A comprehensive analysis of an advanced public library's events: Case analysis of the Helsinki central library Oodi

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Abstract

This study aimed to provide a comprehensive and detailed investigation of the types of events that occur in advanced public libraries that offer not only traditional services, such as book lending and reference services, but also proactively provide new services. We focused on the Helsinki Central Library Oodi (Finland) and mechanically collected event data posted on the webpage. In Finland, as per the Library Act which came into effect in 2017, public libraries are encouraged to hold events, and various events were held at Oodi. A total of 2,324 events were analysed between 13 August 2019 and 31 October 2020. The data collected were coded using the open coding method and grouped into categories. Oodi provided opportunities for many types of learning and experiences. The traditional philosophy of public libraries, which is to eliminate social disparities and ensure the equality of citizens, has not changed. Many events were held to provide citizens with a place for social interaction and dialogue, which created connections between citizens, by using the physical space of the library. Oodi has conducted their events online during the COVID-19 pandemic; these events can still be effective even when held remotely, thus reducing inequalities and recognising diversity in civic society.

Keywords:

Events, Learning, Social interaction, Public libraries, Case analysis

1 Research background

1.1 Diversification of public library services

Public libraries have traditionally performed the unique roles of supporting citizens as ‘hubs of knowledge’ and training informed citizens (Larsen, 2018) by providing equal access to information
and guaranteeing the right to knowledge. These roles are still essential in today’s scenario. In addition, public libraries have recently been required to invent new roles to adapt to changing times. The society of the 21st century has changed rapidly with the development of information and communications technology and globalisation. With the development of information devices, such as smartphones and tablets, people have been increasingly using them to obtain information; consequently, the digital divide has become a social issue where the information available differs depending on whether people have information devices and whether they are able to use them (Tsatsou, 2011; Taylor et al., 2012). Globalisation has led to ethnic diversification and disparity in language skills within communities (Johnston, 2018). Thus, in this social context, public libraries, which provide equal access to information, are expected to play a critical role beyond book lending.

Services that utilise the physical library space have attracted importance in recent years (Buschman & Leckie, 2008). An increasing number of libraries have spaces for creative activities and where citizens can meet. Public libraries today have begun to provide various services such as makerspaces and meeting spaces. Makerspaces are spaces where people gather to create artworks with DIY tools, invent new products, and share ideas, while meeting spaces are discussion arenas where all citizens can gather and create new solutions together while engaging in political discourse. Public libraries in the 21st century have invented new types of spaces with renovations. Jochumsen, Rasmussen, & Skot-Hansen (2012) describe these space-utilisation public libraries in a model called the four-space model (see Figure 1). The model suggests that public libraries consist of four spaces that support experience, involvement, innovation, and empowerment. This model focuses on the space and shows the public library as a model. Events in public libraries are the core service that utilises the physical space of the library.
1.2 Events in public libraries

Public libraries expanded their services (e.g. events) with new types of spaces so that librarians and stakeholders can provide essential activities to their local communities. An analogous concept to events in libraries is ‘programmes’. Due to the diversity of programmes in recent years, a definition has not been established; however, a recent definition has been attempted in the National Impact of Library Public Programs Assessment (NILPPA): that is, ‘a "program" is an intentional service or event in a group setting developed proactively to meet the needs or interests of an anticipated target audience’ (Barchas-Lichtenstein et al., 2019). From this definition, the term ‘event’ can be considered a broader concept, and it is also used in the web pages and reports of actual public libraries, such as the New York Public Library (New York, U.S.), Oodi (Helsinki, Finland) and Deichman (Oslo, Norway). Therefore, we use the term 'event' to refer to something planned and held in a public library during a specific period. Where the term ‘programme’ is used in the literature cited, we will use it but with the same meaning as ‘event’.
In the past, most of the events in libraries were activities aiming to increase the number of users of library services, called ‘extension services’, or activities related to education through access to books (Mathiasson & Jochumsen, 2019). Currently, events focused on building social capital and social integration are gaining attention. Public libraries promote individual learning and encourage personal and community growth (Gorham & Bertot, 2018). Providing events with a particularly large potential to contribute to individuals and communities is central to the role of public libraries today. Indeed, advanced public libraries hold thousands of diverse events each year. Therefore, we cannot fully capture the entire picture of events that advanced public libraries have provided.

