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Urban Physical Environment and Objective Happiness: Toward a Theoretical Framework

Entorno físico urbano y felicidad objetiva: hacia un marco teórico

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ABSTRACT/ This study explores the interplay between urban physical environments and objective happiness, focusing on measurable outcomes influenced by urban design and amenities. Moving beyond utopian ideals, it emphasizes the tangible and physical factors that shape happiness in urban contexts. With a multidisciplinary approach spanning urban studies, psychology, and environmental science, the research develops a theoretical framework that distinguishes objective happiness from subjective well-being (SWB). The study draws on a comprehensive literature review of peer-reviewed papers, books, reports, and doctoral theses covering diverse regions, including Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas. It highlights how improvements in urban design, and amenities are inextricably linked to significant gains in objective happiness. By addressing gaps in existing research, the paper provides novel insights and actionable guidance for urban planners and policymakers, aiming to enhance well-being through physical urban environments. This research contributes to the existing body of knowledge by furnishing a robust theoretical foundation and serving as a resource for academics and decision-makers in urban politics. **RESUMEN/** Este estudio indaga en la interacción entre entornos físicos urbanos y felicidad objetiva, centrándose en resultados medibles influidos por el diseño y las instalaciones urbanas. Trascendiendo ideales utópicos, pone énfasis en los factores tangibles y físicos que moldean la felicidad en contextos urbanos. Con un enfoque multidisciplinario que abarca los estudios urbanos, la sicología y la ciencia medioambiental, la investigación desarrolla un marco teórico que distingue la felicidad objetiva del bienestar subjetivo (SWB). El estudio se basa en una amplia revisión bibliográfica de artículos revisados por pares, libros, informes y tesis doctorales que abarcan diversas regiones, entre ellas Asia, África, Europa y el continente americano. Sus resultados destacan de qué manera las mejoras en el diseño y las instalaciones urbanas están inextricablemente ligadas a aumentos significativos en la felicidad objetiva. Abordando las brechas en las investigaciones vigentes, el artículo ofrece perspectivas novedosas y orientaciones realizables para los planificadores y autoridades urbanas que apuntan a mejorar el bienestar a través de entornos urbanos físicos. Esta investigación contribuye al actual cuerpo de conocimientos proporcionando una sólida base teórica y operando como recurso para los académicos y las autoridades políticas de las ciudades.

INTRODUCTION

Happiness is increasingly used to evaluate quality of life and well-being, yet its conceptualization varies widely across disciplines. This paper adopts a novel lens by focusing on objective happiness, defined as measurable outcomes derived from urban design and physical environmental factors. Unlike subjective well-being (SWB), which is self-reported and perception-based, objective happiness emphasizes tangible, universal factors like access to amenities, environmental quality, and infrastructure. This study addresses a significant gap in urban research by exploring how physical urban environments can enhance objective happiness, contributing to more equitable and human-centered urban planning.

Happiness is one of the most common indicators for assessing the quality of life and well-being, which has a wide range of notations such as life satisfaction, a good life, hedonic balance, and life fulfillment (Ballas, 2013). The topic of happiness in response

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to urban contexts is an emerging field of research (Pelletier *et al.*, 2008). A hedonic approach to urban happiness focuses on how urban environments influence emotional states, emphasizing strategies to enhance positive experiences (e.g., green spaces and recreational facilities) while minimizing negative influences like noise or pollution (Montgomery, 2013). In addition, urban arrangements, systems, spaces, and places substantially affect how we regard and treat others (Pringle & Guaralda, 2018).

According to Ompad, Galea, and Vlahov (2007), the urban environment consists of three main characteristics: built environment, natural environment, and social environment. People interact with the urban environment across various dimensions, including physical factors (e.g., visual components), urban services, and social structures (figure 1). These elements may directly or indirectly influence people's objective happiness, a concept distinct from subjective well-being (SWB). While SWB focuses on individuals' self-reported feelings and satisfaction levels, objective happiness, as this research conceptualizes, refers to measurable outcomes linked to urban environments, such as improved health, access to amenities, and environmental quality.

