

An Analysis of Factors Influencing Residents' Happiness in Urban Neighborhoods Using the Ethnographic Method; Case Study: Darvazeh Ghar Neighborhood (Harandi), Tehran*

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ABSTRACT

Happiness, which stems from two components—overall life satisfaction and the experience of positive emotions throughout the day—is significantly influenced by individuals' attitudes and behaviors within their surrounding spatial context. Accordingly, the importance of the environment as a setting that fosters and nurtures joyful lives becomes increasingly evident. In this research, the Darvazeh Ghar neighborhood was selected for study on happiness, as studies indicate it occupies an underrepresented position in terms of happiness-related policies. One of the most influential factors on happiness is the environment and physical elements (architectural spaces). The present study aims to develop strategies that, through interventions in the spatial structure of the neighborhood, can pave the way for positive transformations in residents' social interactions, enhance their well-being and vibrancy, and ultimately break the vicious cycle of social issues and harms. The aim was to employ the urban ethnographic approach, one of the qualitative research methods, to investigate and understand the concept of happiness in the minds of Darvazeh Ghar residents and to identify the causes of their unhappiness. Subsequently, based on the knowledge derived from the theoretical foundations of the research and the findings obtained from ethnographic field studies, proposals were made on two levels. At the macro level, the scope of action encompasses the entire Darvazeh Ghar neighborhood, including goal-setting and policy development in the socio-cultural, physical-infrastructure, environmental-health, and economic empowerment domains. At the micro level, the southwestern section of the neighborhood, at the intersection of Shoosh and Khayyam Streets, was selected as the starting point for intervention due to its distinct population structure and unique social characteristics. Findings indicated that by focusing on improving the quality of life for women and children living in Darvazeh Ghar and creating settings conducive to experiencing joy and a sense of security, initial architectural interventions could be undertaken. These actions could empower these groups and, in the long term, facilitate happiness for all neighborhood residents by fostering environmental satisfaction and strengthening social bonds.

Keywords: Happiness, Environmental Satisfaction, Neighborhood, Darvazeh Ghar, Ethnography.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Public attitude assessment studies—such as the Gallup research¹ in 1979—demonstrate the central importance of happiness as one of the fundamental priorities of human societies. However, subsequent findings from the same institution in 2013 offer a contradictory image, indicating that Iranian citizens rank among the second-saddest populations globally. Since the 1970s, numerous studies have focused on the concept of happiness. Comparative analyses from 1977 to 2007 place Iran 56th among 97 countries (Minkov 2009). This trend continued in later years; in a 2016 survey, Iran ranked 157th out of 205 countries, and in 2017, 108th out of 155 countries (Samavati and Ranjbar 2018). In line with this, reports from the Iranian Psychological Association indicate a significant increase in depression rates in society, rising from 12% in 2011 to 21% in 2014. Moreover, research by the Ministry of Youth and Sports' Studies Center in 2012 found depression to be the most common psychological disorder among the younger generation (Mousazadeh and Mohammadi 2018). These statistics and behavioral observations confirm that the phenomenon of happiness in Iranian society has been in decline over time. The right to happiness—on par with the rights to life and liberty—is considered one of the three pillars of balanced human existence. The consequences of a lack of happiness encompass a wide range of problems, including depression, nervous disorders, apathy, social isolation, a lack of joy in children, and feelings of despair and hopelessness. The current scholarly consensus suggests that genetic factors may determine at most half of an individual's happiness level. The remaining 50%, however, is shaped by events, environmental circumstances, and conscious choices. This reveals the significant potential to enhance happiness levels through human intervention (Bock 2020). Thus, happiness is regarded as an essential need in contemporary societies, and its absence can lead to numerous societal challenges. Although economic and social variables play a significant role in the decline of happiness in Iran—a point well-

supported in various studies due to the inescapable connection between humans and their surroundings—one of the most influential factors in the feeling of happiness in living spaces is architecture and the physical environment. The design of space and the physical structure of living environments can play a key role in shaping or weakening individuals' sense of satisfaction and happiness.

In this study, the Darvazeh Ghar (Harandi) neighborhood in Tehran is selected as the case study, since the researcher's findings indicate that this area is in an unequal position in terms of access to opportunities for happiness, and its residents face serious deficiencies in this regard. Given that architecture is directly related to the quality of individuals' everyday lives, it bears an ethical and professional responsibility to utilize its spatial capacities to foster a sense of joy and satisfaction. This research aims to provide strategies for the physical regeneration of the neighborhood to enhance levels of happiness. It aims to create a platform that enhances social relationships, mitigates urban harm, and gradually helps the neighborhood recover from its critical condition.

Main Research Question

How can the values and capacities of architecture contribute to the creation and enhancement of happiness among the residents of the Darvazeh Ghar neighborhood?

Sub-Questions

What are the factors contributing to unhappiness among the residents of Darvazeh Ghar, and what negatively affects their quality of life?

How is happiness defined by the residents of the Darvazeh Ghar neighborhood?

2. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

In this section, a review of previous studies presents the physical and spatial factors associated with the concept of happiness in urban spaces, as identified by researchers, in Table 1.

Table 1. Review of Studies on Identifying Components of Happiness in Urban Spaces

Researcher	Physical Components of Happiness	Year of Study
Jacobs	Necessity of mixed land use, adequate population density, and activity diversity	1961
Golkar	Legibility, sense of time, permeability, movement, land-use mix and form, public realm, safety, and security	2007
Foroutan, San'atgar, Kakhaki & Rezaei	Physical and visual permeability, diversity, flexibility, legibility, environmental quality for activities, security	2013
Khosravi & Bahrami	Comfort and ease, security, wayfinding and legibility, accessibility and permeability, attractiveness and interaction	2014
Chapman	Diversity, quality public space, shopping, tourism, pedestrian mobility, and leisure	2015
Vaziri, Hajlou & Karamati	Availability of amenities and facilities, spatial desirability, ease of access, land-use diversity, safety, usability in various weather conditions	2015

Researcher	Physical Components of Happiness	Year of Study
Sarvar, Salahi, Sarikhan Biglou & Mobaraki	Public and natural spaces, adaptability, spatial coherence, mixed use, density, and safety	2017
Didehban, Momeni & Niknam	Diversity, attractiveness, desirable views and landscapes, density, identity	2016
Nahavandi, Zabetian, Pourahmad & Kheiraldin	Safety, diversity, environmental quality, enclosure, permeability, accessibility	2017
Samavati & Ranjbar	Environmental elements, pedestrian-oriented spaces, spatial coherence and connectivity, liveliness index, sense of safety, spatial memorability	2018
Mousazadeh & Mohammadi	Sense of pride toward the street, sense of safety, memorability, beauty, liveliness, presence, night-time safety, wayfinding, sense of intimacy, green space quality, façade desirability, waste management, street dynamism, land-use compatibility, restricted vehicle access	2018
Ouraki, Rezaei, Mobaraki & Akbarian Ronizi	Use of cheerful and natural colors, creation of spaces for conversation on sidewalks (e.g., seating areas with flexible furniture), reinforcement of social dimensions, spaces for social attraction and interaction, equitable distribution of amenities and services, and universal access to spaces	2019

The distinction of the present research from previous studies lies in its perspective on the concept of happiness. In this study, an ethnographic approach was employed to examine the meanings and factors contributing to happiness and unhappiness in the minds of residents in the study area. Environmental satisfaction—emphasizing the enhancement of perceived safety—has been identified as a fundamental factor in promoting residents' happiness within the neighborhood. The aim was to establish a foundation for long-term happiness for all residents of the neighborhood. Therefore, planners and designers can play an effective role in fostering happiness among users by employing an ethnographic approach and analyzing the components of happiness and unhappiness in their audience's minds.

3. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

In psychological definitions of happiness, happiness can be regarded as a positive emotional response that arises following the encounter with pleasant stimuli and events. It is also defined as a pleasurable experience resulting from the realization of personal hopes and expectations (Eysenck 1996).

3.1. Components of Happiness

Which aspects of life are associated with a stable sense of satisfaction and happiness? Researchers, through studies that measure individuals' life satisfaction, have concluded that six primary factors (aside from innate temperament) significantly explain variations in happiness levels among individuals: marriage, quality of social relationships, employment and job satisfaction, perceived physical health, religious and spiritual beliefs, quality of governance and governmental structures (Bock 2010).

