Karjalainen, Markus

Effective negotiation in shop steward position

Thesis

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Tiivistelmä

Tekijä(t): Karjalainen, Markus

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Tiivistelmä

Tämän opinnäytetyön tutkimusongelma oli, että asiakaspalvelu- ja telemarkkinointialalla ei ollut perusopasta luottamusmiehille, joka auttaisi heitä suoriutumaan tehtävistään paremmin. Alan erityispiirteet korostivat tarpeen kehittää opas, joka tukee luottamusmiehiä haastavien ongelmien ratkaisemisessa.

Opinnäytetyön tavoitteena oli saavuttaa kaksi päämäärää: kehittää käytännöllinen käsikirja luottamusmiehille ja tarjota teoreettinen katsaus neuvottelumenetelmiin. Teoreettisessa osassa tarkasteltiin neuvottelun kehitystä, keskeisiä taitoja ja strategioita.

Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli tutkia ja koota tietoa tehokkaista neuvottelutaidoista sekä neuvottelustrategioista ja niiden kehittämisestä. Tavoitteena oli saavuttaa tehokkaampi ja toimivampi ymmärrys neuvotteluista.

Opinnäytetyön tilaajana toimi Palvelualojen ammattiliitto PAM ry, ja sen lähtökohtana oli tarve parantaa luottamusmiesten osaamista ja selkeyttää heidän roolejaan. Aihe valittiin omasta halustani parantaa luottamusmiesten toimintaa asiakaspalvelu- ja telemarkkinointialalla neuvottelijoina ja luottamusmiehinä.

Tämän opinnäytetyön teoreettinen viitekehys kattaa neuvotteluteorian ja luottamusmiesjärjestelmän Suomessa sekä vertailevan analyysin Ruotsin ammattiliittojärjestelmästä. Tämä viitekehys tarjoaa perustan ymmärtää tehokkaan neuvottelun olennaiset prosessit sekä luottamusmiesten erityiset roolit ja tehtävät.

Työn empiirinen osa toteutettiin tutkimus- ja kehitystehtävänä. Tutkimusmenetelmänä käytettiin laadullista tutkimusotetta ja konstruktiivista tutkimusstrategiaa. Tämän kehitystehtävän tuloksena luotiin uusi perusopas asiakaspalvelu- ja telemarkkinointialan luottamusmiehille. Opas sisältää ohjeita, lakeja sekä yleisiä sääntöjä ja määräyksiä sekä uusille että kokeneille luottamusmiehille alalla.

Abstract

Author(s): Karjalainen Markus

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Abstract

The research problem of this thesis was that in the customer service and telemarketing sector, there was no basic guide for shop stewards to help them perform their duties better. The unique features of the industry highlighted the need to develop a guide to support shop stewards in resolving challenging issues.

The thesis aimed to achieve two main objectives: developing a basic handbook for shop stewards and providing a theoretical overview of negotiation methods. The theoretical section explored the evolution of negotiation, essential skills, and strategies.

The purpose of the study was to investigate and compile information on effective negotiation skills, as well as negotiation strategies and how to develop such skills. The aim was to achieve a more efficient and functional understanding of negotiation.

The thesis was commissioned by the Service Union United, PAM ry, driven by the need to improve shop steward expertise and clarify their roles. The topic was chosen out of my own desire to enhance the effectiveness of shop stewards in the customer service and telemarketing sector as negotiators and representatives.

The theoretical framework of this thesis encompasses negotiation theory and the shop steward system in Finland, with a comparative analysis of the Swedish trade union system. This framework provides a foundation for understanding the essential components and processes involved in effective negotiation and the specific roles and functions of shop stewards within these systems.

The empirical part of the work was carried out as a research and development task. The research method employed was a qualitative research approach with a constructive research strategy. As a result of this development task, a new basic guide for shop stewards in the customer service and telemarketing industry was created. The guide includes instructions, laws, and general rules and regulations for both new and existing shop stewards in the sector.

Foreword

Table of content

Symboliluettelo

Erillinen luettelo voidaan laatia, jos raportissa on runsaasti käsitteitä, määritelmiä ja symboleja, joita yleisesti ei tunneta. Tällöin ei tekstissä tarvitse selittää ja määritellä jokaista symbolia ja käsitettä erikseen. Luetteloa ei tarpeettomasti laajenneta yleisesti tunnetuilla käsitteillä ja mittayksiköillä, jotka ovat alaa tuntevalle lukijalle selviä.

1 Introduction

”Negotiation is a strategic discussion between two parties to resolve an issue in a way that both find acceptable.” (Investopedia / Ellen Lindner 2023)

The research problem of this thesis is that in the customer service and telemarketing sector, there was no basic guide for shop stewards to help them perform their duties better. The unique features of the industry highlighted the need to develop a guide to support shop stewards in resolving challenging issues.

The thesis aims to achieve two main objectives: developing a practical handbook for shop stewards and providing a theoretical overview of negotiation methods. The theoretical section explored the evolution of negotiation, essential skills, and strategies.

The purpose of the study is to investigate and compile information on effective negotiation skills, as well as negotiation strategies and how to develop such skills. The aim is to achieve a more efficient and functional understanding of negotiation.

Purpose of negotiation is that it serves as a means to resolve conflicts without resorting to physical confrontation, a method for reaching consensus when decision-makers harbour different opinions, and a strategy for attaining personal goals in the face of conflicting objectives among participants. (Model United Nations, n.d.)

Benefits of the Research

The research benefits shop stewards in the sector and service union united PAM employees by providing important insights and practical tools and processes to enhance shop stewards’ negotiation skills but also strategies. This can lead to more effective representation of the members of PAM but also for those who are still considering joining the union. The findings of the thesis can contribute to the development and success in their roles when negotiating on behalf of the workplace employees.

Effective negotiation serves as a method where individuals reconcile their differences. It involves a systematic approach to reaching compromise or agreement without having argumentation or conflict. When faced with disagreements, individuals naturally strive to attain the most favourable outcome for their standpoint, or potentially for an organization they are representing. (Bright Focus, n.d.)

Negotiation is a skill cultivated from a very young age; everyone becomes a proficient negotiator by the time they can communicate verbally. However, at the business level, negotiation transforms into a complex and refined process. Unfortunately, individuals can become entrenched in specific negotiation approaches, constraining their effectiveness and potential. Consequently, honing negotiation skills becomes essential in the business arena, necessitating dedicated training and practice. (Mind Tools Content Team, n.d.)

The Commissioner

The commissioner of this thesis is Service Union United PAM. Service Union United PAM represents individuals employed in private service sectors. With a membership base of 190.000, the union is predominantly composed of women, comprising two-thirds of their members. The majority of their members are engaged in various sectors, including retail, the hotel and restaurant industry, leisure services, property services, and security services. (PAM, n.d.)

The author of this thesis serves as the chief shop steward in the collective agreement sector of Service Union United PAM, focusing specifically on the customer service and telemarketing sector. This sector consists of approximately 3000 employees in Finland, including roles such as inbound customer services, outbound customer services and sales, among others.

Objectives of the work and development task

The primary objective of this thesis is to develop a comprehensive handbook for shop stewards and to explore effective negotiation techniques pertinent to their roles. This initiative is driven by the lack of an existing basic guide to assist shop stewards in performing their duties effectively, especially in the unique context of the customer service and telemarketing sector.

The research problem is that in the customer service and telemarketing sector, there is no basic handbook for shop stewards to help them perform their tasks better and effectively. There are many unique features in the industry, which supports the reason why it is now necessary to develop a guide to support shop stewards in resolving even the most challenging issues in the sector. In the implementation part I am discussing about the development work. As part of this process, a qualitative themed questionnaire is conducted involving three PAM negotiators and three shop stewards from the sector.

Research questions

First research question is *What are the key characteristics and strategies that contribute to effective negotiation from theoretical side?* The second research question is *from a theoretical standpoint, what are the background influences that can impact a shop steward's functioning as a negotiator, and how do these influences shape negotiation dynamics?* The thesis is going to answer these research questions.

Planning for the thesis commenced in Fall 2023, with the aim of having the theory ready by January. However, due to busy schedules, it was completed by the end of February. The implementation phase commenced in March 2024, during which the qualitative themed questionnaire was finalized. Following the analysis of the questionnaire in late March, the development of the handbook began and was completed by late April 2024.

In the empirical part the questions I want to find answers to *What resources do shop stewards currently rely on for guidance and support in their role?* And *What types of support and resources do shop stewards believe would enhance their ability to represent workers and resolve issues within the workplace?* In this part I seek Service Union United PAM negotiators and shop stewards to provide me information via a themed questionnaire. This is to ensure that the development work yields comprehensive responses to empirical questions and address the needs of the shop stewards in the sector.

I conducted a themed questionnaire for three current shop stewards in the sector, and PAM negotiators: Juha Ojala, who specializes in collective agreement negotiations; Henna-Kaisa Turpeinen, who brings experience from negotiation activities and serves as an Area Manager in PAM Oulu’s regional office; and Irene Korimäki, who possesses extensive knowledge of best practices and challenges in negotiation activities. Two separate research questionnaires were made, each aimed at guiding the development of the shop steward's basic handbook. The themed questionnaire consisted of three to five qualitative open-ended questions. While the aforementioned PAM employees consented to having their names published in the thesis, their questionnaire responses were not personalized.

Research strategy

The research strategy selected for this thesis is a qualitative research approach with a constructive research strategy. This strategy is targeted at addressing practical challenges and contributing to theoretical improvements within the sector. The constructive research approach involves creating innovative constructs to solve real-world problems, focusing on creating new solutions and insights rather than just discovering current ones.

Data collection methods used in this thesis are internet sources, books, articles, and other sources that are relevant to the topic. Observations that have been gathered from discussions in the sector. Themed questionnaire provided detailed responses from participants.

Methodology

The themed questionnaire was used in the thesis because it allowed respondents to choose the time and place when they had time to respond to it. Shop stewards and union employees are usually very busy with their work, so to ensure a sufficient response rate, I decided to use the themed questionnaire in my work. The flexibility of the questionnaire was deemed more practical, and it saved time for all of us. The questionnaire was implemented in the Google Forms for its usability and ease of response. Traditional research interviews could also have been used, where the interviews would have been conducted, for example, via Microsoft Teams, but as I previously justified, it was sensible to let the participants decide the time and place to ensure an adequate response to the conducted survey method.

The sample of the study is relatively small, consisting of three shop stewards and three union negotiators. However, in relation to the number of shop stewards in the customer service and telemarketing sector, approximately seven to nine shop stewards, I believe it provides a good representation of the needs in the industry, as the sample covers one-third of the shop steward population in the sector. The limited number of union respondents is also another factor, as in a small industry, there is not as large a negotiating body. There are a total of two negotiators in this industry, but included in this were a collective agreement contract manager, an area manager, and a union employee who provides negotiation training, which I believe gives a relatively comprehensive picture.

2 Effective negotiation

Negotiation is important in many aspects of life, from personal to business engagements. This topic covers essential discussions such as effective negotiation techniques, preparation strategies, and the influence of factors like culture, gender, and politics on negotiation dynamics. The goal of this topic is to provide readers with practical information to succeed in negotiations across different contexts. Addressing the information gap that young workers may have regarding the topic discussed below was essential in this regard.

In the area of business, enterprises commonly accept competition as a given, yet they frequently neglect to recognize the potential of employing effective negotiation strategies to foster cooperation and attain superior outcomes. (Harvard Law School, n.d.)

Negotiation embodies an interactive communication process involving two or more parties with distinct interests, striving to align their actions or distribute limited resources in a manner that improves mutual benefit beyond what could be achieved individually. This extensive definition implies that negotiation is nearly as pervasive as human interaction itself. Almost everyone engages in negotiation, whether on minor or substantial matters, as part of their daily interactions—with friends, family, colleagues, retailers, or customers. (Korobkin, 2014)

2.1 Negotiation

/nəˌɡəʊ.ʃiˈeɪ.ʃən/, engaging in conversation with someone with the intention of reaching a mutual agreement, or the discussions themselves. (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.)

By defining the etymological roots of the term negotiation, its origin in the Latin expression "negare otium," literally translates to "to deny leisure." Anthropologists claim that the practice of negotiation goes back to linguistic evolution by at least 200.000 years, reaching back to the very inception of human species. Early humans faced conditions of scarcity like our own. The imperative to negotiate arose as a means for them to improve their individual survival and that of their communities. Not every primitive human possessed the capacity to devise innovative solutions in challenging environments with limited resources. Thus, they had to establish effective means of communication to negotiate “business” agreements and exchange value with other early humans for mutual benefit, contributing to the continuity of human species. Remarkably, this intrinsic aspect of negotiation persists in our contemporary lives, subtly influencing our day-to-day interactions as we pursue success, whether consciously or not. (MyEducator, n.d.)

