



Aalto University

USER EXPERIENCE IN AN ACADEMIC COWORKING PLACE:

The Case of Aalto University's Design Factory

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Aim and research questions

- **The aim was to investigate the users' experience of the learning environment in the context of academic coworking space by identifying development possibilities and solutions:**
 - What are the most essential elements of user experience that the Aalto Design Factory building should support?
 - Through which spatial solutions and services can these elements be supported?

Definition of coworking

- **Workspace concept that was born in early 2000s and became soon a global phenomenon**
- **Co-localisation of group of people with different backgrounds to the same work environment where the spaces and tools are at least to some extent shared among the users**
- **Some of the coworking spaces emphasise certain values: collaboration, openness, community, accessibility and sustainability**

Background of coworking

- Rise of freelancers and independent entrepreneurs
- Generalization of mobile and multi-locational working
- Collaboration and interaction as a part of efficient working



Coworking places meets learning environments

The background image shows a bright, modern interior space, likely a library or a study area. Large windows at the top let in natural light, showing green trees outside. Below the windows, there are several round tables with metal legs and modern chairs. A person is sitting on a blue sofa in the background, looking out the window. The overall atmosphere is clean, open, and conducive to learning or working.

- **Need to develop the learning environments to better meet the needs of new ways of learning, including, for instance, facilitation of formal and informal teamwork and encounters**
- **Also, attracting students to spend more time in the campus**

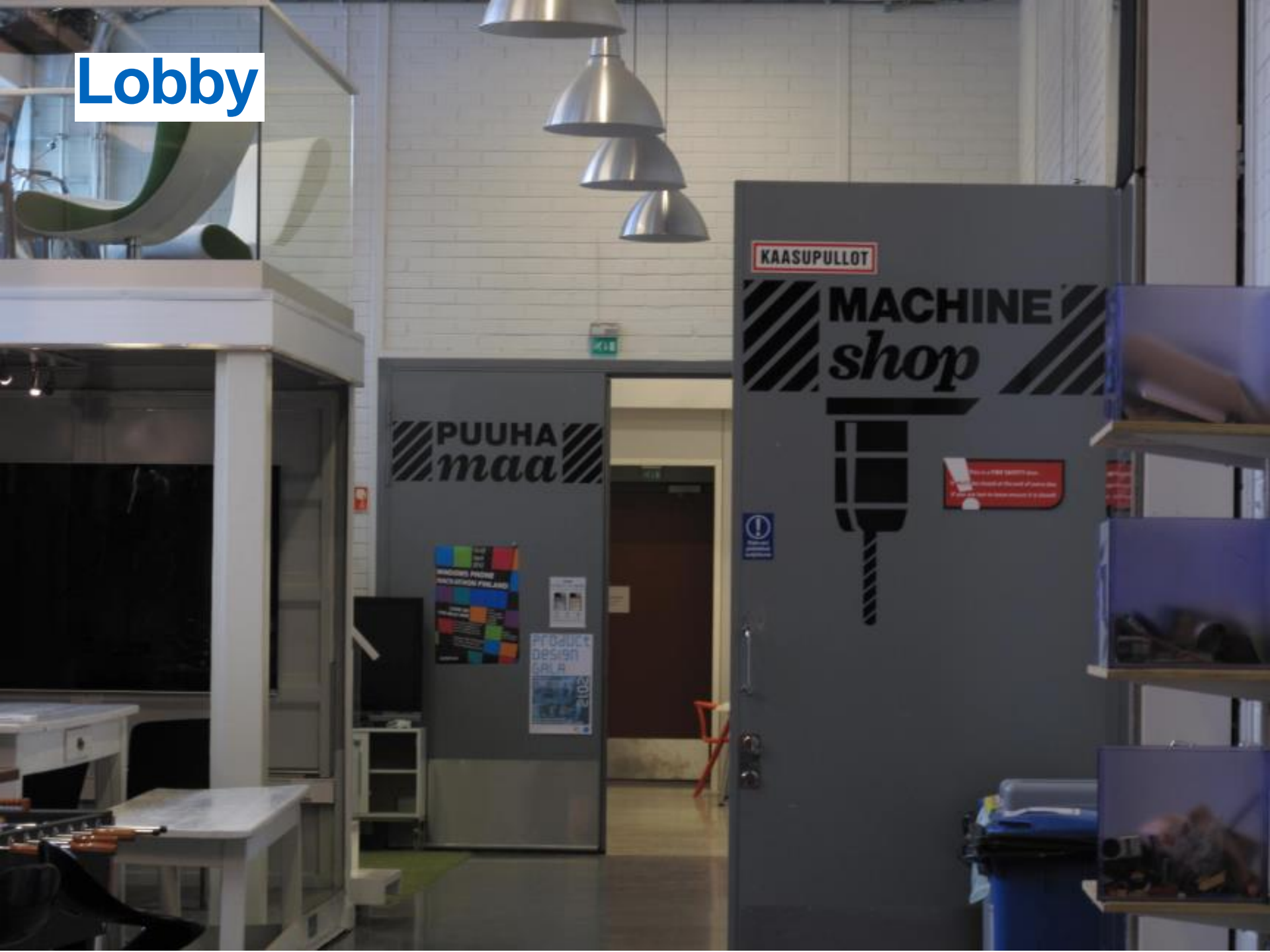
Aalto University Design Factory (ADF)

