

Supporting Older Adults' Social Inclusion and Well-Being in Neighbourhoods: The Social Hub Model

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Abstract

In recent years, many Finnish cities and municipalities have aspired to develop services that support older adults' well-being and social inclusion. This study focuses on the Social Hub model, a local social innovation developed in the city of Tampere. Social hubs operate on a neighbourhood level, providing free-of-charge service coordination and counselling, group activities, and meeting places for social gatherings. This study aims to look at whether this kind of local innovation can support older adults' well-being and social inclusion. The sociomaterial perspective and multidimensional model of well-being (the having–doing–loving–being approach) provided theoretical and analytical guidelines to examine older adults' experiences and perceptions of social hubs. The qualitative interview data was collected among people living in service housing, senior housing, or ordinary housing in the proximity of the social hubs studied. Face-to-face and “go-along” interviews with 19 older adults aged between 57 and 96 were analysed with theory-driven content analysis. The results showed that the hubs are a valuable local resource for older adults, providing free services, accessible and appealing shared spaces, and activities that promote social well-being, physical activity, creativity, and autonomy. The hubs serve as important gathering points for older adults in the neighbourhood, fostering community-building among citizens residing in different types of housing. The results highlight the importance of acknowledging well-being as a multidimensional phenomenon. The Social Hub model provides one practical tool to support older adults' well-being and social inclusion by offering various kinds of resources and social and cultural activities.

Keywords

aging in community; having–doing–loving–being; HDLB model; older adults; Social Hub model; social inclusion; sociomateriality; suburban neighbourhoods; well-being services; well-being

1. Introduction

Developing age-friendly cities and supporting older adults to age in place have become global public and social policy goals (Buffel et al., 2012). Recently, the focus has increasingly shifted from the home to community-centric approaches (Ahn, 2017; Wiles et al., 2012). New concepts such as “aging in community” (AIC) emphasise and expand the understanding of place beyond the home to include the community and neighbourhood levels (Thomas & Blanchard, 2009). Previous research on models supporting AIC has explored community-dwelling facilities, retirement villages, the village model, and naturally occurring retirement communities (Grant, 2007; Greenfield et al., 2013; McDonough & Davitt, 2011; Parniak et al., 2022; Scharlach et al., 2012). In this study, we focus on a local social innovation, the Social Hub model, which is a local innovation developed to support community building at a neighbourhood level. We investigate older adults’ experiences and perceptions of social hubs in the frame of the “HDLB model” (i.e., the having–doing–loving–being approach; see Allardt, 1976; Hirvilammi & Helne, 2014). The study aims to assess whether and how this kind of local innovation can support older adults’ well-being and social inclusion.

There is some evidence of the connections between neighbourhood environments and older adults’ well-being (Besser et al., 2017; Yen et al., 2009). Older adults’ well-being and quality of life are related to the quality and depth of their social relationships and their engagement in neighbourhood social activities (Gardner, 2011; Grant, 2007). Furthermore, infrequent social contact with neighbours and a weak sense of “neighbourhood belonging” are associated with more loneliness among older adults (Nyyqvist et al., 2016). According to the literature, social inclusion may be promoted by overcoming physical and social barriers that prevent older adults from participating in their communities and accessing societal resources (Scharlach & Lehning, 2013). The material environment and its physical characteristics are particularly significant in this context. For instance, it has been found that the transportation infrastructure and accessibility to social connections and services are associated with enhanced social inclusion (Bigonnesse et al., 2018; Luoma-Halkola & Jolanki, 2021; Mahmood & Keating, 2012). There is also a growing drive to integrate digital solutions into well-being services and loneliness prevention (Czaja, 2017). Digitalisation may enrich older adults’ lives in multiple ways, but it can also widen the gap between digitally included and excluded older adults (Pirhonen et al., 2020). Neighbourhoods and communities that facilitate older adults’ social interaction and participation can help reduce health risks related to social isolation and loneliness (Courtin & Knapp, 2017; Coyle & Dugan, 2012). Taken together, previous research highlights the importance of addressing AIC and older adults’ social inclusion in the context of accessible living environments, community, local services, digital participation, and well-being.