1.3 Literature review

Research has been conducted on the roles and effects of these events. For instance, studies have been conducted on a learning programme aimed to develop information literacy skills (Hedemark & Lindberg, 2018; Lopatovska et al., 2018), conversation-based events (Johnston, 2018), the usages of health information (Luo & Jose, 2018), and reading clubs (Luyt, Chow, Ng, & Lim, 2011). There have also been studies on events dedicated to immigrants (Johnston & Audunson, 2019; Vårheim, 2011) and children with disabilities (Adkins & Bushman, 2015). These studies focused on one particular event or target group. However, no studies have comprehensively analysed these events to determine how many and what types of events are held in public libraries.

As noted in the aforementioned NILPPA report, currently, events have become a major service provided by public libraries; therefore, a unified study of programmes provided is needed to support their evaluation, dissemination, and librarian development and education (Barchas-Lichtenstein et al, 2019). Nevertheless, few studies have considered events as unitary services and analysed them comprehensively. Mathiasson & Jochumsen (2019) and Mathiasson & Jochumsen (2020) analysed events in Danish public libraries posted on Facebook with a similar concern. However,
these studies aimed to establish an analysis methodology for Facebook and analyse the content of the pages. Facebook is one of the most popular social networking services used by libraries, which they use extensively to communicate with citizens. Therefore, analysing events posted on Facebook is very significant. However, the analysis was limited to the content on Facebook pages, which is insufficient for analysing specific events. In addition, many events are held without being posted on Facebook.

Barchas-Lichtenstein et al. (2020) developed a framework for evaluating the impact of public library programmes in the United States. They proposed a classification of programmes; however, for impact evaluation, the classification was based on the programmes’ outcomes rather than on the events content. This classification also does not analyse the content.

1.4 Purpose

This research aimed to provide a comprehensive and detailed investigation of the types of events that occur in advanced public libraries.

2 Methodology

2.1 Case analysis

This article focused on the Helsinki Central Library Oodi in Finland. Oodi was designed to combine quiet and lively spaces and was built in 2018. It is an advanced public library that was awarded the Public Library of the Year 2019 by the International Federation of Library Associations (Systematic, 2019). The word ‘central’ is used in Oodi, but it means the centre of the city, and not the main library.

Finland's Library Act (Ministry of Education and Culture Finland, 2016), which was enforced in 2017, defines the roles of public libraries to provide premises for learning, recreational and civic activities, working, promoting social and cultural dialogue, as well as reading and
information services. In other words, it is not simply an activity in individual libraries, but a legal provision to promote events such as learning and public dialogue. In addition, a large number of diverse events occur in practice, which is why we chose to focus on Oodi.

2.2 Procedure

The research procedure used in this study is shown in Figure 2. First, the data of the events posted on the Oodi webpage were collected every day. The period of the events analysed was from 13 August 2019 to 31 October 2020. Because the data were collected daily, there were duplicates for events that were held over multiple days. For instance, if an exhibition was held for one week, seven events were included in the data for seven days. After excluding such duplicates, the number of events included in the analysis was 1,330. Even if an event was cancelled, the fact that it was planned was considered important, and was not excluded.

![Figure 2 Research procedure](image-url)
We conducted the coding and analysis using open coding. The coding was based on the title, description, and image on the event page of each event. Three authors conducted the pilot coding of 150 events, about 10% of the total, to practice coding and create a coding manual. Discussions among the authors and re-coding were repeated until all authors agreed that the codes were appropriate, and a coding manual was thus created. Based on the finalised manual, all data were coded. This step was shared among all authors to improve efficiency. After the authors finished coding, several other authors reviewed the code and confirmed that they found no inconsistencies.