The Latin term negotium, stemming from the negation of otium, originally signified the absence of leisure. Dating back to ancient times, this term inherently conveyed engagement in an activity, particularly a laborious one. (Bell, Raiffa & Tversky, 1988)

Negotiation requires an interaction of ideas that happens collaboratively to reconcile differences, forge agreements, and establish common ground among involved parties. To outperform in the previously mentioned competencies, it's vital to understand their definition, importance, and the various types they combine. (theknowledgeacademy, n.d.)

The process of negotiation needs at least two or more parties to engage in conversations, presentations, and proposals to strike a deal that mutually benefits all parties. It requires a careful sharing of ideas, viewpoints, and positions. (theknowledgeacademy, n.d.)

It involves considering prices or contract terms and requires active listening, clear communication, troubleshooting, and innovative thinking. Negotiation develops in various scenarios, ranging from business transactions and legal disagreements to personal clashes and diplomatic matters. (theknowledgeacademy, n.d.)

Over the history, behaviours, rituals, and methods in human negotiation have continuously changed, adapting to shifts in the surrounding social, biological, political, cultural, and in the economical context. These negotiation behaviors are inherent aspects of human biology, psychology, and language, governed by the fundamental principles of evolution. One can argue that the expansion of the human brain over centuries is, in part, a response to the growing intricacies of the negotiation process. Some physical anthropologists suggest that this evolution is not solely driven by the demand for heightened reasoning abilities but is also a response to the imperative to navigate and address progressively intricate social and political dynamics. (Fenglin et al., 2021)

Aspects of Women's Issues in Negotiation

There is a penalization of women when they engage in negotiations on their own behalf. A research study made by Professor Hannah Riley Bowles of Harvard Business School, Professor Linda Babcock of Carnegie Mellon University, and Professor Lei Lai of Tulane University told that both male and female participants in their research study showed decreased interest when collaborating with women who were looking for to negotiate a higher pay compared to men attempting the do the same. The reluctance of women to begin salary negotiations, when compared to men, seems to stem from their awareness that negotiating could lead to negative social consequences in the workplace. (Shonk, 2023)

A recent study done by researchers Laura J. Kray and Alex B. Van Zant of the University of California, Berkeley, along with Jessica A. Kennedy of the University of Pennsylvania, found that people are more inclined towards to deceive female negotiators than their male counterparts. The participants in the study lied to women more frequently, perceiving them as less competent and therefore less likely to question dishonesty. Additionally, both men and women displayed a tendency to grant preferential treatment to male negotiators by revealing concealed interests. (Shonk, 2023) These types of deep-rooted stereotypes and biased treatment pose significant obstacles to the negotiated outcomes of women, placing them at an unjust disadvantage. (Shonk, 2023)

Over the last 50 years, the scholarly perspective on the influence of gender in negotiation has changed from examining gender as a personality trait to exploring its role as a crucial factor in the social construction of negotiation scenarios. Initially, scholars envisioned that gender would serve as a predictor for negotiation behaviour, adhering to stereotypes such as "men are competitive" and "women are cooperative." However, these expectations proved unsustainable as accumulating evidence found there were conflicting findings. (Kray & Thompson, 2004)

Aspects of Men’s Issues in Negotiation

While conventional wisdom often assumes that women are less effective negotiators, Huang and Low's research challenges this belief by revealing that men face a negotiation disadvantage in scenarios involving explicit verbal communication compared to situations without communication. This disparity is particularly influenced by the disclosure of the partner's gender, resembling real-world negotiations where gender information is known. The underlying cause of this effect seems to be that men do not adjust their negotiation strategy optimally based on partner’s gender. Particularly, men are significantly less inclined to employ assertive (and successful) negotiation tactics when dealing with female partners compared to their interactions with male negotiation partners. The research indicates that these choices result in reduced payoffs, with male-male pairs exhibiting notably poor performance, illustrating a "toxic masculinity" effect. Huang and Low propose that these outcomes may be attributed to men adhering to gender norms in their communication strategies, leading them to adopt a more chivalrous approach with women and a tougher stance with men, ultimately at the expense of their own financial gains. (Huang & Low, 2018)

Political Aspects in Negotiation

Negotiation stands as one of the fundamental political and decision-making processes, yet within the world of political analysis, if processes in general have been somewhat overlooked, negotiation has suffered even greater neglect. Institutional literature on legislation, as a function, is robust, examining a process where goal values remain constant, and decisions result from aggregating sufficient parties to constitute a numerically superior side, forming the basis of coalition theory. Adjudication, too, has garnered significant attention in institutional literature, although a well-established theory explaining the process by which a single party integrates events and values to arrive at a decision is less prevalent. In a similar vein, diplomacy, and more recently, collective bargaining, have been extensively described, with economists and mathematicians utilizing game and utility theories to develop intricate models of bargaining. However, negotiation as a political process, particularly elucidated in terms of power dynamics, remains an inadequately developed area of theoretical exploration. (Zartman, IW., 2011)

Aspects of Negotiation Across Various Cultures

Whether in the areas of business, politics, or personal interactions, negotiations often reach one of two different outcomes – agreement or impasse. The latter can result in frustration, tension, or even a complete breakdown of talks. In a corporate world, this breakdown can lead to the collapse of business relations. To avoid such outcome, navigating a delicate game of give-and-take becomes necessary to forge a final deal, involving compromises along the way. Understanding the cultural background of fellow negotiators is instrumental in anticipating their approach towards securing their part of the deal. In some cases, the landscape has become increasingly challenging due to the growing global, multicultural, and cross-cultural nature of business negotiations in current times. (Pesme, 2019)

Negotiation relationships are intensely influenced by cultural differences, impacting different communication styles, attitudes toward time, hierarchical structures, and decision-making processes. Before engaging in any negotiation, it is vital to conduct thorough research and familiarise oneself with the culture of the other negotiator party. This understanding enables a grasp of their values, customs, and beliefs, laying the groundwork for more effective and respectful negotiations. (Scotwork, n.d.)

Global business transactions frequently require navigating not only geographical boundaries but also cultural ones. Culture plays a major role in making individuals' thoughts, communication styles, and behaviors, thereby exercising a substantial impact on the negotiation relationships. It is essential to acknowledge and understand these cultural distinctions for successful cross-cultural negotiations. (Scotwork, n.d.)

Some people will prioritise reaching a formal agreement, while others value building strong interpersonal connections. Respecting and understanding these different ways are key to successful cross-cultural negotiations. (Global Services in Education, 2023)

Negotiators may have different attitudes towards the negotiation process. It can be seen as a possibility benefiting both sides, collaboration, and outcomes for win-win situations, while others come around it as a competitive, win-lose scenario. Understanding the other party's way-of-doing is essential for aligning cross-cultural negotiation strategies effectively. (Global Services in Education, 2023)

Negotiators' personal styles, encompassing communication, titles, dress code, and interaction, are shaped by cultural influences. While some cultures prefer a formal approach, ad-dressing counterparts by titles and adhering to strict protocols, others favour informality. Respecting these cultural nuances contributes to smoother negotiations. (Global Services in Education, 2023)

In different cultures, various communication styles take place, they can opt for direct, explicit communication, while others can rely on indirect methods with non-verbal cues and contextual nuances. It is essential to understand and analyse these signals accurately to avoid misunderstandings in cross-cultural negotiations. (Global Services in Education, 2023). Cultural point-of-views on time can differ, with some prioritising the importance of punctuality and efficiency, while others take on a more flexible approach. Understanding the other party's view on time assists in setting realistic expectations for the negotiation process. (Global Services in Education, 2023)

Cultural preferences influence the type of written agreement desired. Some cultures prefer detailed, specific contracts covering all contingencies, while others favour general principles, relying on the strength of the relationship to address unforeseen issues. (Global Services in Education, 2023)

Negotiating processes can commence either from general principles and progress to specifics or vice versa. Cultural preferences impact how negotiations unfold, with some cultures emphasizing the establishment of a framework first, while others start with specific details. (Global Services in Education, 2023). In the realm of international education, leaders are well-positioned to comprehend how to navigate cultural differences. Adopting an approach of mutual learning and genuine understanding facilitates common ground, increasing the likelihood of successful outcomes. (Global Services in Education, 2023)

As global business grows, you'll inevitably face negotiations across cultures. It's crucial to understand and respect cultural factors to succeed. Knowing the cultural elements can give you an edge in navigating international deals smoothly. (Global Services in Education, 2023)

Aspects of Negotiation in World Economy

Engaging in the global economy has the potential to foster growth and development. However, as evidenced by the recent financial crisis, this participation can also pose risks to employment, wages, and labour standards. (ILO, 2013)

Collective negotiations emerge as a pivotal factor in maintaining a balanced, fair, and just participation in the global economy. Many times perceived either as an obstacle to the seamless operation of markets or as lacking effectiveness, collective bargaining plays a crucial role in shaping the dynamics of global economic engagement. (International Labour Organization (ILO, 2013)

Aspects of the Rise of Sexual Minorities at the Negotiation Table

Existing research indicates that female negotiators often face less favourable outcomes compared to their male counterparts. The current study seeks to explore whether this trend extends to the subset of individuals identifying as gays and lesbians. Specifically, Desai and Gunia integrate research on gender stereotypes with intersectionality and MOSAIC theory to construct a theoretical model predicting how male and female negotiators will be treated based on their perceived sexual orientation—heterosexual or homosexual. According to this model, homosexual women, akin to heterosexual men, are anticipated to receive more advantageous negotiation offers and outcomes than heterosexual women and homosexual men. The underlying rationale is grounded in distinct behavioural expectations held for male and female negotiators based on their sexual orientation. The results from five experimental and audit studies, involving diverse participant samples such as U.S. and Indian Master's students, individuals selling items on Craigslist, and street vendors in India, consistently support these predictions. Collectively, these findings underscore the significance of simultaneously considering gender and sexual orientation in the study of negotiation dynamics. (Desai & Gunia, 2023)

Aspects of Racism

Skin tone emerges as a pivotal factor in predicting various forms of discrimination perceived by individuals, encompassing both color-based discrimination from both white and black individuals. Importantly, these instances of perceived discrimination are significant predictors for key health outcomes, such as depression and self-rated mental and physical health. Intraracial health disparities linked to skin tone, combined with experiences of discrimination, often rival, or exceed disparities observed between blacks and whites as broader groups. Additionally, the author highlights that self-reported skin tone, seen as a reflection of embodied social status, proves to be a more potent predictor of perceived discrimination compared to skin tone assessed by interviewers. These findings have implications for examining ethnoracial health disparities, underlining the importance of cognitive and multidimensional approaches in understanding ethnoracial and social inequality. (Monk, Jr., n.d.)

Limited research has delved into the impact of race on negotiations. The findings reveal potential racial disparities in negotiation dynamics, indicating that job evaluators with greater racial bias may anticipate Black job seekers to be less inclined to negotiate compared to their White counterparts. When these stereotypical expectations are contradicted in actual negotiations, job evaluators show reduced willingness to make concessions, resulting in significantly lower starting salaries for Black job seekers compared to White job seekers. These insights carry implications for various fields concerned with race-stereotypic expectations and the factors influencing processes and outcomes in salary negotiations. (Hernandez et al., 2019)

Within business contexts, negotiators are obligated by both moral and legal considerations to treat individuals equitably and steer clear of any appearance of racism. Despite these clear incentives, research indicates that minorities encounter discrimination during negotiations, facing both implicit and explicit biases. (Staff, 2022)

In a seminal 1995 study conducted by Yale University professor Ian Ayres, 36 participants—comprising both African American and Caucasian individuals, as well as both male and female—were trained to negotiate for a new car in a standardized manner. These participants, unbeknownst to the car dealers, then engaged in negotiations at over 200 car dealerships in the Chicago area, adhering to a predetermined script. The study revealed that, from the outset and throughout the negotiations, car dealers presented significantly higher offers to African American and female buyers. Ayres hypothesized that dealers tended to stereotype African Americans and women as less knowledgeable or adept negotiators compared to white males, assuming they were more inclined to accept higher prices and less likely to negotiate concessions. (Staff, 2022)

Aspects of Labour Regulation in Finland

The roots of Finland's collective bargaining system trace back to 1940 when labour market organizations mutually acknowledged each other as negotiating counterparts. Tripartite cooperation further evolved in 1968, establishing Finland's industrial relations marked by a high degree of centralization. Close collaboration exists among various trade unions and employers' organizations within peak-level entities. Beyond addressing employment matters, Finnish labour market organizations significantly contribute to policy development in areas like the pension scheme. Consensus is a key element, and the government extensively consults with social partners when proposing changes to laws affecting the working environment. (Easesport, n.d.)