Drawing from (Kahneman *et.al.*, 2003) foundational work, this study aligns objective happiness with eudaimonic principles, emphasizing human flourishing and the tangible factors that support it. Despite critiques by economists advocating for SWB as a more reliable metric (eg, Camacho and Horta, 2022), this research adopts objective happiness to explore how urban planning and infrastructure can create universally positive outcomes. This approach addresses a gap in the existing literature by focusing on tangible urban elements contributing to well-being.

Measuring the extent to which where we live affects our overall happiness and our quality of life has long been a focus of theoretical and empirical research across disciplines such as human geography, urban and regional studies, regional science, and regional economics (Ballas and Tranmer, 2012). It is crucial to distinguish between related but distinct concepts to avoid confusion. In this research, subjective well-being (SWB) refers to self-reported perceptions and feelings about one's state. In contrast, objective well-being pertains to measurable conditions like access to services, income levels, or environmental quality.

Happiness can encompass both subjective and objective dimensions, depending on the context. Similarly, quality of life and life satisfaction is a broad, overlapping term that require context-specific definitions. This paper aligns with the growing body of research recognizing subjective and objective metrics essential to understanding urban well-being (Camacho and Horta, 2022). By adopting a multidisciplinary approach, this study contributes to disentangling these concepts and emphasizes their application to urban environments.

It is reasonable to assume that city scale, urban morphology, and land-use systems play a non-trivial, if complex, role in determining well-being (Brown *et al.*, 2015). In this context, well-being encompasses both objective well-being (measurable factors such as access to services, infrastructure, and environmental quality) and subjective well-being (SWB) (individual perceptions and satisfaction). Research demonstrates that including spatial variables, such as urban morphology and land-use systems, significantly enhances the explanatory power of happiness models. For example, studies show that these factors account for three times the variation in well-being compared to previous cross-sectional analyses, underscoring the critical influence of geography and the environment on overall well-being (Brereton *et al.*, 2008).

Sociologist Ray Oldenburg developed the notion of a "Third Place" in the 1980s: A space for informal, free social interaction (Oldenburg, 1989). The concept has gained unexpected popularity over the years. Coffee houses are a perfect example of the third place (UNESCO Courier, 2023). This concept reminds us of the importance of the connections between people and the environment in which they live, which requires fostering.

Studies of research regarding the environment and happiness conducted by Hogan *et al.* (2016) show that younger adults' happiness, understood here as subjective well-being (SWB), encompassing feelings of satisfaction and enjoyment, is more strongly related to the accessibility of amenities that enhance a city's cultural and place characteristics. For older adults, happiness is more closely associated with the quality of city services that enable residents to age in place, aligning with aspects of subjective and objective well-being. These findings suggest that cities should emphasize quality services (e.g., good policing, schools, and healthcare access), aesthetic appeal, and accessible transport, as well as cultural and recreational opportunities to accommodate diverse needs across age groups (Hogan *et al.*, 2016).

According to the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development's Environmental Outlook for 2050 (OECD, 2012), by 2050, nearly 70% of the world's population will live in urban areas. With rapid urbanization in the following decades, urban challenges such as social exclusion, high inequality, pollution, and the health and well-being of citizens are increasingly recognized as challenges. In this context, the government plays a significant role in the environmental engagement of its citizens. Due to the variable nature of governments and their policies, longitudinal and multi-national research is needed to examine the motivational fluctuations associated with differences between or changes in governments or policies (Lavergne *et al.*, 2010). Various institutions worldwide have projects related to urban health and well-being. Key messages or recommendations from all these institutions aim to improve urban health and well-being, to recognize and reduce inequalities in health outcomes, as well as to build national and regional level capacities to promote urban health and well-being (Krefis *et al.*, 2018).