In this study, we apply a sociomaterial perspective to study the well-being and social inclusion of older adults. This means that we take the stand that the social and material levels are inevitably related and mutually influential, as Orlikowski (2007, p. 1437) argues: “There is no social that is not also material, and no material that is not also social.” Recently, increasing importance has been given to applying sociomaterial perspectives in well-being research (Andrews et al., 2014; Duff, 2014; Fox & Powell, 2021). Fox and Powell (2021) note that, within the literature, addressing the relationship between spaces and well-being, a common distinction is made between the physical and social dimensions of geographical location. The authors argue that the distinction between material characteristics of spaces and the social effects arising from the individuals who occupy those spaces might create an artificial separation between what is considered “natural” (material) and “cultural” (social). As a result, one of these aspects—social or material—may receive

intentional or unintentional preference when examining interactions between spaces and well-being (Fox & Powell, 2021, p. 226). The sociomaterial perspective strives to avoid this dualism by acknowledging that well-being is not solely influenced by either social or material aspects, but rather by the interplay between them, meaning that a person's well-being is shaped by the dynamic interactions between social aspects (e.g., social interaction, relationships, community) and material aspects (e.g., physical environment, infrastructures, resources). There is only limited evidence available on the role of local well-being services in supporting older adults' well-being and social inclusion from a sociomaterial perspective. Our study adds to the literature by providing insight into a local well-being service innovation from this perspective. In the analysis proper we draw from the multidimensional conception of well-being, the HDLB model (Allardt, 1976; Hirvilammi & Helne, 2014), which offers a novel approach to well-being services research.

2. The Social Hub Model

Many Finnish cities and municipalities have aspired to develop service models that aim to support the well-being of older adults and facilitate social interaction (Ministry of the Environment, n.d.). These efforts have been prompted by a health and social care reform that transfers responsibility for healthcare, social welfare, and rescue services from municipalities to well-being services counties. Municipalities remain responsible for primary health promotion, whereas the newly-formed counties will provide secondary and tertiary health promotion (Agerholm et al., 2023; Sote-uudistus, 2022). This study focuses on the Social Hub model (*Lähtötori-malli* in Finnish) developed in the city of Tampere. These social hubs are funded by the public sector and produced jointly by the well-being services county of Pirkanmaa, the city of Tampere, and non-profit organisations.

In the city of Tampere, social hubs provide free-of-charge service coordination and counselling, activities such as chair exercising, handicrafts, games, singing groups, and other community events including concerts and art exhibitions. Most hubs also provide restaurant and cafeteria services. Activities are organised by professional "hub staff," including coordinators and physiotherapists, or by volunteers or representatives of non-profit organisations. The hubs are usually open weekdays from 9 AM to 3 PM all year round. Spaces at the hubs include lobbies with seating areas, meeting rooms for group activities, and restaurant and cafeteria areas. There are also rooms for service coordination and meetings with staff. Free newspapers and computer use are available. In total, there are 13 hubs in the city of Tampere, located in the city centre and the suburbs. In this project, we studied three hubs in suburban neighbourhoods. The size of the buildings where the social hubs were located varied. Each hub had a large meeting room with the capacity for 50–85 people and smaller meeting rooms for 10–20 people. Buildings, meeting areas, and surrounding environments were accessible. Lobbies and yard areas were spacious with wide footpaths and several seating areas. All studied hubs operate within the premises of service housing where service coordination and counselling, group activities, social gatherings, and restaurant and cafeteria services are produced by a non-profit organisation. All studied hubs offer hairdressing services that are produced by private entrepreneurs and one of the hubs also offers a chiropodist service.