In Finland, there's a three-level system for bargaining collectively: nationwide, industry-wide, and locally. Alongside formally negotiated collective agreements, social partners engage in continuous negotiation and discussions throughout the agreement period, known as the "continuous negotiation system." This system facilitates ongoing dialogue and adjustments to address emerging issues and adapt to changes in working life. (Easesport, n.d.)

In Finland, the collective bargaining system operates on the principle of general applicability, a framework established since the 1970s. Under this principle, employers who do not engage in collective bargaining or are not party to a specific collective agreement must adhere to the nationally applicable sector-level collective agreement deemed representative in their industry or sector. The determination of representativeness for a sector-level agreement involves a confirmation procedure for universally binding collective agreements introduced in 2001. For a sector-level agreement to be considered generally applicable, it must be recognized as representative within the respective field or industry. Even if employers aren't directly part of negotiation, they still have to follow the rules outlined in the agreements relevant to their industry. This keeps things fair and prevents them from getting ahead by avoiding the bargaining process. (Easesport, n.d.)

The Finnish labour regulation system mirrors key elements of the Nordic model of industrial relations, characterized by strong organization levels on both employee and employer fronts. Collective bargaining plays a pivotal role in labour regulation, supported by comprehensive legislation complemented by collective agreements. Exceptions to statutory rules are frequently enabled through agreements between national federations of employers and employees. The influence of collective negotiations gained prominence post-World War II, and since Finland's integration into the EEA Agreement in 1994 and subsequent EC membership, European integration has harmonized the overall regulatory landscape. (Suviranta, 2000)

Individual labour relations in Finland have been organised in the Employment Contracts Act, with iterations in 1922, and in 1970, and the most recent in 2000. The law covers the definition of employment contracts, the initiation and termination of employment, job protection, and fundamental rights and duties of parties. Separate laws address specific aspects of individual labour relationships, Labour Safety Act, the Act on Equality between Men and Women, the Annual Leave Act, the Hours of Work Act, and also the Study Leave Act- (Suviranta, 2000)

The regulation of employment terms and conditions collectively operates within the framework of the Collective Agreements Act of 1946, which delineates the parties' authority and the legal ramifications of such agreements. During periods lacking agreements, the state can mediate in labour disputes under the Mediation in Labour Disputes Act of 1962. Worker participation at the enterprise level is governed the Co-operation Within Undertakings Act of 1978, the Act on the Representation of Personnel in the Administration of Enterprises of 1990, and the Act on Personnel Funds of 1989 (Suviranta, 2000).

The collective bargaining structure in Finland can be roughly outlined across three tiers (Saloheimo, n.d.):

At the highest level, employee confederations engage in negotiations with central employer confederations to establish general and framework agreements. These agreements govern aspects such as overall wage increases, working hours, the role of shop stewards, and other broad matters related to the working environment. Typically, these agreements gain binding status upon their inclusion in collective agreements reached by the federations. It is customary for the state to participate in these central negotiations, potentially leading to an incomes policy agreement that encompasses social policies and tax solutions. (Saloheimo, n.d.)

The majority of collectively agreed-upon employment terms are formulated at the level of nationwide federations. Typically, an industry will have a primary, comprehensive collective agreement. However, in cases where trade union organization is structured by craft, each industry may negotiate its own agreement with the employers' federation. (Saloheimo, n.d.)

Local agreements of various types have grown in significance in recent years. Industry-wide agreements may delegate specific issues for resolution at the local level or permit deviations from their contents through local agreements. Additionally, independent company agreements may be established between an employer and a local or industry-wide trade union. (Saloheimo, n.d.)

Collective bargaining epitomizes the method by which employees, represented by their unions, engage in negotiations with employers to define the terms of their employment, encompassing aspects such as compensation, benefits, work hours, leave policies, occupational health and safety measures, strategies for achieving work-life equilibrium, and additional considerations. It stands as an effective avenue for resolving workplace issues and stands out as the premier approach for elevating wages in the United States. In practice, individuals within unions, utilizing collective bargaining, experience heightened wages, enhanced benefits, and safer work environments. (AFL-CIO, n.d.)

In Finland, around 90 percent of workers fall under the umbrella of collective agreements, thanks to legislation that universally enforces many of these agreements. This mandates that all businesses within a specific sector must adhere to the minimum terms outlined in the collective agreement. (Boldt, 2023)

Collective bargaining, especially in the context of multiemployer or sectoral negotiations, is currently gaining attention and traction. This is due to the recent EU directive on minimum wages, which explicitly advocates for collective bargaining and sets a target for member countries to cover 80 percent of employees through such agreements. Nations falling short of this target are required to develop action plans to encourage collective bargaining. The directive aims to mitigate working poverty and reduce inequality. (Boldt, 2023)

A majority of the collective agreements facilitated by PAM are universally applicable, encompassing sectors like commerce, the hotel, restaurant, and leisure industry, as well as the property services and security sectors. Apart from these universally binding agreements, PAM is also involved in negotiating several agreements that apply under normal circumstances or are specific to individual companies. (PAM, 2023)

As numerous European countries turn their attention to models like Finland's, which boast extensive collective bargaining coverage, these systems face challenges from right-wing administrations in key nations like Finland and Belgium. (Boldt, 2023)

The right-wing government program encompasses several measures that erode the collective bargaining system. These proposed actions involve limiting the right to strike, imposing caps on wage increases that the National Conciliator can suggest during labour dispute mediations and granting non-unionized companies and workers the ability to "negotiate" exceptions to collective agreements directly with employees, bypassing the involvement of a qualified union representative. (Boldt, 2023)

2.2 How to become an effective negotiator?

Negotiation is a professional skill needed in the working life, it is a necessary skill for resolving conflicts, making decisions, and fostering mutual agreements. (Poueriet, 2023)

Effective negotiation begins when one gets ready for a negotiation. Before going to a negotiation table start by researching the negotiation subject, understand the interests of all people involved, and pinpoint the outcomes you are looking for. Foresee potential objections and plan strategies to address them. Get ready with knowledge and preparedness. (Poueriet, 2023)

In the workplace, effective negotiation works as an asset, providing positive outcomes, making relationships better, and improving decision-making. A well-prepared negotiator, characterized by thorough preparation, active listening, a focus on interests, and an orientation toward win-win solutions, stands poised to navigate negotiations adeptly. (Poueriet, 2023)

Flexibility and open-mindedness are crucial attributes, coupled with the use of effective communication to foster a constructive negotiation environment. The ability to control emotions, seek common ground, exercise patience, and document agreements further contributes to the success of negotiations. As mastery in the art of negotiation is achieved, the negotiator becomes adept at navigating workplace challenges and orchestrating outcomes that are mutually beneficial for all involved parties. (Poueriet, 2023)

Stress and Pressure

The impact of stress and pressure on individuals in the business realm is well-acknowledged. Whether it's union workers or corporate executives, these pressures can serve as a catalyst for increased dedication, yet they may concurrently foster internal conflicts among individuals within the organization. The adept application of effective stress-handling techniques in challenging scenarios can pave the way for enhanced performance, ultimately elevating the prospects of success. (Spiliakos, 2017)

Emotions

New studies have begun to reveal the biological foundations of emotions. The amygdala, situated in the brain, appears to be central in both producing and managing emotions, while exhibiting the bodily responses linked to emotional encounters. (Robert, Benson & Silverstein, 1998)

Emotions wield both positive and negative influences in the realm of negotiation. On the positive side, they instil a sense of care for personal interests and others, fostering empathy that enhances comprehension and communication. Employing tactics such as concealing emotions or expressing them emphatically can prove effective in negotiation. Legitimately expressing anger, for instance, can convey sincerity and commitment. Conversely, fear and anger typically assume detrimental roles in negotiation. (Robert, Benson & Silverstein, 1998)

Addressing one's own anger begins with acknowledging its presence. Recognizing early signs, understanding typical expressions of anger, and identifying triggering situations are essential steps. Fear in negotiation may arise from feelings of unpreparedness, inadequacy, or facing a more formidable opponent. Some individuals grapple with a fear of fear, dreading the physical symptoms of stress and going to great lengths to avoid it. (Robert, Benson & Silverstein, 1998)

Acknowledging that emotions are an inherent aspect of human life, negotiators should not attempt to eliminate them. Instead, they should strive to heighten awareness of emotions, manage their feelings, and exercise control over their expression. (Robert, Benson & Silverstein, 1998)

Various Roles of a Negotiator

In a negotiation, various roles may come into play, especially in lengthy and high-stakes scenarios, such as significant sales or international politics. It's important to note that not all roles need separate individuals; for instance, the leader might also take on the roles of relater or critic, and the secretary could double as an observer. Roles that may conflict, like relater and critic, are generally better off being handled by different team members (Changing Works, n.d.):

1. The leader plays a dual role, coordinating team actions and serving as the primary representative of the negotiating team. Occasionally, the leader may engage in one-on-one discussions with the opposing team's leader, especially during challenging moments when

multiple voices might hinder progress. The leader, often a senior figure with decision-making authority, should be cautious about potential pitfalls, particularly if they lack experience in team negotiation.

2.The critic assumes the role of the 'bad cop,' consistently seeking flaws and problems. They may focus internally, critiquing their own team privately, while also scrutinizing points raised by the opposing team during negotiations. The internal critique helps prevent complacency and antagonism within the team. Being the verbal critic in the negotiating room can redirect the opposing team's frustration, allowing the leader or relater to later address it in exchange for agreement.

3.The relater serves as the amicable face of the team, fostering relationships with individuals on the opposing side. They may gather valuable information through these relationships and act as a mediator when conflicts arise. While the relater may steer clear of the more substantive aspects of negotiation, focusing on relationship-building, they might, at times, leverage these relationships to discuss crucial deal elements.

4.Experts contribute specialized knowledge to the negotiation, offering evidence or assessments in key areas like technology or law. While they typically don't engage directly in negotiation, they provide information and answer questions. When not permanently present, experts require briefings to align their comments with their home team's position.

5.The recorder, also known as a scribe or secretary, takes notes on discussions, capturing requests and offers. Though they may occasionally seek clarification through questions, their primary role is to silently observe. This allows them to act as an additional observer, making side notes for later discussion with the leader or team.

6.The builder is responsible for crafting deals, assembling packages for exchange, and may also assess the financial aspects of items being traded. They play a crucial role in ensuring accurate valuation and preventing overvaluation of offerings. The builder provides the leader with factual information to facilitate sound decision-making.

7.The observer maintains a watching brief, paying attention to both verbal and non-verbal cues. They analyse subtleties in words and body language, passing notes to the leader with their observations. Observers look for signs of deception and tension, providing valuable insights during breaks between meetings. While not an exact science, their attention to unconscious signals complements the team's focus on the substance of negotiations. (Changing Works, n.d.)

Characteristics of Negotiation Skills

Negotiation is an ever-present aspect of our lives. We take part in negotiations with family members to organize travel plans, with friends to determine invoice payments, and with contractors to arrange home services or repairs. Physicians negotiate with patients, exploring options between medical and surgical treatments or sometimes opting for no therapy. Scientists negotiate for the allocation of time and space for experiments. Everyone negotiates terms for salary and job responsibilities. Although the degree of risk and impact on outcomes varies across these examples, effective negotiation in each case relies on fundamental communication skills. (Magrane, 2004)

Negotiation Skills encompass various attributes, including but not limited to: proficiency in preparation and planning, deep knowledge of the negotiation's subject matter, adeptness in clear and quick thinking amid pressure and uncertainty, effective verbal expression, keen listening abilities, sound judgment and overall intelligence, unwavering integrity, persuasive capabilities, patience, decisive decision-making, consideration of multiple options, awareness of the other person's process and style, flexibility, and the ability to explore and discuss potential areas of agreement. (Bright Focus B.V., n.d.)