One of the key factors in increasing happiness is

the ability to establish and maintain stable and effective human relationships. Close and intimate relationships with family members and a small but strong circle of friends are recognized as significant contributors to increased happiness (Shahidi 2009). Numerous studies show that love, friendship, and positive social interactions significantly enhance human happiness, an outcome that is predictable for most people. Both introverts and extroverts report that being around others increases their sense of joy and satisfaction. Based on this, research has shown that the type and quality of human relationships have more influence on happiness than many other factors. Social groups and institutions are also identified as effective sources of human connection, contributing to happiness. Some researchers have found that even monthly participation in social gatherings (e.g., clubs) or volunteer activities can boost happiness as much as doubling one's income (Bock 2010). High-quality human relationships not only increase happiness but also contribute to physical and mental well-being. A strong and positive relationship between happiness and religion or spirituality has been confirmed in many studies. Those who adhere to religious beliefs generally report higher levels of happiness than those who do not. One of the significant aspects of spirituality that plays a vital role in enhancing happiness is the concept of forgiveness (West 2008). The importance of religious belief as a potential source of happiness lies in its ability to provide individuals with a sense of purpose and meaning, thereby rendering life and activities valuable. Additionally, two studies have shown that groups who deliberately changed their lifestyle to pursue values such as environmental conservation and simplicity experienced greater happiness. In contrast, from a public standpoint, a lack of purpose and meaning in personal activities can render life meaningless, resulting in lower self-

confidence and a diminished internal engagement with everyday life (Bock 2010). Scientific research suggests that various environmental factors, including climatic conditions and geographic location, have a significant impact on individuals' psychological state and mood. Features such as green spaces, open areas, and moderate weather can strengthen positive emotions in humans (Shahidi 2009). Moreover, the availability of welfare amenities also plays a significant role in promoting positive mental states, particularly happiness (Carr 2006).

Physical condition and health status are directly related to an individual's sense of happiness. A person's perception of their health has a greater impact on happiness than medical test results, since the personal concept of health may include factors such as stress, social isolation, or depression, which often lack obvious physical symptoms (Bock 2010). Leisure time is identified as a factor that directly influences individuals' happiness levels (Shahidi 2009). Additionally, research has shown a positive correlation between educational attainment and happiness among low-income groups (Carr 2006). Although no direct studies have been conducted on the long-term impact of successful early education programs on participants' happiness, evidence suggests that children who are effectively trained to pursue better goals, earn higher incomes, commit fewer crimes, avoid addiction, and face fewer career challenges generally experience greater life satisfaction. Also, those who avoid exposure to social violence (such as theft, assault, or shootings) due to low crime rates typically suffer from fewer mental health problems. For many children, preschool programs can be a decisive factor in their future success, significantly influencing educational choices, social interactions, and even high school graduation. Implementing programs that provide equal opportunities for children from low- and middle-income families can lead to reduced crime and lower high school dropout rates. Fortunately, the possibility of achieving such outcomes still exists, and millions of children could be given the opportunity for a happier and more fulfilling life (Bock 2010).

Studies indicate that not only does happiness increase job satisfaction, but happier individuals are also more likely to enjoy their work. Those who become unemployed for various reasons often face long-term psychological issues, a large portion of which stems from loss of self-confidence and concern over diminished social status and respect (Bock 2010).

Research on the benefits of happiness has yielded promising results. One encouraging finding is that sustainable happiness not only strengthens social relationships but also improves the well-being of others. Otherwise, if happiness stemmed from exploiting others or disregarding their needs, it could not be regarded as a desirable social goal. The findings clearly show that in an ideal world, those who experience the highest levels of happiness are

typically more helpful to others and derive satisfaction from such prosocial behavior (Bock 2010).

3.2. Role of Architectural Intervention in Creating and Enhancing Happiness

After examining the factors that influence the formation of the sense of happiness in human beings—and considering the impact of environmental context on human life at both conscious and unconscious levels—the need to align happiness-enhancing factors with the potential capacities of architecture and environmental design becomes evident. Following extensive studies and research on the concept of happiness and its dimensions, and deriving reliable theoretical findings regarding its contributing factors, it was concluded that applying these findings at the local level could lead to improved visual quality of the environment and heightened perceived liveliness among residents. It appears that an architectural approach aiming to provide a basis for creating and reinforcing the sense of happiness should possess the following features:

Creating a sense of security and safety in architectural spaces through appropriate design; ensuring equal access to facilities for all social groups and strata, particularly minorities, through inclusive environmental design; attending to individual differences and creating flexible spaces that users can control; providing multiple options for space usage; incorporating natural and ecological elements such as green spaces and water features that help reinforce the human-nature connection; designing spaces that strengthen the sense of belonging and social connection among residents; encouraging the use of the five senses for deeper engagement with space and sensory pleasure; designing educational spaces that fulfill both educational and enjoyable roles in daily life.

It should be noted that although the aforementioned methods seem reliable and reasonable, establishing principles for achieving happiness without examining the meanings it holds in the minds of the users of that architecture would result only in superficial pleasures and happiness. Thus, due to the need to create a meaningful link between the theoretical dimension and the community under study—and to avoid separating the theoretical framework from the context of action—it was decided, by considering the social dimension of the proposed issue, to experience and sense life in the Darvazeh Ghar neighborhood from within, and to view the lives and world of its people as an insider. Because the goal of this research is not merely to bring joy but to create the foundation for happiness among the people of Darvazeh Ghar, the residents themselves and their needs and desires must play a central role in the process of intervention and in approaching happiness. Therefore, it is necessary to align the factors obtained from happiness studies and theoretical findings with the data derived from observations and interviews, so that the

future theoretical direction of the research can be shaped. Following this process, based on empirical investigations and lived experiences in the target neighborhood, it was concluded that the happiness of the people of Darvazeh Ghar stems from their satisfaction with their lives, and that the prerequisite for achieving happiness is creating a sense of life satisfaction and environmental well-being. As a result, it was deemed necessary to study the literature related to satisfaction and its contributing factors to shape the theoretical framework of the research, aiming to achieve happiness by fostering life satisfaction.

3.3. Happiness and Life Satisfaction (Positive Well-Being)

One effective method for achieving and increasing happiness in individuals is cultivating a sense of life satisfaction. This feeling is defined as a cognitive and emotional response to environmental factors, meaning that when needs are fulfilled, the individual experiences happiness and satisfaction. Residents' satisfaction in a city is, on the one hand, a reflection of environmental, social, and economic conditions (King 2008), and on the other hand, can help predict conditions such as public health (Lamnek 2010). Satisfaction is not a fixed or predetermined phenomenon that can be easily measured; rather, it represents individuals' judgments during specific timeframes, reflecting their personal experiences. As individuals enhance their emotional awareness and gain new emotional experiences—often through the consequences of predictive errors—their emotional repertoire expands, leading to improved mental health (Rahimi and Asadi 2025).

Satisfaction, as an indicator of individuals' achievement of desirable goals, reflects the gap between subjective expectations regarding service quality and what is received (Jalilian, Moradi, and Azari 2011). In essence, satisfaction is an emotional and cognitive reaction to the environment, during which individuals express their needs, and when these needs are fulfilled, they experience happiness and satisfaction. According to Durkheim, life satisfaction depends on the type, intensity, and quality of an individual's social relationships. Social relationships affect life satisfaction in two ways: first, by fulfilling emotional, cognitive, and even financial needs, they increase satisfaction; second, by regulating personal desires, they prevent limitless and unfulfillable aspirations. In Durkheim's view, when there is a mismatch between individual needs and available resources, a person cannot enjoy life and may even be at risk (Gorosi and Shamseddini Motlagh 2018).

Researchers emphasizing the impact of the environment on satisfaction regard this index as a measure of environmental change. The environment in which individuals live comprises a set of diverse elements, encompassing both physical and social aspects. This environment ranges from large-scale areas, such as neighborhoods, to smaller spaces, like

the rooms in which individuals reside. The physical environment can have a substantial impact on individuals' satisfaction with their lives.

3.4. Well-being, Environmental Satisfaction, and Quality of Life

Quality of life, as a comprehensive concept, encompasses both objective and subjective aspects. Its subjective dimension refers to the level of individual satisfaction, while the objective element relates to the actual living conditions of individuals. Some scholars believe that a significant part of the aim dimension of quality of life depends on environmental characteristics and an individual's residential situation. Therefore, the quality of the living environment can be considered a key aspect of this concept's objective nature. In particular, satisfaction with the place of residence is recognized as one of the main components of quality of life (Potter and Cantatero 2006). The living place has profound impacts on individuals' health and well-being, and the interaction of environmental and social factors also influences social welfare. These factors include elements such as climate, geographical features, the quality of natural resources, and lifestyles. In such spaces, goods, services, and social support are exchanged and transferred, and the type and intensity of these exchanges can affect individual satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Urban studies experts have introduced various indicators for evaluating satisfaction with the living environment. These indicators include attention to appropriate pre-development activities, focus on the visual order of the environment, use of mixed land use—both in terms of usage type and age diversity of buildings—emphasis on the importance of streets and permeability of urban fabric (meaning the use of smaller urban blocks), social mixing, spatial flexibility, social interaction, high standards of hygiene according to accepted health standards, access to valuable and accessible health services for all residents, suitable physical quality of the environment, housing, creation of healthy spaces and active and meaningful neighborhoods. Moreover, the fulfillment of each citizen's basic needs, the presence of appropriate social relationships, a stable and self-sufficient economy, diversity of cultural activities, vibrancy, identity, control, access to opportunities, creativity and joy, authenticity and meaning, public and social life, and self-reliance are considered other significant components (Hajinejad, Rafieann, and Zamani 2011).

