

Original Research Article

Identifying the Factors Contributing to Happiness Based on the Features of Mixed-Use Urban Centers*

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Abstract | Happiness is a broad and complex concept, which has numerous definitions in cognitive sciences. Such definitions have been developed based on human perceptions of this concept in different periods. Many studies have been carried out on the definition of happiness in different fields of study such as philosophy, economics, and especially social sciences. The present study attempts to identify the factors resulting in happiness in mixed-use urban centers based on social studies, which have been conducted in recent decades. Accordingly, urban spaces are described as important places for social relations. One of the reasons for the promotion and development of mixed-use urban centers is the formation of social interactions. Since the number of these centers has been considerably increasing in recent years, it seems necessary to pay attention to them as a place promoting people's interaction and happiness. The main goal of the present research is to identify the features of mixed-used urban centers contributing to users' interaction and happiness. The content analysis and observation method were used to investigate the relationship between happiness and social interaction. Further, the development of mixed-use urban centers was investigated by focusing on the case studies in Tehran and examining the fusion of diversity, density, and interactive space design in the form of the building types such as cinema complexes, playgrounds, various stores, restaurants, and food courts; as well as features such as vertical connection, voids, indoor/outdoor connection, security, and shared spaces. In conclusion, based on the happiness criteria set for spaces and by identifying the characteristics of mixed-use urban centers based on past studies, the study found that mixed-use centers play an important role in the improvement of happiness and social interactions for citizens.

Keywords | *Happiness, Mixed-use Urban Centers, Social Interactions.*

Introduction | Happiness and its achievement have always attracted the attention of humans. This complex and multifaceted concept is defined differently by philosophers and thinkers throughout history. Philosophers have grasped

happiness in an abstract form by two main eudemonistic and hedonistic definitions. After the age of enlightenment, thinkers proposed scientific methods to define happiness, mostly providing such quantitative criteria as income level to measure happiness. In the late 20th century, social approaches in interdisciplinary studies of economics revealed that people's

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interaction is a contributory factor of happiness. Social interactions affect people's happiness more than quantitative personal factors such as level of income or total assets. In the new urban planning, social interaction is also considered an important criterion for urban development. According to the trend of mixed-use development in the history of urban planning, despite various types of these spaces, they all share characteristics regarding the improvement of social interactions. The studies on the trend of mixed-use development indicate that in the past, mixed-use planning was developed aiming at reducing the distances and solving the problems caused by long distances and lack of transport vehicles. In the industrial age, mixed-use approaches were not popular because of the population growth, environmental pollution, and emergence of vehicles in cities. However, in the second half of the 20th century, by the social problems arising from separation and dispersion in cities, the mixed-use idea was proposed again as an appropriate solution for the problem of cities. Therefore, in the present study, attempts have been made to identify the features implying happiness in mixed-use centers according to social interaction that is the common subject of happiness and urban mixed-use spaces. Thus, the research background section concerns this subject regarding space and happiness. In the theoretical foundation section, the trend of the concepts of happiness and urban mixed-use development are investigated. Since the last decade, these centers are in rapid development in Tehran; thus, the adaptation of some features of these centers to happiness criteria is discussed in this study. Results indicate that mixed-use urban centers have a significant capability for the happiness of users according to functions and spatial features.

Research background

In this section, existing studies are reviewed, and the physical and spatial factors concerning the concept of happiness and improvement of social interaction in urban spaces and shopping centers investigated by former researchers are presented in Table 1. Furthermore, Fig. 1. Presents the studies carried out on mixed-use urban spaces and their results.

In *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, Jane Jacobs pointed out the necessity of the mixture of main land-uses (use diversity), physical diversity, sufficient population density, and diversity of activities as improving factors of urban spaces and social interaction (Jacobs, 1961). Martin Bershaw considered such criteria as diversity, appropriate public space, shopping and recreation, public transport, mobility, and leisure as contributory qualities bringing happiness (Chapman, 2015). Another research titled "Spaces' Livability in Modern Commercial Centers; Case Study: The Triangle Shopping Center" investigated a successful sample of commercial complexes. Its case study is "the Triangle shopping center" located in England. This center is a successful example of improvement projects. The study results of the improvement