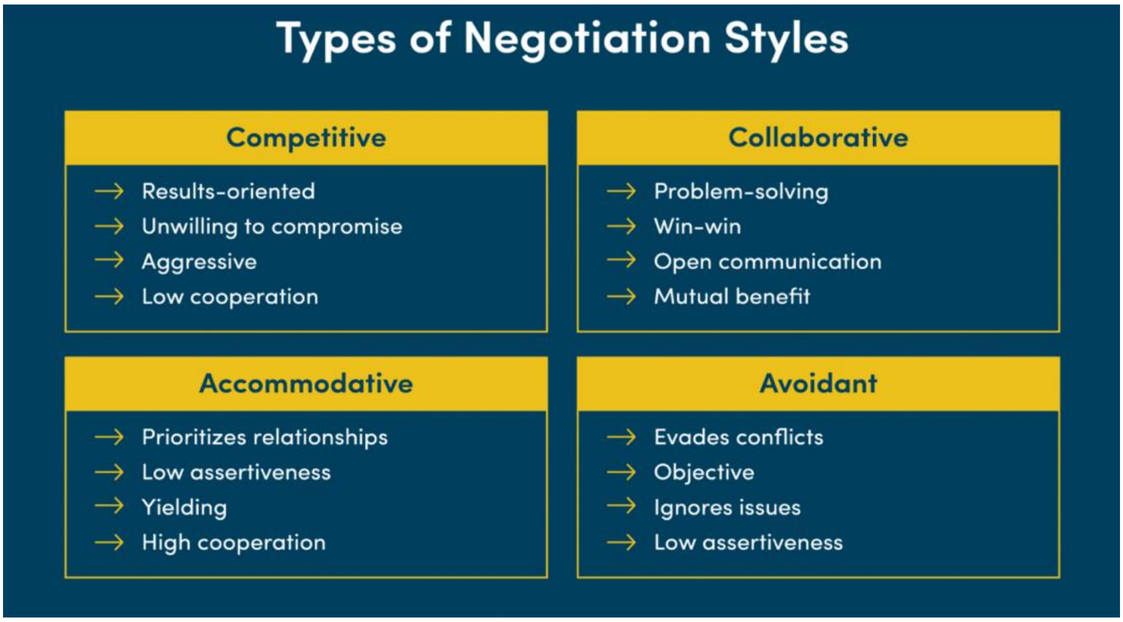
Negotiation stands as a fundamental skill essential for shop stewards. There are three primary types of negotiations that encompass this role (TEEU, 2003):

- Grievance Resolution: Involves addressing issues with individuals or small groups of members.
- Integrative Negotiations: Occurs when both the union and management collaboratively identify the problem's nature and work together to find a joint solution.
- Adversarial Negotiations: Takes place when the union and management rely on their respective negotiating strengths to secure the most concessions from the other side

Negotiation Styles

One’s negotiation style (picture 1.) represents one’s favoured communication approach for satisfying a need or desire. A skilled negotiator can discern which negotiation styles will be most impactful throughout the negotiation process and can adeptly shift between styles when necessary. (MasterClass, 2022)

Various negotiation styles are available for use when reaching an agreement with another party. The following outlines some commonly employed negotiation styles (Gibson, 2023):



Picture 1. Negotiation styles (Gibson, 2023)

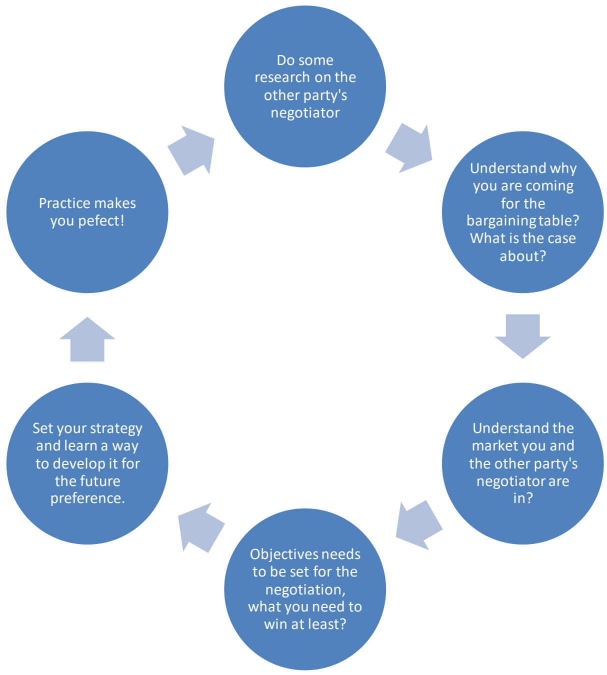
A competitive negotiation approach involves securing the maximum benefit for oneself, even if it comes at the expense of the other party, it is the same as being aggressive, defensive, or assertive, driven by a strong desire to achieve a victory. (Gibson, 2023)

Promoting a collaborative negotiation style requires developing a positive working environment with the other party while bearing in mind both parties' objectives. The aim is to establish balance and fulfil each other's needs in a fair and cooperative manner. (Gibson, 2023)

The accommodative negotiation strategy deliberately places you at a disadvantage in the initial stages of the process. The objective is not to arise as the winner but rather to extend gestures like making apologies or offering favourable terms, with the intention of fostering a more balanced relationship in the future. (Gibson, 2023)

An avoidant negotiation strategy aims to steer clear of conflict by overlooking the current issue at hand. This type of a style, also known as passive-aggressive, may manifest when dealing with a competitive or aggressive negotiator, emphasizing avoidance over direct confrontation. (Gibson, 2023)

2.3 Preparing for a negotiation



Picture 2. Preparing for negotiation

A critical aspect of preparing for a negotiation (picture 2) involves conducting thorough research and gathering information pertaining to the situation, the counterpart, and potential options. This proactive approach facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the context, expectations, and available alternatives for the negotiation. For example, when negotiating a contract with a customer, it is important and beneficial to explore into research on that particular industry, budget, past projects, and competitors. Such diligent investigation enables one to tailor their proposal effectively and anticipate potential objections. Define Your Negotiation Strategy. (LinkedIn, n.d.)

Information holds an important role in negotiations. It is very important to understand the other party, comprising the individuals present at the negotiation table, their off-site collaborators, and external parties like employees, public opinion, or the media. What are their interests? What objectives do they pursue? What strengths can they leverage? To address these questions effectively, adopting the perspective of the communicators is beneficial; negotiations often hinge on important human dynamics. Therefore, delving into the personality and influence of each actor becomes necessary. The negotiator can gauge the power dynamics between the two parties and establish a framework for discussions. (Garcia, 2018)

In negotiations, the background, whether related to the subject matter or not, must be thoroughly understood by the negotiators. At the time of preparation, they will also have to determine the overall context and measure the consequences. For example, a war situation gives all the more value to the time factor. However, the context must not prevail over everything. Sometimes you have to be able to avoid it so that it does not jeopardize the objectives. At last, the environment needs to be considered; A) where will the negotiation take place? B) in the opposing party? C) in a neutral zone? D) how will the actors be placed? E) will members of the same team be able to communicate with each other? (Garcia, 2018)

To consider a negotiation, one must be willing to back off, to make concessions. Two major ways of negotiating are then possible: integrative (or cooperative) negotiation and distributive (or conflicting) bargaining. The choice of one or the other depends on the desired result (unilateral concessions, mutuals, compromises) and the strength ratio. In the long run, we must always give favour to a "win-win" agreement. The type of issue is also to be determined: are you looking for only an agreement in principle? A memorandum of understanding? A signed contract? Depending on the desired outcome, we will choose the tactics to be applied: let it come, systematic withdrawal, time control. (Garcia, 2018)

To uphold each position, the negotiator needs to formulate compelling arguments and proposals. In the context of a negotiating team, roles must be defined: A) Who will present the case? B) Who will address proposals? Subsequently, success hinges on anticipation, attempting to foresee opponents' reactions and potential responses. Regardless, the negotiator should prepare a contingency plan and evaluate its practical implementation. For instance, it may be viable to suggest a pause in negotiations if they veer off course. (Garcia, 2018)

One final consideration: in periods of silence, the first speaker often concedes something. Proficiency in handling silent moments equates to mastery in negotiation. – Understanding the needs at two levels: organizational objectives and personal needs of individuals. (Garcia, 2018)

2.4 Negotiation process

Picture 3. 4 Steps of the Negotiation Process (Cote, 2023)

Negotiation involves the cooperation of multiple parties, each working towards a resolution that satisfies all involved. One party presents its position, and the other party may either accept the proposed conditions or present counter positions. This iterative process persists until a resolution is reached, agreed upon by both parties, and negotiations may cease without reaching a consensus. (Dhir, 2023)

Here is a summary of the four stages of the negotiation process (picture 3) and guidance on acquiring the skills necessary for successful negotiation (Cote, 2023):

Preparation is imperative before entering a negotiation, necessitating a comprehensive understanding of various components:

1. Zone of Possible Agreement (ZOPA): This delineates the range wherein common ground can be identified among involved parties. The establishment of the ZOPA entails a meticulous consideration of each party's perspectives and needs, facilitating the identification of potential compromise areas.

2. Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement (BATNA): Constituting the optimal course of action if an agreement remains elusive, determining one's BATNA involves exploring alternatives offering commensurate value from the negotiation.

3. Walkaway: Defined as the juncture where terminating negotiations supersedes accepting an unfavourable deal, the establishment of the walkaway leverages the BATNA to ascertain when it provides superior value compared to a potential negotiated outcome.

4. Stretch Goal: Representing the most favourable scenario for negotiation outcomes, this provides a potential upper limit to evaluate offers. The selection of a stretch goal involves opting for an outcome that, while improbable, remains plausible, perhaps with a 10 percent chance of occurrence.

Advance preparation engenders heightened confidence, articulates explicit goals, and establishes the foundation for a strategic approach. The bargaining phase, constituting the second step, is commonly synonymous with negotiation. However, even preceding discussions, three levers significantly influence this stage (Cote, 2023):

1. Engaging (the "who"): Signifying how the parties interact, be it amicable or adversarial.

2. Framing (the "what"): Determining how the negotiation is construed, whether as a battle, partnership, or collaborative problem-solving.

3. Norming (the "how"): Encompassing the established behaviors characterizing the negotiation and the ensuing relationship between parties.

Implicitly defined in the preliminary moments of negotiation, these levers remain integral throughout the explicit negotiation process. The third step involves the closure of the negotiation, culminating either in an agreement or its termination. Closure is contingent upon each party's walkaway, BATNA, and ZOPA, along with the shaping influence of engaging, framing, and norming on the relationship. If a resolution within the ZOPA proves elusive, parties may opt for their BATNA. Conversely, successful negotiation, facilitated by value creation and claiming, may lead to an agreeable outcome. (Cote, 2023)

The concluding step, often overlooked but pivotal for personal growth, entails reflective consideration of the negotiation experience. Assessment of successes, shortcomings, and their underlying causes, alongside introspection regarding one's sentiments regarding the outcome, contributes substantively to ongoing personal development. (Cote, 2023)

Given the distinctiveness characterizing each negotiation, encompassing foundational elements and nuanced intricacies, this reflection remains integral to perpetuating personal evolution. (Cote, 2023)

2.5 Crafting a negotiation strategy

In the midst of negotiations, harnessing negotiator's listening skills becomes a valuable asset to comprehend the motivations and needs of the other party. Adopting a stance of listening more than speaking not only aids in understanding but also encourages the other party to divulge additional information about their circumstances. (Indeed editorial team, 2023)

Successful negotiations are the ones that benefits all the parties involved. When focusing on understanding the needs and desires of the other party, the negotiator paves the way for an agreement that benefits both sides. (Indeed editorial team, 2023)

The element of timing holds significance in negotiations. In various industries, the opportune moment to procure services often aligns with the conclusion of a month or quarter, coinciding with salespeople and vendors striving to meet their quotas. (Indeed editorial team, 2023)

In the course of a negotiation, timing is a factor to weigh. The juncture at which a negotiator presents a request or make a concession is just as pivotal as the content of the request or concession itself. For instance, strategically waiting until one holds a stronger position in the negotiation can enhance your bargaining power when making requests. (Indeed editorial team, 2023)

It is important to rethink who we negotiate with by looking beyond the obvious players and considering a wider network of potential allies who can help achieve our goals. We should aim for an inclusive approach that involves all relevant parties to ensure the best outcomes. (Ertel & Hughes, 2020)

Acquaintance with the negotiation's ecosystem is facilitated through a structured inquiry encompassing (Ertel & Hughes, 2020):

- The delineation of business outcomes sought within the negotiation.

- Identifying stakeholders invested in these outcomes.

- Discerning entities capable of influencing these outcomes.

- Strategizing engagements, be they direct or indirect, with entities sharing an interest in the attainment of these outcomes.

Conducting an analysis of the constituencies comprising negotiation counterparts elucidates the corporate structure's multifaceted nature. Negotiation extends beyond engagement with a monolithic entity, necessitating cognizance of diverse constituencies constituting an organization. (Ertel & Hughes, 2020).