Based on the coding results, discussions were held between the authors, and events with similar concepts were grouped as ‘categories’. In other words, the framework was created in a bottom-up manner.

3 Results

3.1 Overview of the results

Table 1 shows the assigned categories, codes, definitions of the codes, and number of events included in each code. The total number of events differed from the number of events because multiple codes may have been assigned to one event.
## Table 1. Overview of the results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Definitions</th>
<th>Number of events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collection based events</td>
<td>Lectures related to books</td>
<td>Lectures and talks by authors, translators, and so on about a book or its contents</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Storytelling</td>
<td>Reading activities in which the participants do not read directly, such as storytelling</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Reading activities in which the participants read, such as reading groups and reading circles</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poetry</td>
<td>Poetry recitation, study, and writing</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing experiences</td>
<td>Workshops</td>
<td>Activities in which participants learn something experientially</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Language Café</td>
<td>Activities to support the acquisition of language skills through daily conversation in simple terms.</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IT support</td>
<td>Supporting participants in using digital devices and the skills to use them</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Homework help</td>
<td>Helping students with their homework</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exercise</td>
<td>Physical activities in the library</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion of cultural activities other than reading</td>
<td>Playing music</td>
<td>Singing and playing musical instruments with library users</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Listening to music</td>
<td>Listening to music by musicians and other performers</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Movies</td>
<td>Film screening</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Viewing performances</td>
<td>Activities in which the citizens can watch a play, dance and other performance</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Broadcasting live radio</td>
<td>Broadcasting a radio program live from the library</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Playing performance</td>
<td>Activities for the citizens to perform plays, dances, and so on</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing information of interest to citizens</td>
<td>Lectures (excluding topics about books)</td>
<td>Lectures by experts and cultural figures on social or local issues and cultural activities. Sometimes there will be a dialogue with the participants. (Not include topics related to the book.)</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exhibitions</td>
<td>Exhibition of materials and research results</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussions</td>
<td>Activities that do not involve lectures by experts but discussions among participants</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recruitment</td>
<td>Activities for recruiting research subjects, citizens’ requests and messages for other citizens</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Campaign speech</td>
<td>Candidate speeches during elections</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting child-rearing</td>
<td>Children’s learning and playing</td>
<td>The provision of places for children to learn and play (not including “Reading” or “Storytelling”)</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supporting Baby care</td>
<td>Activities for babies under one year old and their parents to help them read and play</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating relationships with others</td>
<td>Games</td>
<td>Playing board games and video games</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Live games</td>
<td>Watching a game, rather than the user playing it</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intercultural exchange</td>
<td>Activities to discover other cultures</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Socializing with other people in the same situation</td>
<td>Providing opportunities for citizens to meet other people in their same situation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing necessary support for daily life</td>
<td>Language instruction</td>
<td>Activities to teach languages.</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employment support</td>
<td>Helping citizens find work by assisting with CV writing and inviting recruiters</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Health checks</td>
<td>Activities related to health care, such as medical check-ups</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>Festivals</td>
<td>Special events, such as anniversaries and openings of community groups</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Referral service</td>
<td>Providing information about other institutions in the region</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Library guidance</td>
<td>Providing information about the library and its activities to potential users</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seasonal activities</td>
<td>Seasonal events to match the season</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.2 Collection-based events

‘Collection-based events’ included ‘reading’, ‘storytelling’, ‘lectures related to books’, and ‘poetry’. The most popular ‘reading’ event was a reading circle with specific books based on a single theme. The themes ranged from the philosophical, such as epic poetry, ancient wisdom, and why evil is worshipped, to science and fiction, thus catering to diverse interests. In addition, the event was characterised not only by reading but also by discussing the contents. There was no admission charge, no need to make reservations in advance, and the assigned books could be collected at Oodi's information desk, so the hurdles to participation were low. Therefore, libraries enhance communication, making it a place for citizens to interact with each other.

