USER PERSPECTIVE ON THE WEARING OF WOODEN FLOORS – CASES VIikki CHURCH AND KUOKKALA CHURCH

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ABSTRACT: The aim of this case study was to find out do users of two wooden churches consider wearing of the wooden floor as an aesthetic problem or not. And would they like to change the material of the floor to something else. The research was done using quantitative methods in a form of questionnaire, using both multiple choice and open questions. The study shows that users of the churches are satisfied with the wooden floors and marks of use on the floors do not disturb most of the respondents. Attitudes towards the wooden floors were positive.

KEYWORDS: Wooden floors, user research, wearing of a floor

1 BACKGROUND

When designing a wide solid wooden floor in a public building, wearing of the surface has to be taken in to consideration. Wearing is characteristic for wooden floors, still sometimes there is only a fine line between what is wearing and what soiling in people’s opinions. In discussions with the persons responsible of the maintenance in Viikki and Kuokkala churches in Finland it has occurred that these persons fear that the users of the church consider a worn floor as a soiled one and not aesthetically pleasant.

The hypothesis of this study is that wearing of the floors in the churches is not an aesthetic problem for the users. Besides that it is assumed that the users would not have any desire to change the material of the floors to something else than wood. The focus of the study was to survey the opinions of non-professionals.

Both churches in the study, Viikki, built in 2005 and designed by architect Samuli Miettinen, and Kuokkala, built in 2010 and designed by architect Anssi Lassila, are predominantly wooden. Spruce has been used throughout the church floor and the massive floor boards are radially sawn. [1, 2].

2 METHODS

Two research methods, case study and quantitative survey, was used in the study. As a method, quantitative survey was chosen because it is a good way to forecast attitudes of a bigger group of persons.

2.1 QUESTIONNAIRE FORM

In the questionnaire, seven questions concerned how the visitors of the church felt about the wooden floor. In addition, the participants were asked to tell how often they visited the church and to which age group they belonged to. The questionnaire form included lines for free commentaries. The questions handled following topics:

- How does the floor fit in the church,
- Do the respondents consider the floor beautiful,
- Are marks of the use on the floor disturbing,
- How does the floor function in the church?

2.1.1 Viikki Church

The questionnaire was carried out using paper forms that where left in the church entrance hall for a month. The personnel of the church were guided to tell about the research for the visitors of the church.

2.1.2 Kuokkala Church

In Kuokkala the questionnaire was carried out using an Internet form, though the questions were the same. The form was sent to the contact person of the church and he distributed it to the regular visitors of the church.

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3 RESULTS

3.1 QUESTIONNAIRE

Altogether 88 answers were received; 43 from Viikki Church and 45 from Kuokkala Church. 64 persons were female and 24 male. There was no significant difference between the opinions of people in the two churches. The majority of the respondents thought that the wood as a material fits well in the church and the floors were also considered beautiful. Figure 1 shows how the opinions were divided when asked about the present wooden floor material in the churches and Figure 2 presents how disturbing the marks of use are considered. Some of the respondents gave free comments in the questionnaire. Most of them were very positive about the wooden material. 80% of the respondents think that the wooden floor gave them a positive experience.

![Floor material suits the church floor](image1)

*Figure 1: Most of the respondents agreed that the wooden material suited the floors.*

![Marks of use do not disturb](image2)

*Figure 2: The marks of use on the floor were not considered as a problem.*

4 CONCLUSIONS

This study shows that users of the churches are satisfied with the wooden floors. When both churches have wooden walls and inner roofs, the respondents seemed to think that it is natural that the floor also is wooden.

Marks of use on the floor do not disturb most of the respondents, though sticks splitting here and there from the floor were considered as a problem. Still 80% of the users of the church wanted to keep the wooden floor material, so it can be said that the problem with wearing is not aesthetic, mainly functional.

This case-study states that the wearing of the wooden floors is not considered as something disturbing, as soil. In following researches it would be interesting to examine how much the material of the walls and inner roofs influence in the opinions of a worn wooden floor. For example would the results of this study have been the same if the walls had been concrete or painted.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Finnish Cultural Foundation has funded this work.

REFERENCES