3.5. Neighborhood Satisfaction

The neighborhood, as a fundamental unit of the environment, is a place where people's social lives take shape. This space simultaneously possesses both social and physical dimensions, including residential areas where many daily and essential activities, such as shopping, recreation, and social interactions with

others, occur (Forrest and Kearns 2001). Factors influencing neighborhood residents' satisfaction can be divided into two dimensions: social and physical. On the one hand, the neighborhood's cultural and social dimensions, directly related to collective activities and the specific cultural characteristics of each neighborhood, play a prominent role in residents' satisfaction. On the other hand, the neighborhood's physical quality—such as the absence of urban hazards and easy access to services—has a significant impact on residents' feelings of satisfaction. Overall, the social quality of the neighborhood in ensuring individual satisfaction outweighs its physical quality. In addition, the neighborhood's physical characteristics—such as access to urban services and the level of urban hazards—directly affect individuals' satisfaction. Specifically, better access to services increases satisfaction, while the presence of urban hazards can negatively impact this perception. Some researchers believe that poor environmental quality, limited access to urban amenities and facilities, and inadequate security are among the main factors affecting residents' satisfaction levels (Woldoff 2002). Another group of studies emphasizes the importance of social relations and social cohesion in residential neighborhoods as determinants of satisfaction levels (Parkes, Kearns, and Atkinson 2002). Satisfaction with the neighborhood is the result of complex and composite assessments that residents make of their social and physical needs in that neighborhood (Lu 1999). Space quality, diversity, safety, and the provision of suitable environmental conditions are factors that motivate people's presence and social connections, ultimately strengthening interactions among residents (Ebrahimnia, Rahimi, and Shahbazi 2022). Interactions among neighborhood residents and their social connections—formed through behaviors such as conversation, participation in shared activities, and collaborative problem-solving—have a significant impact on satisfaction with the living environment (Lee, Oropesa, and Kenan 1994). Formal and informal social ties among neighbors create a local community, which ultimately leads to enhanced social support among neighborhood residents. Participation in this local community is considered a form of emotional investment. Collective interactions among neighbors resulting from stable social relations significantly influence the level of satisfaction with the neighborhood. Problems in the physical fabric of the neighborhood—such as unfinished buildings or ruins, a lack of access to urban amenities, and infrastructural damage—create a sense of disorder and a lack of supervision among residents. This condition can significantly reduce social bonds and, consequently, lower satisfaction with the living environment (Hipp 2009; 2010). Therefore, some argue that the physical environment's effects on determining individuals' satisfaction levels with their

living environment are more important than its social aspects.

As mentioned, in the past, urban studies researchers mainly emphasized the visual and physical effects of neighborhoods on residents' satisfaction. In many cases, these features seemed more prominent in their research than the social and economic aspects (Sirgy and Cornwell 2002). Various studies have shown that while visual aesthetics may be important to newcomers, for long-time residents, this factor is less important compared to the neighborhood's social, cultural, and economic aspects.

Numerous studies have been conducted on neighborhood satisfaction, each identifying different factors as determinants of satisfaction. Some scholars have categorized these factors into three main groups: (1) individual characteristics of residents, (2) residents' subjective evaluations of neighborhood characteristics, and (3) objective and actual characteristics of the neighborhood. Among these, the subjective evaluation of neighborhood characteristics appears to be more important than the other two (Parkes et al. 2002).

Research indicates that neighborhoods with higher socio-economic status generally produce higher levels of satisfaction among their residents compared to other neighborhoods. On the other hand, factors such as hygiene, cleanliness, and desirable building quality have a positive impact on residents' satisfaction with their neighborhood. At the same time, high population density may have a negative effect on satisfaction. Individual characteristics often influence satisfaction levels through their impact on people's choices and decisions; for example, younger people typically report lower satisfaction than middle-aged or elderly individuals (Parkes et al. 2002). According to some studies, families with children usually express higher satisfaction with their place of residence. This may be because such families tend to choose neighborhoods with higher quality and safety standards to ensure their children's well-being, resulting in higher satisfaction levels (Parkes et al. 2002). Moreover, individuals with higher socio-economic status or higher educational levels tend to report greater satisfaction with their living environment (Harris 2001).

Unfavorable environmental pressures at the neighborhood level—such as poverty, delinquency, social disorder, and racial segregation—can significantly affect residents' happiness with their living environment. This situation is significant because the lack of appropriate services and facilities in such areas often indicates low levels of security and public health, thereby setting the stage for the emergence of social stigma and negative perceptions about that location (Woldoff 2002). Furthermore, dissatisfaction with the residential environment imposes multiple severe social and psychological pressures on individuals and increases the likelihood of physical and mental health problems (Ross and

Mirowsky 2009).

Various studies have shown that satisfaction with the living environment is strongly linked to individuals' willingness or unwillingness to relocate (Brower 2003; Lee et al. 1994). Overall, both physical features and access to urban amenities, as well as the level of environmental vulnerability, and the quality of neighborhood relationships—including interactions and a sense of collective responsibility—play a key role in residents' positive assessment of their neighborhood. Ease of access to urban services and facilities, such as public transportation and educational centers, on the one hand, and the low level of environmental threats, including air pollution and traffic congestion, on the other, contribute to forming a positive attitude toward one's neighborhood. In contrast, a high level of interaction and social responsibility, by creating a sense of belonging and responsiveness to part of individuals' social needs, provides the ground for favorable evaluations of the neighborhood and thus raises residents' satisfaction levels. Studies have shown that some neighborhood

indicators are associated with feelings of satisfaction and reported health levels. These indicators include the presence of green spaces, access to quiet environments, crime rates, traffic volume, and various dimensions of social capital (Bowling et al. 2006). It appears that the presence of green areas in the neighborhood and residents' daily interaction with nature are directly and closely related to their health status (Takano, Nakamura, and Watanabe 2002). Evidence suggests that persistent crime in a neighborhood can potentially lead to depression and anxiety among its residents.

Findings from Tabibian and Mansouri's 2013 study prioritized the factors influencing residential environment satisfaction as follows: first, collective identity and residents' social interactions; second, vibrancy and vitality of public spaces in the neighborhood; third, absence of environmental pollutants; fourth, sense of belonging and attachment to the neighborhood; fifth, quality and design of public spaces at the neighborhood level; and finally, ease of access to necessary services and amenities.

Table 2. Environmental Satisfaction Indicators

Indicators	Source
Indicators of Creating a Sense of Community/Neighborhood Quality: Sense of membership, influence, fulfillment of needs, shared emotional connection.	(McMillan and Chavis 1986)
Access to services, quality of green spaces, social relationships, welfare services, commercial services, access to public transportation, safety and security, health, sense of neighborhood belonging, and aesthetic pleasantness of the place	(Bonaiuto, Fornara, and Bonnes 2003)
Neighborhood center and sense of centrality, mixed land use, fabric permeability, social interactions in the neighborhood, participation in collective activities, independence from automobiles, access to urban facilities, access to daily-needed services, access to public transportation, sense of social security, safety in neighborhood spaces, and design for improving microclimate conditions	(Chapman 2005)
Neighborhood center, evaluation of green spaces, social relationships, evaluation of housing units, reduction of car use, using bicycles instead of cars, feeling of safety and security, assessment of aesthetic aspects of neighborhood buildings, evaluation of public spaces, and identification of neighborhood landmarks	(Kowaltowski et al. 2006)
Neighborhood center, quality of green spaces for recreation and social encounters within the neighborhood, social interactions among residents, comfort and safety of walking and cycling, independence from cars, access to daily-needed services, and sufficient green space	(Choguill 2008)
Intimacy among residents, safety in neighborhood spaces, residential stability and willingness to remain, sense of belonging and attachment to the neighborhood, and a place that provides dignity and status	(Bramley and Power 2008)
Quality of housing unit, suitable conditions for children, educational services, commercial services, private and public facilities, proximity to workplace, public transportation, comfort amenities, healthcare services, safety and security, and social relationships with neighbors	(Sedaghatnia et al. 2013)
Responsibility toward the neighborhood, connection of the neighborhood to other parts of the city, social interactions in the neighborhood and participation in collective activities, interaction with urban managers, memory association with places, sense of belonging and attachment to the neighborhood, a place that provides dignity and status, aesthetic pleasantness of the place, intimacy among residents, mixed land use, neighborhood center and sense of centrality, sufficient open spaces between buildings, access to daily-needed services, safe nighttime mobility in the neighborhood, quality of children's play areas, absence of noise pollution, access to green spaces, stability and willingness to remain, legibility, quality of green spaces for residents' recreation and social encounters, absence of environmental pollution, permeability, landmarks, access to the city center, independence from automobiles, ease and safety of walking and cycling, quality of housing unit, sense of social security in neighborhood spaces, design to improve microclimate conditions, access to public transportation, access to urban facilities, and absence of vacant or derelict lots	(Tabibian and Mansouri 2013)