The hubs are intended to support older adults to continue to live meaningful and independent lives in their living environments and to prevent social exclusion and the need for stronger services. The Social Hub model combines social and welfare services, group activities, and social gatherings and is produced in cooperation with different sectors, making it a unique social innovation worthy of examination.

3. Theoretical Framework: The HDLB model

We structured our analysis around a multidimensional model of well-being: the HDLB model (see Table 1 for an overview). This model is based on Allardt's (1976) theory of well-being, according to which well-being is composed of the three welfare dimensions of having, loving, and being. The dimension "having" refers to the need for basic material and economic resources. "Loving" refers to a longing for connective social relations with others and "being" refers to a sense of autonomy, self-actualisation, and wholeness. Hirvilammi and Helne (2014) have further elaborated on Allardt's original model and added a fourth dimension: "doing," which refers to the need to engage in meaningful activities such as hobbies. While Allardt regarded "doing" as part of "being," the distinction made by Hirvilammi and Helne (2014) emphasises human activities as a source of well-being. Allardt's theory was very much ahead of its time in recognising the impact of environmental factors on well-being. Helne and Hirvilammi (2015, p. 172) also underline the importance of understanding well-being not only as an interpersonal phenomenon but also as a connectedness to the physical environment and non-human entities. Together, the four dimensions of well-being make up the HDLB model.

Table 1. The HDLB model.

Having	Doing	Loving	Being
Material & economic resources	Hobbies	Local communities	Sense of autonomy
Housing & transportation	Social & political action	Society	Creativity
Natural resources	Education & learning	Family & friends	Self-actualisation
	Nature activities	Other species & nature	Physical & mental health

Allardt's framework was originally designed for survey use, whereas Hirvilammi and Helne were concerned with developing a model of ecosocial well-being that strives to identify the interdependencies between personal well-being and social and ecological systems. In aging research, Allardt's theory has been used to study older adults' mobility (Hjorthol et al., 2010), unmet activity needs and well-being in later life (Nordbakke & Schwanen, 2015), and aging in Norwegian communities (Blekesaune & Haugen, 2018). The HDLB model has not been previously used in aging studies. Helne and Hirvilammi (2022) have studied young unemployed adults' discourse on well-being by adapting the HDLB model to the analysis and Obeng et al. (2023) have used the HDLB model to interpret well-being outcomes of nature-based interventions for young people in precarious situations.

Neither Allardt (1976) nor Hirvilammi and Helne (2014) have discussed aging and the changing needs and life situations that might emerge in later life. Blekesaune and Haugen (2018) have acknowledged this issue and utilised Allardt's well-being theory by adapting different dimensions (having–loving–being) to better fit older adults' lives. This was done by shifting the focus to aging and the changing needs and life situations of older individuals. Blekesaune and Haugen link the dimension "having" to older adults' access to resources and facilities within their living environment. The authors relate the dimension "loving" to older adults' experiences of attachment, belonging, and social relationships. Blekesaune and Haugen note that many older adults do not participate in the workforce, which is why older individuals need to find new venues for self-actualisation ("being"; Blekesaune & Haugen, 2018, pp. 234–235). Retiring from work might increase the meaning of other activities such as hobbies and volunteering, which is why these kinds of leisure activities are highlighted in our analysis through the dimension "doing." Hirvilammi and Helne (2014) also highlight the connectedness to the physical environment and non-human entities, which is why we analyse the dimension "loving" not only

as older adults' experiences of social relationships with other people but also as connectedness to material surroundings. Following the work of Blekesaune and Haugen (2018) and adapting the HDLB model to fit older adults' everyday lives, we have used the HDLB model as an analytical tool to study older adults' perceptions and experiences of the social hubs in Tampere and to find answers to the question of whether and how social hubs can support older adults' well-being and social inclusion.