- **Multi-user academic innovation hub type of coworking place and project of Aalto University that has focus on product design and development**
- **Situated in the Otaniemi Campus area (Espoo, Finland), operated since 2008, was born as a “grass root” project**
- **Located in late 1950s building of approximately 4,000 m², activity based office, open 24/7**
- **Used by interdisciplinary students, teachers and professors, researchers, staff members and some companies**

Lobby



Lobby



Metal workshop



Prototyping workshop



Lobby



Large event space



Small event space



Teamwork room



Teamwork room



Teamwork room



Common cafeteria-kitchen



Common cafeteria-kitchen



Common cafeteria-kitchen

gging
point



Common cafeteria-kitchen

Coffee Cups For Sale



Approach
DF Staff for Details



8€

Price list

Black coffee	0,50 €
Espresso	0,50 €
Double espresso	1,00 €
Café latte	1,00 €
Café mocca	1,00 €
Cappuccino	1,00 €
Hot chocolate	0,50 €
Tea	0,20 €



Common cafeteria-kitchen



Methodology

- **Qualitative research with mixed-method approach:**
 - Internet survey (March-May 2012) with 101 respondents: 41 students, 43 staff members, 13 visitors, 4 start-up entrepreneurs
 - Semi-structured interviews (April-June 2012) with 15 interviewees: 8 staff members, 4 students, 3 start-up entrepreneurs
- **The 6T model for capturing the use experience of places was applied as a framework for the survey**

