Nature Tours: Kemihaara winter expedition

Sampsa Vähä-Karvia

Bachelor's degree in Adventure and Outdoor Education, Community Educator

(210 ECTS)

5/2021

ABSTRACT

Humak University of Applied Sciences

Bachelor's degree in Adventure and Outdoor Education, Community Educator

Author: Sampsa Vähä-Karvia

Title of thesis: How to adapt the requirements of an expedition to meet customer competences

Number of pages: 35 and 2 pages of appendices

Supervisor of the thesis: Kai Lehtonen

Commissioned by: Polku Nature Tours (Sampo Rouhiainen)

There is an overall need to find a good fit between offered hiking products and the customer demand. The trend of ever raising interest in outdoor recreation makes this issue very topical. Objective for my thesis was to expand the operations of my commissioner, Polku Nature Tours. Polku Nature Tours is a Finnish hiking and bush craft course operator. I concentrated on producing a winter hiking product for them and giving general ideas on improving their hiking products. I also provided a difficulty rating for their expeditions.

I concentrated on three factors within the thesis: customer communication; different ways to adjust the level of challenge for the participants; and reflecting. In communication part, I concentrated on the aspects that happen before the expeditions starts. Adjusting part focused on actions that you can do during the hike as a leader and reflecting combined these two phases together by forming a continuous cycle of reflecting on the quality of communication and whether customer demands were met or not.

As methods for research-based development work, I used benchmarking, interviews and test expedition, which included participant observation and a small questionnaire. I planned and implemented in collaboration with my commissioner a test expedition with 6 customers and 8 participants in total. To analyze my data, I used coding to define themes that became the main results of the data analysis.

As results, I found out that effective communication and thorough planning are crucial in a successful expedition. Both factors help you as a guide to adjust the level of challenge of the expedition to match with your customers' competences. Reflecting continuously on your operations enables you to plan better and communicate more effectively. Using adventure educational approach to organize their expeditions proved to be worthwhile for my commissioner.

Keywords: adventure education, communication, competence, expedition, hiking, reflection, outdoor

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

TIIVISTELMÄ

1	INTRODUCTION	4
	1.1 Commissioner	4
	1.2 Thesis needs and objectives	5
2	KNOWLEDGEBASE	7
	2.1 Customer Communication	7
	2.2 Adjusting the level of challenge according to customer competence.....	10
	2.3 Reflecting on adventurous activities	15
3	METHODS FOR RESEARCH-BASED DEVELOPMENT WORK.....	17
	3.1 Benchmarking	17
	3.2 Semi-structured interviews	17
	3.3 Test expedition.....	19
	3.4 Methods of analysis	21
4	RESULTS	23
	4.1 Preparing for the expedition	23
	4.2 Different ways of adjusting the challenge	26
5	CONCLUSION	30
	REFERENCES	33
	APPENDICES	36
	Appendix 1. Sauna Expedition.....	36
	Appendix 2. Difficulty rating for Polku Nature Tour's expeditions.....	37

1 INTRODUCTION

Finnish hiking organizers hardly express the level of difficulty of their products in depth. There is a lack of information on how a prospective customer could assess their own level of competence and then choose a correct expedition that would match with these competences. Especially when it is expected that the current trend of new hikers is increasing, there is a demand for reliable and simple ways of assessing the competences of a hiker. The information provided on the expeditions should be clear and concise as well.

There is also a need for embedding a continuous reflection process for organizers to assess their operations and to improve them with the help of their experiences. To my personal knowledge this might be something new, at least for smaller operators, in the hiking industry.

Meaning of this thesis for the industry is to give instructions on customer communication, how to adapt the level of challenge for your customers and how to reflect on your actions and develop your operations continuously by gathering and processing feedback.

I will concentrate on a winter skiing expedition where people ski from camp site to another while spending at least four days in the wild. However, the findings from the thesis can be transformed to any type of expedition regardless of the time and place and activities it includes.

1.1 Commissioner

Commissioner of my thesis is Turku/Pyhä based Polku Nature Tours (Polku Nature Tours 2021a, 2021b). Polku Nature Tours is a relatively young company that has concentrated on traditional Finnish wilderness surviving skills. Sampo Rouhiainen, the owner and operator of Polku Nature Tours, has a background as working in Finnish Lapland as a wilderness guide for several winter seasons. He is also an instructor in Survival Guild Finland (Survival Kilta Ry 2021). Their purpose is to raise the awareness of safety risks on recreational activities and teach how to deal with them. Survival Guild Finland also promotes the use of natural materials for nutrition and other aids as well for nature conservation. Guild organizes courses on survival related topics in two main courses: Outdoor safety course which is held in the summer months and Winter safety course.

Polku Nature Tour's core value is the respect for the nature. They strive to minimize their environmental impact. They underline that key factor in doing so is their activities.

“ However, we think that our activities as such are our most effective action to protect the environment. We want to teach people to understand nature better so they can protect it better in their everyday life.” (Polku Nature Tours 2021b)

Polku Nature Tours is utilizing adventure educational approach in their operations in the sense, that they want to provide possibilities for their customers to feel agency and promote the experiential way of learning new things.

” We at Polku Nature Tours want to encourage people to step deeper into forest to find their own strength. We believe that everyone will be able to learn if one has only courage to try out. We want to strengthen one’s connection with nature around us and nature within us.” (Polku Nature Tours 2021a)

1.2 Thesis needs and objectives

Needs for my thesis comes mainly from the commissioner Polku Nature Tours. Company got some Covid-19 related subsidies from Business Finland to expand their operations. One direction for expanding the product base is to concentrate more on multiday hiking products, in winter and in summer and autumn time. In the scope of my thesis, I will concentrate on producing a winter hiking product for Polku Nature Tours and giving general ideas on improving my commissioner’s hiking products.

This fits also very well in the raised interest of outdoor recreation in Finland and especially in Finnish national parks and other government maintained outdoor areas. There has been an increase in national park visits by 23 percentage in year 2020 compared to year 2019 (Metsähallitus 2021a; Metsähallitus 2021b). This trend is expected to continue during this year (Helsingin Sanomat, 2021; Latu ja Polku, 2021). There is an overall need to find a good fit between offered hiking products and the customer demand. To do this, for example customer skill level or required skill level to accomplish a certain route, or expedition, must be taken into account.

I will be focusing on three different elements within the thesis. These include: 1) pre-hike communication, which includes a clear on concise route description and a difficulty level indicator, that is explained in a way that a person who doesn’t have that much experience on hiking can relate to and decide the correct level for themselves. 2) Adjusting or adapting the level of challenge during the expedition to be able to find a good fit between customer competences and the requirements of the expedition at hand. 3) Reflecting the whole process of planning and implementing an expedition to ensure that the expedition is meeting the pre-set goals for customers

and organizer. This three-stage approach forms a continuous learning cycle, or maybe a spiral would be better, as Kolb describes in his renowned experiential learning theory (Kolb, 2014).

This is also a process for the commissioner: they offer a good quality pre-hike information for the prospective customer and incorporate a self-reflection process to assess the quality of the hike and the customer experience and make necessary improvements for the next hike or event.

I will use benchmarking, semi-structured interviews, observation, and questionnaire as my research-based development methods.

2 KNOWLEDGEBASE

This section explains the theories behind the topic of my thesis. What is already known and how that links to my thesis and why it is relevant.

I will divide my knowledgebase into three different sections which concerns the procedures in three different stages of organizing and implementing a commercial multiday hiking product. It consists of pre, during and post hike actions. Pre-hike part regards customer communication. During part deals with how you can adjust the level of challenge during the expedition. And after part concerns with reflection and combines the two former parts and transfers the findings and insights gained back into the pre-expedition part to be used for the next expedition.

Karppinen and Latomaa defines Outdoor adventure education as a treefold process: there is a pedagogical goal; the activities are regarded as an experience or adventure; and the participants reflect on the adventure-based activities (Karppinen and Latomaa, 2015, 72–73; Karppinen 2005, 50). All these three elements are included in Polku Nature Tours expeditions, also considered in the viewpoint of the company itself. This is what Polku Nature Tours aims to accomplish with its winter hike course, that we tested in our test expedition. There are certain goals for participants to achieve, for example getting to know the basic skills required for accomplishing a winter hike. These skills include for example camping in winter, choosing your route, fire making skills and taking care of yourself in cold environment. There is a sense of adventure because the hike is somewhat unknown for participants and the landscape and area might be totally new for them, so there is certainly some uncertainty involved. The experience is also authentic and a week on the hike gives some tools for participants to master the basics of winter hiking skills. This comes hand in hand with the adventure educational approach by Beames and Brown, which includes four different elements: authenticity, uncertainty, mastery and agency (Beames and Brown, 2016).