4. Materials and Methods

4.1. Participants

We conducted thematic interviews with older adults ($N = 19$) living in three suburbs of Tampere. Fifteen participants were female and four were male, ranging in age from 57 to 96 years. All participants lived alone. Twelve participants lived in service housing, five in ordinary housing, and two in senior housing. In Finland, service housing refers to housing that provides on-site services (e.g., daytime personal care and meal services) and accommodation. Senior housing refers to a residential building that offers rental or ownership apartments specifically designed for older adults. Unlike service housing, senior housing complexes do not typically have on-site staff or services. In this study, the service housing units were located in the same buildings as the social hubs. Senior housing units were located in the proximity of the social hubs. An overview of the participants is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Overview of the participants.

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Housing type: service/senior/ordinary housing	Social hub ($N = 3$)
Leena	73	Female	senior	Hub-1
Jaakko	69	Male	service	Hub-1
Ismo	57	Male	senior	Hub-1
Eero	70	Male	service	Hub-1
Irma	72	Female	service	Hub-1
Toini	87	Female	service	Hub-1
Alma	68	Female	ordinary	Hub-2
Anna	81	Female	ordinary	Hub-2
Elsa	85	Female	ordinary	Hub-2
Viola	77	Female	service	Hub-2
Roosa	79	Female	ordinary	Hub-2
Sylvi	76	Female	service	Hub-2
Hilja	77	Female	ordinary	Hub-2
Kaija	78	Female	service	Hub-2
Elisa	86	Female	service	Hub-3
Saara	96	Female	service	Hub-3
Vuokko	86	Female	service	Hub-3
Laila	92	Female	service	Hub-3
Eino	92	Male	service	Hub-3

The participants were recruited in collaboration with the hubs' service provider (Sointu Senioripalvelut). We delivered a presentation about the research and collected a list of people interested in participating. We then contacted all participants to arrange interviews. Before the interviews, the participants received information about the project and the voluntary nature of the research. They also received a data protection report and signed an informed consent form. Ethical approval for the study was granted by the Academic Ethics Committee of Tampere University.

4.2. Interviews

Thematic face-to-face interviews were conducted in the participants' homes or on the premises of the social hubs. The themes covered social relationships, perceptions of living environment and services, everyday routines, and use of technology. The interview themes were based on the ideas coming from the multidimensional Alsola Research Project 2021–2022. The Alsola project studied loneliness and social isolation from the perspective of social psychology, gerontology, architecture, and technology. The themes were chosen based on the research objective to gain a rich understanding of older adults' everyday lives and living environments. The interview guide is presented in the Supplementary File. The interviews lasted between 31 and 238 minutes and were audio recorded and transcribed. One of the transcripts covered only parts of the interview due to the poor quality of the recording.

Go-alongs were conducted after the face-to-face interviews. They lasted between 20 and 90 minutes and were conducted up to three times based on the participants' interests. The route and length of the walks were decided by the participants. We mostly walked outside along streets and in parks, but sometimes only in indoor spaces. Field notes were taken during the interviews. We also collected additional data by photographing our observations and places that were meaningful for the participants. The field notes and photographs were transcribed into ethnographic field diaries. In this study, we used the data from the face-to-face interviews and the field diaries. Most of the photographs were taken elsewhere in the neighbourhood, not in the social hubs, and therefore were not included in this analysis. All interviews were conducted by the first three authors of this article.

4.3. Method of Analysis

To organise and make sense of the data, we conducted a theory-driven content analysis based on the HDLB model (Krippendorff, 2004). The data was organised with Nvivo. In the first round of the coding process, all descriptions of the hubs were searched from the data. In the second round, the descriptions were identified and coded into four categories: "having," "doing," "loving," and "being." After coding, the transcripts were transferred to Excel where they were organised into a table of contents following the categories of the HDLB model to check the coherence of the coding. This process allowed us to systematically go through the data.

5. Findings

The findings are structured around the HDLB model and illustrated by extracts from the data. The names appearing in the extracts are pseudonyms and the letter "I" refers to the interviewer. The extracts were translated from Finnish into English by the authors. Some excerpts are condensed for readability. Omitted

text is marked with an ellipsis (...). In some places, the authors have added information to clarify the context of the talk. These explanations are given in square brackets.