6T model

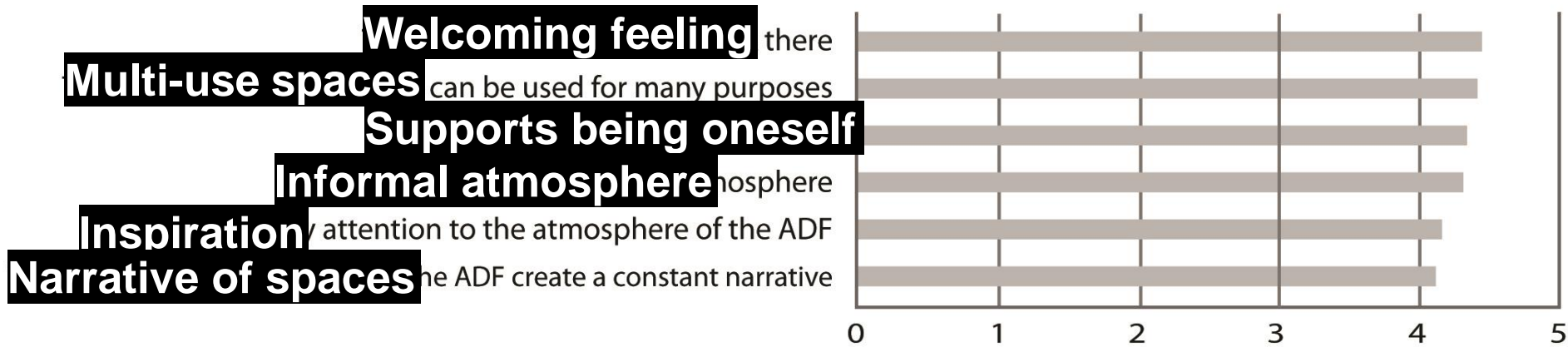
- **6T model is experience-based usability framework that aims to integrate the different, often overlapping, elements of user experience of a place into one holistic model**

T-concept	Area of concern	Topics
Tune	Atmosphere	Sensory environment and cognitive symbols
Tempo	Time	Use of time, sense of time and rhythm, history
Task	Functionality	Modifiability and support of activities and performance
Tie	Familiarity	Learnability and ease of use, memorability
Tale	Story	Continuity and consistency of the story and narrative, visibility of history
Theme	Meaning	Support of users' identity and values

Adapted from Nenonen & Kojo, 2013; Tähtinen et al., forthcoming

RESULTS: Elements of user experience that the ADF building should support

- The survey included six predicate questions addressing the necessary user experiences of the building
- Each of the predicate questions included 6 claims based on the 6T framework, consisting of 36 claims altogether



RESULTS: Spatial solutions and services supporting the user experience

<i>Experience</i>	<i>Function</i>	<i>Examples of supporting spatial solutions</i>
<i>Sense of welcome</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Attract people</i> • <i>Opens people up</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Consistently friendly doorbell-answering policy</i> • <i>Action can be seen right in the lobby</i> • <i>Availability of non-reservable spaces</i>
<i>Possibilities for multi-use of the building and spaces</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Suggest new ways of doing things</i> • <i>Support users' activities</i> • <i>Increase the use rate</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Different spaces for different functions</i> • <i>Spaces that can be modified according to different use purposes</i> • <i>Easily movable furniture (e.g., light or with wheels)</i> • <i>Use policy that allows the application of the space for different purposes</i>
<i>Permission to be oneself</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Enhance productivity and learning</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Spaces that enables informal interaction</i> • <i>No traditional office look; relaxing, home-like spaces</i> • <i>24/7 access</i>
<i>Informality and ease</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Attract people</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Open environment</i> • <i>Hot desks instead of private rooms or personal desks</i> • <i>Places that bring people together</i> • <i>Funny and playful decorative elements</i>
<i>Inspiration and facilitation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Inspire</i> • <i>Enhance learning</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Bright colours and cosy space solutions</i> • <i>Tone of instructions about the use of the space</i> • <i>Use of different materials and textures in decoration</i>
<i>Constant narrative of spaces</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Communicate purpose of existence of use</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Design reflects the aim of the place</i> • <i>Visually and verbally consistent space-use instructions</i> • <i>Use of similar furniture and colours</i> • <i>Displays of course outcomes, such as prototypes and posters</i>

Summary and future

- **User experience of ADF**

- Relates much to the social issues but also to spatial solutions and services: Open, accessible, friendly and home-like activity based places facilitating collaboration and interaction and communicating the activities and aim of the place
- Concrete suggestions to be applied in learning environments

- **6T-model**

- Part of process of developing a user experience based workplace usability method
- Can be applied when collecting and/or analysing place related user experience data
- The model will be further tested and developed..

- **Further analysis of the data**