2.1 Customer Communication

Communication is highly important in all aspects of organizing and implementing a successful hiking experience. Within the scope of this thesis focus is however on the communication taking place between the expedition organizer and a client before the start of the expedition. Most importantly, successful communication is needed to enable the customer to make a justified

decision about their ability to participate on a certain expedition based on the facts presented on Polku Nature Tours' website.

Finnish safety and chemical agency, TUKES, justifies why clear and correct information on expeditions is crucial and needed to fulfill the liabilities of a company organizing adventure services (TUKES 2021a, 2021b). TUKES lists several safety related items, that a service provider should have covered. Safety information related to the service should include for example the degree of difficulty of the service, requirements on the participants' state of health and other personal characteristics, the previous competence or skill level required from participants and the necessary gear. All these are very relevant for expedition organizer and it highlights why successful communication is essential to ensure all above mentioned points. TUKES defines that images shown on your website should consist of real and authentic pictures from the actual operating site and that they are in line with correct safety protocols and instructions.

Multimodal communication, using multiple different forms of communication, comes into place when customers are getting information in multiple modes such as written, audio or video. Multimodal communication means in principle that there are multiple different modes, or ways, to transfer the message you want to deliver, and usually people are using many of these modes simultaneously while they are communicating (Norris, 2004). This also gives room for people with different skills to be able to understand the communicated issue better. It enhances participation and agency and is an inclusive way to communicate. It is also important to make your product understandable for most of the people using universal design, or design for all, methods, which also covers accessibility requirements. Universal design "...includes an idea of multi-channel communication: contents are being provided for example as videos, pictures and sound in addition to plain text." (Saavutettavuus, 2021). TUKES also suggests to think which methods you choose to provide information for your customers and that you consider the needs and participants' abilities to understand the instructions and consider how well customers know the service you are providing for them (TUKES 2021a).

These different communicational modes need also to be in line with each other. They must support each other and deliver the same message. If these different modes are not in line, it might make people confused and doubting on which mode to rely and trust. In the sense of my commissioner this means that all the material and communication with customers should be in line with each other and telling the same information but just in a different way. Two-way communication ensures that the information delivered is the same as information received.

Two-way communication means that feedback is used in communication (Priest and Gass, 2005, p.258). Using feedback guarantees that customer had understood correctly the information provided. “By encouraging clients to give and gather feedback, you can double-check that the receiver’s (client’s) interpretation accurately matches the generation by you, the sender.” (Priest and Gass, 2005 p. 257-258). This feedback comes in three forms according to Priest and Gass: paraphrasing, impression checking and behaviour description. Paraphrasing helps to confirm concepts and determine if the receiver correctly understood the sender’s ideas. Paraphrasing happens when you rephrase what you just heard in your words. If you use concrete examples at the same time, paraphrasing becomes even more effective. Impression checking is used to check if the receiver of information has correctly understood the delivered message.

TUKES instructions also highlights the importance of guaranteeing that given information has been understood correctly. “Make sure that the participants of the service have received sufficient information before the start of the service, and that they remember and understand what they were told and know how to act accordingly.” (TUKES 2021a)

One part of customer communication is the information provided on routes and possible recreational places. I will look more into the information provided by companies organizing hiking products in the results chapter. Here I present some of the information and basis for hiking route grading.

Calbimonte et al (2020) have been developing a new system for hiking route skill level assessment in Switzerland. They have developed an application called Syris (Calbimonte et al. 2020) which shows for example the possible points of difficulty on a certain route. Points of difficulty refers to certain points on a trail where you might need to have certain skill level or skillset to be able to continue on that route. Same protocols might be used in the future in Finland also to be able to rate the difficulty of a certain hiking route better. This is already happening in some areas in Finland. Same kind of service is offered by a company called Outdooractive, which offers comprehensive information about certain hiking routes including for example a detailed digital route map, estimated time to hike the route, distance, and a description of the route (Outdooractive, 2021). Metsähallitus had a project called Pallas–Ylläs TOBE1 where one of the project goals was to produce a set of the best hiking routes in the Pallas-Yllästunturi national park and provide new kind of route description and info for the hikers in a digital form (Metsähallitus 2021d). They were using a planning tool provided by Outdooractive. As a result, there are now many routes online with a proper route description and an overall difficulty rating

for the route, which takes into account for example the length of the route, elevation difference and the terrain of the route. Below you can see a capture from Metsähallitus route description on the famous Hetta – Pallas hiking route.

THE ROUTE	DETAILS	TURN-BY-TURN DIRECTIONS	GETTING THERE	CURRENT INFORMATION
EQUIPMENT				
Difficulty				difficult
Technique			● ● ● ○ ○ ○	
Stamina			● ● ● ● ● ●	
Experience			● ● ● ● ● ●	
Landscape			● ● ● ● ● ●	
Highest point			Taivaskeron satula, 767 m	↕
Lowest point			Ounasjärvi, 287 m	↕
Best time of year				

Figure 1: Metsähallitus

Metsähallitus summarizes the value of clear and concise route information very well in their website.

” The purpose of route gradings and route descriptions are to give the essential information from the route to the recreational users of routes. With the help of difficulty grading a hiker can compare different routes and choose one that fits best for themselves. When there is extensive basic information about a route, it is also easier to gear up correctly and hiking is then safer.” (Metsähallitus 2021e)

2.2 Adjusting the level of challenge according to customer competence

In this subchapter different ways on evaluating the customers and their competences are being described. I will present different options on how to adjust the level of challenge to match customer competences. Key theories used in adventure education are described.

“ Adapt adventure experiences to suit the varying levels and needs of all members in a group. Leaders should recognize that adventures are a state of mind that often fluctuates according to a participant’s perception of situational risks and personal

competence. A range of challenges should be made available in the same activity or at the same site so that participants can select a level of risk that suits their level of competence.” (Priest and Gass, 2005)

Adventure experience paradigm

Figure 2 describes the optimal arousal level and the performance quality of a person. On expeditions it is important to try to keep the levels of arousal as close to optimal among participants as possible. This means that there is a match between the challenge and their skills. This is the same what Hopkins and Putnam describes as the problem of the match (Hopkins and Putnam, 2013 p. 102). In Figure 3 this same issue is described and presented by the flow model of Csikszentmihalyi (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). Csikszentmihalyi talks about finding the so-called flow channel where level of difficulty and level of skill goes hand in hand. Another model to describe the problem of the match is the different zones by Mortlock (Mortlock, 1987). Mortlock has only replaced difficulty with risk.

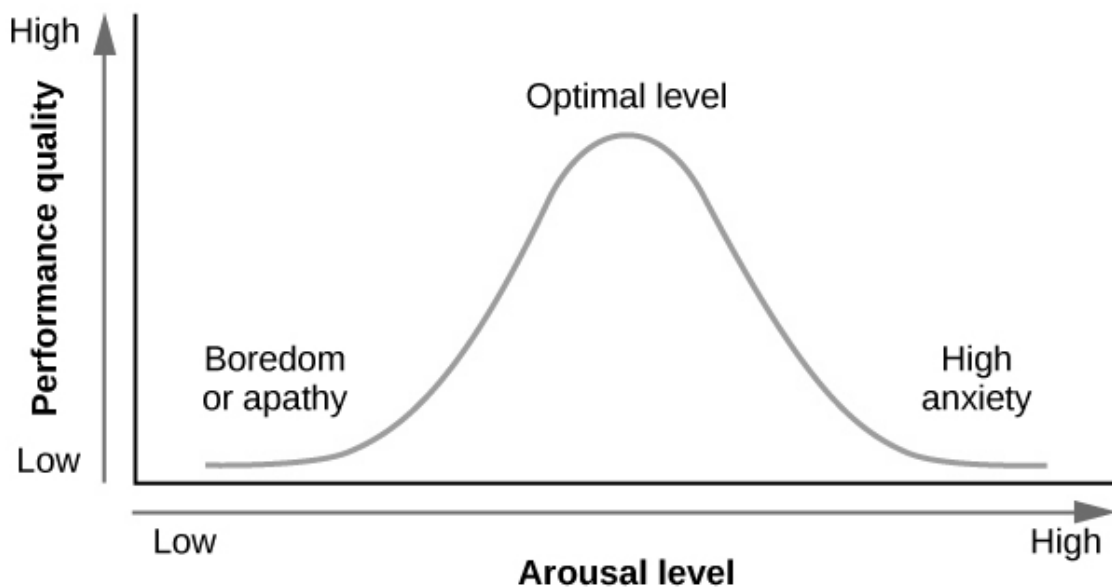


Figure 2: Optimal arousal theory according to Ellis (Ellis, 1973).