4. RESEARCH METHOD

Given that the formation and transformation of cities, neighborhoods, districts, and passageways are fundamentally based on human life and interactions—and conversely, these spaces also influence their inhabitants—this study has adopted an urban ethnographic approach to gain a deeper understanding of this context. Urban ethnography is recognized as one of the qualitative research methods, with its primary goal being to provide a detailed, sensitive, and observation-based description of the lifestyles of groups that differ from the researcher. To achieve this, the researcher actively participates in the daily life and setting under study, examining ordinary events and ongoing activities as they naturally occur in their real-life contexts. Additionally, the researcher does not overlook unusual or exceptional occurrences.

Unlike some other research strategies, the ethnographer typically does not act as a purely detached or passive observer. Instead, they engage in data collection and seek to gain valuable insights through close interaction with the study subjects or local informants. The research process in ethnography progresses through these interactions with the people who constitute the core of the study. These interactions take multiple forms, including conversations, interviews, and even participation in shared emotional or ritual experiences (Saghafian 2019).

This study has been conducted with full commitment to the foundational principles of rigorous and valid anthropological research, as defined by Ingold, which include responsibility, generous attention, relationality, and contextual sensitivity. Throughout the research, the investigator did not attempt to distinguish

between “being in a situation” and “knowing about it.” The fieldwork was designed to require an understanding, interpretation, and description of a group of people actively interacting with one another. Therefore, the field researcher studied individuals in their natural living environment, based on the assumption that reality dynamically flows through the social world’s text and setting. The primary methods used to understand this context included: participant observation, recording observed behaviors, in-depth interviews—initially conducted in an unstructured format, which then evolved into semi-structured and structured interviews as the research’s theoretical framework and analytical understanding progressed. The Harandi (Darvazeh Ghar) neighborhood, characterized by significant ethnic diversity and a spectrum of residents including homeowners, renters, and homeless individuals, presents multiple arenas of profound and remarkable socio-economic disparities, cultural meanings, identities, and behavioral norms to the researcher. This ethnographic research, with a committed focus on a range of urban marginalized groups, seeks to understand their world and interpretations of it, exploring subjective meanings and signals related to happiness, life satisfaction, and neighborhood satisfaction among residents. It also aims to challenge unconscious mental assumptions toward these individuals. In this approach, writing style holds particular importance. The organization of the text revolves around scenes rich in meaning or key themes and concepts, such that the reader becomes familiar with the flow of life within that setting, not merely through policy-driven writing frameworks based on pre-defined, compartmentalized sections.



Fig. 1. Routes taken through the Darvazeh Ghar Neighborhood for Observation and Familiarization with the Context before the Beginning of Interviews

4.1. CASE STUDY PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Pathological Mosaic of Darvazeh Ghar

Darvazeh Ghar, as a marginal zone in the heart of Tehran, hosts residents from diverse migratory backgrounds who, while integrated into the urban structure, simultaneously experience various forms of social and economic exclusion. This neighborhood has consistently served as a residential hub for low-income households, and its residents represent a clear example of the urban underclass, marginalized both economically and socially. There are differing historical accounts regarding the original formation of this neighborhood. Some believe its early inhabitants were Isfahanis and Arabs who worked in brick kilns. In contrast, others emphasize the role of street vendors who sold fruits and vegetables in the area and later contributed to its development through construction. Historically, the area served as a market for agricultural products during the day and, at night, as a hangout for thieves and dealers of stolen goods. Today, Darvazeh Ghar is home to families of diverse ethnic backgrounds—including Persian, Lur, Turk, Roma (Qorbati), and Afghan migrants.

The neighborhood's social structure has long been entangled with challenges such as poverty, delinquency, and a negative public reputation. These conditions have persisted due to ongoing poverty, waves of migration, and severe physical and social deterioration. Following the demolition of the Khak-e Sefid neighborhood, Darvazeh Ghar has become the primary epicenter of social harm in Tehran. Evaluation of the "social territory quality index" in the Harandi district indicates severely undesirable conditions.

The illiteracy rate in Harandi is reported to be almost four times the Tehran average, at around 27%. The dropout rate among boys and girls in this neighborhood is also very high, nearly three times the average in Tehran. The proportion of children working or seeking employment in this neighborhood has reached a concerning 22%. Harandi, at 10%, has the highest rate of smoking among women in Tehran. The level of mental disorders in this neighborhood is such that only 23% of its residents are mentally healthy. On average, 75% of people in this neighborhood show symptoms of depression, while the average depression rate in Tehran is 36%. In Harandi, 44% of households lack any health insurance coverage, which is twice the average in Tehran. The unemployment rate in this neighborhood is 20% and 46% of its residents are renters. The savings rate of households in this neighborhood is almost zero, and 93% of the people live below the poverty line. These indicators and statistics are visible in the streets, parks, and alleys of this neighborhood (Saghafian 2019).

The impoverished Harandi neighborhood is a concentration of multiple social vulnerabilities. The ethnic diversity among the urban underclass and the

prevalence of social harms—particularly addiction, child labor, and female-headed households—is evident without requiring an in-depth investigation. Civil society organizations have described the situation starkly: The poor neighborhood of Harandi is a melting pot of diverse social evils. The diversity in many social indicators, such as the ethnic spread among the lower class and various forms of social evils, especially addiction, child labor, and female heads of households, does not require close examination and is self-evident as an urban phenomenon. People-oriented organizations, emphasizing the seriousness of the situation, have described the neighborhood as follows: "The addiction situation in Harandi is deplorable." Prostitution, addiction, and homelessness are three pervasive and prevalent social problems in this neighborhood. With its colorful residents, diverse cultural meanings, and different behavioral rules, this neighborhood challenges the common and uniform image of marginalized areas. Researchers and the middle class often tend to create a single, generalized image of the lower class and analyze everything about them based on this perception, distancing themselves from them and turning them into objects of a superior gaze, humiliation, and condemnation. Direct contact with people from this class reveals the absurdity of these stereotypes and the behaviors they are based on. The following quotes offer a glimpse into the social and physical conditions of this neighborhood.

"All the users or recoveries I knew were in front of my eyes; weren't they human? Couldn't they be? You don't know what you're talking about, you only have an image, an image that is far from reality, an image that makes you think you're so good and they're so bad, so that you feel at ease and your conscience is at ease, but the reality is not, it's not just us who are human."

In this neighborhood, people with religious and non-religious beliefs, conventional and unconventional behaviors, and different physical and mental health conditions live side by side. The residents of Darvazeh Ghar can perhaps be divided into two main groups based on their drug use patterns and their level of involvement with the formal economy. The first group is usually born in Tehran, the head of the household is employed in the formal sector of the economy (such as working in bazaar workshops, driving for an agency, or doing office work), and the problem of addiction in the family is either non-existent or limited and hidden.

The second group includes people experiencing homelessness and those who, although living in rented houses or rooms, have a lifestyle more similar to that of people experiencing homelessness in the neighborhood. Most of the residents of this group are immigrants who are mainly active in the informal economy; peddling, begging, drug trafficking, buying and selling stolen property, and similar occupations constitute the sources of income for this group. Also,

the families of this group of residents usually do not have a complete nuclear family structure. Many marital relationships are based on concubinage, and families are therefore temporary in nature. For some of the women in this group, marriage is a kind of bargain they have agreed to in exchange for security, shelter, material goods, and financial support. Sometimes, a woman, especially if she has children, will agree to a temporary marriage with a man to escape homelessness in the park. It is common to see children living with their mother and fatherless, or children living with aunts, uncles, grandparents, and other relatives. These households may frequently move between living under the same roof and relocating to another place. In these households, addiction is a serious issue, and adults and children alike are at risk of substance abuse.