5.1. Resources and Accessible Spaces (“Having”)

The interviewees extensively described the services and activities available at the social hubs. The hubs were something that the participants *had* in their living environment, contributing to the dimension “having.” Below, Viola refers to the different supervised activities available and stresses that this is not common in other residential settings. Similar remarks were also made by other participants:

Viola: ...so yes, we have all kinds of supervised activities here, which you wouldn't have in an apartment block or a detached house.

One advantage of the hubs discussed in the interviews and go-alongs was that they were conveniently located within walking distance, meaning there was no need to travel to the city centre, as Roosa describes:

Roosa: The social hub offers lots of, like, culture. I was just looking at the programme for November and there are art exhibitions and music and so—when you live nearby, I'm not the sort of person who would go to the city centre to a concert, a bit too lazy to go to the movies or anywhere—so this is really nice because it's all so nearby, and all the events are during the daytime.

Both Viola, who lives in service housing, and Roosa, who lives in ordinary housing, describe the hubs as a local resource that brings value to the neighbourhood and enables cultural experiences, for instance. Similar comments were also made by other participants. Many of them appreciated the proximity of the hubs and having access to face-to-face services and counselling on weekdays.

One important material and spatial feature was the easy accessibility of the hubs and their immediate environment, as highlighted in Jaakko's remark:

Jaakko: This is a great place in terms of environment.

I: Yeah. Do you also mean the location or what's around here?

Jaakko: I mean the surroundings that you can easily move around.

Some negative comments related to the built environment were made during the go-alongs. A few participants said they had difficulty crossing doorsteps with mobility aids. Those with mobility difficulties, such as Saara, who lives in service housing, expressed frustration at the physical challenges that hampered her movement at the hub. Some also referred to slippery pavements around the hubs in the wintertime. The findings related to the dimension “having” highlight the importance of ensuring a physically accessible and safe environment within and around the hubs to cater to the needs of older adults with differing abilities.

5.2. Activities and Involvement (“Doing”)

All participants were involved in a varied range of group activities offered by the hubs. The frequency of participation ranged from daily to once or a couple of times a week. Participants living in service housing tended to visit the hubs almost every weekday, whereas most of those living in senior or ordinary housing visited less frequently, one to three times a week.

The opportunity to continue old hobbies through the hubs’ organised activities held significant importance for some participants. The hubs provided a space for participants to continue their long-standing interests and maintain a sense of continuity in their lives. Many expressed a desire to engage in familiar activities such as gymnastics, singing, or physical exercise. Laila talked about keeping up her regular gymnastic exercises:

Laila: ...and what I do is gymnastic exercises. There, that’s my hobby.

I: Where does that happen, where do you exercise?

Laila: Usually in the big hall [of the hub], on the first floor...

I: So this is something you like to do, something you’ve done regularly?

Laila: Yes, right, really since I was a child.

Participants also described their involvement in self-organised groups. These groups, such as TV clubs, knitting circles, and exercise groups, connected older adults based on their shared interests and abilities. Below, Jaakko talks about the TV club and his role as facilitator in the club:

Jaakko: Yes, for us living here, for them I’m a kind of “Jack of all trades,” I switch on the television and search these things [programmes] on the internet. We’ve watched together, Matti, Annikki, Aune, and Tuija. We watch something on the telly every day.

I: Right, so what kind of programmes do you show them?

Jaakko: I search them on the internet.

I: Okay. And how did this habit start?

Jaakko: It just came [laughs]. I don’t know.

I: Yeah.

Jaakko: The others don’t know how to use them, so that’s why they come to me.

Similar descriptions of self-organised groups were found in other interviews as well, indicating the participants’ enthusiasm to engage in activities of mutual interest. Often these groups had grown out of activities taking place in the hubs and, in this sense, formed a natural extension of the hubs’ activities. Some participants said

they would have wanted to see the hubs open their doors during weekends. Self-organised groups seemed to satisfy this need by providing a forum for get-togethers outside the hubs' opening hours.