process of the Triangle shopping center reveal that diversity, attractiveness, proper view and landscape, density, and identity are the most important factors contributing to the design of this center (Dideban, Momeni & Niknam, 2017). In their research, Khastoo and Saeidi Rezvani (2010) classified the contributory factors of happiness into four groups, and under the group of design factors, they counted such variables as legibility, sense of place, architectural distinction, connection of different parts, friendly environment, and safety. Sarvar et al. investigated the role of commercial centers in the creation of urban spaces and counted the factors contributing to dynamism and happiness of urban spaces including public realms and physical and natural elements in spaces, changeability of spaces for various uses, connection and correlation of spaces, mixed uses, the space's response to different social groups, visual and functional permeability, security, social safety, timeliness, and population density (Sarvar, Salahi Sarikhanbiglou & Mobaraky, 2017). Izadpanah and Habibi (2019) investigated the malls as public spaces and the factors considered by shoppers as the criteria for assessing the appropriateness of public spaces including accessibility, sociability, security, and control. Bahrami and Khosravi (2015) introduced the spatial-behavioral factors (i.e. comfort and ease, safety feeling, navigation and eligibility, accessibility and permeability, and social interactions. contributing to the assemblage quality in shopping centers). Golkar considered livability as equivalent to urban design quality. He introduced legibility, sense of time, sensual significance, sense of belonging, permeability, and movement, mixing of function and form, public realm quality, climate comfort, safety and security, flexibility, harmony with the environment, energy efficiency, and cleanness as the factors contributing to livability (Golkar, 2007). Foroutan, Sanatgar Kakhki, and Rezaei studied commercial and shopping centers and investigated the environmental quality for activities, security, physical permeability, diversity, visual permeability, visual diversity, legibility, and visual flexibility (Foroutan, Sanatgar Kakhki & Rezaei, 2013). Nahavandi et al. investigated the livability of service spaces in commercial centers by such factors as security, evening economy, dynamic economy, vegetation, use diversity, environment quality improvement, enclosure, permeability and accessibility, legibility, environmental comfort, and density (Nahavandi, Zabetian, Pour Ahmad & Kheyroddin, 2017). Rahimi and Jafari (2018) conducted a study titled "The Measurement of Livability of Historical and Modern Commercial Spaces in the City of Tabriz" and considered capability of activity and accessibility as the factors affecting the livability of these centers. The idea of mixed-use urban spaces is developed in new urban planning to improve social interactions in urban spaces. Although this idea has existed since a long time ago in different cities around the world, there have always been supporters and opponents. The idea of mixed-use urban space is a vague and challenging idea that is

Table 1. Introducing the factors of happiness in urban spaces and shopping centers based on research background. Source: Authors.

Researchers	Year	Factors of happiness
Jacobs	1961	Mixed land-use, physical diversity, sufficient population density, and diversity of activities
Bershaw-Chapman	2015	Diversity, appropriate public space, shopping and recreation, mobility, leisure
Golkar	2007	Legibility, sense of time, permeability, movement, mixed-use and form, public realm, safety, and security
Khastoo & Saeidi Rezvani	2010	Legibility, sense of place, architectural distinction, connection of different parts, friendly environment, security
Foroutan et al.	2013	The environmental quality for activities, security, physical permeability, diversity, visual permeability, diversity, legibility, and flexibility
Bahrami & Khosravi	2015	Comfort and ease, safety, navigation, permeability, attraction, and interaction
Sarvar et al.	2017	Public and natural realm, flexible space, correlation of space, Mixed-uses
Dideban, Momeni & Niknam	2017	Diversity, attractiveness, proper view, density, Identity
Nahavandi et al.	2017	Security, diversity, environment quality, enclosure, permeability, accessibility