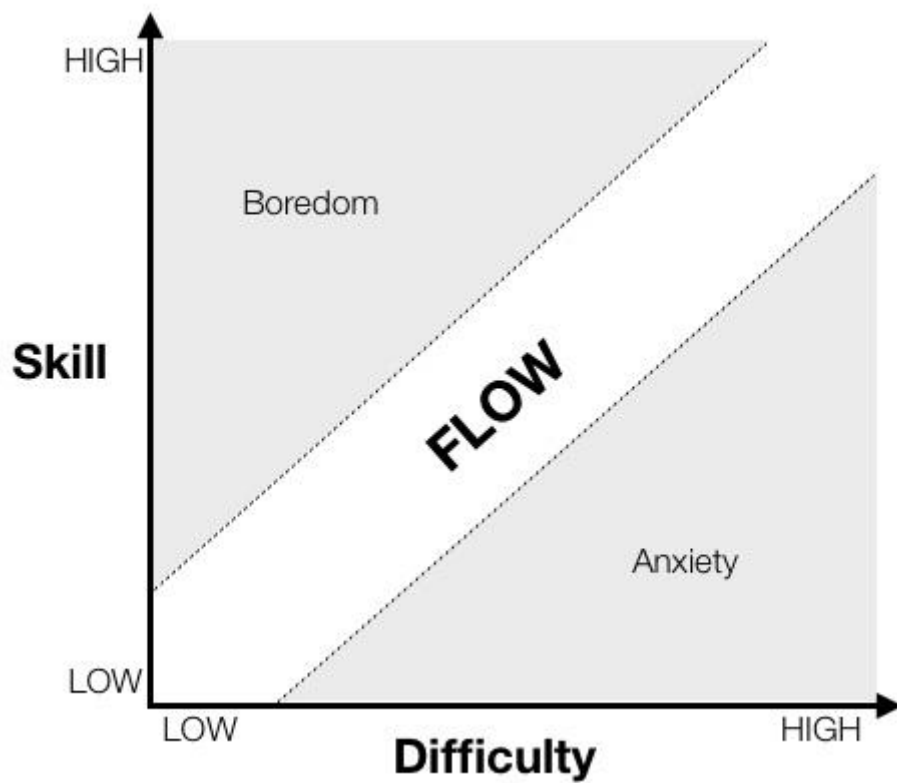


Figure 3: Flow according to Csikszentmihalyi (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975).

Martin and Priest have combined theories of Ellis, Csikszentmihalyi and Mortlock into a single theory called adventure experience paradigm (Martin and Priest, 1986). Adventure experience paradigm explains participant's behaviours using the variables of risk and competence. Figure 4 illustrates this by comparing the level of risk and competence in certain situations. Perceived risk and perceived competence can differ from the reality, but as an instructor you can affect on the perceived risk or competence.

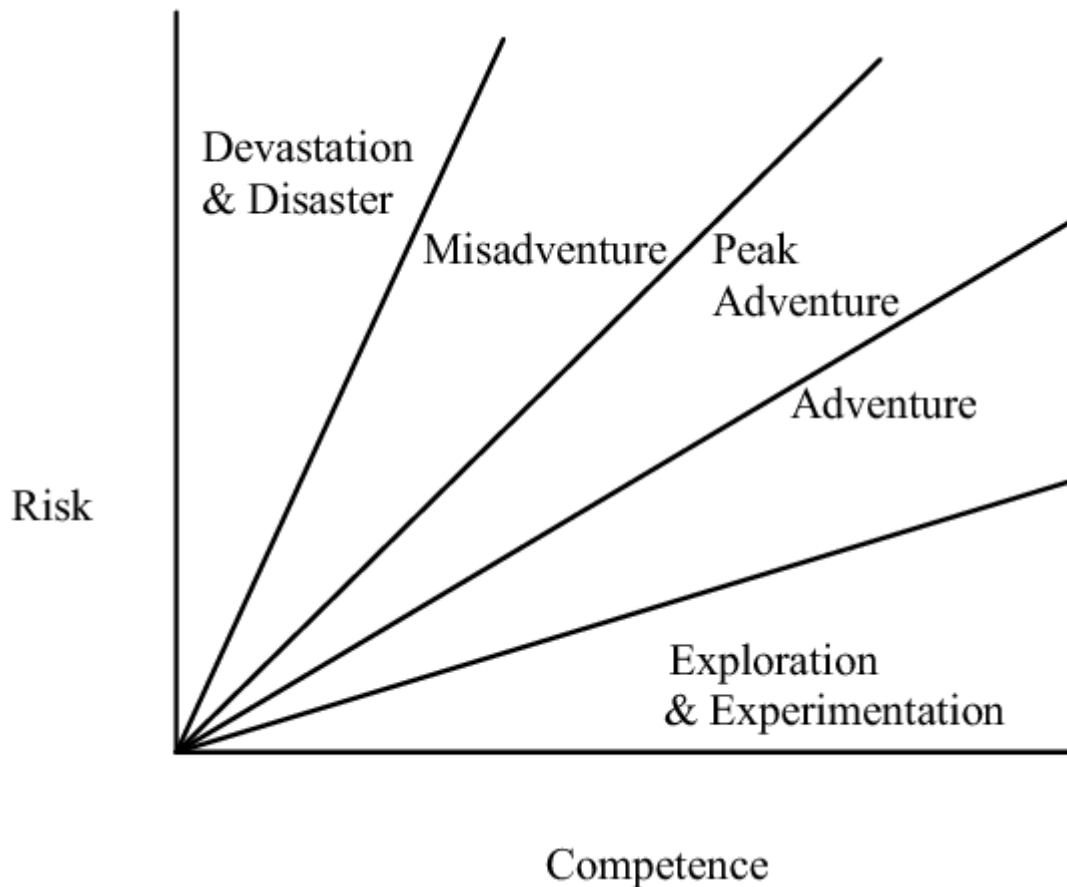


Figure 4: Adventure experience paradigm (Martin and Priest, 1986)

Conditional outdoor leadership theory

Conditional outdoor leadership theory, COLT, (Priest and Chase, 1989) is a model which is described graphically by Priest and Gass in figure 5 (Priest and Gass, 2005 p.247). It combines information on different leadership styles, leadership orientation and conditional favourability.

“ We encourage you to analyze your style in relation to these three variables and flex to suit the particular circumstances.” (Priest and Gass, 2005)