For instance, while a unit manager may exclusively negotiate contracts pertinent to her unit, stakeholders in distinct organizational domains, who may incur gains or losses, warrant identification. Temporal investment in understanding these stakeholders, their exigencies, and priorities is posited as fortifying one's position. (Ertel & Hughes, 2020)

The malleability of a negotiation's scope is underscored, challenging the notion of its inherent fixity. Contemplating instances where either broadening or narrowing the scope serves to overcome impasses advocates for a comprehensive, strategic overview and subsequent adjustments as deemed necessary. (Ertel & Hughes, 2020)

The imperative to reassess the nature of leverage pivots upon the acknowledgment of one's attitude as pivotal to negotiation success. Advocating for a perspective aligned with delivering mutually beneficial deals rather than a unilateral focus on personal needs is accentuated, cautioning against coercive tactics, and espousing a proclivity for win-win outcomes. (Ertel & Hughes, 2020)

The advisability of transcending the immediate negotiation and considering broader, strategic implications is posited as a requisite of a sophisticated, strategic approach. The establishment of precedents and their consequential impact on future negotiations forms the crux of this consideration. (Ertel & Hughes, 2020)

The nuanced appreciation of timing and sequencing emerges as a critical determinant, elucidated through a case involving a small tech firm's renegotiation with an internet giant. Strategic manoeuvres, be they accelerating or decelerating negotiations, are posited as a common tactic, albeit one potentially fraught with risks and unintended consequences. (Ertel & Hughes, 2020)

Concomitantly, the strategic sequence in addressing varied issues within the negotiation is posited as a pivotal consideration. The resolution of specific issues, and the attendant reset or reframing of subsequent negotiation dynamics, is underscored. (Ertel & Hughes, 2020)

The introduction of creativity in process and framing is proffered as an alternative to binary thinking. As a pertinent example, a healthcare firm's departure from conventional queries towards a pre-negotiation summit with a major supplier is posited. The ensuing transformation of the negotiation into a collaborative, problem-solving exercise accentuates the potential efficacy of such innovative approaches. (Ertel & Hughes, 2020)

2.6 Negotiation strategy

Whether engaging in integrative negotiation or adversarial bargaining, your primary source of influence lies in your capacity to walk away and pursue an alternative deal. Prior to entering negotiations, astute negotiators invest significant time in discerning their Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement (BATNA) and taking measures to enhance it. (Shonk, 2024)

BATNA stands for best alternative to a negotiated agreement, a strategic tool employed by negotiators to identify and solidify alternatives during negotiation phase. The objective is to enhance readiness for various scenarios, ensuring the attainment of the most advantageous agreement possible. Through pre-emptive evaluation of all available options, negotiators can strategically select the most favourable alternative in the event that the initial round of negotiations fails to yield the desired outcomes. Possessing a robust BATNA equips negotiators with a more substantial safety net, bolstering their negotiating prowess. (Santander, n.d.)

Following the exchange of initial positions, the clarification and justification stage can commence. Both parties involved are tasked with explaining, clarifying, reinforcing, and justifying their original positions or demands. This stage offers an opportunity for imparting a comprehensive understanding of their respective standpoints while gaining insights into the other party's perspective and sentiments regarding their position. (Lumen, n.d.)

During this phase, each party may choose to elucidate the rationale behind their current stance, potentially supplementing their explanations with pertinent documentation. Additionally, this juncture allows for a reassessment of the negotiation strategy initially devised, ensuring its continued relevance and appropriateness. (Lumen, n.d.)

While this phase need not be, and ideally should not be, confrontational, certain negotiations may inherently present challenges in maintaining a non-confrontational tone. If emotions are heightened as this segment unfolds, adept management of these emotions becomes imperative, laying the groundwork for the commencement of earnest and productive bargaining. (Lumen, n.d.)

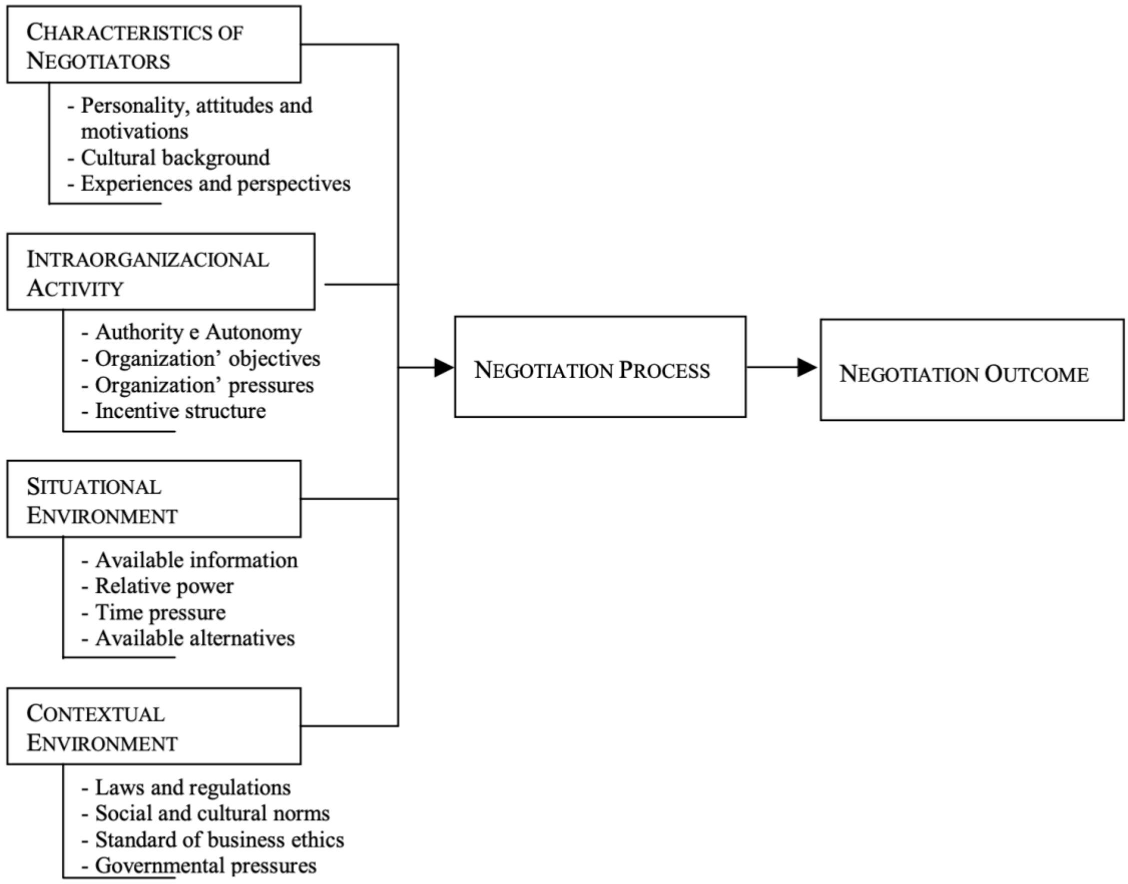
This encapsulates the core of the negotiation process, where the exchange of concessions and demands initiates. (Lumen, n.d.)

Both parties will employ diverse negotiation strategies to attain the objectives set forth during the preparatory stages. Utilizing information amassed in the preparatory phase, arguments will be presented, and positions fortified, with potential adjustments based on the strength and coherence of the opposing party's argument. (Lumen, n.d.)

Effective negotiation benefits from adept communication, particularly through active listening and feedback. Emphasizing a focus on the pertinent issues fosters an objective discussion, while the necessity of emotional control remains paramount. Ultimately, a mutual agreement between the involved parties should be reached. (Lumen, n.d.)

After an agreement is reached, the ensuing stage entails crafting procedures for implementing and monitoring the agreed-upon terms. This involves organizing pertinent information in a format acceptable to both parties and formalizing the arrangement. (Lumen, n.d.)

Formalizing the agreement can manifest in various ways, spanning from symbolic gestures, such as a handshake, to the creation of a written contract. (Lumen, n.d.)



Picture 4. Interorganizational Negotiation Model (Inemo) (Azevedo et al, 2002)

Inemo proposes a theory (picture 4) examining the consequences of negotiations involving representatives from buyer and seller firms (picture 4). The theoretical framework adopts a social-psychological standpoint, suggesting that situational constraints and the characteristics of negotiators play pivotal roles in shaping the negotiation process and subsequently influencing outcomes. Situational constraints are exemplified by power relations, while negotiator characteristics encompass cultural/national background, interpersonal orientation, and listening proficiency. Elements of the negotiation process explored include the strategic use of questions, initial demands, procedural discipline, accuracy in forming impressions, and maintaining control over discussion topics. The negotiated outcomes are framed in terms of economic rewards, satisfaction levels, and the interpersonal attraction generated through the negotiation process. (Graham, 1987)

3 Shop steward system in Finland

The era preceding the formation of unions was a challenging period for workers. Employers unilaterally dictated the terms, creating a dichotomy where individual employees had minimal rights and lacked the negotiating power. The initiation of trade union activity occurred in Great Britain at the start of the 19th century, a development that did not sit well with employers. They vehemently opposed such collective actions, leading to a period where early unions operated covertly due to resistance not only from employers but also from the government, which perceived it as a threat and explicitly forbade such activities. (Ay-oikeudet, 2016)

However, over time, a shift occurred, compelling acceptance and recognition of union activities, as reflected in international agreements such as those established by the International Labour Organization (ILO). In Finland, significant change began officially with the "January engagement" in 1940, marking a turning point when employers' unions, following a strenuous battle, finally acknowledged unions as equal contractual partners. It's worth noting that even before this recognition, unions already had the legal right to conduct their activities. In 1944, the first convention between central organizations was formalized, signalling a gradual transformation toward a democratic society. This shift aimed at ensuring employees' entitlement to a decent livelihood, reasonable working hours, and other provisions outlined in collective agreements. (Ay-oikeudet, 2016)

National collective agreements became widespread on June 19, 1945, following the government's wage decision. In the early 1960s, there was an enhancement in the negotiating relations of labour market organizations, leading to an increased influence. Towards the end of the same decade, the initial income policy solutions bolstered the nation's competitiveness and improved the operational environment for the trade union movement. The organizational strength of trade unions experienced substantial growth, reaching a new pinnacle in Finland during the 1970s. (SAK, 2013)

The peak of the trade union movement's organization occurred during the severe economic downturn in the early 1990’s. Since then, there has been a decrease in the labour market's trade union membership. However, even with this decline, the Finnish trade union movement still appears remarkably strong when compared internationally (SAK, 2013).

3.1 From the nomination of candidates to the election of a shop steward

This topic discusses about the nomination of candidates to the election of shop stewards and different shop steward roles.

The trade union representative, often referred to as the shop steward, is selected by members of PAM whose employment falls under the terms of the collective agreement applicable to the workplace. Trade union representatives are elected via a voting process. In the private services sectors, the election of trade union representatives is conducted biennially, specifically during the months of October to December. (PAM, 2023)

Finland's Cooperation Act defines shop steward as: "A personnel representative refers either to a shop steward elected based on a collective agreement or to a union representative as described in Chapter 13, Section 3 of the Employment Contracts Act (55/2001)". (Finlex, n.d.)

The appointment of union representatives and deputy union representatives have to be arranged to allow the participation of all PAM members who are to be represented by the chosen union representative. Sectoral union representative agreements are established through negotiations between employers' federations and trade unions as integral components of sectoral collective agreements. Following the selection of the union representative, the individual fills out a form to officially inform PAM of the appointment. (PAM, 2023)

Employees in a workplace are encouraged to democratically choose a shop steward to act as their representative. The individual assumes the roles of a local negotiator, mediator, and channel for communication between the employer and the workforce. (SAK, n.d.)

The shop steward should possess a comprehensive understanding of the current dynamics within the relevant sector, including knowledge of labour laws and the applicable collective agreement. Seeking guidance from the shop steward before finalizing any new or modified employment contract is advisable. (SAK, n.d.)

In instances where a shop steward is not present in the workplace, seeking assistance from more seasoned colleagues can be beneficial in employment-related matters. Additionally, even if not yet a member, it is recommended to reach out to the pertinent trade union when facing workplace issues. Regional State Administrative Agencies are also available to provide guidance and support for employees. (SAK, n.d.)

In the workplace, employees together select a representative or shop steward that is responsible for negotiating with the employer and act as a liaison between the two parties. The shop steward presents the employees in the event of any type of conflict or disagreement between the employer and the employees. (SAK, n.d)

Shop stewards are in an important role in ensuring compliance with the collective agreement and the legislation. They actively engage in negotiating employment terms at the local level and act as intermediaries in resolving issues. A higher member amount in the unions enhances the shop steward's ability to advocate for one’s interests. (PAU, n.d.) The shop steward's role is governed by overarching agreements between labour market organizations, such as The Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK) and the Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK). These general agreements also outline specific provisions related to shop stewards. (PAU, n.d.) To fulfil their responsibilities, shop stewards may be partially or fully released from regular work duties, with the allocated time specified in the collective bargaining agreement. (PAU, n.d.)