While the issues and challenges are known, this is still a nascent field with significant

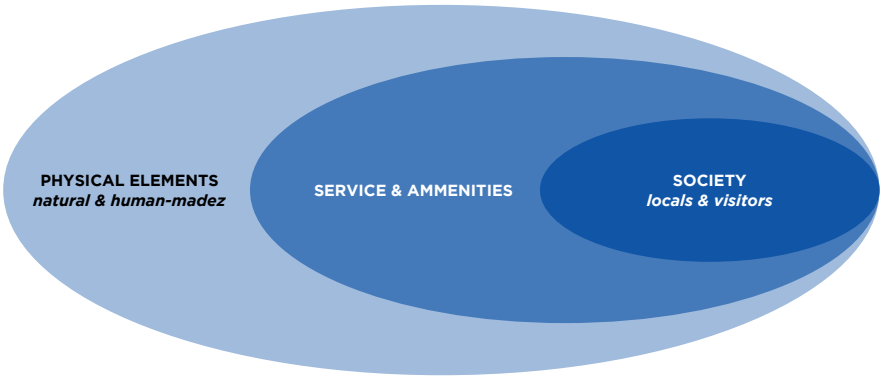


Figure 1. *Urban environment dimensions and layers which individuals encounter within an urban environment (source: Researchers, 2024).*
Note: The interconnected dimensions collectively shape the urban experience and influence objective happiness. This framework highlights the interplay of both tangible and intangible elements contributing to a city's well-being and happiness. While the study focuses on these three primary dimensions, it acknowledges the existence of other urban elements that, although relevant, fall beyond the scope of this research.

potential for further research and development. Overall, this study aims at: i) Enriching the understanding of the connections between objective happiness and urban physical environments (see clarifications; section B); ii) Providing new knowledge and suggestions for more refined and humanistic urban planning and governance; iii) Enhancing quality of life and promoting long-term objective happiness by considering the physical characteristics of the urban environment; and iv) As a long-term strategy, providing a solid theoretical foundation and serving as a resource for academics and decision-makers in urban policies.

CLARIFICATION AND DEFINITIONS

To ensure clarity in conceptualizing key terms within this research, the following clarifications and definitions have been outlined:

A. Scope of happiness: This study does not aim to measure domain-specific happiness, such as neighborhood or community satisfaction within a specific geographical area. Instead, it seeks to identify, on a universal scale, the interconnections between urban environments, people, and objective happiness. The focus is placed on overarching urban factors rather than on localized or individual happiness metrics.

B. Objective happiness: For this research, **objective happiness** is defined as a measurable state influenced by urban design and physical factors (both human-built and natural-based). This concept is rooted in Kahneman's framework of "objective happiness" (1999), which emphasizes quantifiable and observable elements of well-being; it is contrasted with **subjective well-being (SWB)**, which focuses on personal perceptions, feelings, and satisfaction (Alexandrova, 2005). Examples of objective happiness in this context include improved access to green spaces, efficient infrastructure, and enhanced air quality.

C. Multidisciplinary terminology: This research acknowledges the overlapping usage of terms such as "happiness," "well-being," "life satisfaction," and "quality of life" across disciplines. These terms often overlap in meaning but differ in focus depending on the context. For this research, **"objective happiness"** is the central concept, representing measurable and tangible outcomes influenced by urban physical environments. By adopting this term, the study aims to provide a focused framework that distinguishes it from subjective and perception-based metrics.

D. Dimensions of happiness: Happiness has different dimensions, which have been captured or measured using diverse methods in previous studies (Stiglitz et al., 2009). Within various sources in the realm of urban studies, two main dimensions or approaches to happiness have been recognized:

Subjective happiness: which aligns with hedonism, focuses on emotional satisfaction and immediate gratification.

Objective happiness: is associated with eudaimonia, which emphasizes human flourishing, purpose, and the fulfillment of higher needs (Vinh & Powdyel, 2022).

This research prioritizes objective happiness, analyzing its connection to urban environments and identifying physical characteristics that enhance this dimension.

E. Relevance to urban environments: The study bridges the gap between abstract definitions of happiness and their practical implications in urban settings. Focusing on **objective happiness** highlights the measurable impact of urban infrastructure, public spaces, and social cohesion, providing actionable insights for urban planners and policymakers.