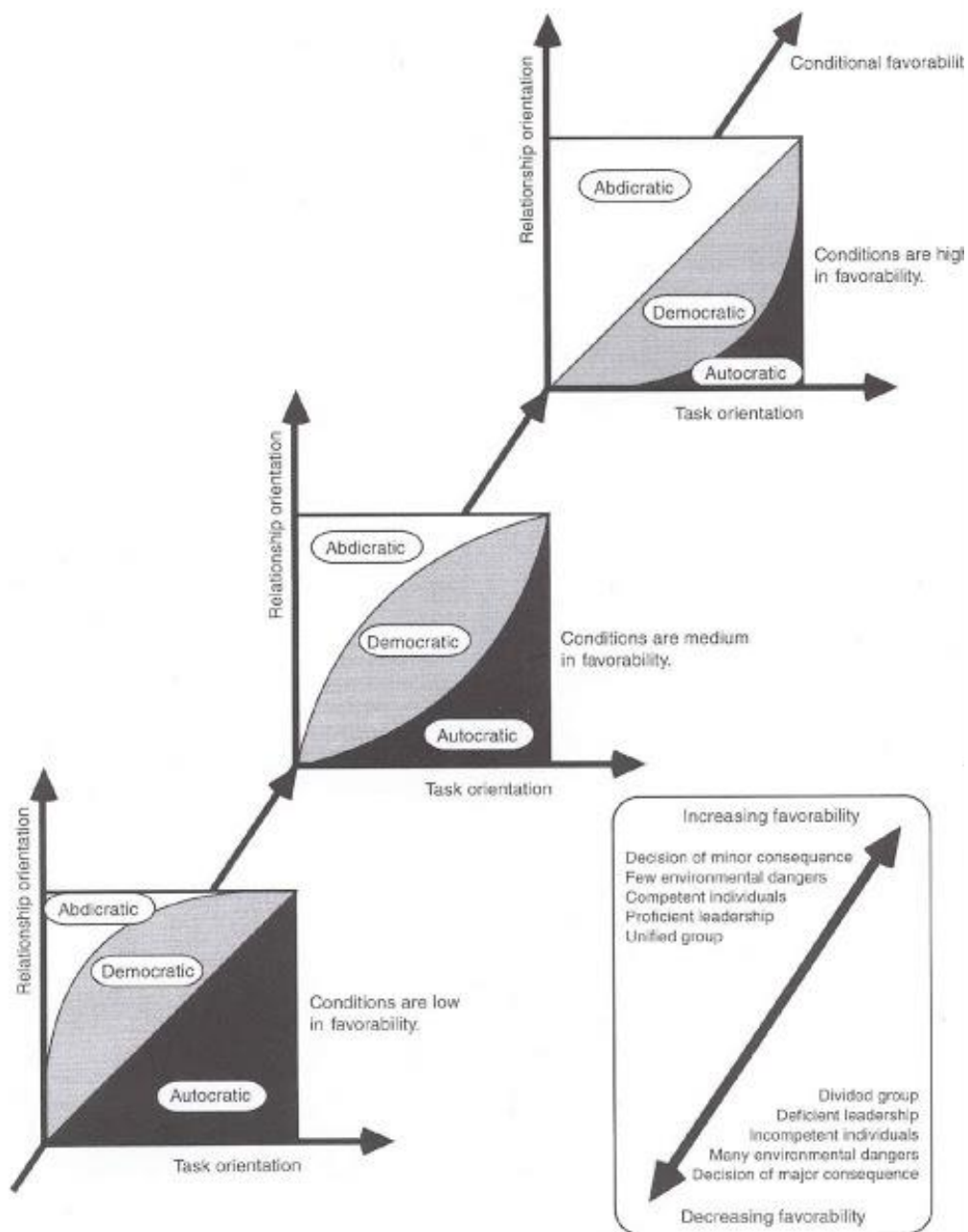


Figure 5: The conditional outdoor leadership theory (Priest and Gass, 2005)

In COLT, leadership styles are divided into three groups, which are: autocratic, democratic and abdicratic leadership styles. The autocratic style utilizes an authoritarian approach in which the leader has complete power over decision making and decides what to. The democratic style involves shared decision making, with you and the group working together to solve problems. The abdicratic style is a style where you leave the decision making in the hands of the group and you agree to abide by their decisions.

According to Priest and Gass leadership orientation can be divided into two: task orientation and relationship orientation. Task-orientation means, that leader is more concerned on achieving the set goals. Relationship orientation pays more attention of maintaining a positive atmosphere in the group. Priest and Gass also imply that task-oriented leaders tend to be more autocratic and relationship-oriented more abdicratic in their leadership styles but in order to be an effective leader you must be able to flex your leadership style, no matter what your preferred style is.

Conditional favourability means that you should always consider your leadership style with the conditions around you. If conditions are in your favour, like weather is good and terrain is easy, and group atmosphere is good, you have more options to choose on which leadership style to use. In good conditions it is preferrable to give more decision-making power to your group using abdicratic leadership style. If the conditions are not in your favour when weather is turning stormy, and terrain gets harder, you should think of a more autocratic leadership style to guarantee safety of the group and task orientation. In medium favourable conditions you might want to choose your style depending on the fact that are you more concentrated on the task at hand or the relationships in the group.

Autocratic styles are wise when you have a high concern for task and a low concern for relationship and are working under unfavourable conditions. Democratic styles are appropriate when your concerns for task and relationship are balanced and you are working under medium favourability. Abdicratic style works well when you have a low concern for tasks, a high concern for relationships and are working under favourable conditions.

2.3 Reflecting on adventurous activities

In this subchapter I describe what reflection means in the scope of this thesis and why it should be implemented into my commissioner's operations.

Kaisa Pietilä divides reflection into three parts: reflection for action, reflection in action and reflection on action (Pietilä, Kaisa 2020). Pietilä describes reflection for action with different questions: What is the goal of the process? How to choose your participants? What type of activities suits best for this group? What are the comfort zones of the participants? How to differentiate, or adjust, the level of challenge? What role is instructor taking?

In reflection in action part Pietilä advice the leader to ask: What happens right now? Are the participants in their comfort zones? Should the level of challenge be adjusted? What is my role within the group? According to Pietilä, reflection in action is surely the most challenging part of reflection, because it happens on the go. You need to react simultaneously when situations arise and choose your approach to them accordingly. Pietilä highlights that instructor's ability to reflect enables them to change plans, if needed. This justifies well why reflection is highly needed that you are able to adjust the level of challenge for your customer.

Reflection on action is maybe the most common version of reflection used in instructional situations. It is usually considered or called as debriefing. In this part of reflection emphasis is put on the issues that worked well or did not work that well in activity. What factors affected on the success and why? What could be learned from this and how does it effect on future operations?

3 METHODS FOR RESEARCH-BASED DEVELOPMENT WORK

In this section I explain what methods I chose to use for my research-based development work, how I applied them in my thesis and why I chose these methods. The methods for analysing the results gained are discussed at the end of this chapter.

3.1 Benchmarking

Benchmarking, or best practices, means to gather data from other similar operators in the field of my study and trying to find out the best practises that are usually used amongst the field. The Cambridge dictionary defines benchmarking as: “the use of something as a standard in order to improve your own work, products, or processes” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2021).

I decided to start my research by benchmarking to find out the best practices amongst the field of organizing guided hiking tours. I gathered data from Finnish tour operators and a few examples from abroad. The companies could be categorized in different level mountain treks, hiking tours in Nordic countries, skiing expeditions in Finnish Lapland and day treks from a home base. My object was to find out how companies present different skill levels for their organized trips and what kind of information they provide for their customers in their website and how it is presented. I found this information crucial for the prospective customer to be able to assess their own skills and how they would match with a certain hike.

3.2 Semi-structured interviews

I conducted semi-structured interviews with the experts in the different fields of hiking industry in Finland. Topics related to good customer experience and how to consider different factors while planning your hiking products were discussed in these interviews.

Semi-structured interview combines pre-set questions and questions that may rise during the interview process. Method offers a possibility to check that interviewer has correctly understood what the interviewee said in the interview (Flick, 2018). I decided to conduct a semi-structured interview because this creates some structure in the interview process and gives room for further questions if there are topics that raises and needs more attention.

I chose my interviewees from different fields of outdoor sector to get a wider perspective and better and more reliable data. I conducted four interviews in total. Four interviews in this case were sufficient when I used this method combined with other methods. This is called triangulation. One interviewee is working as an adventure education teacher, one has a long career of working as a guide in different countries and being an entrepreneur offering several different types of tours and expeditions. One has experience on planning and implementing hiking route descriptions and one has worked as a mountain tour leader and has a background as a wilderness guide.

My aim was to gather data in the field of good customer service: what preliminary information customers need to get a sufficient and valid information to back up their decision making to take part on a certain hike and choosing a right expedition for their needs and competences. Interviews covered topics related on customer communication and how to adjust the level of challenge during an expedition. Each interview consisted of slightly different questions depending on each interviewee's expertise but the themes were the same in each interview.

I informed the participants via email what the interview is going to be about. I made sure before the interview started that the interviewee knows what their role is and what is interviewers role and what is the goal for the interview.

In conducting the interview, I used video-meeting in two occasions and recorded the interviews to be able to make the transcripts. One interview was held via telephone, because of timetable issues and one face-to-face. In these two latter ones I made notes during the interview. It would have been good to be able to have all the meetings as video-meetings and to be able to record them. This was not possible, so I went with note taking then, which was the second-best option. Recording the face-to-face interview would have been good, but we had enough time to get my notes correct and all in all the interview was more like a conversation and we could then go through the most interesting topics raised once again in the end of the interview.

