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**Multi-cultural perception towards happy homes: the case
of Iran and Malaysia
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Multi-cultural perception towards happy homes: the case of Iran and Malaysia

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Abstract

The traditional view that sees happiness as too subjective and vague to be included in national policy is disappearing. In other words, happiness is not just about something that every human being ultimately wants in life, as a concept is has moved across personal boundaries to the social realm. Beside common factors such as higher income, better health and social capital, the place that people live can contribute to their level of happiness. Considering the amount of time we usually spend in our homes, it seems that our living space and our perception towards our home, influence our feelings and emotions. Although there is research that has explored the relationship of happiness and homes, most recommend a standard way to measure happiness but fail to see the embedding context. However, how people feel and express themselves through their homes is a subjective experience that needs to be studied considering values, perceptions and intuitions. Thus, this research aims to investigate factors in our homes that stimulate happiness considering international variances. As the main indicator of individual happiness is how happy she/he feels, this research used a qualitative methodology to ask people whether they are happy with their homes. Two sets of semi-structured interviews were conducted with people in Iran and Malaysia asking questions regarding underpinning factors promoting or hindering core emotions leading to happiness. The gathered data were analysed qualitatively to create a list of stimuli of happiness related to homes for each country. The variance r similarities among the list formed a proper ground for analysing cultural impacts. The early findings revealed that happiness surrounding the home is created based on the social reality of a complex structure. In the Malaysian context, happiness and homes are linked much further to the emotional needs and the sense of belonging, but relate to the religion and cultural structure which drive and regulate their perception. In Iran, people are happier with their homes when they live with beloved ones and have a sense of ownership, a private cosy spot, a connection to nature, the opportunity to change and customise, the proximity to parents and siblings, and a pleasant neighbourhood. Iranian's perception towards a happy home is a free place that they can follow their own

rules and acts as a vehicle that enables them to achieve their goals in life. Therefore, the social and cultural context works hand in hand with the international differences in the perception and intuition of homes. These factors are important contributors to happiness or frustration. Moreover, the concept of happiness ought to be constructed based on human interactions with diverse metaphysics of ordinary social relations. This paper shows that future research should rely more on background and culture to demonstrate the vital role of the homes in nurturing people and happiness more deeply.