METHODOLOGY

This research utilizes a systematic literature review to examine the relationship between urban physical environments and objective happiness. A comprehensive search was conducted across databases such as Scopus and the World Database of Happiness, focusing on peer-reviewed articles, books, and these from 2000 to 2024. Keywords like "objective happiness" and "urban physical environments" guided the search, yielding 218 results, which were narrowed down to 51 key resources after detailed screening. Additional materials, including six books and one doctoral thesis, enriched the theoretical foundation.

The selected literature spans Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas, reflecting a global and interdisciplinary approach across fields like urban studies, psychology, and environmental science. Resources were included based on their discussion of measurable happiness

outcomes, their focus on urban infrastructure and green spaces, and their contributions to urban policymaking.

This methodology bridges existing gaps in research by synthesizing diverse perspectives and provides actionable insights for improving urban well-being. Data collection lasted from October 2022 to December 2024, including the latest studies and perspectives.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Importance of Urban Issues in Objective Happiness

Many factors are equally important for objective happiness in groups and communities in an urban context. For example, income, education, sanitation, living conditions, leisure, availability of essential services, and social life engagement usually indicate elevated levels of civic engagement, trust, positive relations, and satisfaction with life (Scardua, 2018). On the other hand, many factors influence objective happiness within the physical environment. There is a growing conviction among urban and regional policymakers that the urban structure is one of them (OECD, 2014).

The results of a study by Hogan *et al.*, (2016) demonstrate a fascinating, complex relationship between the city environment and residents' happiness across their lifespan. The findings suggest that a city's planning, maintenance, and administration have an impact on the happiness of urban dwellers (Hogan *et al.*, 2016). These findings underscore the importance of cities seeking to accommodate diverse populations to prioritize specific elements. Additionally, emphasizing aesthetics and fostering a distinctive urban character can significantly enhance overall urban well-being.

Well-being and happiness have always been a central topic in economics. Still, in recent years, a broader perspective on the measurement of well-being is emerging (Deaton, 2008). Substantial efforts should be made to develop and implement robust and reliable measures of social connections, political voice, and insecurity that can be shown to predict life satisfaction (Stiglitz *et al.*, 2009). Poll (2014) found that 74 % of the interviewees believed that the best way to boost local economies is to "invest in local schools, transportation choices, walkable areas, and making the area as attractive as possible".

Along with traditional economic indicators, policymakers are increasingly concerned with the well-being of society as a measure of its success (Leyden *et al.*, 2011). In competitiveness studies, extensive research argues that societal well-being is not merely an outcome but an integral component of competitiveness. For example, fostering well-being can enhance economic productivity, social stability, and long-term resilience, which are critical aspects to maintaining a competitive advantage at a regional or global scale (Delgado *et al.*, 2012). This perspective underscores the importance of integrating well-being into policy frameworks as a goal and driver of sustainable development and competitiveness.

Most of the statistical happiness models developed to date were built using individual-level microdata to make inferences about an