Before having the interview, I made sure that I am familiar with the topic of the interview. I also tried to memorize all the questions that I was about to ask but used also a prewrote notes to check that I included all the important questions. I had a pen and paper to write some key points up, to remember the highlights and making the interviewee feel that they have something useful to say that is worth writing up. This aimed at creating a comfortable atmosphere for the interview.

I started with an easy and general questions to make the interviewee at ease and then went a bit deeper in the middle part of the interview. At the end I concluded and asked some clarifying questions, and then did a cool down to end the interview in an easy manner.

Guidelines for having a semi-structured interview suggests that questions should be specific, well-formed, open ended and not leading (Flick, 2018). I did not quite succeed in keeping the questions open ended and maybe a bit too much shared also my own views on the topic, so this made the interview a bit more like a normal conversation. This is something that is good to keep in mind and I made progress during my interview process to notice some of the short comings I might have done during the interviews.

It is important to go through your interview notes quite soon after the interview is over to get them right and to make your own comments while you still remember them. Recorded video-meetings were useful because I did not have to make notes during the interview, so I was able to concentrate more fully on the interviewee and the interview itself.

Between interviews I found it useful to assess how did it go and was there something that needs to be changed or tweaked for the next interview. This allowed to make some corrections if needed while it was still possible for the interviews to come.

3.3 Test expedition

I planned and conducted a test expedition for my commissioner with 6 customers in April 2021 (Polku Nature Tours 2021c). Test expedition included participant observation and a mini questionnaire as methods for data gathering.

Test expedition is considered methodologically to be participant observation. Schensul et al defines participant observation as “...the process of learning through exposure to or involvement in the day-to-day activities.” (Schensul, S. L.; Schensul, J. J. and LeCompte, 1999). This applies when we spend a week together with customers. During that week I observed them and what difficulties and successes they faced and how they coped with them and how they acted as a group.

Data collection was mainly based on the field notes I wrote during the test expedition. Flick describes reasons to use observation as a method that: “..observation takes the researcher in the fields and processes under study beyond hearing reports about them by one or more participants. The data will be richer in their dimensions and more comprehensive.” (Flick, 2018). In addition

to my field notes I used all the informal conversations with customers and my commissioner during the expedition as a data.

I planned a six-day long skiing expedition into Kemihaara wilderness area (Metsähallitus 2021c) and Urho Kekkonen national park. Customers had been contacted via my commissioner in the process when they enrolled into the expedition. We had a video-meeting with all the participants two weeks before the hike, where we went through the practicalities concerning the expedition and gave opportunity for the customers to ask any issue that concerned them about our expedition. The video-meeting lasted in total 45 minutes.

I planned the route in that sense that the first and last day would be relatively easy and on the fourth day there would be an option to have a rest day if needed. That day was reserved for hiking up to the fell of Vongoiva, which was expected to be one of the highlights of our expedition, in addition to the saunas. Campsites were chosen by the proximity of wilderness huts or lean to shelters. It will be preferred that there is a backup wilderness hut to dry out gear or to get inside if the weather is too harsh. This also creates some psychological safety for the participants. The availability of outdoor toilets is considered in order to minimize the environmental impact during the hike and following leave no trace principles (National park service 2021).

Days 3 and 5 were expected to be more demanding than others with longer distance to cover to reach our daily destinations. And there were also a significant amount of ascent and descent meters in these days and possible river crossings. These factors made the days eventually the most demanding in our test expedition, which will be talked more in the results chapter.

During our hike I wrote a journal and added the observations I had made during the days. In the evening before our last night on our trip, I had planned a focus group between our group to discuss more in depth about the topics related to my thesis work. This plan had to be changed because the fifth day ended up being quite demanding with various changing snow conditions, few river crossings, and a long and winding uphill. I decided after talking it through with my commissioner, that it would not make any sense to force tired people to have a focus group meeting, which would need to have fresh minds to make any sense. So, we decided to have just a quick reflection and I said that I would conduct some questions to be answered after our hike.

I sent 4 questions to all our participants after a week had gone after our hike and asked everyone to reply to me personally to those questions. I highlighted the anonymity of this questionnaire

in my thesis work and told also that it is voluntarily but highly recommended to answer to these questions.

I had four questions and they were:

What would you tell about our hike to your good friend if he/she asked about how was the hike?

Did you learn some new during our hike? If you did, what? (Could be some concrete thing or a new aspect about yourself.)

Did the pre info matched with the actual hike delivered? Why?

What tips/instructions would you give to someone who is about to participate in a similar hike we had?

3.4 Methods of analysis

This subchapter explains the methods I used to analyse my data gathered from methods of research-based development work.

I used a simple and straight forward model for analysing my data by Ditte Hvas Mortensen which goes as follows:

1. Familiarize yourself with your data.
2. Assign preliminary codes to your data to describe the content.
3. Search for patterns or themes in your codes.
4. Review themes.
5. Define and name themes.
6. Produce your report.

(Hvas Mortensen, 2020)

Similar steps are used also in the video by Kent Löfgren (Löfgren, 2013). Following these guidelines, I familiarized myself first with the collected data. I went through the whole data to get a general idea of it all. I also made notes about my first impressions. Then I reread trough the data gathered again very carefully. After that I started labelling words, phrases, sentences or sections, which is referred as coding or indexing. (Löfgren, 2020)

How could I know then what was relevant or important? According to Löfgren if it is something that comes up in several places, if it surprises me or if in the case of interviews, the interviewee

explicitly states that it is important. Or if I have read about something similar earlier or if it reminds me of a theory or a concept then it is worth to consider relevant.

After coding my data, I decided which codes are the most important and created categories or themes by bringing several codes together. Then I started labelling categories and decided which are the most relevant and how they are connected to each other. These categories and connections became the main result of the data analysis.

4 RESULTS

In this section I represent the results of my thesis work. I gained the results using benchmarking, semi-structured interviews, and test expedition, which involved participant observation and mini questionnaire, as methods. I gathered the results, from different methods I used for my study, and then combined them into suitable themes and will discuss each theme separately.

Themes are based on the results from my study and earlier studies from my knowledgebase section to create clarity and continuity in my thesis. Results are divided into two sections: how to prepare for an expedition and how to adjust the challenge while on an expedition. The division of these two categories is a bit artificial, though, because the work you do to be prepared for the expedition gives you a lot more options on how to adjust the challenge as we will see.

4.1 Preparing for the expedition

In this subchapter I will talk about which factors are crucial while you are preparing for running a successful winter expedition for customers. Results are based on the data gained from benchmarking, semi-structured interviews, and test expedition. Even though this thesis concentrates mainly on winter expeditions, these results can be applied in any type of expedition regardless the time of the year.

From benchmarking I found out that there is no one way to describe the overall skill level of a certain trip. They vary from each other and some were based on three different levels (Moln, 2021) and some had up to 12 different levels (KE Adventure Travel, 2021). Shared common themes, that came out from benchmarking different companies on their difficulty rating, were based on three different factors: stamina, technical difficulty and terrain or other conditions that affect on the difficulty. Stamina described the overall physical condition a customer should have to be able to take part to a certain expedition. How many kilometres a day or usually how many hours on the move per day and how heavy backpacks you need to carry yourself. Technical difficulty can be anything from the usage of special technical gear to the skills of how to make a camp in wintertime. Terrain is related to the conditions on the hike. In what condition is the path, or is there any path at all? How much there are vertical ascent or descent meters on the route? What type of accommodation is used during the expedition? Tent, lean to shelter, wilderness hut, cabin or hotel. Remoteness of the trail or hike from civilization affects also on the level of difficulty.

After customer had made their choice on attending for an expedition they will be contacted. This is an important and usually the first phase of getting more information on the customer. This phase is quite crucial to gather and provide information. It can be done with email, phone call or video-meeting. According to communication theories described in earlier sections a communication mode that offers two-way communication would be best to make sure that both parties understand each other and have the same idea of participant competences and would they fit for the expedition at hand. When customer have decided to participate on my commissioner's expedition, an information package will be provided which include detailed information on food and eating during an expedition, a packing list and a health form to be filled out.

When the start of an expedition gets closer a video meeting is held with all the participants. Basic information concerning the hike is discussed and the participants are given a chance to get to see each other and ask questions if needed. After the hike feedback is collected from the participants to gain information about the success of the hike. Using reviews on webpage, including reflection in the company's process. It can give prospective customers a better sense what a trip might be like, than just a route description.