"None of their family members are addicted; everyone is healthy and has no moral problems. However, their house is in Darvazeh Ghar, an old house with peeling paint and peeling walls, and in the middle of the courtyard, they used to sit and wash clothes by the pond." Darvazeh Ghar has always been associated with infamy. "It is interesting that when talking about social harms, the first place that comes to mind is Darvazeh Ghar. So, isn't there an addiction in Niavaran? Corruption and theft are only in Darvazeh Ghar? Isn't prostitution in the rest of Tehran?"

In this neighborhood, the amount of money that families spend on entertainment, social, and cultural activities is minimal. Participating in educational classes is considered a luxury for most people, and only free or low-cost classes organized by the municipality allow women and their children to gain new experiences. Men in the neighborhood spend little time at home due to their strenuous work, so the responsibility of managing these activities falls more on women. Cultural and social programs that the municipality has developed to achieve its goals have rarely been successful in achieving their goals. In the past, women in cultural centers, such as the Khajoo Kermani Cultural Center (Harandi), have relied on their social networks to advance the

municipality's semi-essential programs in their way. This participation increased women's self-confidence and changed their perception of their role as weak beings who were only valid at home. Women sought social mobility to educate themselves and improve the cultural level of their families.

"These classes (cultural center classes) made me change a lot."

"...We believed that if women learn, everyone else will learn too. Women were welcoming..."

"... I have no one to entrust this [my 13-year-old son] to to guide him... I go to class myself, I get counseling, so that I can help my son ..."

"... Let's go to the park, the cinema, or for a walk together. We don't have such experiences together..."

A survey conducted in the Harandi neighborhood showed that around 1,700 homeless people lived in the parks of this neighborhood, 700 of whom were women. Many of these women were trying to return to a "normal" life, although this life is different from the concept of "normal life" of various classes. Women who had recovered from addiction were examples of these efforts, those whose background and appearance had become an obstacle to returning to an everyday life and work. Sometimes, even families refused to accept them after recovery. Their free lifestyle during their homelessness made it difficult for them to return to the social structure and rules of life. The physical and psychological damage caused by drug use was sometimes irreparable and made it difficult for them to continue their daily activities. In the operation to collect migrant addicts, approximately 500 women were arrested in Haqqani Park and transferred to Shafaq Camp. The rest were scattered, hidden, and displaced, under the bazaar or in the ruins of the neighborhood.

"I have no motivation to leave. What if I leave? Should I return to my family? Should I become an addict again?..."

"Like many recoverers, Sahar was struggling with financial difficulties. Finding a job with black, loose teeth and skin burned by the sun and cold was almost impossible due to homelessness."

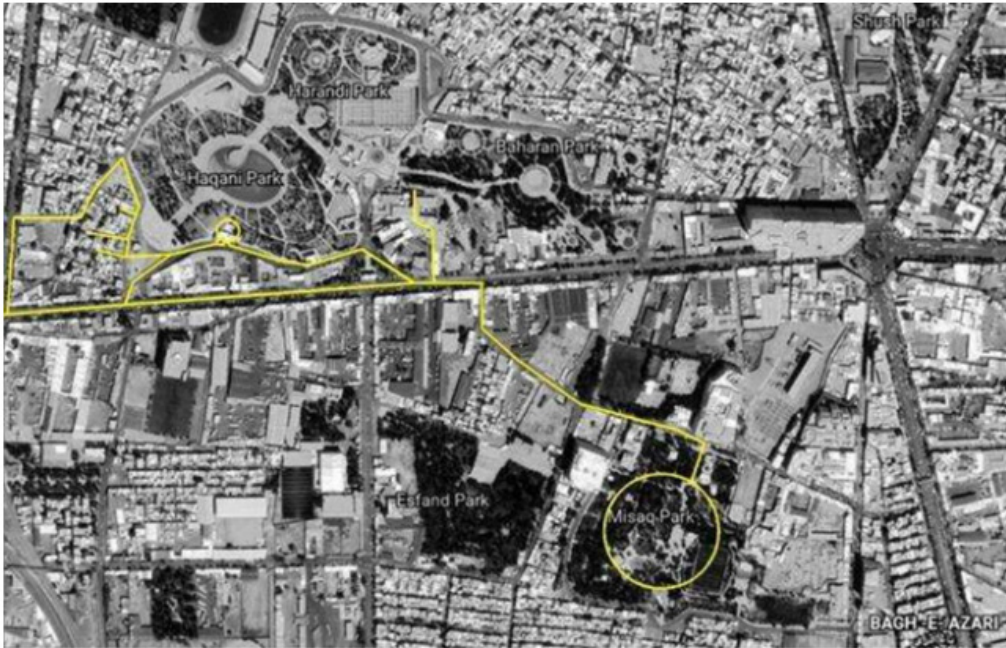


Fig. 2. Researcher's Route for Interviews and Observations in the Neighborhood Fabric, Khaneh Khorshid, and Misagh Park

An Excerpt from the Lived Experiences of People in Darvazeh Ghar

- Grief and sorrow have become inextricably linked to their lived experience. These individuals may not explicitly feel as though they are mourning, but they are well aware that the situation is neither desirable nor pleasant. It seems they see themselves as inevitably having to adapt to it.

- Is that the same park located next to this place? Yes, it's been fenced off all around... as if it's pushing people away. Entry now requires presenting a national ID card. As you know, a large portion of this neighborhood's residents are Afghan migrants and homeless individuals... So, they and their children cannot enter...

- Do you know when the issue in this area will be resolved? When, even after physical barriers are removed, people with a history of addiction no longer wish to enter. That is the true meaning of resolution, not the current situation where these individuals are dispersed across the entire neighborhood.

- For these people, happiness is synonymous with an overall sense of life satisfaction... not reducing happiness to a few moments of fireworks and fleeting celebratory events... What comes the day after?

- In place of Shabahang Cinema—the only recreational center in the neighborhood—towering residential buildings have risen... Shush Children's Center and the Reyhaneh Center for girls have also been demolished and replaced with commercial units... There once was a cultural center named Khajoo Kermani in this location, equipped with a library and a ping pong table for children's recreation... but that too vanished following construction projects.

- The development plans implemented in this area have yielded no desirable results... This place functions as the city's dumping ground... everything unwanted and deemed useless ends up here... as though these people have been marginalized and made to feel isolated...

- It seems all solutions eventually come back to the issue of education.

- Sustainable changes must occur... for instance, individuals who formerly used drugs and are now rehabilitated can become agents of transformation and initiate a sustainable process in this regard.

- For five consecutive years, we've surveyed residents of this area, and in all five years, a lack of security has been cited as the most significant issue.

- We have no opportunity here to even think about the concept of happiness. Most residents of this area suffer from depression.

- The neighborhood is polluted and disorderly... As night falls, the area becomes filled with individuals with a history of drug use... The current state, which may seem safe to walk through, is deceptive... Seeing these people takes a toll on one's spirit.

- This area needs a thorough cleansing... sanitary conditions are deplorable.

- This neighborhood has been completely neglected. Are you satisfied with the condition of the streets? If you were here at night, you would feel a sense of fear... People with a history of addiction are usually quiet and harmless... but the theft rate is high in this area...

- If the municipality had paid just a little attention, kept the place clean, and created green spaces, this new gate would have been installed recently.

- We're willing to help people with a history of

- addiction find work... but their attendance at the workplace is inconsistent...
- First, individuals with a history of addiction must be removed from the neighborhood... This way, public trust will be restored... These individuals are not native to the area... they come from other places and gather here. This place has become their central gathering point.
 - Creating a proper amusement park and a library can provide a space for people to come here with their families.
 - The number of individuals with a history of addiction in this area is quite low... but due to the abundance of drug dealers, people come here from across the country... They are not residents of this neighborhood.
 - This place has become like a homeland for us; although we're originally from Azerbaijan, we grew up right here. This area is in the city center, close to the bazaar and metro.
 - Do you see that unpaved area in the middle? It used to have trees and water... they changed it like this.
 - The condition of the public bath is poor and rundown... It's a dangerous day and night.
 - There is not enough security. The theft rate is high.
 - People with a history of addiction have been rounded up, but there are still many drug dealers. They take shelter in abandoned houses... where they have both access to drugs and a place to sleep... Also, they are given food at night and noon!... These benefactors don't go to their neighborhoods to feed them... This place has become the center of everything... drug dealers and abandoned old houses...
 - I've lived here for 65 years... The native residents of this area are not addicted... They come here from other regions.
 - There are no poultry or fruit shops in this neighborhood.
 - Cars come to sell alcohol and drugs, and I cannot protest... because I will be beaten.
 - People need to feel that they haven't been abandoned in this place.
 - The population of this area must increase... grocery stores and fresh produce markets must also be established. Currently, this area is quiet and sparsely populated. With an increased population, security will also improve.
 - The children's play area is suitable, but it needs to be expanded. Healthy families will also come to this area.
 - There are no facilities around here.
 - This neighborhood has earned a bad reputation... with renovation and reconstruction, growth and development will occur... illegal activities cannot take place openly under such conditions.
 - Corruption has increased... they do whatever they want.
 - Construction must be done. The population in this area is low. People from all walks of life must come here so these issues can be resolved. When a person with a history of addiction can no longer climb over people's walls, they won't be able to steal... with redevelopment, they will gradually leave this area.