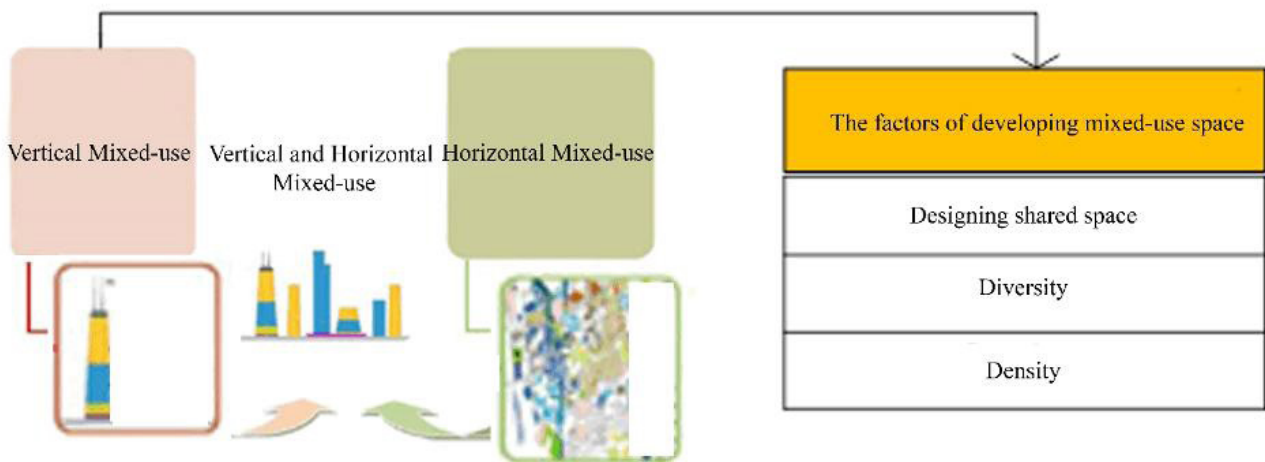


Fig. 1. The features of urban mixed-use centers. Source: Authors.

defined numerously (Hoppenbrouwer & Louw, 2005). Also, many researchers have investigated mixed-use development in suburban areas (Filion, McSpurren & Huether, 2000; Grant, 2007; Grant & Perrott, 2011). The common feature of these definitions is the concentration of humans' activities on the surrounding environment and improving their interaction with the environment (Hoppenbrouwer & Louw, 2005). Defining the mixed-use spaces, Gong asserts that the mixed-use space is the activity of residents in a specific boundary of the land by using natural resources and human potentials. By another definition, Gong defines the mixed-use space as a place required by humans for living and meeting various needs (Gong, 2009). Some researchers think of mixed-use spaces as buildings with various uses such as a combination of residential units, stores, cafes, restaurants, cinemas, offices, etc. (Nabil & Abd Eldayem, 2015). Some others describe the

mixed-use concept as the inhomogeneous pattern of land use in terms of geography constituting a combination of residential, commercial, industrial, office, agricultural, and recreational uses (Croucher, Wallace & Duffy, 2017). Nabil and Eldayem (2015) classify the mixed-use spaces into three groups: vertical, horizontal, and a combination of both Fig. 1 shows different types of mixed-use spaces. Vertical mixed-use spaces mostly include two different commercials, residential, medical, cultural, recreational, etc. uses constituting a building. Horizontal mixed-use spaces usually contain at least two different uses adjacent to each other that are accessed through sidewalks or transport vehicles. Furthermore, the mixed-use spaces type 3 is a combination of the vertical and horizontal models. Another important feature of mixed-use urban spaces is the capability of promoting selective social activities, which occur the interaction and participation of people in mixed-use

spaces. Examples of such activities are conversation, children at play, seeing and hearing other people, and assemblage of different groups (Samburu & Hyombe, 2019, 63).

This research is different from past studies in terms of the view toward the concept of happiness which is based on new theories. According to these theories, social interaction is the main factor contributing to happiness in a society. Social interaction is also a major goal of mixed-use urban centers. Therefore, planners and designers could pay attention to spatial configurations in mixed-use urban centers and play a contributory role in the happiness of users.

Methodology

In this study, the content analysis method was used to extract the concept of happiness based on new definitions in the contemporary age. Furthermore, the observation and content analysis were used to identify the main features of urban mixed-use development. The happiness based on social interaction was then adapted to the physical features of mixed-use urban centers.

Research objective and hypothesis

The main objective of this research is to identify the features of mixed-use urban centers contributing to the interaction and happiness of citizens. The hypothesis of this study suggests that a reason for the popularity and attention paid to urban mixed-use development is the improvement of interaction and consequently, the happiness of citizens.

Research question

Based on what has been discussed, the question of this study is: Which features of mixed-use urban centers do contribute to the improvement of citizens' interaction and happiness?