As a result of my interviews, I found out that it might not be wise to ask too many detailed questions from prospective hiking customers because then they might expect that if something is asked it also will be considered or provided in the actual product and if this does not happen it will end up in unsatisfied customers and bad customer service. Two out of four interviewees highlighted quite clearly that you need to be careful on what to ask to guarantee that the level of expectations is on a right scale.

“ Buying yourself more safety as an instructor, when you know that who is coming to your trip and it allows you to plan better.” - Interviewee

” Being curiously sceptical about customers self-perceived abilities.” - Interviewee

One aspect that came up from one interview is that you should trust your customer that they are able to choose a right product for themselves. This requires a good overall description of the hike, route and conditions, and clear instructions on how customers can assess their own competences.

One idea that raised after the test expedition was that how customers could prepare themselves better for the trip. It would be useful that customers could simulate the demands of the hike in

some way. It would give them a better idea what it takes physically to be able to excel on a hike, what type of competences and stamina they should have and how they could reach those requirements? What activities the hike resembles that anyone can relate to? Like walking with a backpack 4 hours daily, six days in row. It could be in the form of training program to prepare yourself for the expedition and it would describe the required competence levels. This could be done for example in the form of a preliminary task. To do one long day trip and one overnight trip before the expedition to try out the gear and get more information about themselves in similar conditions as on the expedition. Easy hinders could be avoided in this way on the expedition, like blisters and knowing how your equipment work out. This also creates a feeling of capability for customers and helps on keeping them on their comfort or growth zones. This idea is something that needs still future development, and I was not able to finish it in the scope of this thesis, but it would be good to take it into consideration as well in the future operations of my commissioner.

The main information for my commissioner's expedition is in a text base form, which describes the different qualities and requirements to be able to attend for a certain hike and expresses in general how the hike would be for a customer attending to it. Plain text is just not enough in this information, but representative and correct pictures from the area of the hike, and even better, pictures showing people attending to the hike makes it easier for one to relate how this hike would feel if they would be taking part in it and it enables the customer to make a justified decision to attend for the hike or not.

Thorough planning

Knowing the area where you are going with your customers is probably the one most important thing that affect your abilities as a guide to adjust your hike. We did not have this possibility on our test trip. But as this was a test expedition, and a rehearsal for an actual one coming hopefully in the coming winters, we decided to go to Kemihaara just based on proper inspection of the area. We looked into maps and former experiences of others who have done similar expeditions in the area. One useful source of information was two books from Jouni Laaksonen (Laaksonen, Jouni. 2008 and 2010), who explained well the conditions and routes of the area.

One aspect that we could not assess thoroughly was the snow conditions. Due to warming winters, it is now days ever more challenging to estimate to snow conditions and weather especially

in the beginning of winter and the end of it. So, we were not sure would the creeks and rivers be still frozen and how much snow there would be and how soft would it be.

One useful source of information in this sense would have been local Metsähallitus workers who operate in that area. We knew that there are maintenance routes for the huts and lean to shelters and fireplaces in the area, but we were not quite sure where the routes would be. Usually, these routes are not visible on any maps, it is just some tacit knowledge, that locals or people who work in the area, have. Experience and different sources of maps helps in planning your route. Some maps show more details than others of in different forms. For example, in the two maps I got for the expedition, one showed a bridge over a river, other just a path crossing it. When you have gained some information, you can have educated guesses about what it will look like in reality and would there be a bridge or a wintertime maintenance route. But this is not sufficient information if you want to provide a good service for your customers and give more options for yourself as a guide to adjust your hike. In some cases, this is the normal procedure, to have some accepted level of uncertainty, but I would see that in a product like this, the route and area should be well known beforehand and visited by the guide(s).

“ Balance is everything, experience helps in this, can be tested in safe conditions and when getting more experience can go to more demanding circumstances.” - Interviewee

4.2 Different ways of adjusting the challenge

In this subchapter I will discuss the importance of the novel skill of adjusting your hiking product for your customers. How it can be done, and which factors influence on it. Results are based on the data from semi-structured interviews and test expedition.

All the work you have done before the expedition starts, help you as a guide to adjust your product. Helping customers and having a reserve as a leader to be able to do this, 1/3 skills and stamina in use in normal situations gives you possibilities to adjust your hike better. In our adventure education studies we have been talking about having only 1/3 of your skills in use if you are instructing customers, so you would have then enough in reserve to react if something unexpected happens. In our test expedition this part was considered in the way that we had two guides in the group, me and my commissioner, and also 3 other students from my class from Humak. So, there was more than plenty of reserve to react if needed.

Adjusting your leadership style

For a guide it is important to have a good set of metacognitive skills. Metacognitive skills can be defined as skills to use prior knowledge to plan a strategy for approaching a learning task, take necessary steps to solve a problem, reflect on and evaluate results, and modify one's approach as needed (TEAL Center, 2021). Meta-cognitive skills are especially important while working close together with various people. You have to be able to step into the shoes of another person to assess their performance and current state, both physically and mentally. You also need to reflect on your own actions, how they impact on your customers and which way you tend to react normally in different situations that might arise during the expedition.

This all is maybe the hardest part of being a guide. So called hard skills, meaning for example technical skills and safety skills are important, but in those it is usually quite straightforward to gain these skills, you just need to work on them – and get better. But in these soft skills or in other words, people skills, you need to have a certain type of sensitivity for reading people and their actions, and what might lay behind those actions. Wihersaari describes this sensitivity as a skill of encountering another person:

“ When providing outdoor adventure education, instructors work with people with highly different backgrounds. This places significant emphasis on the skills of encountering another person. Good encounter with people results in high-quality teaching and education. A genuine encounter is based on an individual's concept of human, on his or her ethics and values. It also requires presence and readiness to accept other people as unique individuals. A practical encounter situation requires trust, discretion and the ability to truly listen, see and respect others.” (Wihersaari 2011, 66, 72)

This is a skill that can be learned, but it is not as straightforward to gain that skill. This also links to situational leadership theory and its application conditional outdoor leadership theory model in chapter 2. You need to be able to change your leadership style in accordance to different situations and demands.

As a guide, most importantly, you need to be fully aware of your own feelings and strengths, and more important your insecurities. How they might affect for example on your decision making and the way you might interpret some people or some situation. You must be able to reflect on your own actions and the reasons behind them.

One most important aspect of this all is that you need to be also humble and allow yourself to be vulnerable as well. Sometimes it is crucial to be able to show others that you are not perfect as a leader and you might make mistakes as well. A good example on this is a story from NOLS blogpost, where a participant on NOLS' Outdoor Educator Course told her experience on good

leadership and a leader who can admit that sometimes, you just don't have the right answers right away and it is ok:

“ You're not always going to know what to do. Sometimes you have to deal with a situation as it comes and make the best judgment call you can. And then debrief it, and learn from it.” (NOLS Blog 2021)

Brene Brown puts this in other words:

“ I don't know the answer to that, but I'll find out. I want to make sure you have the correct information. I explained that the unwillingness to engage with the vulnerability of not knowing often leads to making excuses, dodging the question, or— worst-case scenario—bullshitting.” (Brown, 2018)

How to adjust the challenge

Instructor can affect on the difficulty level by “What is being done, on which intensity and in what environment.” according to one of my interviewees.

On our winter expedition you could adjust the challenge by giving more responsibilities or more demanding skiing place for somebody. Skiing in the front opening the trail. Giving leadership possibilities and teaching how to choose the route and keeping the right pace and check in on others following for adjusting your speed. Changing the position in the line of skiers. Usually, it is easier to ski in the back of the line because the trail gets more packed and easier to ski, but there could also be rubber band effect that might make it more challenging if the leader does not know how to take this into consideration. Giving options for more experienced participants to share their knowledge to others in the group.

Having the day trips relatively short and then make some added excursions if someone needs some extra duties. Here the test expedition could have been shorter, we realized and heard from the customer feedback that the entire hike was quite challenging physically. Having a shorter basic route, and a route that is a loop, gives you more options to adjust your hike. In general, it is wise to include some loose time in your plans, which also offers a possibility for a rest day in between the hike. Our decision to reach Tahvontupa reserved hut and having the option to summit the Vongoiva fell, made our expedition longer.