‘Storytelling’ was usually for kids and young children. In addition to readings by library staff, there were events where authors of picture books and children's stories were invited for a reading, and there was experiential storytelling combined with music. These storytelling events were expected to stimulate children's interest in books and encourage them to develop reading habits. After the COVID-19 pandemic, recordings of reading events with authors were uploaded to the website.

In ‘lectures related to books’, most events comprised lectures by guest authors on the contents of their books or related topics. The guests were diverse, including novelists, playwrights, and university professors, and the themes and genres of the books introduced also varied. By organising these lectures, the library was encouraged to deliver the author's realistic thoughts to readers and to introduce library users to new reading experiences. These events were also expected to increase the number of library users.

Another unique event that was organised regularly was lectures held by parliamentarians. The lectures were not about politics but about their memories and reading experiences at the library. In other words, these events were supposed to increase the citizens' interest in politics by making them feel closer to and interested in the politicians themselves, as citizens could learn about the opinions of
politicians and what they have in common with them from their reading experiences.

As for ‘poetry’, events were held to experience poetry in a variety of ways. For instance, poetry can be expressed through music, poems, and treasure hunting combined with a functional experience. For some events, poets were invited to create poetry, and the library thus provided opportunities for more people to experience poetry. Such efforts to increase citizens’ interest in poetry were expected to nurture their creativity, imagination, and emotions.

‘Collection-based events’ were the most common library event. The library focused on experiential events, such as those where guests are invited to introduce the collection to give library users new ideas and interests. Through these events, the library contributes to stimulating communication among citizens, promoting reading activities for children, and providing liberal arts education to citizens.

3.3 Providing experiences

‘Providing experiences’ included ‘workshops’, ‘language café’, ‘IT support’, ‘homework help’ and ‘exercises’. ‘Workshops’ comprised various programmes, including not only knitting and sewing but also children's workshops using Legos, and professional art workshops hosted by university faculty. Therefore, through ‘workshops’, the library supported the creativity of members in all aspects. In most of the workshops, basic equipment was available, making it easy for beginners to try their hand at creating something.

‘Language café’ was similar to ‘language instruction’, even though, rather than studying the language, it was characterised by a relaxed atmosphere where participants could learn the language while enjoying a conversation with each other. In the first half of 2020, face-to-face meetings were limited due to the COVID-19 pandemic; however, remote meetings have been conducted through Zoom since fall 2020. ‘Language café’ facilitated the inclusion of immigrants in the community by
helping them acquire new languages. Furthermore, by holding meetings constantly and periodically, the library strengthened the relationships between immigrants and natives.

‘IT support’ assisted participants not only in the basic use of computers, tablets, and cell phones but also by teaching them information literacy skills, such as how to prevent digital fraud and how to use Twitter safely. Participants could bring their digital devices to the library and ask for help with any questions about their devices. By providing such opportunities, the library tried to solve the digital divide between citizens.

‘Homework help’ was intended for children from diverse backgrounds, such as those whose parents were not able to help them with their homework or whose first language was not Finnish. Hence, public libraries were expected to supplement school learning through ‘homework help’. While it was mainly designed for elementary and junior high school students, the event was also open to anyone, including adults who wanted to study at the elementary and junior high school level.

‘Exercise’ at the library primarily included physical exercise programmes, such as yoga, which was open to anyone; it also offered targeted events, such as yoga for pregnant women. By organising an ‘exercise’ event in the library, which had never been done before, a new segment of library users was expected to join.

‘Providing experiences’ enriched the lifelong learning experience of library users by offering events for all ages. The significance of holding these events consistently, and holding them online during the COVID-19 pandemic was that it allowed people to get to know each other and share experiences with other participants. Especially in Finland, which is home to many immigrants, events such as these strengthen the relationships between immigrants and local citizens.