Theoretical foundation

The theoretical foundation of this study constitutes four sections including concepts of happiness, happiness based on social interaction in the present age, urban mixed-use development trend, and interaction in mixed-use urban centers.

• Concepts of happiness

Happiness and happy life have been great concerns for humans since the classical Greek period. The philosophical foundations of happiness could be found in the views of Plato and Socrates. Plato defined happiness as the perfection of human virtues, and Socrates claimed that happiness is defined through pleasure. In the early Christian period, happiness was integrated with perfectionist definitions, and ideological and perfectionist happiness turned into a tool for social control and ruling. The common feature of these definitions proposed before the age of enlightenment is their abstract conceptions of happiness. Since the enlightenment period, happiness became an earthly and accessible subject for

everyone, and the responsibility of governments was to ease the achievement of happiness for people. In this period, by the propagation of sciences in studies, the concept of happiness was transformed. The science of happiness was aimed at connecting the measurable and assessable factors to justify the amount of happiness. For example, biologists considered happiness to be connected with the level of some hormones in the body. Psychologists also discussed happiness in terms of positive psychology which, contrary to traditional psychology (improvement psychology) (Ryan & Deci, 2000) focused on the scientific studies of happiness, well-being, and positive feelings. Martin Seligman considers positive psychology as concerned with emotions and personal positive characteristics (courage, altruism, moral conscience, etc.). Jeremy Bentham, the English reformer proposed the concept of utilitarianism and stated that since happiness is truly a set of pleasure without pain and suffering, the best method and policy of governments and people for maximizing the pleasures is summarized in this formula: maximizing the first (pleasure) and minimizing the second (pain). Therefore, the main problem was how to calculate pleasure and pain (Montgomery, 2016). Bentham invented a set of tables called Felicific Calculus in which the degree and amount of pleasure or pain that a specific action is likely to induce was evaluated (Bentham, 1996). Feelings were disregarded by Bentham in his calculus. After Bentham, economists followed his concept of utilitarianism but smartly reduced the calculation of happiness to money and people's decision about spending money –which was the calculable factor for them. Thus, they replaced purchasing power with utilitarianism and benefit.

Publishing a paper titled “Does economic growth improve the human lot?” Richard Easterlin was the first person who responded to this question negatively (Veenhoven & Hagerty, 2006). He showed that in the United States, although the income per capita is doubled, happiness is not improved (Easterlin, 2006). According to his findings, during this period, Americans have become richer, but not happier. His claim paved the way for the new literature in the studies of development assessment of a society titled as “happiness level of society”

• Happiness based on social interaction in the present age

Whewell et al. carried out multiple reviews of the Gallup World Poll by statistical filters and found that in the relationships of people, satisfaction with life is of greater importance than income. In his “The Metropolis”, Simmel discussed a condition in which human relationships are declining. In his analysis, he paid attention to the elimination of emotional and loyal relationships and the dominance of accounting relationships. According to Simmel, the feelings and especially emotional relationship of people is lost in society, and this exerts negative impacts on life quality (Nazari & Mokhtari, 2010). Simmel considered individuality as a characteristic of

modernity, and happiness as integrated with it (Glatzer, 2000). Christian Bjørnskov investigated the relationship between social capital and happiness in the United States in the 1983-1998 period. Conducted as the secondary analysis panel 9 data of the statistical center, his study indicated that social capital has a positive impact on happiness (Bjørnskov, 2007). In his research, Chang concluded that all of the social capital components (participation involuntary and non-voluntary institutions, participation in communities, and trust) contribute to mental happiness (Chang, 2009). In his research, Leung found that such elements as the social bond are in a significant relationship with happiness even after controlling major underlying features (Leung, Kier, Fung, Fung & Sproule, 2013). Growiec and Growiec (2010) studied the simultaneous impact of social capital on happiness and concluded that there is a positive network and bond between social capital and people's happiness. Han Sehee conducted a study titled "Social Capital and Subjective Happiness: Which Contexts Matter?" and investigated the role of social capital and happiness. The results of this study indicate that neighborhood social context is of great importance for the understanding of individuals' different types of happiness (Han, 2015). According to the studies concerning the definition of happiness, the improvement of social relationships and interactions between people is of undeniable importance. Happiness is not the result of people's accumulation of feelings, rather it is a social outcome of interactions between people leading to their happiness. Therefore, to achieve a happy society, it is necessary to improve people's interaction instead of improving the characteristics of their life, Table 2.