3.2 Health and safety representative (occupational)

Employees of a workplace are represented through many different roles in the workplace. These include shop stewards, who align with the collective agreement terms, also employee representatives and occupational health and safety representatives, as mandated by legal provisions. We collectively term them as personnel representatives. The evolving demands of the work environment emphasize the need for elected personnel representatives who actively contribute to developing working conditions and employment terms within their workplace. The representatives engage in constructive discussions with employers to address the dynamic needs of the workforce. (Laakso, n.d.)

The Finnish occupational health and safety administration is dedicated to ensuring the safety, health, and fairness of working conditions in the country. They are committing to involve their selves through conducting thorough workplace inspections to verify that employers adhere to their legal obligations in providing a secure and healthy work environment. Alongside inspections, we offer valuable advice and guidance. (Regional State Administrative Agency, n.d.)

In close collaboration with employers' organizations and trade unions, they actively contribute to fostering a culture of occupational safety and health. A national helpline and the dedicated website Tyosuojelu.fi serve as accessible resources, providing information and answers to work-related queries. (Regional State Administrative Agency, n.d.)

Their approach is adaptive, considering evolving labour market trends. Over the next few years, their key focus areas include working conditions, addressing work-related stress, and adapting to the changing nature of work. They aim to mitigate risks such as accidents, physical and psychosocial factors, and other work-related hazards. Additionally, their efforts are directed towards ensuring equitable treatment for all workers, irrespective of industry or job characteristics. (Regional State Administrative Agency, n.d.)

The company (employer) is responsible for their employee's health and safety in the premises where the work is done. Promoting a precautionary tactic, a health and safety representative advocates for the implementation of occupational safety and health policies in cooperation with occupational health care providers. (Regional State Administrative Agency, n.d.)

Regional state administrative agency conducts thorough inspections to verify that employers adhere to pertinent regulations. Also, the agency issues various work-related permits, licenses, and authorizations. The agency is responsible for investigating major occupational accidents and diseases. The agency makes certain that employers are compliant with the laws, covering the Contractor’s Obligations and Liability act when work is contracted out, that is a key aspect of the agency’s work. (Regional State Administrative Agency, n.d.)

Participating actively in court proceedings concerning criminal labour law, they contribute to upholding legal standards. Furthermore, they guarantee the regulatory compliance of machinery, tools, and personal protective equipment designed for professional use. (Regional State Administrative Agency, n.d.)

The occupational health and safety representative represents the employees within the workplace in questions e.g., occupational health and safety cooperation. The duration of the occupational safety and health representative is typically two years unless an alternative plan has been reached prior to the election. (Tyosuojelu, n.d.)

Many collective agreements provide extensive instructions regarding the roles and responsibilities of occupational health and safety representatives. The law called the Supervision Act (44/2006) outlines the methods for choosing and defining the obligations of both the occupational health and safety representative, and the deputy representative. (Tyosuojelu, n.d.)

The election of the occupational health and safety representative, along with deputy representatives, is a process initiated by the employees. (Tyosuojelu, n.d.)

In workplaces where at least ten employees regularly work, the employees have the right to elect an occupational health and safety representative and two deputy representatives. In smaller workplaces, the option to choose representatives remains, allowing employees in clerical positions to select their own representatives.

The selection process can take place via a general election if there is a consensus on the procedure and individuals to be elected. Everyone who is interested of applying for the position should be able to do so and employers should not impede the process of the election. (Tyosuojelu, n.d.).

Where an occupational health and safety representative has not been chosen for a workplace with ten employees, the employer is required to let known the employees of their right to choose a representative. Also, the employer must provide a list of the workplace's employees and designate the premises for the election. (Tyosuojelu, n.d.)

Roles and Responsibilities of the Occupational Health and Safety representative and Deputy representative, the duties associated with the role of the occupational health and safety representative encompass the following (Tyosuojelu, n.d.):

Independent Awareness: The proactive engagement in consistent observation and familiarization with factors influencing the safety and health of employees within the work environment and the broader work community.

- Regulatory Familiarity: The acquisition of comprehensive knowledge regarding occupational health and safety regulations pertinent to the considerations.

- Reporting Deficiencies: The timely identification and reporting of deficiencies and grievances to both organizational management and the occupational health and safety manager.

- Representation: The assumption of the role of employee representative in interactions with occupational safety authorities, coupled with active participation in occupational safety inspections.

- Promoting Best Practices: The active contribution to the implementation of operational methods aimed at augmenting occupational safety and health within the workplace.

- These responsibilities collectively define the critical functions undertaken by the occupational health and safety representative in ensuring a secure and healthy work environment. (Tyosuojelu, n.d.)

- The role of the occupational safety representative involves representing the interests of workplace employees concerning occupational safety, health, and overall working conditions. This designation is mandatory in companies with a workforce exceeding ten individuals, and any employee is eligible for appointment as an occupational safety representative. (Industrial Union, n.d.)

Occupational safety representatives and shop stewards support employee well-being in the workplace. Each role has different areas of responsibility, and they serve in their trusted positions either alongside their regular work or full-time as trust personnel. The role of the occupational safety representative is defined by the Occupational Safety and Health Act. The tasks of a safety representative include addressing psychosocial stress, among other responsibilities. (Veroväki, 2022)

4 Case: Swedish trade union system – How Sweden differ from Finnish system?

The Nordic countries maintain their status as having the highest union density globally. As of 2016, membership in trade unions among both blue and white-collar workers was notably prevalent, with rates reaching 52% in Norway, 65% in Finland, 84% in Iceland, 66% in Sweden, and 67% in Denmark. In contrast, a majority of European Union countries typically experience unionization rates ranging between 20% and 30%, with the exception of Belgium, sharing a comparable organizational structure with the Nordic countries. The United States, in stark contrast, records a mere 10% unionization among employees. A significant majority of workers in the Nordics, estimated between 80% to 90%, are included under collective bargaining agreements. This indicates a notably greater involvement in collective agreements compared to other countries (Logue, 2019).

The concept of “co-dedication”, involving the direct influence of unions on corporate deci-sion-making, is an integral aspect of corporate culture in the Nordic countries. This practice traces its origins back to the 1970s, a period marked by labour unrest, epitomized by a se-ries of wildcat strikes in 1969-70. The traditionally stronger national influence of Nordic unions prompted a shift toward advocating for increased worker influence at the workplace. (Logue, 2019)

This movement brought about a significant expansion of the role of union locals. In 1973, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden mandated corporate board seats for employee representatives, a trend later adopted by Finland in 1991. This legislative shift was accompanied by additional measures aimed at reinforcing the roles of safety stewards and enhancing individual rights related to employment security. (Logue, 2019)

Furthermore, Sweden enacted the Co-determination law (Medbestämmandelagen or MBL) in 1976, requiring local co-determination in shop, plant, and corporate decision-making. A parallel mandate was implemented in Finland in 1979, solidifying the framework for co-determination at the local level. (Logue, 2019)

Foundational labour laws in Sweden are codified in legislation, delineating procedural guidelines for the right to negotiate, and establishing basic regulations applicable to all individuals working in the country. Key examples of labour legislation include the Co-Determination Act and the Employment Protection Act. Notably, labour legislation predominantly takes a collective form, providing frameworks and procedural rules. (The Swedish Trade Union Confederation, 2011)

The specific information of individual labour contracts are many times developed by collective agreements. In contrast to certain jurisdictions, in Sweden there are no statutory minimum wage, nor is there legislation mandating wage payments. The determination of compensation for work performed is primarily governed by collective agreements and individual contracts. (The Swedish Trade Union Confederation, 2011)

If there are no collective agreement negotiated to the sector in question, an employer has the flexibility to set a salary at their discretion, as long as the employee consents to it. Certain aspects of labour legislation are semi-discretionary, allowing deviations through collective agreements but not through personal contracts between employers and workers. (The Swedish Trade Union Confederation, 2011)

Roughly 90% of Sweden's workforce enjoys the protections provided by collective agreements. Additionally, approximately 70% of all employed individuals in the nation are affiliated with trade unions. This robust unionization, combined with the absence of legal constraints on organizational activities, allows a significant level of autonomy for social partners to engage in and establish collective agreements. (The Swedish Trade Union Confederation, 2011)

National collective agreements, including aspects e.g., pay and general employment conditions, are negotiated through a central negotiation process by the social partners. The Swedish labour market has over a hundred national contracting parties responsible for more than 650 collective agreements at the national level. Throughout the contractual period, the parties are obligated to maintain industrial peace. (The Swedish Trade Union Confederation, 2011)

This obligation to uphold industrial peace is applicable for the duration of the collective agreement. The peace obligation entails a prohibition on resorting to industrial action with the intent of altering the agreement or securing advantages not explicitly outlined in the agreement. (The Swedish Trade Union Confederation, 2011)

Trade unionism in Sweden possesses several distinctive characteristics, many of which are shared across the Nordic region (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden). However, there are certain aspects that set Sweden apart from other countries. (Fahlbeck, 1999)

The most notable of these is the exceptionally high rate of unionization, with union density exceeding 80% of the employed population. In specific sectors, this rate surpasses 90% and continues to rise rather than decline. Between 1990 and 1996, the overall unionization rate increased from 80% to 83%. (Fahlbeck, 1999)

Another remarkable aspect is the absence of significant resistance from employers towards unions. Since an agreement was reached in 1906 between nascent organizations on both sides, private sector employers affiliated with the prominent Swedish Employers Federation, SAF (Svenska Arbetsgivareföreningen), have embraced unionism. This cooperative stance has persisted despite occasional contentious disputes. (Fahlbeck, 1999)

Traditionally, unions in Sweden have pursued an ideological agenda, with the transfer of the means of production to society being a longstanding aspiration, particularly within the dominant blue-collar federation of employees, the Swedish Federation of Trade Unions, LO (Landsorganisationen i Sverige). While this goal was never vigorously pursued, there has been relentless advocacy for the transformation of Sweden into a welfare state founded on political and economic democracy, as well as equality. (Fahlbeck, 1999)

A distinctive characteristic is the constructive dialogue maintained by LO and its member unions with employer counterparts. This communication has facilitated the negotiation of traditional collective agreements covering wages and employment terms. Furthermore, it has enabled the negotiation of overarching agreements on employer-worker cooperation, addressing various issues such as grievance procedures, industrial action limitations, workplace health and safety, and gender equality. In essence, a notable feature of Swedish unionism is its pragmatic approach in engaging with the employer community. (Fahlbeck, 1999)

Labour market institutions—such as legislation, collective agreements, and norms—have gained prominence as important research areas in labour economics. Finland and Sweden exhibit several common characteristics in their labour market systems: extensive coverage of union contracts, minimum wages established through collective agreements, union-managed unemployment insurance with generous replacement rates, and comparable levels of employment protection stringency. (Skedinger, 2016)

5 Research strategy

This topic explores constructive research, focusing on its origins and practical uses. It will delve into how we understand knowledge, existence, and value, while also examining the essential traits and methods associated with constructive research.

5.1 Constructive research as a research strategy

The research strategy chosen for this thesis is constructive research strategy, which involves deep philosophical considerations regarding the nature of knowledge and truth. Through constructive research strategy, the study aims to explore and analyse the fundamental assumptions underlying the research philosophy, particularly in relation to epistemology, ontology, and axiology.

According to Lukka (2000) as cited in Ojala & Hilmola (2003, pp. 83-101) the constructive research approach is a methodological framework designed to generate inventive constructs with the aim of addressing practical challenges in the real world. Through this process, it seeks to contribute to the theoretical advancement of the relevant discipline. The central concept in this approach, the (novel) construction, is an abstract idea with a vast and potentially infinite range of possible realizations.

According to Lukka (2000) as cited in Ojala & Hilmola (2003, pp. 83-101) human artifacts, including models, diagrams, plans, organizational structures, commercial products, and information system designs, are all considered constructions within this context. What defines them is that they are created and developed rather than discovered. The act of developing a construction result in the creation of something fundamentally different from anything that existed before—an innovative construction brings forth a new reality by definition.

Key characteristics of the constructive research approach (picture 5) include Lukka (2000) as cited in Ojala & Hilmola (2003, pp. 83-101)

- Concentration on real-world problems deemed relevant for practical solutions.