Participants took an active part in both organised and self-organised groups but expressed a preference for on-site activities over virtual groups. Toini expressed her frustration at the technical difficulties she encountered in online groups:

Toini: ...but now these [singing groups], they're quite poor because often the programme comes through the television and there's so much interference, it can be blank for a long time....Like yesterday, we had this programme and it's impossible to join in when it keeps breaking up.

Virtual groups lacked the same appeal as face-to-face groups, and Toini was not the only participant to report problems with online connections. Analytically, online activities can be categorised as both "having" and "doing." The hubs provide access to computers and online groups, contributing to the dimension "having," where digital devices can be understood as a material resource supporting older adults' digital participation. Digital devices also play a role in hub activities ("doing") as part of the hubs' programme was organised virtually during the data collection. According to our analysis, the participants preferred face-to-face participation over online groups, indicating that sharing the same physical space affords stronger social connections and a greater sense of physical presence.

5.3. Social Relations and Connectedness ("Loving")

Social interaction played a crucial role in the participants' lives. The various social encounters and activities offered by the hubs allowed participants to engage in meaningful interactions. In the field diaries, hubs were described as an "arena where one can meet friends." According to our interpretation, shared spaces were important for meeting the need for connectedness. Hubs served as common living rooms in the neighbourhoods, facilitating social contacts and providing a practical way for older adults living in service housing to connect with those living in ordinary or senior housing. Participants reported forming new connections with people they met in the hubs' environments, as described by Viola:

Viola: ...and of course you get outsiders here as well. For this morning, when we had our "move your joints" group, there were five of us in total, two of us, and three "from outside." So now I know these people as well because we've played *mölkky* [a yard game played in Finland] in the summertime....But it's nice when we get outsiders. That's how you get to know them. I don't know at all where they live; apparently somewhere nearby.

I: Right, so these social contacts, they are mainly in the shared spaces?

Viola: Yes, these that we have.

These new friendships seemed to contribute to a sense of belonging and enrich the participants' social lives.

We found that participants met other people in shared spaces even though they lived in the same service block or as neighbours in senior or ordinary housing. Visiting other residents' apartments was extremely rare.

Although this can be attributed, in part at least, to Finnish culture where neighbours tend to interact mainly in public spaces, the result emphasises the meaning of shared communal spaces where people can easily meet each other. Below, Sylvi underlines the importance of interacting with other people in the hub's lobby. The dynamic nature of the community ensures that there is always someone to engage with:

Sylvi: The chairs are always full in the evening and we talk and chat about all sorts of things. Sometimes you get different people so that if someone is missing there is always someone else. But that you get to see other people and exchange a few words, that's a surprisingly big thing. Sometimes I sit and listen to them talking and it's nice just to listen. Then they will argue about something or, you know, you can say it's normal living.

Hilja also explained how social connections in the hub and upcoming events can help reduce feelings of loneliness:

Hilja: ...it's nowadays, this loneliness. And when you spend a lot of time alone, sometimes your imagination starts running wild and makes things up, things that are not at all hard but your head makes them hard when you're alone and thinking. We humans are like that. But thank God there's this social hub and these meetings at our clubroom where I can meet people once a week. So that there's something.

The dimension "loving" refers to individuals' longing for social relations, not only with other people but also with other species and nature. In our data, the presence of familiar environments, memories related to landscapes, nature, and aesthetic appeal had a positive influence on participants' connection to their surroundings. One of the studied hubs was located next to a lake, which was an important and familiar landscape for many people, loaded with memories from the past.

Our results related to the dimension "loving" highlight the importance of the hubs for social interaction. The analysis emphasises the role of social engagement, the formation of new friendships, and the emotional connection that participants establish with their material environment.