• **Mixed-use urban development process**

By reviewing the history of urban spaces, it seems that the creation of mixed-use spaces in cities has been promoted strongly in some historical periods and criticized in other periods. In the 1000-3500 BC period, segregation has been a common urban concept in such civilizations as Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Greece. Services surrounded religious elements and other uses provided residence. In the period from 700 BC to 1900 AC, mixed-use spaces emerged in cities. In this period, non-residential building types were scattered horizontally and vertically among residential buildings. Commercial spaces down the residential floors were common. This is also

evident in Islamic cities. Most houses surrounded retail stores, markets, religious spaces, and other services. The use of mixed-use spaces for simpler accessibility was more efficient because there was no transport vehicle in that period. By the Industrial Revolution and the emergence of such problems as pollution and high population in cities, the idea of segregation was emphasized in urban planning. In the 60s and 70s, the idea of mixed-use urban spaces attracted the attention again, and it was proposed as a solution for activating great urban regions. From the late 70s to the end of the 80s, the mixed-use idea was also accepted as the solution for improving worn-out urban areas. From 1990 to 2000, mixed-use spaces were considered as the main design component of sustainable residential neighborhoods and the principle of smart growth (Nabil & Abd Eldayem, 2015). According to the changing trend of mixed-use spaces in cities presented in Fig. 2, the call for the return to mixed-use spaces seems to be a logical solution for sustainable and smart urban planning. Mixed-use spaces improve the cities socially and economically by attracting population, increase in land value, increase in tax revenue, increase in pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

• **Interaction in mixed-use urban centers**

Nowadays, mixed-use centers are referred to as public spaces in which shopping is no longer the main act. Apart from various shopping experiences studied by such sociologists as Abbas Kazemi and Yousef Abazari, other social acts also take place in mixed-use spaces. Strolling in these centers will not necessarily lead to buying; however, buying is itself a kind of social relationship. Like other public realms, shopping realms and especially mixed-use centers contribute to cultural changes and rethinking in a society. As new shopping realms, mixed-use centers are the active realms in the daily life of people, and they are pioneers in committing changes, transformations, and recreating multiple cultural forms (Kazemi & Abazari, 2005). Further, selective activities are facilitated in these spaces. Since these centers are indoor spaces and it is possible to use them in different seasons, they could be used in different situations. In mixed-use centers, physical and mental security is provided at different hours either by security guards or due to the presence of people and sellers. In addition to spatial function and their role in fulfilling the needs of an area, these spaces turn into a club or

Table 2. Approaches of Happiness. Source: Authors.

Approaches of happiness		Concept of happiness
Philosophical-abstract approaches		-Eudaimonic happiness: Plato -Hedonic: Socrates
Scientific-quantitative approaches	People's happiness is a function of quantitative-material indicators, such as the level of income, the sum of which leads to a happy society.	
A new social-approach	Happiness is the result of a group of social interactions of individuals, which leads to the emergence of a happy society.	