3.4 Promotion of cultural activities other than reading

‘Promotion of cultural activities other than reading’ consisted of the following six codes:
'playing music', 'listening to music', 'playing performances', 'viewing performances', 'movies', and 'broadcasting live radio'. 'Playing music' and 'playing performances' included events where citizens could experience playing musical instruments or dancing. In the 'listening to music', 'viewing performance', 'movie', and 'broadcasting live radio' events, citizens watched the works. These events promoted cultural and artistic activities, learning and playing for children and parents, and presented social issues.

In Oodi, cultural activities other than reading, such as stage performances by citizen orchestras and theatre groups, and movie screenings were actively held to promote culture and art. After the COVID-19 pandemic, many events were simultaneously broadcasted or recorded and made available online. The awareness of cultural diversity is characteristic of the cultural and artistic activities covered in this study. A variety of art forms and cultural activities from different parts of the world were performed for citizens.

‘Listening to music’ and ‘playing music’ included pop music, jazz, classical music, and folk songs. Furthermore, gypsy and Middle Eastern classical music events, and performances using the kantele, which is a traditional Finnish instrument, were held. The dance events included in the ‘playing performance’ also included traditional dances such as flamenco and modern street dances. Weekly radio broadcasts on Fridays always focused on topics of cultural interest.

Many events were held as children's services, mainly for children and their parents. Many 'playing music' events were held as part of children's learning or parent-child play, where children and their parents sang together, some of which were held regularly. Several events on themes related to seasonal holidays, such as Halloween and Christmas, were held. Other events were regularly held to show movies for children and parents. Regarding learning, the puppet theatre, which is categorised as a ‘viewing performance’ event, was held to improve the memory skills of young children. In addition, some events aimed to assist language learning through songs not only for children but also for
immigrants.

Other events in this category aimed to encourage citizens to think about social issues, such as the environment and human rights, through cultural activities. Puppet theatre performances were held on the theme of environmental protection and sustainability, and dramas and films that dealt with human rights and social issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic were screened. After the screening of one of the films, a panel discussion on the theme was organised in combination with the film. The purpose of these events was to help the public think more deeply about the selected theme. A similar pattern was observed for the music events. For instance, an event aimed to raise interest on issues, such as climate change and urban environment, through the performance of music with sounds sampled from the natural world and urban areas.

3.5 Providing information of interest to citizens

‘Providing information of interest to citizens’ included ‘lectures (including topics about books)’, ‘exhibitions’, ‘discussions’, ‘recruitment’, and ‘campaign speeches’. ‘Lectures’ comprised discourse on various topics by inviting experts and celebrities. ‘Discussions’ were events in which participants deliberated with each other. In these events participants spoke instead of experts, as in ‘lectures’. ‘Exhibits’ were displays of art, research, and collections on a certain theme. ‘Recruitment’ was a call for research participants, volunteers, and opinions on government policy. There was only one ‘campaign speech’, and it was about the election of a member of the Sámi Parliament, an ethnic minority.

All the codes contained various themes. Some of the most distinctive themes concerned environmental issues. For instance, lectures, exhibitions, and discussions were held on the effects of climate change and what citizens could do to protect the environment. Climate change is a global issue, as it is one of the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2020). According to a United
Nations report (United Nations, 2020), Finland has been challenged on climate change. By organising such events, the library is trying to increase awareness among citizens about social issues and contribute to solving them.

Themes regarding local communities and politics are also important. For instance, lectures on the history of the local region and the origin of the names of places were held. Learning about the region enhances citizens' attachment to it. Lectures and exhibitions were also held on politics. For instance, bicycle transportation plans and environmental protection policies were discussed. For transportation plans, opinions on the policies were also exchanged. By increasing the opportunities for citizens to come into closer contact with policies and soliciting citizens' opinions, the library encourages more interest in politics. Subsequently, an election event was held. These events encouraged citizens to participate in politics.