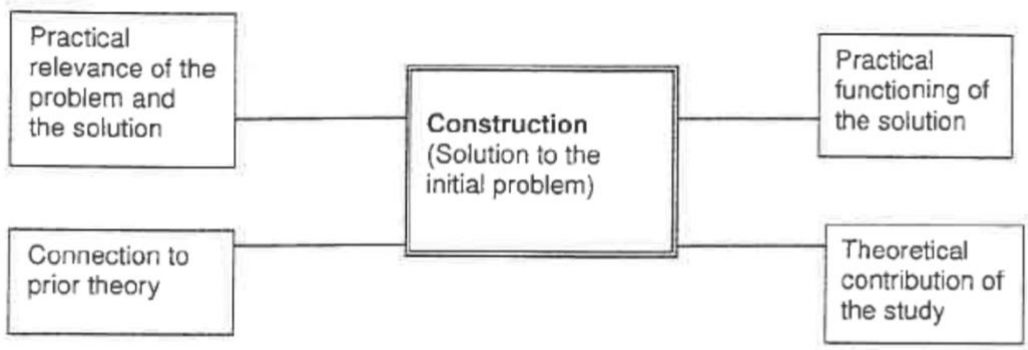
- Generation of an inventive construction aimed at resolving the initial real-world problem.

- Implementation of the developed construction, including testing its practical applicability.

- Close collaboration and involvement between researchers and practitioners in a team-like manner, fostering experiential learning.

- Explicit connection to prior theoretical knowledge.

- Special emphasis on reflecting empirical findings back to theory



Picture 5. According to Kasanen (1993) the key elements of the constructive research approach

Research philosophy is linked to assumptions, the nature of knowledge, and the study's essence. It encompasses the particular approach to knowledge development. Addressing this aspect is essential because researchers may hold diverse beliefs regarding the nature of truth and knowledge, and philosophy aids in comprehending these individual assumptions. (Dudovskiy, n.d.)

The research objectives

The main objectives of this study are twofold, to develop a basic guidebook for shop stewards in the sector of customer service and telemarketing, and to provide a theoretical overview of effective negotiation methods. The selected research strategy is a qualitative approach with a constructive research strategy. This strategy is suited to achieve the research objectives for the following reasons: creation of the handbook, the aim to develop a basic handbook requires gathering detailed, context-specific information from shop stewards and negotiators involved in the sector. This approach allows detailed data collection via themed questionnaire, capturing nuanced insights from shop steward and the service union united PAM negotiators. The insights gathered are critical in the developing of the handbook to address the challenges faced by the shop stewards at their place of work.

A theoretical overview provides a thorough exploration of literature, including articles, books, and online sources. The constructive research strategy supports this by integrating findings with practical real-world applications, guaranteeing that the guidebook is rooted in proven negotiation skills and strategies.

A research philosophy constitutes a perspective on the appropriate method for collecting, analysing, and applying data about a phenomenon. The term epistemology, which pertains to what is known to be true as opposed to doxology, representing what is believed to be true, encompasses diverse research approach philosophies. In the realm of science, the fundamental objective is the conversion of beliefs (doxa) into established knowledge (episteme). Within the Western scientific tradition, two primary research philosophies are recognized: positivist, often termed scientific, and interpretivist, also referred to as anti-positivist. (Galliers, 1991, as cited in Anonymous, n.d.)

Ontology, in its most basic form, delves into the examination of existence. However, its scope extends beyond mere inquiry; it also explores the methods by which we ascertain the existence of entities and the categorization of that existence. The aim is to concretize abstract concepts, affirming their reality. Within the realm of philosophy, ontology operates as a facet of metaphysics—a branch that scrutinizes the fundamental nature of entities, encompassing their being, causality, and identity. (Study, n.d.)

Axiology, originating from the Greek words Axios (meaning worth or value) and logos (signifying logic or thesis), is a branch of philosophy. It focuses on the categorization of things as good and the determination of their degree of goodness. In essence, axiology's theoretical framework revolves around assessing the value or goodness of entities. (Atria Admission Team, 2022)

The concept of axiology delves into the fundamental nature of value and its metaphysical dimensions. The theory aims to understand the essence of what is truly valued. This conceptualization directly aligns with the objectives of research, particularly in the field of fact-finding. (Atria Admission Team, 2022)

Within the research domain, axiology pertains to the exploration of what holds value. The study illuminates whether one seeks to elucidate, predict, or merely comprehend it. Axiological considerations intertwine with epistemological and ontological speculation. Discerning the concealed reality is an art within philosophy, encompassing four major branches: metaphysics, epistemology, logic, and axiology. The latter further divides into categories—ethics, examining personal values and morals in social conduct, and aesthetics, scrutinizing beauty, and harmony. (Atria Admission Team, 2022)

The philosophical groundwork directly influences the employed methodology in the research, this is shaped by the approach how data is collected, analysed, and interpreted.

5.2 Research problem

A research problem serves as a declaration of an issue of interest, a challenge to be resolved, or a perplexing inquiry found within scholarly literature, theory, or practical contexts, thus necessitating thorough examination and understanding. In certain social science fields, the research problem is commonly framed as an inquiry. It refrains from prescribing specific actions, proposing vague or sweeping assertions, or raising value judgments. (Sacred Heart University, n.d.)

Research involves the meticulous examination of a specific research problem or issue through the application of the scientific method. The presence of a theory is indispensable in any research endeavour as it provides guidance and facilitates the validation or refutation of hypotheses. Theoretical frameworks enable us to elucidate the mechanisms underlying phenomena and understand the motivations behind certain behaviors. (Urmita, n.d.)

Theoretical research allows for the exploration and discussion of a research subject using philosophical concepts and abstract theoretical frameworks. Unlike empirical research, theoretical inquiries do not involve direct observation of the research subject. Instead, they rely on scholarly literature to delineate and elucidate conceptual frameworks, explanations, and structures pertinent to the chosen topic. (Urmita, n.d.)

5.3 Qualitative research

This topic discusses about qualitative research, reliability, validity, and saturation point in qualitative research.

Qualitative research adopts a multimethod approach, utilizing an interpretative and naturalistic perspective towards its subject matter. In essence, qualitative researchers investigate phenomena within their natural settings, striving to comprehend and interpret them based on the meanings ascribed by individuals. (Qual Sociol, 2019) Qualitative research includes the collection and analysis of non-numerical data in example video, text, or audio, with the aim of comprehending concepts, opinions, or experiences. This approach facilitates the exploration of in-depth insights into a given issue and the generation of new innovative ideas for further research. (Bhandari, 2023)

The core of qualitative research lies in the exploration and identification of patterns within words, aiming to construct a meaningful narrative without sacrificing its depth and complexity. Similar to quantitative research, qualitative inquiry seeks to address questions related to 'how, where, when, who, and why,' intending to either develop a theory or challenge an existing one. In contrast to quantitative research, which focuses primarily on numerical data and their statistical interpretations within a reductionist, logical, and strictly objective framework, qualitative research involves non-numerical information and their phenomenological interpretation. This interpretation is closely connected to human senses and subjectivity. While emotions and perspectives from both subjects and researchers are often seen as undesirable biases that can distort results in quantitative research, they are regarded as essential and valuable in qualitative research. These factors inevitably add extra dimensions and nuances, enhancing the richness of the findings. (J Family Med Prim Care, 2015)

In qualitative research, validity concerns the suitability of the tools, procedures, and data used. This entails evaluating whether the research question matches the intended outcome, if the chosen methodology effectively addresses the research question, if the design aligns with the chosen methodology, and if the sampling and data analysis methods are appropriate. Ultimately, validity in qualitative research extends to ensuring that the obtained results and conclusions are applicable and fitting within the specified sample and context. (J Family Med Prim Care, 2015)

Reliability in qualitative research pertains to the consistency of responses when multiple coders analyse data sets. This consistency can be bolstered through meticulous field notes, the use of recording devices, and the transcription of digital files. On the other hand, validity in qualitative research may be conceptualized differently than in quantitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985, as cited in University of Miami, n.d.) introduced the term 'trustworthiness' as a naturalist's equivalent for internal validation, external validation, reliability, and objectivity. Trustworthiness in qualitative research is established through credibility, authenticity, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. To put these concepts into practice, researchers engage in prolonged fieldwork and employ triangulation across data sources, methods, and investigators to establish credibility. Thick description is essential to confirm the transferability of results between the researcher and the study participants. Unlike reliability, qualitative researchers seek dependability, acknowledging that results may be subject to change and instability. (University of Miami, n.d.)

Qualitative analysis endeavours to deepen the comprehension of the essence, attributes, and significances inherent in the subject of investigation. Drawing from the philosophical underpinnings of the Philosophy of Science, various methodologies are employed to conduct qualitative analysis, ranging from those with a narrow analytical scope to those with a broader approach. A common thread across qualitative methods lies in their emphasis on elucidating perspectives regarding expressions, language, and the contextual elements encompassing the subject's environment, background, objectives, and interpretations. Humanistic research frequently adopts qualitative approaches. (Jyväskylän yliopisto, 2021)

Quantitative analysis deals with numbers to describe and understand the research subject statistically. While qualitative and quantitative analyses are distinct, they can be employed in tandem within a single research endeavour, albeit in differing manners. Some methods blend both numbers and descriptions, straddling the line between pure statistics and pure descriptions. Whether researchers choose to change these approaches it all depends on what they aim to achieve and their personal beliefs about research. (Jyväskylän yliopisto, 2021)

The research attempts to enhance the understanding of the chosen issue via systematic categorization, classification, or typification. Categorization often employs thematic analysis to identify recurrent themes within the phenomenon or its attributes, while classification involves organizing information into distinct categories, groups, or classes. Typification entails the formation of generalized types based on the phenomena or their attributes. These processes might serve as secondary objectives in research, contributing to a deeper understanding of the chosen phenomenon. (Jyväskylän yliopisto, 2010)

In research and development work, typical approaches include action research, constructive research, and case study in both research projects and theses. The approach can also be, for example, service design, experimentation culture, adversarial research, foresight, or innovation generation. (Humak, 2024)

In qualitative research, saturation means having enough interviews. It's reached when you have gathered all the needed information, and more interviews won't add anything new. This idea comes from grounded theory in qualitative research. (Dovetail Research, n.d.)

Data saturation in qualitative research means that researchers have collected enough data to thoroughly study a topic, where more data won't add much new. This concept comes from grounded theory and suggests that even with a small sample, researchers see the same themes and patterns. Saturation can happen with fewer participants than expected, especially in studies with clear goals and similar groups. Factors like study purpose, coding methods, and group makeup affect saturation. Different models and methods help researchers understand when saturation occurs. Balancing thorough exploration with practical concerns is key. Saturation ensures research findings are strong and valid. (Dovetail Research, n.d.)

6 Construction implementation for Service Union United PAM

This part talks about chief shop stewards and how the qualitative research used as a constructive research strategy will benefit them and their role as shop stewards.

6.1 Presentation of the client and the basics of the study

“Service Union United PAM is a trade union for people working in private service sectors.” (PAM, n.d.) The sector under consideration is customer service and telemarketing. The thesis initiates with a discussion on negotiation theory, followed by the implementation phase, which includes a themed questionnaire. Subsequently, utilizing the theory and the gathered results, the shop steward handbook is developed. The development work is designed for both new and existing shop stewards in the sector, this guidebook serves as a valuable resource offering guidance and processes to steer shop stewards in the right direction and assist them in seeking answers from the appropriate sources.

The basic handbook offers several benefits to its users, succinctly outlining the roles and responsibilities of a shop steward and enhancing understanding of their function within the organization. It provides valuable insights into the sector, labour laws, conflict resolution strategies, communication skills, the process of making a disagreement memo, and introduces negotiation tactics, it equips shop stewards with essential day-to-day knowledge to effectively fulfil their responsibilities.

6.2 Research implementation and the process

In the empirical part the questions I want to find answers to “*What resources do shop stewards currently rely on for guidance and support in their role?* And *What types of support and resources do shop stewards believe would enhance their ability to represent workers and resolve issues within the workplace?”.*

I made a qualitative themed questionnaire for three PAM negotiators in March 2024; Juha Ojala who is the collective agreement negotiator, Henna-Kaisa Turpeinen who has experience from negotiation activities (PAM Oulu Area Manager), and Irene Korimäki who has solid knowledge of good practices and bottlenecks in negotiation activities. Although not all of them are negotiators by trade, they all are representing collective bargaining from different perspectives, so I grouped them as PAM negotiators for this work. The negotiators have confirmed that their names can be shown publicly in the thesis. I also invited three shop stewards to take part in the questionnaire to furnish me with information regards to what the shop steward manual should have.

By solving the before mentioned research problem, the thesis writer can answer qualitatively to the development of the handbook and provide better understanding of what the handbook is all about.