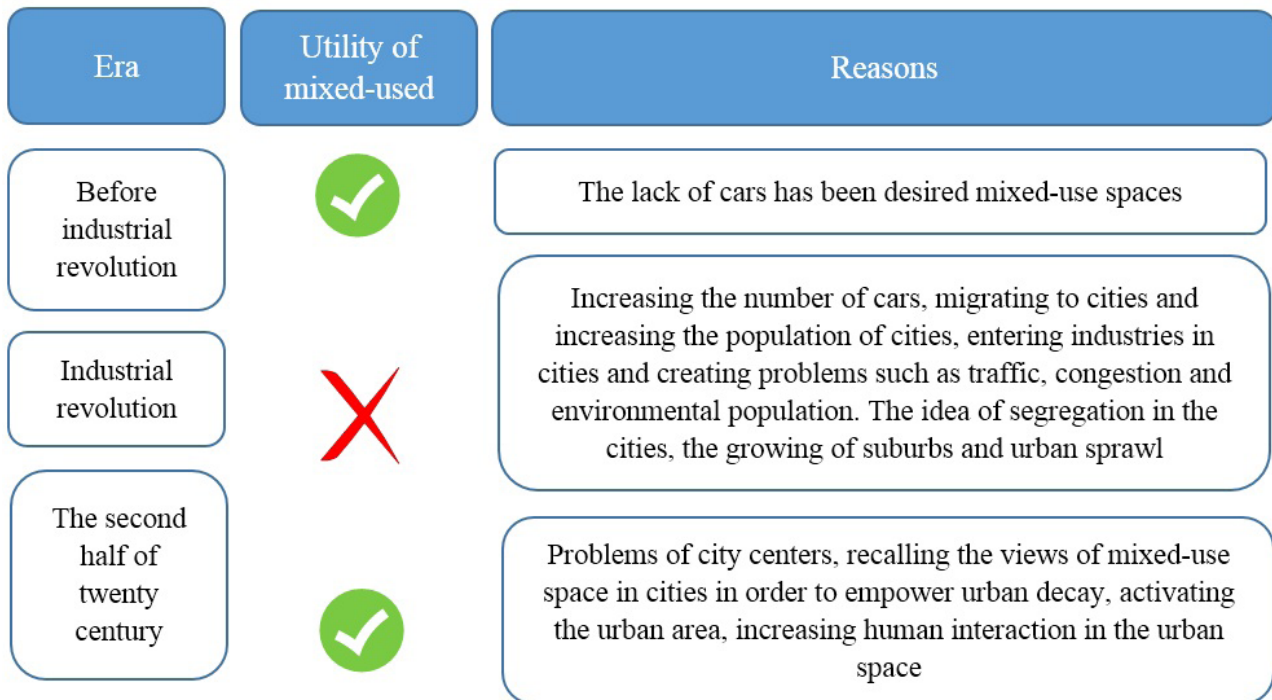


Fig. 2. The evolution of urban mixed-use centers. Source: Authors.

place of interaction by changes in meaning, and they could play the role of a social gathering place in the urban space of Tehran (Khademi & Alipour, 2017).

• **Empirical studies on mixed-use urban centers**

According to the reception of new mixed-use centers in Tehran by people, it seems that a new experience of these urban spaces is being formed in these places. A city is certainly alive by the presence and interaction of people, and people need spaces so that they could be together. By eliminating or neglecting the design of these spaces, people respond to the need for urban spaces by favorably receiving the new types of mixed-use centers because of various uses, easy access, and diversity of activities. It is not only for shopping that people go to these places but the concept of being and presence has given these spaces a new taste. Evidence shows that more than a half of citizens attend mixed-use urban centers for purposes other than shopping (Shirmohamadian & Azizi, 2020).

In the present study, all the classifications of shopping centers are studied, and the lifestyle centers were selected according to ICSC (International Council of Shopping Centers) criteria which are the closest type of centers to the new urban centers of the 90s in Tehran. Furthermore, in terms of the mixed-use center definition, these centers are classified as vertical mixed-use urban centers including cinemas, playgrounds, restaurants, cafes, and various commercial units. The selected centers are presented in Table 3.

Discussion

According to the new approaches toward the definition of happiness, this concept is inevitably and continuously

dependent on social interaction. Social interaction is the key element of happiness in the present age; therefore, as the main foundation of social interaction, urban spaces could provide their users with the required capacity for happiness. A mixed-use center is an important type of urban space in the new urban planning. A reason for its development is the improvement of interaction and happiness in citizens. These centers have emerged in different forms according to different spatial-temporal situations. In addition, their common feature is the improvement of interactions due to the density and diversity of uses and the creation of spaces for participation. In this research, the mixed-use centers of Tehran are detected as a type of mixed-use urban spaces contributing to the improvement of interaction and happiness of citizens. Urbanization has caused the urban spaces to lose their main function. Lack of urban space is evident in a city like Tehran, and it has led to the emergence of collective spaces in new centers of Tehran under the title of mixed-use centers. Since people favorably received the new types of mixed-use centers in Tehran, it seems that a new experience of urban spaces is developing in these places. According to what was mentioned about mixed-use urban centers, these centers contain a different spectrum of cultural, commercial, recreational, social, and other uses in a vertical complex. Contrary to the past approaches toward shopping centers in Tehran, the special design of these centers has provided users with selective activities. Diversity and density have provided different simultaneous activities especially for women who are the main users of mixed-use spaces.