Fig. 3. Path of the Researcher for Interviews and Observations, from 15 Khordad Metro and Bazaar, Khanat Caravanserai, Sar-e Ghabr-e Agha Shrine, Shoosh Square, Glassware Bazaar, Dowry Shopping Center, Darvazeh Ghar Monument, Sobhe Royesh School for Working Children, Ramzoon Yakhi Teahouse, Shaqolam's Shop, Darvazeh Ghar Neighborhood Fabric and Shops

- A fundamental cultural deficiency is strongly evident in this area. Even if these families are financially well-off—particularly among the Ghorbati (nomadic) group—they still send their three- or four-year-old children to intersections to earn money. The prevailing mindset in these communities treats children as a source of income, and as they grow up, they adopt the same approach toward their children. In this way, the cycle of social harm continues in the neighborhood.
- The first essential step is to encourage these individuals to pursue education and attend school. Initially, neither the children themselves nor their families understood the necessity of education.
- Most children are engaged in informal and unstable jobs, such as carrying goods in the bazaar with carts. We try to introduce various skills and identify their talents to provide blended education. We show them paths to advancement, hoping they will achieve success. Nevertheless, we are always aware that we are dealing with a complex being called the human.
- The alleys and streets adjacent to the bazaar suffer less from social harms. However, the narrower passageways and areas under the small markets—especially Ghalishoorha Alley—face significantly more social issues. The number of unhygienic kitchens is high in these areas.
- When we observed the vicious cycle of social harm, we found that education and empowerment of children were the only entry points into this cycle. Our goal is to show them that a different path exists, one that differs from what they are currently experiencing. At the same time, we try to

- acknowledge their efforts to earn an honest living while offering them better alternatives.
- The primary issue is that they lack a clear understanding of their future aspirations. They have not painted a vivid picture of an ideal situation for themselves.
- I used to have a sandwich shop here (pointing to the asphalted area); that was my place of business. There was a kebab shop over there. Two ice cream parlors were across from each other, with a cart selling faludeh (a traditional frozen dessert) in between. There was a bakery here and a butcher over there. This neighborhood was once very vibrant. At night, there wasn't even space to stand on the sidewalk. All the shops had customers... That path led to the bazaar. In my sandwich shop, I used to slice 50 loaves of bread daily and serve them to customers. Even at closing time, my assistant would still sell 20 to 30 more sandwiches. Now, it's hard to find a sandwich shop around here that has 10 customers a day... Our table is now empty of bread...
- The park has time restrictions. One gate is on this side, and the other is on that side... The street is very unsafe... Sometimes I fear crossing it... Cars speed by at an alarming rate... I witness two or three accidents here every day.
- For a while, the environment here was very inappropriate. What could a child learn while looking out the window?
- They love this neighborhood. They love being near each other. In the afternoons, they sit in front of their homes, reminisce... talk to one another... It is the human connection that keeps this place alive.



Fig. 4. Identifying the Low-Risk and High-Risk Zones of the Neighborhood (in Terms of Social Harm). The Yellow Areas Represent Low-Risk Zones, while the Red Areas indicate High-Risk Zones.

5. FINDINGS

The first step in this research was to be present in the neighborhood and conduct field studies aimed at identifying and extracting the factors influencing happiness from the perspective and lived experiences

of residents in Darvazeh Ghar. However, after analyzing the data obtained from preliminary observations and interviews, it was concluded that there is likely a close relationship between happiness and life satisfaction within this social context. In other words, increasing the level of life satisfaction among

the residents of this neighborhood can significantly lead to higher levels of happiness; otherwise, achieving happiness within this demographic group would be highly unlikely. Based on this, a hypothesis was proposed: achieving and enhancing happiness among the residents of Darvazeh Ghar requires fostering a sense of life satisfaction within them. Following this finding, it was decided to study and extract the theoretical foundations of satisfaction and its components. This effort aimed to design new interview questions for the target group based on these components, to determine which factors could

enhance life satisfaction among the neighborhood's residents and ultimately contribute to their happiness. By completing the theoretical framework of the research in this way, it is hoped that a foundation for practical interventions in this neighborhood can be established.

After aligning the criteria of neighborhood satisfaction with the present study's research questions and the specific context under investigation, those criteria with the most significant impact on the target group's satisfaction were selected.

Table 3. Influential Components on Satisfaction from the Residents' Perspective

Satisfaction Components	Dimensions of Each Component
Security	Absence of heterogeneous groups, safe communication arteries (safe and comfortable sidewalks), permeability of the texture, and supervision
Social	Residents' mutual interactions, sense of belonging to the neighborhood, social mixing, memory association with place, territoriality and territorial mapping, social spaces, social participation of residents, intimacy, and existence of suitable spaces for different age groups and social classes
Environmental Quality	Absence of visual, environmental, and noise pollution, and presence of unwanted individuals, including drug users
View and Green Space	Presence of sufficient open spaces among buildings, urban green spaces, and functional places
Services	Availability of daily required services and easy access, life facilities, provision of basic needs, and mixed land uses
Physical Structure	Safety in the neighborhood via access routes, facilities, and the absence of unfinished and dilapidated buildings

At this stage of the research, precisely defining the target group among the highly diverse residents of Darvazeh Ghar (considering other demographic groups and avoiding their invisibilization) was considered essential. Deciding who would be the primary audience of efforts to enhance happiness held particular importance. Without such a limitation, ambiguity could arise, and emotional bias due to observations might lead to addressing all the neighborhood's problems, risking unrealistic idealism and diverting the research path. Since solving all neighborhood issues at once is impossible, focusing on resolving specific challenges for a particular group of residents can improve their quality of life and thereby achieve the primary goal of this study.

Through close interaction with the social texture of the neighborhood and a deep understanding of life dynamics there, two demographic groups were identified as focal points for the continuation of the research: First, women who, after completing addiction rehabilitation and leaving recovery centers, lack shelter and job opportunities to improve their lives. This lack is one of the leading causes of their return to homelessness in parks and the continuation of social harm cycles. Second, the ordinary and often neglected residents of Darvazeh Ghar, especially women, and children, in families where addiction is either absent or limited and hidden, but due to living in this neighborhood, they experience harms

such as insecurity and widespread depression. Children hold special importance as they shape the future of any society, and education can pave a completely different life path for them. Women are also important due to the patriarchal structure and prevailing economic conditions in the neighborhood, where neglect or domestic violence against them is probable. Therefore, they must be considered and educated to build a better life for themselves and their children. Accordingly, during the upcoming visits to Darvazeh Ghar, some questions were designed to enable the residents themselves to participate in defining target groups, and the research path would be shaped through interaction and exchange between the residents and the researcher.

Additionally, examining the historical, identity, and economic capacities of the neighborhood was also crucial. The goal was to integrate and consider all these factors to design a comprehensive intervention program that could enhance life satisfaction and happiness among Darvazeh Ghar's residents.

Addiction is one of the fundamental problems in Darvazeh Ghar. Two groups of drug users are identifiable in this neighborhood: The first group includes the indigenous residents of Darvazeh Ghar. The second group consists of individuals who, due to available facilities for obtaining and consuming drugs—caused by factors such as the presence of dealers, relative quietness of the neighborhood, its

negative reputation, abandoned buildings, and the deteriorated appearance of the area—come and go here, exacerbating the spread of addiction. Regarding the first group (residents), experience has shown that aggressive collection plans and coercive methods have been ineffective and inhumane. Hence, a necessary approach is to guide the deviated individual toward change and return to a healthy life through personal will and decision. Regardless of the multiple causes leading to addiction (which are beyond this study's scope), one major factor for addiction and substance abuse is social disorder and individual vulnerability, especially psychologically, alongside a lack of motivation and hope for life. Among these affected individuals, whose number is considerable, it is probable that by providing life incentives and observing life improvements after quitting addiction among the general community, their motivation for recovery and reintegration into daily life would increase.