The researcher of this thesis employs qualitative data analysis to explore and understand the results of the questionnaire. In October 2023, the decision on the topic of the thesis was made, I wrote the theory between January and March, the questionnaires were sent off to participants in late March, and the analysis of the questionnaire results was made in early April. The development work was finalized in early May. The whole thesis was finalized in May 2024.

The thesis research was not solely focused on developing the guidebook for shop stewards; it also aimed to gather insights from the Service Union United PAM, who negotiate collective agreements daily. By incorporating their responses, the development work addresses the research question and underscores the need for the development work. The final handbook is written in Finnish.

6.3 Development work implementation and results

The development of the basic shop steward handbook for the customer service and telemarketing sector involved themed questionnaire that was made for shop stewards and PAM negotiators. This approach generated numerous ideas, many of which were incorporated into the final handbook. However, some suggestions, such as basics of working life, organizing workplace benefits, maintaining work-wellbeing, and recognizing personal limits, were deemed beyond the scope of a basic handbook, and reserved for a potential comprehensive version in the future.

The handbook was structured to prioritize essential information pertaining to the shop steward's role. The focal point remained on the "shop steward," ensuring the handbook was focused on the reader.

Challenges

During the development process, several challenges were encountered, including balancing basic information with a user-friendly format, and trying not to go too deep into the topics. Also, one of the negotiators had requested to have shop steward processes made in pictures which would have been a challenge to make and would have cost money, so the handbook was left without many pictures and no other visuals were included. Input from shop stewards and PAM negotiators ensured the handbook was practical and met the needs of its users.

Outcome

The final handbook serves as an important resource that provides new shop stewards with a comprehensive but basic understanding of their role and responsibilities. The inclusion of links in the guide to additional resources encourages further learning and adaptation. The handbook also includes contact details and a map of all PAM regional offices in Finland to facilitate further support and networking.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the development of the basic shop steward handbook represents a significant step towards providing practical support to shop stewards in the sector. While handbook is focused on essential topics, there is potential for future expansion into a more comprehensive guide that explains matters in detail.

7 Research results

The questionnaire aimed to identify the support and resources currently relied upon by shop stewards, along with their perceived needs for improvement in their roles and the subjects they felt should be covered in the handbook. PAM negotiators also participated in the questionnaire to provide their perspectives on shop steward work and their expectations for the handbook's content. The sample size included three shop stewards and three negotiators. The primary goal was to address the empirical questions of the thesis: 'What resources do shop stewards currently rely on for guidance and support in their role?' and 'What types of support and resources do shop stewards believe would enhance their ability to represent workers and resolve issues within the workplace?' The questionnaire was administered in late March 2024, with the results analysed in early April 2024.

Findings from Shop Steward Responses

Analysis of the shop steward responses revealed a diverse range of resources currently utilized. These included regional office assistance, peer support from other shop stewards in the sector, self-learning, and the use of PAM’s employment counseling helpline, website, and social media platforms. The findings indicated a clear demand for more accessible and comprehensive support, particularly in areas such as negotiation skills and essential employment matters.

The identified handbook topics brought attention to the challenges faced by shop stewards, suggesting that addressing these areas could enhance their effectiveness in supporting employees and resolving workplace issues. The results highlighted the need for training programs and resources tailored to shop stewards' needs. Specifically, the handbook should cover negotiation skills, comprehension of local agreements, and strategies for promoting employee well-being.

Findings from PAM Negotiator Responses

Responses from PAM negotiators brought attention to the varied roles and responsibilities of shop stewards in advocating for employee rights and addressing workplace issues. The negotiators recognized the need for sufficient support and resources for shop stewards, including training opportunities, mentorship programs, and access to union services.

The negotiators also emphasized the potential benefits of a handbook for shop stewards. They suggested that such a handbook could help standardize procedures, assist with complex issues, and ensure consistency in representation. The data analysis stressed the importance of providing diverse support and training in the sector to empower shop stewards in their roles.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is recommended to develop comprehensive training programs and resources tailored to the needs of shop stewards. The handbook should cover topics such as negotiation skills, understanding local agreements, and promoting employee well-being. These measures are essential to adequately support shop stewards and enhance their ability to represent workers effectively and resolve workplace issues.

8 Conclusion and implications

This thesis focused on effective negotiation for shop stewards. The main objectives were to develop a practical handbook for shop stewards and provide a theoretical overview of negotiation methods. The theoretical section explored the evolution of negotiation, essential skills, and strategies.

Summary and findings

The purpose of the study was to investigate and compile information on effective negotiation skills and negotiation strategy. The results were obtained from theoretical research and questionnaire responses, which highlighted the need for negotiation skills from basic to advanced levels. The qualitative research followed a constructive process, using themed questionnaires for data collection. Participants included Service Union United PAM negotiators and shop stewards from my work group.

The qualitative research followed the constructive research process, employing themed questionnaires for data collection. Participants were selected from service union united PAM and included shop stewards from my work group who volunteered to participate in the questionnaire and assist in the development of the handbook for shop stewards.

Evaluation of the results

Shop stewards and PAM negotiators identified the need for guidance in the changing role of a shop steward in the customer service and telemarketing sector. They also highlighted the need for support, training, or resources due to lack of experience, training, and information on basic matters. Key areas highlighted by the participants included collaboration and information sharing, training about well-being of a shop steward, basics of working-life, negotiation skills, local agreements, conflict resolution, representation rights, negotiation process, and psychological aspects.

Additionally, they stressed the importance for organizing benefits at the workplace, ways to utilize digital tools, maintaining well-being at work, understanding personal limits, improved negotiation skills, understanding collective agreements, and accessing support networks and peer support groups.

Analysis and critiquing

The framework of the thesis allowed for a structured exploration of effective negotiation skills, the shop steward system in Finland, and a comparative analysis with the Swedish trade union system. Key sources included works by AFL-CIO, Bright Focus, International Labour Organisation, Harvard Law School, and Korobkin.

Thesis questions answered

Answering the first research question involves identifying the key characteristics and strategies that contribute to effective negotiation from a theoretical perspective. Comprehensive preparation, active listening, focus on interests, orientation toward win-win solutions, flexibility, open-mindedness, effective communication, emotional control, seeking common ground, win-win, patience, and documenting agreements.

Answering to the second research question the background influences that can impact shop steward's functioning as a negotiator were defined as support from the union e.g., training and advice, organizational culture, traits of an individual, e.g., skills in communication, understanding of employment laws and collective bargaining agreements, and relationships with upper management of the company.

Answer to the third research question currently shop stewards relied on regional office's help, the other shop stewards help in the same sector, self-learning, or calling to the PAM's employment helpline etc. Pam's website and various social media platforms were also considered tools that the shop stewards used in their work.

Answer to the fourth research question what types of support and resources did shop stewards believe would enhance their abilities, this question provided longest answers and in their answers shop stewards told that one can never have too much of information, and there should be more information available.

The attachment number one provides the reader the shop steward handbook. The participants answers gave ideas and recommendations what the handbook should have. I made the last decisions what the basic handbook should have, since the handbook should cover basic things about the position, but some answers were requesting to add topics from occupational health and safety side, too.

Limitations and future directions

The study faced challenges with a small participant size, involving only six respondents. Time constraints also limited the scope of the research. However, recurring themes indicated data saturation, suggesting the qualitative research was sufficient. Future studies should involve a larger participant size to provide a more comprehensive understanding of sector needs.

This handbook can benefit various stakeholders, including shop stewards, PAM administrators, and other interested parties, by providing essential information and guidance in a written format. Covering topics such as the shop steward's role, tasks, relevant laws, and rights, it would serve as a valuable resource. Furthermore, having the handbook complement the collective agreement would ensure a comprehensive understanding of rights and responsibilities."This study highlights the need for a shop steward handbook in the sector. However, the research was limited to only six participants, whereas it is recommended to involve at least nine for a more comprehensive understanding. Therefore, further research with a larger participant size may provide a clearer and more efficient picture of the actual needs in the sector.

Contributions and implications

As strengths of the thesis, I see its workplace relevance, as well as, of course, its timeliness, given that we have now witnessed strikes in the service sectors and strong exchanges of opinions in the media between the government and trade unions. The topic and research questions are truly workplace-oriented and have arisen, in my opinion, from my own needs and thoughts about what needs to be done, but I also believe that there is a need within the union to develop the service sector. The results of the thesis are concrete and highly applicable for further use, as well as practical. The results are directly targeted towards the development task of the thesis.

Learning and development

Throughout the thesis writing process, my professional expertise and competence have significantly improved. Exploring my field of work through theory, research knowledge, and the questionnaire has enhanced my performance in my current job, allowing for enhanced effectiveness. Understanding the breadth of the field and its context has enabled me to critically engage with various studies in my role. Compared to the YAMK competencies (ARENE, 2022, 5), my skills have notably developed during the thesis writing and education period. Incorporating knowledge from various industries and skills acquired during my education, both during the thesis writing process and throughout my studies, has been beneficial. Particularly, I have focused on enhancing my expertise, conducting thorough work with the thesis to provide depth for future reference and application. This experience has empowered me to contribute to the workplace and engage in its development, fostering the ability to improve my own workplace and contribute to its future evolution.

Contributions and implications

There are numerous factors to consider for the future, particularly the changing landscape of service unions in Finland. Recent governmental decisions challenging unions and proposing changes to laws, such as the right to political strikes in 2024, raise questions about the future of collective agreements. Will national agreements shift towards company-specific ones, especially in sectors such as customer service and telemarketing? This is something that may be under debate in the future possibly.

There is a clear demand for a comprehensive handbook, that became evident from the responses to the questionnaire. It would be prudent to initiate its development, especially if its advantages continue to be recognized in the sector.

Ethics of the research

The study follows the rules of good scientific practice, being honest, careful, and accurate in how it conducts, records, and presents research, as well as in evaluating studies and their results. The study also uses reliable and ethical methods for collecting, researching, and evaluating data. Also, it is open and responsible when sharing its findings with the scientific community, staying true to the principles of scientific knowledge. (TENK, 2023)

The study adhered to good scientific practice, and ensuring honesty, accuracy, and responsibility in conducting, writing, and presenting the research.

Conclusion

This study highlights the need for a comprehensive shop steward handbook. While the research was limited to six participants, further research with a larger participant size is recommended to get a better understanding of sector needs. The results are directly applicable to the development task and can significantly benefit shop stewards, PAM employees, and other stakeholders.

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Pictures

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Picture 2. Karjalainen, M. (2024). Preparation for a Negotiation.

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Opinnäytetyön aineistonhallintasuunnitelma

1. Aineistojen yleinen kuvaus

    - Opinnäytetyössä käytetään Internetistä hankittua lähdeaineistoa, esimerkiksi akateemisia opinnäytetöitä ja tutkimuksia, käytännön oppeja, teoreettista materiaalia yliopistoista, lisäksi aineistoa on hankittu teemakyselytutkimuksella.

2. Aineiston dokumentaatio ja laatu

    - Tutkimusaineisto dokumentoidaan kirjallisesti tallentamalla kaikki kerätyt tiedot ja hankitut havainnot. Sisältäen muun muassa tutkimuksen kohteet, havainnot, analyysit, ja tulokset. Tunnistetietoina opinnäytteessä ovat Palvelualojen ammattiliiton neuvottelijat, joiden nimet löytyvät opinnäytetyöstä ja joihin on saatu lupa julkaista. Aineiston ja sen dokumentoinnin laatu varmistetaan noudattamalla hyvän tieteellisen käytännön periaatteita, kuten tarkkuutta, huolellisuutta ja rehellisyyttä. Lisäksi noudatetaan tietosuojaa.

    - Aineisto tallennetaan Theseukseen valmiina opinnäytetyönä. Lisäksi luottamusmiehen opas toimitetaan palvelualojen ammattiliitolle jatkokäyttöön.

    - Opinnäytetyön aineistoa ei pääse kukaan muu käsittelemään kuin itse kirjoittaja missään vaiheessa työntekemistä tai työn kirjoittamisen jälkeen. Tutkimuskysely poistetaan ja kaikki kyselyyn liittyvät tekijät poistetaan lopullisesti.

3. Säilyttämiseen liittyvät eettiset ja laillisuuskysymykset

    - Aineisto tullaan lataamaan Theseukseen ja on siellä maininnalla kenen työ on kyseessä ja jos joku haluaa lainata tekstiä, tulee hänen käyttää lähdeviitteitä yleisten ohjeiden mukaisesti.

4. Aineiston avaaminen ja pitkäaikaissäilytys

    - Aineistoa voi käyttää myöhemmin, ainoastaan lähteitä ja itse työtä, mutta tutkimustuloksia (yksilöiviä) ei voi saada erikseen, sillä ne ovat tuhottuja.