One way of adjusting the hike for your customer is simply talking with them. Listening to them and providing the necessary support for them. This might be giving more responsibility if that is what the customer wants, and it seems that they could be able to take it. Or just a few kind words to cheer a tired person up and motivate them to just push a little bit more to get to the next hut where there is a warm bed waiting for two nights. Also placing customer experiences

in a healthy scale, meaning that this is something that all of us need to cope with or that the problem might actually be something that needs an urgent intervention to prevent any further damage and minimize the potential risks.

How many guides to have?

This was a topic that was raised in many interviews and during the test expedition. To my own experience as well, there are pros and cons in being just the only guide or having two or more guides on an expedition. One guide can offer more personal way of leading. Two guides give you a lot of more options to choose if something goes wrong and it gives wider possibilities on adjusting your hike while you are able to divide your participants into separate groups. One guide can concentrate more on the task at hand, say orienteering, and the other can concentrate then more on the group. In this it helps if the guides have slightly different personal leadership styles, one being more task oriented and one more relationship oriented like we talked in chapter 2.2.

If something happens for example to one guide, there is the second one to take over and guaranteeing that participants are not on their own. To work well together, two guide system requires effective communication and clearly shared responsibilities among the guides. You have to be aware of your leadership skills and how the dynamics works between the guides. Easily it can go into a situation that both guides think that other has taken care of something if it is not agreed, and in the end, nobody has done that matter.

5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter I sum up the results and process of this thesis work and discuss the limitations considering this thesis and suggest some topics that could be researched more in depth in the future.

I first planned to produce a comprehensive list of questions to be asked from prospective customers to place them into so called level groups according to their competences and skills needed on a winter expedition. This idea seemed good as far I had my first few interviews. The results indicated that this might be a hard way. When my commissioner and my thesis supervisor assessed the situation with me in the eyes of Polku Nature Tours, this approach was not very relevant in the end, because the company is still quite a small operator and it cannot afford to organize level groups, not at least at the moment, because this would need a wide customer base and a wide product family. So, we decided to go with the idea of providing sufficient preliminary information for the customers. With this information they can assess themselves if their competence levels and interests fit in to expedition products and make the decision themselves. In my interviews I gained information from an experienced guide who said that usually customers find into the right level expeditions by themselves, which encouraged to proceed with this approach.

When you have a heterogeneous group with different competences your options to match these competences and requirements together is to adjust the expedition for your customers. In my research I found several ways how to do this. The most important way to adjust your hike is good and proper planning. You must create a route and schedule that allows you to adjust it when needed. For example, you might shorten the route or make it longer. But in order to do this, you have had to incorporate that in your plans already. In future it would be beneficial to also have some kind of virtual info about coming expeditions for interested customers. This would give a better understanding for customers on what a certain expedition will include and what it would be to take part in them.

You can adjust your leadership style. Leading participants in different ways according to their personalities and competences. You can also give more responsibilities if somebody needs an extra challenge or similarly make some decisions to help some participants.

Test expedition provided lots of valuable hands-on information on organizing a winter expedition into specifically Kemihaara and Urho Kekkonen national park area. Test expedition itself

turned out to be too demanding. But it was very useful experience to have, because in paper and theory all seemed good and not too demanding. It gave me and my commissioner more experience on the abilities and competences of participants on a winter expedition.

My commissioner commented after the expedition the overall impact of this thesis for Polku Nature Tours in few sentences:

“Organically got customers and others interested in the product gave confidence for the future of this expedition. Interesting, functional and an easy-to-sell product. Gave tools to find out parts to develop in other products and product descriptions as well. Difficulty grading will improve for sure the pre-information provided for customers and in that way also customer satisfaction. If Metsähallitus is going to expand their route grading from PallasYllästobe1 project it will help adventure activity providers working within hiking industry to standardize their product descriptions on their product’s difficulty.”

The process of making this thesis was fruitful for both me and my commissioner and we are planning new expeditions for the autumn 2021, which I would be guiding for Polku Nature Tours.

It was clear that all the work done before the hike helps you while you are on the hike. But it is not possible to prepare yourself for everything, which is to me one of the main aspects why I enjoy this work. You prepare yourself as good as you can, but still nature and people throw you into situations you had not been prepared but you will try to find the best solution for each situation and then reflect afterwards how did it work out in the end. Usually being able to make justified decisions, or some decisions, is better than hesitating for too long and not being able to find “the perfect” solution. In this I personally try to follow the mantra that done is better than perfect.

In a way reflection is included in every process and it produces information for the expeditions to come. Reflection is the glue that binds together different phases of my thesis and the work entrepreneur does in planning and implementing outdoor products. To be able to do this, metacognitive skills are especially important. You must be able to reflect on your operations and what effect your own behaviour has on your clients. This gives you tools to communicate the crucial information for your customers. It gives you grounds on how to adjust your hiking product for your customers and after all it makes you able to assess your own actions. And here you get back to the start again. And this is what Kolb means by experimental learning. You try out something, gain experience on it and then reflect upon those experiences and hopefully transfer those insights gained into something new. In other words, the life of an entrepreneur is a life of

an adventurer. You don't need a perfect product or expedition to start with. The idea is to start and then reflect upon your findings and to do it again and apply your new skills and then continue that cycle. This is the way for entrepreneurial living or the life of an experiential learner.

“ By definition, entrepreneurship is vulnerable. It's all about the ability to handle and manage uncertainty. People are constantly changing, budgets change, boards change, and competition means you have to stay nimble and innovative. You have to create a vision and live up to that vision. There is no vision without vulnerability.” (Brown, 2018)

REFERENCES

- Beames, Simon, and Mike Brown 2016. *Adventurous learning: A pedagogy for a changing world*. Routledge.
- Brown, B. 2018. *Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts*. Random House.
- Calbimonte, J. P., Martin, S., Calvaresi, D., Zappelaz, N., and Cotting, A. 2020. Semantic data models for hiking trail difficulty assessment. In *Information and Communication Technologies in Tourism 2020* (pp. 295-306). Springer, Cham.
- Cambridge Dictionary. Benchmarking. Retrieved 13.5.2021 <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/benchmarking>
- Csikszentmihalyi, M. 1975. *Beyond boredom and anxiety: Experiencing flow in work and play*. San Francisco/Washington/London.
- Ellis, M. J. 1973. *Why people play*. Engewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall
- Flick, U. 2018. *An introduction to qualitative research*. sage.
- Helsingin Sanomat 2021. Tulossa on kaikkien aikojen retkeilykesä, varusteita myydään jo nyt ennätystahtiin. Retrieved 13.5.2021. <https://www.hs.fi/kotimaa/art-2000007872581.html>.
- Hersey, P., Blanchard, K. H., and Johnson, D. E. 2007. *Management of organizational behavior* (Vol. 9). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice hall.
- Hopkins, D., and Putnam, R. (2013). *Personal growth through adventure*. Routledge.
- Hvas Mortensen, D. 2020. How to Do a Thematic Analysis of User Interviews. Retrieved 14.5.2021 <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/how-to-do-a-thematic-analysis-of-user-interviews>
- Karppinen, S. 2005. Seikkailullinen vuosi haastavassa luokassa. *Etnografinen toimintatutkimus seikkailu- ja elämyspedagogiikasta*. Oulu: Oulu University, Acta Universitatis Ouluensis, E Scientiae Rerum Socialium 77.
- Karppinen, S.J.A. and Latomaa, T. 2015. *Seikkaillen elämyksiä III. Suomalainen seikkailupedagogiikka*. Rovaniemi: Lapland University Press.
- KE Adventure Travel 2021. Grades explained. Retrieved 13.5.2021. <https://www.keadventure.com/holiday-types/trekking-walking/grades-explained>
- Kolb, D. A. (2014). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. FT press.
- Laaksonen, Jouni 2008. *Vaeltajan opas*. Edita.
- Laaksonen, Jouni 2010. *Erämaat – pohjoisen Lapin vaelluskohteet*. Helsinki: Edita publishing Oy.