Regarding the second group (temporary visitors who consume drugs), gradually improving security and environmental quality should help reduce the neighborhood's negative reputation and redefine its identity with a fresh perspective.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The findings of the present research indicate that architectural interventions and urban design, as tools for environmental transformation, play a fundamental role in redefining spatial identity and enhancing residents' sense of satisfaction. Specifically, improving the quality of public spaces not only enhances the visual and physical condition of the environment but also fosters a sense of security and belonging among residents. Moreover, establishing local service centers with active public participation fosters the strengthening of social networks and cultural and social interactions, thereby enhancing the environmental and psychological well-being of residents. Overall, combining architectural capacities with existing infrastructures paves the way for increasing life satisfaction and achieving sustainable happiness among the residents of Darvazeh Ghar.

Field analyses and in-depth interviews identified a set of structural, social, and environmental factors as the primary obstacles to realizing happiness. Among the most important are structural decay and environmental disharmony, a lack of systematic renovations, and a shortage of essential amenities such as green spaces, sports facilities, and cultural centers. In addition, issues related to environmental insecurity, social problems such as addiction and corruption, along with the lack of effective social interactions and weak participatory networks, have directly and negatively affected the quality of life, intensifying residents' feelings of insecurity and distrust toward the urban environment. These factors collectively act as drivers

of unhappiness and serious barriers to achieving a satisfactory and sustainable living environment in Darvazeh Ghar.

From the perspective of this research, based on the lived experiences of the residents, happiness is defined as a multidimensional phenomenon in which environmental, social, and psychological dimensions synergistically and simultaneously operate. More precisely, residents' happiness results from the synergy of physical environmental improvements (through architectural interventions and public space renovations), enhanced security and social trust (via local service centers and increased public participation), and empowerment of vulnerable groups (especially women and children). In this framework, happiness is an experience that stems from overall life improvement, where residents benefit from renovated public spaces, increased welfare amenities, strengthened security, and active social participation, leading to a sense of trust in the future and a feeling of belonging to the community. Empowering vulnerable groups, particularly women and children, through education and the creation of economic and supportive opportunities is identified as a key component in defining happiness. These findings demonstrate that by applying architectural interventions and comprehensive environmental improvement programs, research questions can be effectively answered, and the path toward achieving happiness among the residents can be facilitated.

The core strategy, derived from theoretical foundations and ethnographic studies, focuses on transforming the current stigmatized identity of Darvazeh Ghar and assigning it a new functional role.

Accordingly, intervention in this neighborhood will be pursued at two distinct levels: At the macro-strategic level, the intervention area includes proposals aimed at improving the overall condition of the neighborhood. Establishing local service centers based on the active participation of local volunteers and residents can provide services to low-income residents and address social issues and insecurity, potentially leading to a successful experience in reducing problems and harms. Contrary to common misconceptions and negative public attitudes toward Darvazeh Ghar, social participation in this neighborhood is significant, especially in charity and aid activities. The necessity to pay attention to local service centers as support arms for governmental and security institutions, alongside leveraging high resident participation and strengthening the sense of belonging and respect for the neighborhood, is evident. Revitalizing this neighborhood can begin with a selected small-scale area (the micro-scale intervention zone proposed in this research), gradually expand, increase its influence throughout the neighborhood, and beyond, and continuously respond actively to existing challenges.

Table 4: Goals to Expected Policies at the Macro Level of Intervention in Darvazeh Ghar Neighborhood

Goals	Objective Goal	Current status	Favorable Situation	Policy
Improving the Socio-Cultural Situation of Residents of the Darvazeh Ghar Neighborhood	Improving social security for residents of the Darvazeh Ghar neighborhood	The activity of organized networks for drug distribution in the form of team houses; the abundance of open urban spaces without adequate supervision; the lack of appropriate urban equipment to provide lighting during the dark hours; the prevalence of various types of criminal behavior and social harms such as addiction, theft, extortion, pickpocketing, and violence at the neighborhood level.	The neighborhood should be safe in terms of issues such as addiction, theft, violence, and vulnerable urban areas.	The need for broader cooperation with relevant organizations and institutions to continuously and reliably improve the level of security in the neighborhood; creating the necessary platforms for the formation of a local network of activists in the field of combating addiction and drug trafficking; developing and increasing the number of non-governmental organizations active in the field of reducing social harms (such as theft, violence, and extortion) at the neighborhood level; drawing a vision of the desired living situation for neighborhood residents to strengthen motivation and hope for life and break the cycle of social harms; adopting a preventive approach to crime through environmental design based on CPTED principles.
	Increasing citizen participation in neighborhood management	The level of public participation in the design and implementation of neighborhood programs is low.	Improving the level of citizen participation and role-playing in the process of designing and implementing local plans, especially in the field of social and cultural activities; strengthening the position and increasing the responsibility of trusted and influential local people in participating in and managing neighborhood affairs.	Expanding the scope of citizen participation in urban governance through the creation of civic organizations and active groups; establishing and strengthening local institutions consisting of trusted individuals in the community with bargaining skills to improve the quality and quantity of facilities and amenities available at the neighborhood level.
	Empowering people living in the Darvazeh Ghar neighborhood, especially women and children	The level of women's participation in social life and their freedom to make choices is low in this neighborhood due to the limited availability of cultural and educational activities. Additionally, access to educational facilities and awareness of the importance of education from an early age in Darvazeh Ghar are in a poor state.	Enhancing the level of empowerment and decision-making authority among women and children residing in the neighborhood, to foster a more favorable outlook for their lives and facilitate entrepreneurial opportunities for women through targeted training.	Creating and facilitating educational opportunities for neighborhood residents, with a special emphasis on empowering women and children; fostering favorable conditions for independent and self-managed businesses owned by women.

Goals	Objective Goal	Current status	Favorable Situation	Policy
Improving the Physical and Infrastructural Condition of the Darvazeh Ghar Neighborhood	Creating integrity and enhancing the visual quality of the urban environment to provide visual comfort, promoting social status, and increasing the psychological well-being of city residents.	The undesirable landscape of the roadsides in this urban area is evident, with the presence of incongruous and disturbing uses, such as loading centers and warehouses related to the local market, as well as the abundance of barren and abandoned lands in the neighborhood.	The neighborhood should have a suitable landscape; residential and commercial areas should be separated; and wasteland should be designated for specific purposes.	Optimizing the use of barren and abandoned lands by incorporating them into adjacent residential units; reforming and organizing disparate uses (industrial and workshop) to improve the quality of the urban landscape; introducing selected commercial uses, such as Bloor stores, into the neighborhood context; enhancing and renovating existing urban furniture; organizing and securing vulnerable urban spaces, especially at the neighborhood level.
	Improving the quality of pedestrian access at the Darvazeh Ghar neighborhood level	The narrowness of the sidewalks and the wideness of the neighborhood's driveways; the presence of unsafe traffic junctions; the lack of legibility of many alleys; the neighborhood's surface streets have traffic problems, and the high speed of vehicles on the main roads has caused inconvenience to residents.	If possible, widen the sidewalk to calm the neighborhood and increase security, and consider side parking routes.	Managing the traffic load of neighborhood streets and preventing new traffic from entering and imposing it on neighborhood streets; promoting traffic culture; utilizing all the capacities of scientific, religious, cultural centers, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), etc., to improve citizens' traffic behaviors in the neighborhood; providing the required parking; reopening the neighborhood's narrow streets by consolidating and renovating properties located in the alley (creating a connected network in the texture); improving the readability of alleys, especially those that have been destroyed.
	Improving the quality and safety of housing for residents of the Darvazeh Ghar neighborhood	The low quality of housing for residents of the neighborhood and the use of low-quality materials in housing construction by residents	Improving construction quality	Holding training courses to improve the quality of construction at the neighborhood level
	Providing public services in the Darvazeh Ghar neighborhood	Lack of public parking spaces in the neighborhood	Providing the required parking for all new construction projects	Construction of parking lots at the neighborhood level
		Lack of health care facilities at the neighborhood level	Access to health centers for all residents of the neighborhood	Construction of neighborhood-scale therapeutic spaces on unused land
		Lack of equipped green spaces at the local scale	Equipping abandoned spaces in the neighborhood	Equipping urban furniture for abandoned neighborhood spaces and transforming them into local green spaces
		Lack of cultural and educational spaces in the neighborhood	Access to cultural and educational facilities, such as libraries.	Creating cultural-educational complexes and building well-equipped libraries for all age groups in the neighborhood.