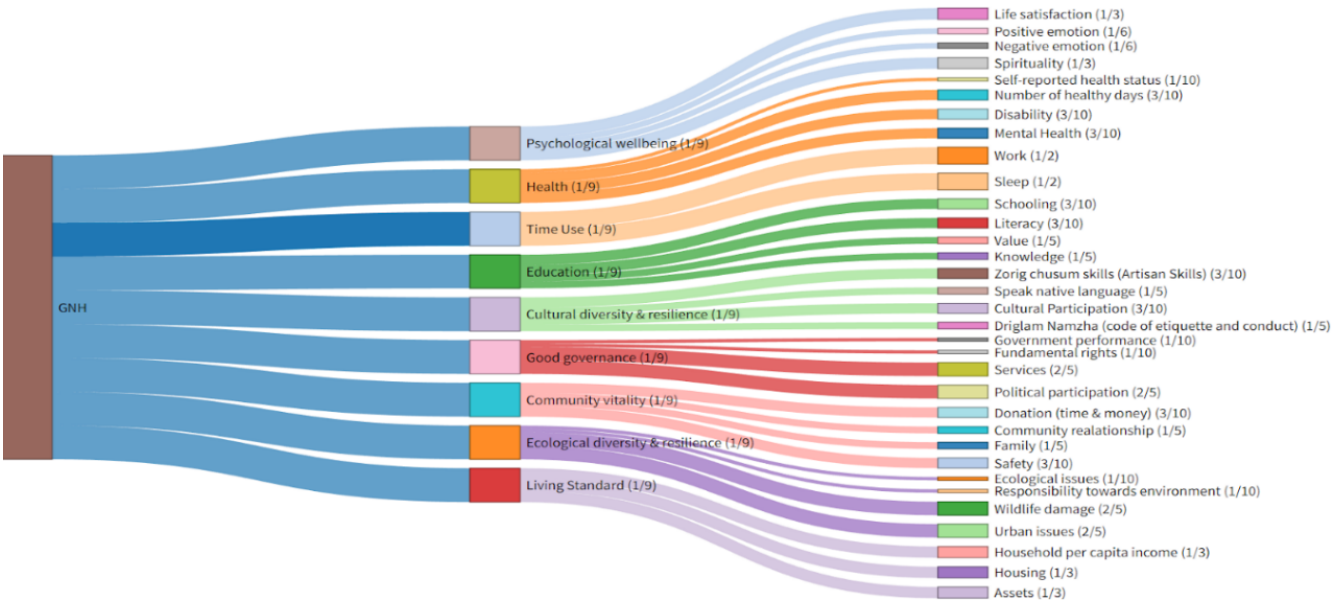


Figure 2. *The Gross National Happiness Index (source: GNH.com, 2023. https://www.grossnationalhappiness.com/).*

individual-level relationship between happiness and a wide range of socio-economic and demographic characteristics (Ballas and Tranmer, 2011). Most early studies considered individual happiness based on an econometric perspective, typically relating a subjective happiness variable to a set of explanatory variables (Blanchflower & Oswald, 2000). However, more recent research has expanded these approaches, incorporating regional and cultural contexts. For example, studies in Latin America have explored how urban social capital, neighborhood dynamics, and regional inequalities impact subjective well-being, offering a more nuanced understanding of happiness in diverse settings (Camacho and Horta, 2022; Scardua, 2018).

A city has a multi-faceted configuration that can be envisaged from different angles, namely geographical, economic, social, demographic, political, and technological, among others. In all cases, however, a thorough understanding of a city's operating mechanism requires reliable and up-to-date data based on an appropriate spatial scale (Kourtit *et al.*, 2022). In the context of urban environments, it may be helpful to think of both physical and social dimensions, which may affect or be related to the quality of individuals' lives or as aggregate level measures that may be indicators of quality of life (Stimson & Marans, 2011).

Literature cumulated with attempts to measure and analyze the quality of life. However, there is no single model, nor a comprehensive set of measures widely accepted by researchers and policymakers (Stimson & Marans, 2011). In this research, the Gross National Happiness (GNH) index has been studied to justify the importance of urban issues in facilitating objective happiness. The GNH indicator, first coined by the 4th King of Bhutan is a United Nations (UN) project created to measure population happiness as a development means. The concept implies that sustainable development should take a comprehensive approach toward notions of progress and attach equal importance to non-economic aspects of well-being (Milan & Yangchen, 2023).

The GNH index includes nine domains: health, education time use, cultural diversity and resilience, good governance, community vitality, ecological diversity, and resilience living standards (figure 2). The nine domains include 33 indicators, and the Index seeks to measure the nation's well-being directly by starting with each person's achievements in every indicator. Urban issues are considered one of the most critical ecological diversity and resilience indicators. Like economic and human capital, social capital has important values to individuals and communities (Rogers *et al.*, 2011).