- Latu ja Polku, 2021. Retkeilyn hullu vuosi. Retrieved 13.5.2021. <https://www.latujaipolku.fi/uutiset/retkeilyn-hullu-vuosi.html> Retrieved
- Löfgren, K. 2013. Qualitative analysis of interview data: A step-by-step guide for coding/indexing. Retrieved 14.5.2021 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DRL4PF2u9XA>
- Martin, P., and Priest, S. 1986. Understanding the adventure experience. *Journal of adventure education*, 3(1), 18-21.
- Metsähallitus 2021a. Käyntimäärät. Retrieved 13.5.2021. <https://www.metsa.fi/vapaa-aika-luonnossa/kayntimaarat/>
- Metsähallitus 2021b. Kansallispuistoissa ennätysvilkas vuosi. Retrieved 12.5.2021. <https://www.luontoon.fi/-/kansallispuistoissa-enn%C3%A4tysvilkas-vuosi-koronapandemia-vahvisti-pitk%C3%A4n-jatkunutta-trendi%C3%A4-retkeilyn-suosiosta>
- Metsähallitus 2021c. Kemihaara. Retrieved 13.5.2021. <https://www.nationalparks.fi/kemihaara>
- Metsähallitus 2021d. Pallas–Ylläs TOBE1-hanke 2018-2020. Retrieved 13.5.2021. <https://www.metsa.fi/projekti/pallas-yllas-tobe1/>
- Metsähallitus 2021e. Reittien vaativuusluokittelu. Retrieved 13.5.2021. <https://www.luontoon.fi/retkeilynabc/yleistaretkeilysta/reittienvaativuusluokittelu>
- Moln 2021. Difficulty rating. Retrieved 13.5.2021. <https://moln.fi/fi/alku/>
- Mortlock, C. 1987. *The adventure alternative*. Cicerone Press Limited.
- National Park Service 2021. Leave no trace principles. Retrieved 13.5.2021. <https://www.nps.gov/articles/leave-no-trace-seven-principles.htm>. Retrieved
- NOLS Blog 2021. You Don't Always Have To Know The Answer: Vulnerability In Leadership. Retrieved 13.5.2021. <https://blog.nols.edu/2020/03/25/vulnerability-in-leadership> Retrieved
- Norris, Sigrid 2004. *Analyzing Multimodal Interaction: A Methodological Framework*. London: Routledge
- Outdooractive 2021. Outdooractive. Retrieved 13.5.2021. <https://www.outdooractive.com/fi/>
- Pietilä, Kaisa 2020. Reflektointi seikkailupedagogiikassa. In Karppinen, S., Marttila, M., and Saaranen-Kauppinen, A. 2020. Seikkailukasvatusta Suomessa – pedagogisia ja didaktisia näkökulmia. *Outdoor Adventure Education in Finland – pedagogical and didactic perspectives*, 186 – 198.
- Polku Nature Tours 2021a. Polku Nature Tours. Retrieved 13.5.2021. <https://polkunaturetours.com/>
- Polku Nature Tours 2021b. About us. Retrieved 13.5.2021. <https://polkunaturetours.com/en/about-us/>
- Polku Nature Tours 2021c. Talvivaelluskurssi. Retrieved 13.5.2021. <https://polkunaturetours.com/tuotteet/talvivaelluskurssi-peruskurssi/?portfolioCats=33>
- Priest and Chase 1989. The conditional theory of outdoor leadership style: An exercise in flexibility. *Adventure Education*, 6(2), 10-17.

- Priest, S. and Gass, M. A. 2005. *Effective leadership in adventure programming*. 3rd edition. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Saavutettavuus 2021. Yleistä saavutettavuudesta. Retrieved 13.5.2021. <https://www.saavutettavuusvaatimukset.fi/yleista-saavutettavuudesta/>
- Schensul, S. L., Schensul, J. J., and LeCompte, M. D. (1999). *Essential ethnographic methods: Observations, interviews, and questionnaires* (Vol. 2). Rowman Altamira.
- Stremba, B. 2009. *Teaching adventure education theory: Best practices*. Human Kinetics.
- Survival Kilta Ry 2021. Survival Kilta. Retrieved 13.5.2021. <https://www.survivalkilta.fi/>
- Tapio, Elina 2019a. Multimodal interaction – Interactional skills for enabling equality and participation. Retrieved 13.5.2021 <https://youtu.be/uf7qKYxWOoU>
- Tapio, Elina 2019b. Resources in interaction. Retrieved 13.5.2021. <https://youtu.be/tW8CISDFh4c>
- TEAL Center 2021. TEAL Center Fact Sheet No. 4: Metacognitive Processes. Retrieved 15.5.2021 <https://lincs.ed.gov/state-resources/federal-initiatives/teal/guide/metacognitive>
- Tukes 2021a. Ohjelmapalveluiden turvallisuuden edistäminen. Retrieved 13.5.2021. <https://tukes.fi/documents/5470659/6410920/Tukes-ohje+2-2015+Ohjelmapalveluiden+turvallisuuden+edist%C3%A4minen/6bfb2e72-1a3b-4c9a-8f54-1fa3b5dcb123/Tukes-ohje+2-2015+Ohjelmapalveluiden+turvallisuuden+edist%C3%A4minen.pdf/Tukes-ohje+2-2015+Ohjelmapalveluiden+turvallisuuden+edist%C3%A4minen.pdf?version=1.3>
- Tynjälä, P. 1999. *Oppiminen tiedon rakentamisena. Konstruktivistisen oppimiskäsityksen perusteita*. 1.–4. painos. Helsinki: Kirjayhtymä.
- Wihersaari, J. 2011. *Kohtaaminen – opettajuuden ydin?* Academic dissertation. Faculty of Education, Acta Electronica Universitatis Tampereensis 1030. Tampere: Tampere University Press.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Sauna Expedition

Sauna expedition to Kemihaara wilderness area was held on 6-11.4.2021 with six customers and two guides (Polku Nature Tours 2021c).

The terrain of Sauna expedition consists of old forests, fells, rivers, creeks and marshlands. So it offers a diverse spectrum of Finnish Lapland. It is one of the vastest wilderness areas in Finland and has a dense sauna network as a speciality. We will ski through snowy forests and open marshlands and will experience some of the highest fells in the area from the top Vongoiva fell which offers a 360 panoramic view over the vast Urho Kekkonen national park.

Day 1 Tuesday 6.4.2021 Kemihaara – Vieriharju ~10 km

Arriving to Kemihaara and starting the expedition. Skiing towards Vieriharju wilderness cabin and sauna. Spending the night outdoors in tents or under a tarp.

Day 2 Wednesday 7.4.2021 Vieriharju – Jussinmurusta ~12 km

Skiing along the reindeer fence to Jussinmurusta lean to shelter. Spending the night in tents or laavu or under a tarp.

Day 3 Thursday 8.4.2021 Jussinmurusta – Tahvontupa ~16 km

A bit longer day to the Tahvontupa reserved wilderness hut, that is reserved for us. Following again the same reindeer fence and then Jauru river, which leads us to our second sauna destination.

Day 4 Friday 9.4.2021 Tahvontupa – Vongoiva fell – Tahvontupa ~13 km

Spending the day skiing at open fell area and trying to reach the summit of Vongoiva fell. Great panoramic views if sky is clear. Returning back to Tahvontupa and spending night inside the reserved hut and having a sauna possibility again!

Day 5 Saturday 10.4.2021 Tahvontupa – Härkävaara ~14 km

Starting our way back to Kemihaara and reaching Härkävaara wilderness hut. Climbing up from the river valley of Jauru and through a pass to reach the crossroads of reindeer fences and following wetlands to our last sauna of the hike. Sleeping outdoors in a tent or under a tarp.

Day 6 Sunday 11.4.2021 Härkävaara – Kemihaara ~14 km

Last day of our trip. Returning back to Kemihaara, skiing across the vast wetlands, clean and fresh after our sauna expedition of three different saunas.

Appendix 2. Difficulty rating for Polku Nature Tour's expeditions



Light

Short days. 4-5 hours on the move. Overnight or a weekend trip. Lighter backpacks. Accommodation in wilderness huts or tents. Not so remote from civilisation. Day trip experience required. Basic stamina.



Moderate

Longer day 5-7 hours. 3-6 days. Heavier backpacks. Sleeping in tents or lean to shelters. Some wilderness huts as a reserve. Medium remoteness. Required experience on overnight hiking trips. Basic hiking skills required.



Challenging

Days 7+ hours. 5-7 or more days. More challenging terrain with more ascent and decent. No trails or a rugged trail. Heavy backpacks. Sleeping only in tents, no backup wilderness huts available. Remote area. Required experience on multiday hikes and good hiking skills. Good physical condition to be able to do 5 or more 7+ hour day in a row.