Many lectures on artificial intelligence (A.I.) were also held. The lectures included expert presentations and A.I. demonstrations. A.I. has a significant impact on our work and daily lives, and its impact is anticipated to increase in the future. Its impact on and interest among citizens is high and growing. Therefore, libraries are providing citizens with this information.

Other events were also held on diverse themes, such as children's learning and addiction. Lessons were provided on themes that were of high interest to citizens, thus satisfying their information needs.

3.6 Supporting child-rearing

‘Supporting child-rearing’ included ‘supporting baby care’ and ‘children's learning and playing’. Families and children from 0 to 12 years old could participate in many events.

‘Supporting Baby care’ was an event that supported reading and playing for babies under one year old and their parents. Oodi has an event space for children called Loru, where family
storytelling and rhythmic play events are provided. The latter is not specified but is presumed to have a music education component, such as eurhythmics. These events are also held in multipurpose spaces. Because these events are for babies, there are many interactive activities such as singing, playing, and book-related events. The fact that many such events exist indicates that they are also important events for parents, and function as childcare support.

‘Children's learning and playing’ comprise events that provided opportunities for children to learn, and a place to play. This code does not include reading clubs or storytelling. Some of the events included crafts, playing with Legos, and rhythm sessions.

An organisation called the Ladushki circle held events for children aged 3-5 years to develop their physical and learning skills through poetry, dance, singing, games, and drawing. The circle also held the same events in Russian, and the fact that they were conducted in multiple languages was thought to provide opportunities for interacting with other ethnic groups. Another example of an event with a learning component was the children's philosophy circle. Family events that encouraged familiarisation with Finnish through music were also provided. In other events, children made party hats for anniversaries, and New Year's Eve and Christmas parties were held.

‘Children's learning and playing’ supported children in both learning and playing. It differs from ‘homework help’ in that learning is not the main purpose of some of the events, thus making it easy for anyone to participate.

Although the descriptions of some of the events did not provide detailed information about the events, it can be inferred that the events served as a playground for children and that they were encouraged to take the initiative in these activities. ‘Supporting child-rearing’ included numerous and varied events and reflected the characteristics of the public library as an educational facility. Through these events, the library contributed to the growth and development of children.
3.7 Creating relationships with others

‘Creating relationships with others’ included ‘games’, ‘live games’, ‘intercultural exchange’, and ‘socialising with other people in the same situation’. ‘Games’ included chess and other board games, quizzes, puzzles, and other games that participants could enjoy together. In ‘live games’, participants could watch chess games or watch live games on the library's website. ‘Intercultural exchange’ was an opportunity to learn about different cultures through lectures on dramas in other languages. ‘Socialising with other people in the same situation’ had only one event, which provided an opportunity for people who experience migraines to get together and talk.

‘Games’ included role-playing games and board games. Role-playing games were characterised by the fact that they did not require any gaming equipment and could be enjoyed even by beginners. By conducting a variety of game events, children who rarely visited libraries on their own were likely to become aware of the appeal of libraries. The events included in ‘creating relationships with others’ were designed for users of various backgrounds. The library thereby contributed to new encounters and strengthened connections among members.

3.8 Providing necessary support for daily life

‘Providing necessary support for daily life’ included ‘language instruction’, ‘employment support’, and ‘health checks’, mainly for socially disadvantaged individuals. ‘Language instruction’ provided language lessons in Finnish to immigrants and non-native speakers of Finnish. ‘Employment support’ included only one event, where recruiters were invited to introduce job opportunities to citizens. There was also only one ‘health check’ event, where people could receive a health check-up at the library. ‘Language instruction’ included free Finnish instruction for immigrants.

Oodi is part of Let's Read Together, a national network that supports language learning and integration, especially for immigrant women. The instructors were all volunteers who supported language
development for learners at different levels. Other events were held for parents, children, and refugees to support the integration of citizens by providing language support to a variety of members.

In the ‘providing necessary support for daily life’ event, the library contributed to improving the citizens' livelihood by holding various support events for people of various backgrounds and ages, taking advantage of the fact that anyone can access libraries.