Goals	Objective Goal	Current status	Favorable Situation	Policy
Improving the Environmental and Health Conditions of the Darvazeh Ghar Neighborhood	Reducing pollution of streets and surface tables in the Darvazeh Ghar neighborhood by organizing household waste collection	Dumping household and workshop waste into the streets and sidewalks	Proper disposal of garbage and waste	Proper access to trash cans, especially on narrow streets, and educating citizens
	Proper disposal of household and workshop waste at the neighborhood level	Industrial and household waste flows throughout the neighborhood, especially in narrow alleys.	Proper disposal of garbage and waste	Relocation of incompatible uses at the neighborhood level; education on healthy urban living and a healthy urban environment
	Reducing noise and visual pollution in the Darvazeh Ghar neighborhood	Noise pollution is evident in the neighborhood's main thoroughfares and arteries.	Reducing noise pollution	Regulating traffic load on the main streets of the neighborhood and developing green spaces along their edges.
	Improving the quality of the urban landscape at the neighborhood level	According to local observations, this neighborhood suffers from landscape pollution, particularly on the side of the street parallel to Shush Street in the south of the neighborhood, as well as incompatible uses throughout the area.	Improving the quality of urban scenery and landscapes (scale neighborhood) and ensuring visual comfort for citizens	Determining the use of unused and barren lands at the neighborhood level; Relocating incompatible uses in residential areas.
	Improving and promoting the management of natural and human crises in the Darvazeh Ghar neighborhood	The presence of dilapidated structures in the neighborhood has reduced the security of neighborhood buildings against natural and human-made disasters, as well as low public awareness of natural and human-made crises.	Buildings are resistant to natural and manufactured disasters; all citizens are familiar with how to provide relief; and citizens are effective in managing natural and manufactured crises at the neighborhood level.	More precise monitoring of public construction; increasing public awareness of natural disasters through holding training courses by institutions responsible for dealing with natural and human crises; enhancing the role of citizens in managing crises and environmental hazards, and continuously increasing neighborhood safety.
Economic Empowerment of Citizens of the Darvazeh Ghar Neighborhood	Economic empowerment of residents of the Darvazeh Ghar neighborhood	Low income and quality of life among citizens of Darvazeh Ghar neighborhood compared to other neighborhoods in Tehran and District 12 of Tehran	Increasing the income level and quality of life of residents of the Darvazeh Ghar neighborhood	Implementing value-added projects at the neighborhood level
	Attracting private sector investment to the Darvazeh Ghar neighborhood	The low price of land in this neighborhood compared to other neighborhoods in Tehran has made investors less interested in this neighborhood.	Private sector capital overflow for neighborhood renovation	Special facilities for renovation in worn-out neighborhood textures; special facilities for implementing service projects at the neighborhood level
	Attracting public sector investments to the Darvazeh Ghar neighborhood	Economic, socio-cultural, physical, and infrastructural problems and lack of public services in the Darvazeh Ghar neighborhood	Authorities pay special attention to the Darvazeh Ghar neighborhood and take action to resolve the neighborhood's problems	Carrying out appropriate and effective planning and measures to reduce economic, social, and cultural issues, and to provide services.

Based on the theoretical framework of the research, the findings from participatory studies, and the review of documents that led to the identification of factors and prerequisites necessary for achieving happiness among the residents of Darvazeh Ghar, it was concluded that creating appropriate platforms for the happiness of women and children in this neighborhood, empowering them, and influencing the prevailing social and cultural structure can be the first and fundamental step towards increasing the overall happiness of all residents. This architectural intervention, by prioritizing the enhancement of life and

environmental satisfaction—especially strengthening the sense of security among this demographic—will gradually lay the groundwork for the happiness of the entire local community. Accordingly, the southwestern area of this neighborhood, located at the intersection of Shoosh and Khayyam streets, due to its unique demographic composition and the aforementioned social characteristics, was selected as the initial intervention zone and a model for future developments in this neighborhood and similar ones, to foster residents' happiness and social development.

Path to creating happiness for the residents of Darvazeh Ghar

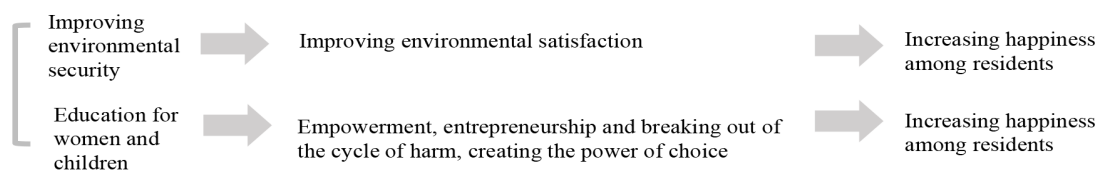


Fig. 5. Path to Creating Happiness for the Residents of the Darvazeh Ghar

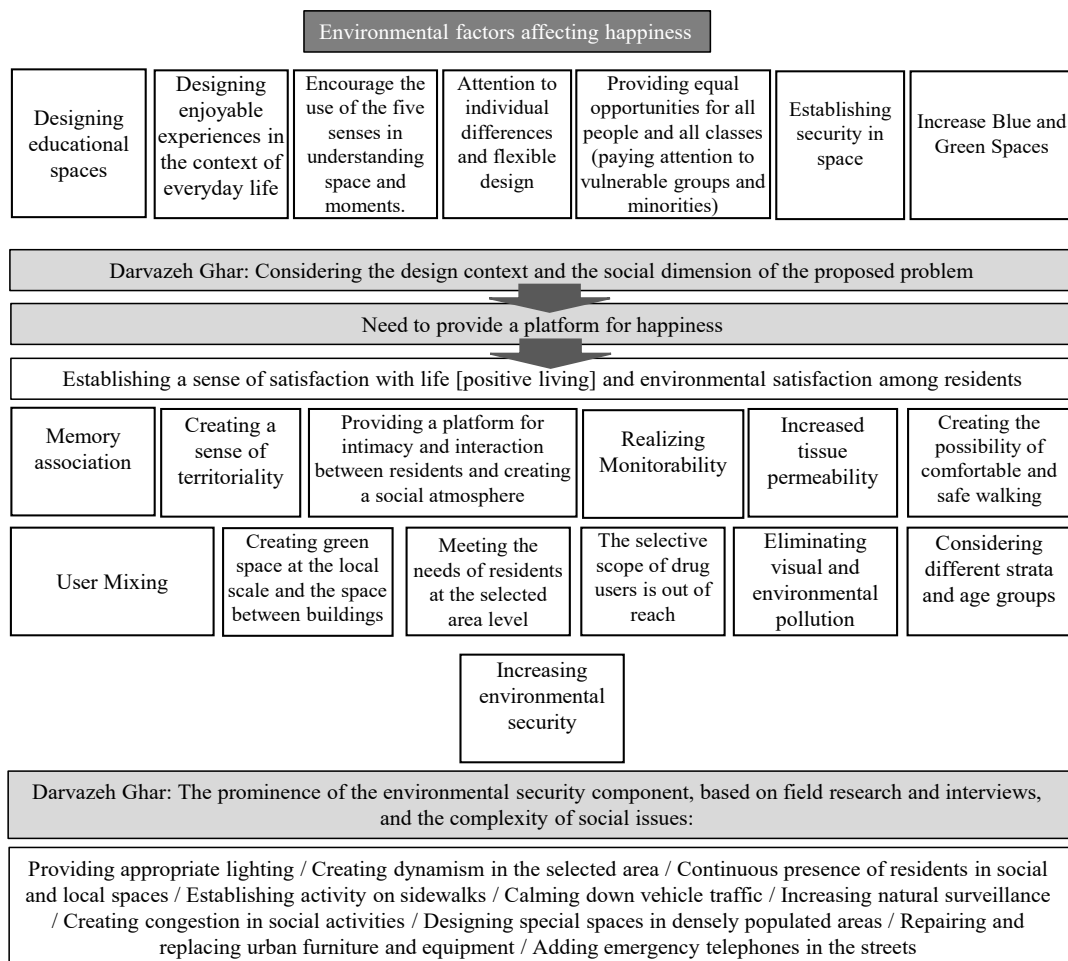


Fig. 6. Factors Influencing Design Plans at the Darvazeh Ghar

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

MORAL APPROVAL

The authors commit to observe all the ethical principles of the publication of the scientific work based on the ethical principles of COPE. In case of any violation of the ethical principles, even after the publication of the article, they give the journal the right to delete the article and follow up on the matter.

PARTICIPATION PERCENTAGE

The authors state that they have directly participated in the stages of conducting research and writing the article.

ENDNOTE

1. Gallup Inc., better known in Iran as the Gallup Institute, is a management consulting firm best known for its Gallup Poll.

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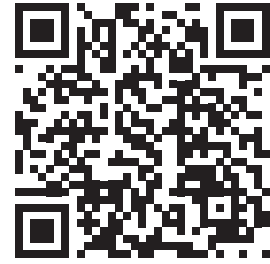
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