5.4. Autonomy and Self-Actualisation ("Being")

Participants explained that they were involved in the hubs' activities based on their own interests, motivations, and schedules, indicating a sense of personal agency and choice. Most of them talked about making choices as to which activities to attend and which not to attend. As there is no obligation to participate and no fees are charged, the hubs can facilitate older adults' independence and autonomy. Vuokko exemplified this freedom of choice by describing how she had started to make her own meals at home rather than use the hub's restaurant services:

Vuokko: I used to go out to eat for a very long time, and then I just felt that I needed to do something. I've always been, let's say, active, I haven't been able to stay still and do nothing for very long at all. I mean, I have nothing to do here and I don't have my own garden, so I decided that, and now I've been making my own meals for more than two years.

Based on our analysis, self-organised groups contributed to supporting older adults' autonomy and self-actualisation by providing a platform for smaller groups to come together based on their shared interests and skills. For example, the handicraft groups, both supervised and self-organised, provided opportunities for creativity and self-expression. Activities such as knitting or crafting fostered creativity and allowed participants to maintain and develop their personal skills. The handicrafts produced were often put on display at the hubs as a concrete reminder of shared activities. Irma remarked during her go-along interview that the handicrafts hanging on the corridor walls brought the place to life. Some participants described how they had volunteered to organise community events such as rummage sales. Others talked about assisting in group activities; Viola mentioned how she had helped the tutor of the singing group by handing out songbooks. For most informants, taking on an active role and opportunities for self-actualisation played an important role in participation.

Another significant motivation for engaging in group activities, especially chair exercises and games, was the desire to maintain one's functional ability, remain physically active, and address the challenges associated with the aging body. Below, Jaakko talks about how activities like bingo and physical exercise helped him maintain his functional ability:

I: Right, so, are bingo and exercise group activities that you attend weekly?

Jaakko: Quite regularly. It sort of helps maintain your functional ability a bit when you go to play.

Participants actively pursued their interests and made choices that were aligned with their individual needs and preferences. Therefore, it can be argued that the hubs provide an environment that supports older adults' autonomy and self-actualisation ("being"), allowing them to explore their potential and remain physically active.

6. Discussion

The participants in our study regarded social hubs as valuable local resources that offer shared spaces for social encounters, facilitate interaction with one's social and material environment, provide activities that promote physical activity and creativity, and allow for independence in choosing when and how one wants to participate. The hubs were viewed as important community assets that contributed to the overall well-being of local neighbourhoods. The results highlight the significance of social and material aspects in understanding the meaning of the hubs for older adults living nearby.

The results concerning the dimension "having" underscore the importance of physical accessibility to services in the neighbourhood. This is in line with earlier findings on older adults' social inclusion and age-friendly living environments (Bigonnesse et al., 2018; Mahmood & Keating, 2012; Scharlach & Lehning, 2013). It is worth noting that socio-economic aspects were not prominently discussed in the interviews. This might indicate that in Finland, people are used to having access to public well-being services that are provided for a nominal fee or free of charge.

All participants took part in different kinds of *doings*, including activities organised by the hubs and self-organised groups. These activities contributed to the construction of daily routines and provided

opportunities for continuing existing hobbies and starting new ones. Meaningful and appealing activities also reduced the amount of time that people spent alone in their apartments, which for some meant feeling less lonely. Covid-19 accelerated the shift to virtual care and social support. The results of this study indicate that well-being services have social, spatial, and bodily meanings for older adults. Even though virtual connections can contribute to satisfying social and emotional needs (Czaja, 2017), our analysis points to the importance of physical face-to-face interactions. Similar findings were reported by Pirhonen et al. (2020).

One of the key findings of our study concerns the ability of social hubs to serve as gathering points for older adults living in the neighbourhood, fostering social interaction and community-building among older citizens residing in different types of housing. The hubs provide spaces where older adults can form meaningful social bonds and neighbourhood networks. Informal interactions and networks within places can be important for older adults' everyday lives and well-being (Gardner, 2011). By creating opportunities for connecting with others and meeting the needs related to the dimension "loving," social hubs help reduce social isolation and loneliness.