3.9 Others

A code included in ‘others’ was, firstly, ‘festivals’. For instance, an award ceremony for a literary prize was held. Seasonal activities, such as those related to Christmas, were also included. Some events were held to celebrate anniversaries. ‘Referral service’ included events for connecting citizens with other institutions in the community, and ‘library guidance’ included events for introducing the library itself, that is the services that libraries traditionally provide.

4 Discussion

4.1 The relationship between events and the four-space model

Jochumsen et al. (2012) proposed a four-space model indicating four functions of the public library: experience, involvement, innovation, and empowerment. Based on the framework of these four functions, we discuss actual events held in the public library.

Under experience, ‘providing experiences’ is typical. These events range from providing experiences closely related to everyday life, such as ‘homework help’ and ‘IT support’, to offering opportunities that are difficult to experience daily, such as workshops using equipment such as 3D printers and sewing machines. Furthermore, in some events, participants performed music and drama. It is often difficult for economically disadvantaged citizens to have access to machines and musical instruments. The library helps to fill the gap between the rich and the poor by providing various
experiences for everyone.

‘Creating relationships with others’ is a typical category of involvement. Through board games and role-playing games, libraries create encounters among citizens who rarely interact with each other in everyday life and build relationships between them. Workshops and language cafés are attended by citizens who share the same interests and face the same issues, thus enabling them to meet others who are in similar situations. By creating opportunities for citizens from similar or different backgrounds to interact with each other, the library encourages understanding among them and allows them to become involved in the community naturally.

Events related to innovation are creative and exciting events. Creative events include workshops. Workshops are held not only for adults but also for children, through activities, such as crafts and drawing in ‘children's learning and playing’. Drama and music events are exciting events. The library seeks innovation through a combination of creative and exciting events.

A typical category of empowerment is ‘providing information of interest to citizens’. Lectures and exhibitions are held on topics of social interest and policies to provide citizens with various information. Furthermore, ‘language instruction’ and ‘IT support’ improves abilities closely related to daily life. Therefore, the library improves citizens’ empowerment by developing skills and providing information.

We discussed the relationship between the actual events held in the library and the four functions of the four-space model. Of course, almost all events have multiple functions, not just a single function. Events conform to this model to some extent.

4.2 The effect of COVID-19 on events

COVID-19, a worldwide pandemic that began in early 2020, had a significant impact on libraries. The Oodi had also been closed since 18 March 2020 to prevent the spread of infection. The
library significantly changed how events were held. Despite the noticeable cancellation of events in the first few weeks after the closure, many events were held online from the first half of April 2020. Generally, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted library events, especially in terms of how they were held. Even under such circumstances, libraries have been providing services to citizens by organising various online events as before the pandemic.

5. Conclusion

Through our analysis, we revealed in detail the types of events that are held in an advanced public library, and the characteristics of the events held at the Helsinki Central Library Oodi in Finland. The public library provided all types of learning and experience opportunities through these events. As a result, public libraries, such as Oodi, bridge the social divide between citizens and ensure equality among them. Furthermore, many events were held to connect citizens by utilising the library’s physical space, for example, by providing a place for social encounters and dialogue. It created a relationship between citizens who otherwise had few opportunities to interact with each other in everyday life. In other words, public library events reduce inequality and recognise diversity in civil society.

In the 21st century, with the rapid changes in society, libraries have diversified their roles and are no longer just a place for books. Many events were held to provide experiences and involvement beyond their collection. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic, events were held online, though in fewer numbers. Libraries are trying to fulfil these roles by organising events even during such grave situations.

In this study, the analysis was based on the information posted on the web page. By comprehensively analysing public libraries’ events, we explained the types of events that were held. Nonetheless, event information is limited to the event announcements on the libraries’ webpages. In the future, conducting interviews with the people in charge of the representative events and the
participants will be useful to clarify the purpose and effects of public library events in more detail.

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