Table 3. The selected multi-purpose centers in Tehran. Source: Authors.

The name mixed-use center	Area (m ²)	Region	Year of construction	Function
Galleria	40511 m ²	1	2019	Commercial, Cultural, Recreational
Arg	700000 m ²	1	2012	Commercial, Cultural, Recreational
Samarghand	32500 m ²	5	2015	Commercial, cultural, Recreational, Office
Kourosh	23000 m ²	5	2014	Commercial, Cultural, Recreational
Kian	15000 m ²	19	2011	Commercial, Cultural, Recreational
Heravi	15000 m ²	4	2018	Commercial, Cultural, Recreational

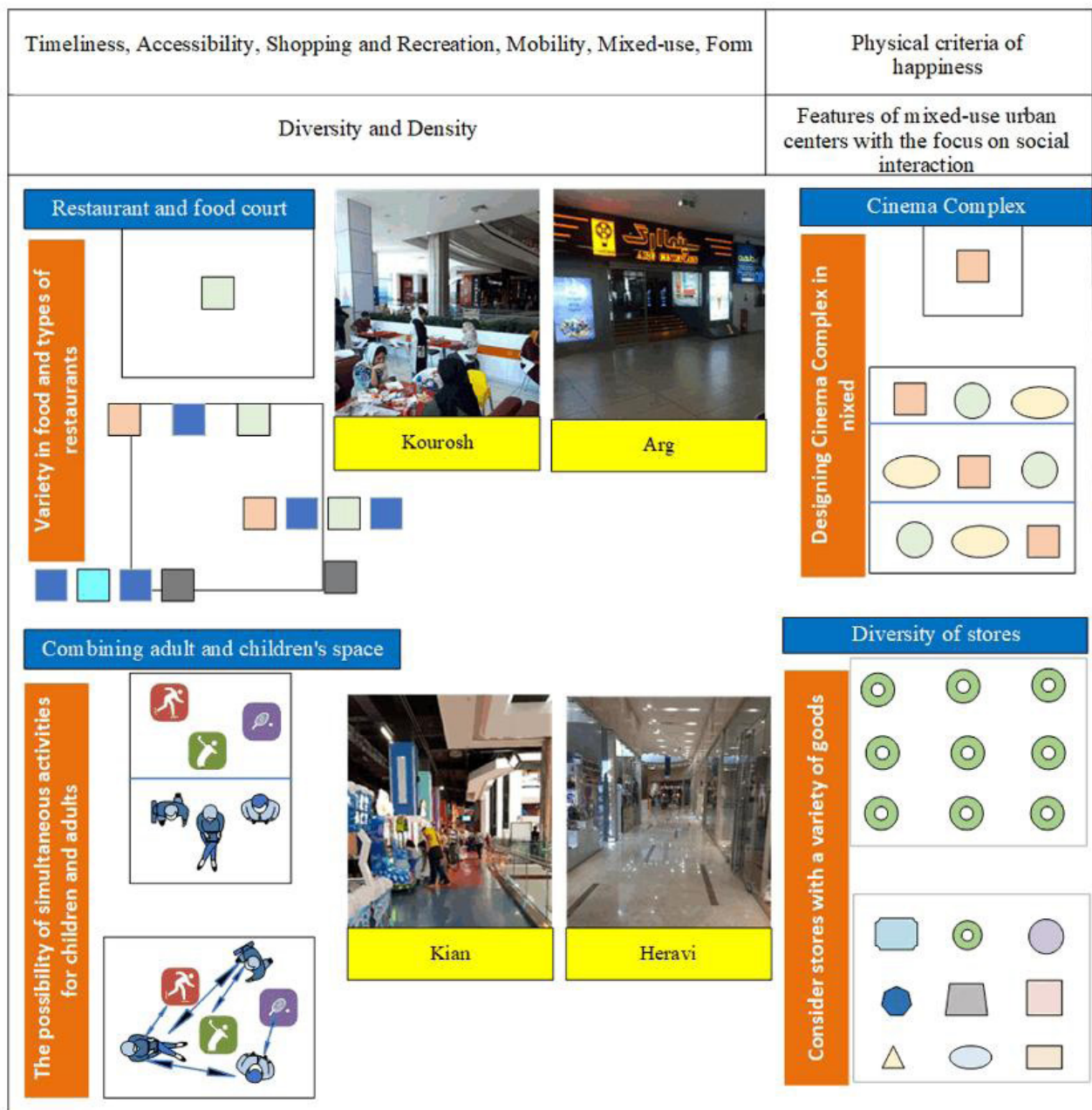


Fig. 3. Adaptation of physical happiness criteria with diversity and density in urban mixed-use centers. Source: Authors.