The concept of regional resilience has aroused heated discussions in recent studies. It is applied in multiple fields, including ecological, engineering, economic and social fields (Nematollahi *et al.*, 2022). The main conclusion of a study conducted on urban resilience in residents' happiness in China shows that raising urban resilience is an effective strategy for strengthening residents' happiness. Findings show that, as urban resilience increases, residents feel more satisfied with their lives, and each sub-class resilience index (ecological resilience, economic resilience, infrastructure resilience, and social resilience) of the four aspects is positively related to residents' happiness (Liao *et al.*, 2022).

Like economic and human capital, social capital is considered to have essential values to both individuals and communities (Rogers *et al.*, 2011). Nevertheless, there will never be a city or city region considered 'optimal' from a happiness point of view, given that (as also discussed in the section above) various characteristics and factors are valued differently by different people, or by the same people at different points in their 'life course' (Whisler *et al.*, 2008).

The Role of Urban Design and Amenities in Provoking Happiness

There is extensive urban science literature focusing on happiness and wellness issues, in which the role of urban design and amenities has been analyzed to model the quality of urban life. In a study conducted by Pringle & Guaralda (2018) on urban happiness, a crucial question arose: Perhaps there is an urban language of characteristics that can be formulated, one that is essential to human happiness. Therefore, the question remains as to what is quintessential for happiness for people in an urban context (Pringle & Guaralda, 2018).

At this stage, the research focuses on positive emotions in users and visitors, which are promoted by physical elements within an urban environment. In addition, it seeks to take into account the mental effects of urban physical elements, both natural and human-made. Furthermore, it aims to strengthen the associations between physical elements in an urban context, attempting to understand how intangible factors improve objective happiness within an urban environment.

The urban environment plays a crucial role in a person's life. Urban issues such as lack of facilities, noise, pollution, and crime may affect people's health (Ayu Abdullah & Zulkifli, 2015). A study conducted in 2011 by Leyden *et al.* across 10 urban areas demonstrates that the design and conditions of cities are associated with the happiness of residents. Cities that provide easy access to convenient public transportation as well as cultural and leisure amenities promote happiness (Leyden *et al.*, 2011).

According to Smith (1978), urban amenities play a vital role in determining the quality of life, experience, livability, and well-being of urban residents. Multifunctional amenities can attract residents, creating a delicate feedback and interaction cycle that fuels the demand for services and attracts more residents (Tonkiss, 2013). Amenities are key to understand the quality of life precisely because they make some places attractive for living and working, especially compared to other places that lack them and/or are burdened with their opposites: disamenities (Mulligan & Carruthers, 2011).

A city's design can play a significant role in the desirability of city living. City neighborhoods designed with mixed uses (i.e., a combination of residential and workplaces along with shops, pubs, parks, and civic facilities) and a vibrant, active sidewalk life, can influence the desirability of city living and have positive effects on the personal well-being of residents (Jacobs, 1961). On the other hand, more amenities and surface area, and less population often translate into a higher quality of life (Albouy, 2008).

Indeed, modern cities display a complex arena with multiple actors, diverse interests, and different morphological structures (Batty, 2007). Identifying the physical factors responsible for eliciting happiness in urban environments could revolutionize the way we design spaces. Rather than unintentionally creating spaces that generate negative emotions among users, we can purposefully craft future urban areas to promote happiness. Recognizing the elements that engender positivity becomes essential in the strategic planning, design, and construction of cities that prioritize the well-being of their inhabitants. Figure 3 shows the physical characteristics of the urban environment that people may care about, examining several physical factors that may affect happiness and facilitate socialization in an urban environment.

Although very place-specific, these features can be used as a foundation and starting point to support the future planning and design of happy cities. This section corroborates the importance of maintaining a balance among the physical characteristics of the urban environment for social cohesion to support people's happiness. As urban planning moves from a centralized, top-down approach to a decentralized, bottom-up perspective, our conception of urban systems is changing (Batty, 2007).