Our findings related to the dimension "being" highlight the active role of older adults as agents who are willing to participate in community activities and organise their groups and initiatives. The results underline the importance of autonomy, self-actualisation, and creativity in participation. Scharlach and Lehning (2013, p. 114) propose a developmental perspective on social inclusion for older adults, encompassing participation in activities that are valued throughout one's life, including non-labour-related contributions. Based on our study, social hubs can facilitate valuable opportunities for self-actualisation in old age by providing places for social participation. By actively engaging older adults, the hubs can better meet the diverse needs of the older population, leading to a more inclusive approach to social inclusion and AIC.

The results generally align with the literature on AIC (Blanchard, 2013; Thomas & Blanchard, 2009), to which we add that local well-being services can facilitate community-building in suburban neighbourhoods by offering a social and material environment that supports older adults' social inclusion and well-being. Developing new ways of involving older adults in the social life of cities is an important task for urban development (Buffel et al., 2012). The Social Hub model appears to be a promising model in supporting AIC, and it can also contribute to making suburban neighbourhoods good places to age.

While the findings of this study provide valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge some potential limitations. The sample size was relatively small, and the participants were white and predominantly female. This may limit the generalisability of the findings to more diverse populations of older adults. Additionally, data collection took place during the Covid-19 pandemic, which could have influenced the participants' experiences and perceptions. However, most of the social restrictions were lifted at the time of the interviews. Future research should aim to include a more diverse range of participants to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of older adults living in suburban neighbourhoods. In addition, it would be beneficial in future studies to collect systematic data on participants' health status and socio-economic background to gain a better understanding of the interaction between individual and social factors influencing well-being and social inclusion.

The HDLB model applied in the analysis was originally designed for survey use (Allardt, 1976), whereas Hirvilammi and Helne (2014) set out to develop a model of ecosocial well-being. In this study, the model

provided a framework for understanding the dimensions “having,” “doing,” “loving,” and “being” within the context of a local well-being service model. The HDLB model provided a useful tool to analyse the Social Hub model and AIC from a sociomaterial perspective. Even though the different dimensions of well-being can be analytically separated from the data, the dimensions and their sociomaterial characteristics need to be understood as intertwined in older adults’ everyday lives. For example, forming social relations (“loving”) takes place in physical space, where the characteristics of the space affect the formation of social ties, and social interaction affects how individuals engage with the material environment. In older adults’ everyday lives, material characteristics, such as accessibility of the place and close location of resources (“having”), play a crucial role in the formation of social ties (“loving”). Accessible and available places and material elements also affect activities (“doing”) and self-actualisation (“being”). For example, in Jaakko’s interview, where he talked about the TV club and his active role as a “Jack of all trades,” the interaction between social and material aspects was clearly pronounced. The material aspects, such as television and the shared space offered by the social hub, together with the social interaction taking place in the TV club can be seen as a sociomaterial practice, where material environment and resources affect social behaviour (the TV club); vice versa, the social interaction and decisions made in the TV club affect how the participants of the club engage with the environment and its material elements (e.g., TV). In the context of this study and the results, social hubs can be understood as networks of multiple human and non-human relations (Duff, 2014; Fox & Powell, 2021) that affect older adults’ well-being and social inclusion. More empirical research is needed on the relations between the dimensions of well-being to develop the HDLB model and its adaptations further.

7. Conclusions

Based on our analysis, we argue that social hubs have an important role in providing preventive care at a neighbourhood level and in supporting older adults’ social inclusion. The results provide valuable insights into the efforts of professionals and stakeholders to develop community-based models aimed at promoting the well-being of older adults. In conclusion, the findings of this study highlight the significance of social hubs as local resources that can support the well-being and social inclusion of older adults. Providing local well-being supporting services, fun and meaningful activities, and shared spaces for social interaction can promote aging in the community and foster the overall well-being and social inclusion of older adults.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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