As presented in Fig. 3, diversity and density will improve the accessibility of the place and make it possible for different social age groups to use a place. Furthermore, diversity will lead to the use of space in more varied times. Density will reduce the dependence of citizens on private vehicles; thus, by increasing the mobility in spaces, there will be more interaction and happiness. Diversity and density are provided by such uses as restaurants and food courts, playgrounds, stores, and cinema complexes. Restaurants and food courts are the spaces that cause social multiplicity, interaction, and happiness because of their reception by a wider range of people in society. Cinema complexes make a place more accessible for different age groups. This could lead to the social diversity of a place. In the mixed-use spaces, synchronicity and coherence of playgrounds and adults' activity will lead to happiness and interaction in the spaces. Different kinds of stores such as supermarkets, bookshops, toy stores, drug stores, etc. will create diversity in spaces especially in the present age, in which many people prefer online shopping due to the circumstances of big cities.

As presented in Fig. 4, the spaces for social interactions will improve creativity and freedom in users' activities. Further, by increasing the trust and relationships in a place, the interactive space will prevent social isolation. This will increase interaction and consequently, happiness. The exterior body of mixed-use centers could function as a bridge and connect the city to mixed-use centers, and make a strong connection between the body and sidewalk. The connection with the outdoor could be realized in the form of views to urban landscapes from trusses, roofs, or transparent bodies resulting in interaction and happiness in spaces. Mixed-use spaces contain voids which makes the space more attractive and improves its visual coherence and interaction. An attractive event in mixed-use centers is to stop around the voids and watch others. Common spaces will improve the rate of social participation and consequently interaction and happiness of people because of diverse and selective activities. Security will improve social trust which is in direct relationship with social capital and happiness of people. Security could be manifested in the form of escape from the formal culture of the society for example, for sub-cultures such as women and teenagers. Furthermore, security makes it possible to use the space at more varied

times. The facilitation of vertical connection between floors could increase the movements in spaces and lead to interaction and happiness of citizens. It is very important to pay attention to pregnant women, the elderly, mothers with young children (prams), and people with disabilities in the equipment design process because this will make spaces more accessible and increase interaction and happiness.

Conclusion

Based on the analyses and investigations of past studies, the study found that despite the conceptual complexities in the definition of happiness, it could be defined as the result of social interactions according to humans' life at this age. Therefore, social interactions are the key to happiness in the present age, and according to the unbreakable bond between interaction and city, urban spaces could lay the ground for individuals' happiness. Thus, the generation and development of mixed-use urban spaces and the increasing trend of their impact on users' interaction and happiness are investigated in this study. According to the development trend of these centers in Tehran, many social interactions of people are defined by these spaces. Examples of the major centers created in the last decade in Tehran are the mixed-use centers of Galleria, Arg, Kourosh, Samarghand, Heravi, and Kian. In the studies of architects and urban planners, such criteria as diversity and density, permeability and legibility, security, attractiveness and environmental comfort, collective activity and flexibility, timeliness, and accessibility are introduced as the main criteria of happiness in urban spaces. The detected criteria are evaluated according to the developmental features of mixed-use centers in Tehran. The features such as diversity, density, and design of interaction spaces in mixed-use centers have improved interaction in the space which are the important factors of people's happiness. These features are created in the form of functions such as cinema complex, playground, store, restaurant, and food court. Further, the design of interaction spaces including such features as vertical connection, connection to outdoor spaces, void, security, and shared spaces will improve the interaction and happiness of people in mixed-use centers.



Fig. 4. Adaptation of physical happiness criteria with the design of interaction spaces in mixed-use urban centers. Source: Authors.

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