Despite some inconsistencies, the way a neighborhood is built can have major impacts on the social capital of its dwellers. In particular, walkability, public places, and mixed-use are associated with improvements in social capital (Frank, 2005). According to the results of a recent study regarding urban forestry and greening conducted in 2023, improving the physical measures of urban green space has the potential to enhance people's happiness. The contextual nuances of the urban green space-happiness relationship were observed throughout the review (Syamili *et al.*, 2023). Green spaces which refer to vegetation (trees, grass, forests, parks, etc.) can also have a significant impact on mental health (Gascon *et al.*, 2015).

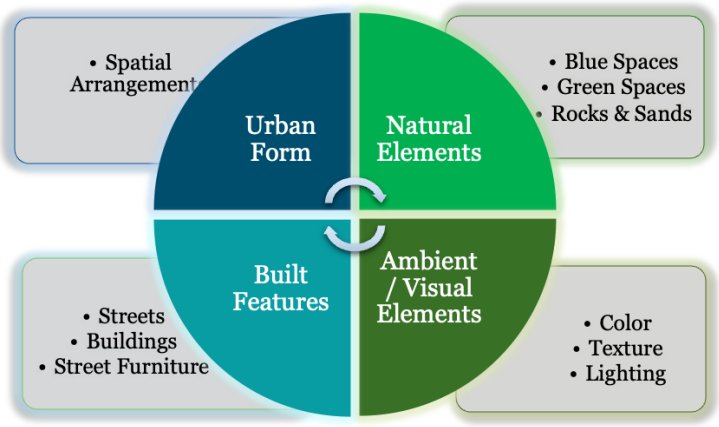


Figure 3. *Physical characteristics in an urban environment (source: Images of Urban Happiness: Pringle & Guaralda, 2018).*

Linking Objective Happiness to Urban Environments

There is growing interest among urban researchers and geographers in the relationship between urban environments and happiness. Previous studies have primarily focused on people's long-term overall well-being, often emphasizing subjective well-being (SWB), which captures individual perceptions and satisfaction levels. However, there is limited evidence linking momentary happiness (a form of SWB) with immediate urban environments (Su *et al.*, 2022).

This study adopts a broader perspective by focusing on objective happiness and measurable outcomes influenced by urban design and infrastructure. According to Leyden *et al.* (2011), people care about the place where they live and how it is maintained. Feeling connected to people and the city is critical for the happiness of urban residents, combining elements of both SWB and objective happiness (Leyden *et al.*, 2011).

This section addresses the interconnection between the urban environment and objective happiness (figure 4) while further investigating how our everyday routines, emotions, performance, social connections, and overall well-being are profoundly impacted by our living, working, and recreational environments. This segment has a people-oriented approach and emphasizes social cohesion and quality of life improvements, setting the stage for arguments in favor of enhanced future urban development policies and guidelines from a planning or design point of view.

An urban system comprises not just tangible elements, such as the built environment, but also intangible factors like the urban atmosphere, along with the morphological aspects like its shape and structure. In other words, cities not only exhibit a significant degree of socioeconomic heterogeneity (income, wealth, education) among urban districts and population groups but also a considerable variation in the sense of well-being and happiness (Kourtit *et al.*, 2022).

In a world with increasing urban populations, understanding how urban environments

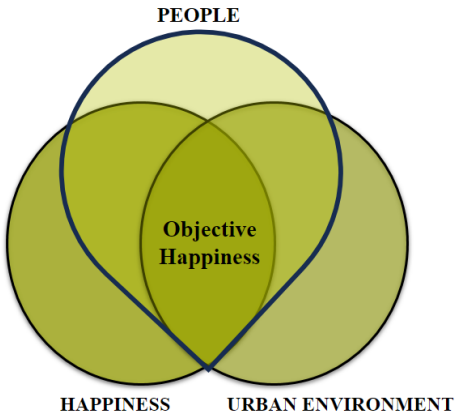


Figure 4. *Interconnection between the urban environment and objective happiness (source: Researchers, 2023).*

influence well-being is a critical topic in current literature. It is essential to examine the elements in an urban space that positively or negatively affects individuals, including both subjective and objective well-being (Pringle & Guaralda, 2018).

When exploring the relationship between environmental factors and urban effects on mental states no simple deterministic functional relationship is found. The combined effect of multiple factors is presented through statistical relationships, but the impact of different environmental factors on mental states is something that needs to be ascertained before making predictions (Wu *et al*., 2020).

Kourtit and colleagues (2022), call the interconnection between the environment and people in an urban area "city love". They believe city love is not a vaguely used term but can be measured through appropriate numerical indicators, which stem from the appreciation, contentment, or satisfaction derived by citizens from the use of or access to urban services (related to both the city's 'body' and 'soul') (Kourtit *et al.*, 2022). Place indicators include residents' ratings of how beautiful their city is, how proud they are to live there, how easy it is to access shops, cultural and sports amenities, parks, and green spaces, and the convenience of public transportation (Goldberg *et al.*, 2012).

Urban planning, public health, natural sciences, and epidemiology have all been the focus of studies to elucidate the potential links between urban spaces and well-being (Krefis *et al.*, 2018). A city's environmental and social health can indicate the mental state of people living in certain areas, and exploring urban dwellers' mental states is crucial to understanding cities and improving their management (Wu *et al.*, 2020).

Beyond traditional economic metrics, policymakers are increasingly prioritizing well-being a core indicator of societal progress. While subjective well-being (SWB) captures individual perceptions and satisfaction, it is distinct from objective happiness, which emphasizes measurable outcomes shaped by urban design and infrastructure. Understanding the interaction between urbanization and ecological environments is essential for two reasons: 1) From a practical standpoint, it provides scientific references for effective urban development strategies; and 2) It helps mitigate ecological risks associated with accelerated urbanization (Liao *et al.*, 2023).

The features of the built environment at the city level are also associated with residents' happiness, in addition to the neighborhood-built environment (Brereton *et al.*, 2008). In terms of the impacts of the built environment, the results shared by Yin *et. al.* (2019) for China shows that residents' happiness is significantly associated with both levels of built environment in cities with more than 50% of urbanization rates. Conversely, residents' happiness is only significantly correlated with the neighborhood-built environment in cities with less than 50% of urbanization rates. Hence, to improve residents' happiness, urban planners and policymakers should consider multi-scale-built environmental characteristics according to local urbanization levels (Yin *et al.*, 2019).

The importance of the urban environment to people seems universal around the world (Krekel & MacKerron, 2020). Places can facilitate human social connections and relationships because people are often connected to quality places that are cultural and distinctive. City neighborhoods are a vital environment that can facilitate social connections and the connection with the place itself. These connections, in turn, are essential for happiness and one's quality of life (Putnam, 2001).

CONCLUSION

This paper demonstrates a positive correlation between urban environments and objective happiness, by synthesizing findings from multidisciplinary research. The connection is established through measurable outcomes, such as improved access to amenities, enhanced public spaces, and the aesthetic and functional quality of urban design. Collectively, these factors shape the physical and social conditions that significantly contribute to residents' happiness.

Having reviewed numerous studies on objective happiness and urban concerns, this research highlights how physical factors, such as nature-based and human-made environments, and urban infrastructure, directly influence happiness. For example, access to green spaces, well-maintained urban infrastructure, and efficient public transportation systems have consistently been linked to enhanced quality of life and emotional well-being. The growing body of literature emphasizes that urban settings

affect not only individual satisfaction but also societal cohesion and sustainability.

The researchers have initiated efforts to identify a coherent framework –a "language" of urban characteristics– that contributes to happiness. This involves categorizing and linking physical urban elements, such as spatial arrangements, aesthetics, and social spaces, to measurable well-being outcomes.

While these contributions hold immense potential, they remain at a developmental stage, requiring further refinement and empirical validation.

Finally, the relationship between urban environments and objective happiness is multifaceted and transcends traditional disciplinary boundaries. Addressing this complexity demands a multidisciplinary approach that integrates insights from urban studies, sociology, economics, and environmental science. By prioritizing urban planning that promotes both subjective and objective well-being, cities can create happier, healthier, and more equitable living spaces, ultimately contributing to a higher quality of life for their residents.

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