

POLITECNICO DI TORINO
SECOND SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE
Master of Science in Architecture
Honors theses

A home for yourself: characteristics of the living space and subjective well-being through an empirical survey

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Home, for human being, is not only a physical object composed of walls and windows, source of safety and security, but it becomes the space of excellence: it's the place of family life, the symbol of personal identity, the space modeled according to their own needs.

Our analysis has been conducted on the development of living-models during the Twentieth Century, taking account of all those aspects that could recreate the most realistic situation at the time. It has been shown that the houses built in each period, even the most recent ones, were not able to satisfy all the needs and desires of the users, who have had to reorganize the space inside the best they could. This happened because the most common approach has always been the functional one, that is imperfect, since it is limited to the application of the rules (instead of smartly interpreting them as a starting point for adaptability), disregarding the opinion of people whom living spaces are meant to. The measurement of the quality perceived by users must become, instead, an important standard for projects.

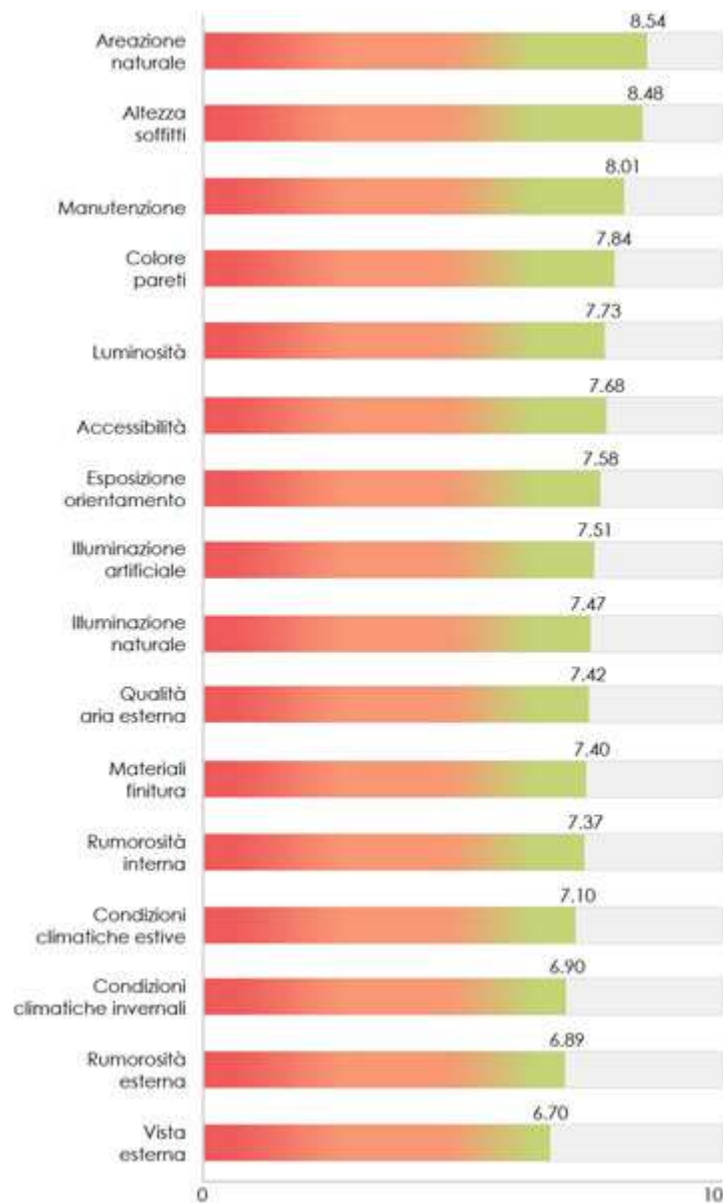
All above are preliminary remarks behind our survey, made in collaboration with the Faculty of Psychology of the Università degli Studi di Torino, whose aim is to understand how people value the spaces in which they live, in order to identify possible actions to meet their expectations and requirements. We created a questionnaire that was given to a sample of 90 people from small, medium, and large cities of Piedmont. People had to express judgments on functional aspects and performance of their own home and its perceived welfare, highlighting strengths and weaknesses. Then they were asked to think of their ideal home, intended as a space that can meet their needs and that is specifically and only dedicated to themselves.

Such detection has the aim to enhance and facilitate the contribution and participation of citizens in the process of providing a concrete thought about a quality-home, recognizing their role as full players: thus, the designer is given the ability to identify which architectural models are more appropriate to meet the expectations of several categories of people made of different gender, different ages, multiple family structures, etc.

Since the first analysis, it has been clear that there is a close bond between the age of the subject and the use of space: during the life cycle of a person, the use of rooms is not always constant, both in terms of quantity and quality.

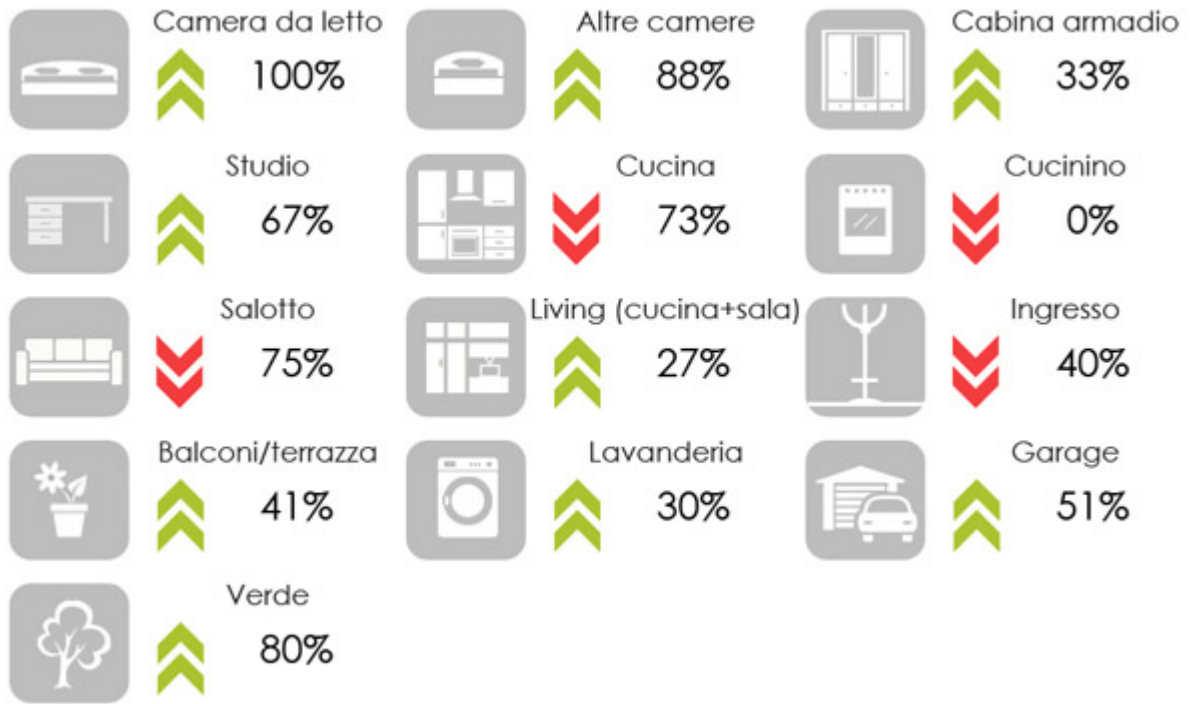
The family composition strongly affects on evaluations: the results showed that, people who share their living space with a newly created family, give higher marks than those who still live with their original family.

As far as functional and environmental performances are concerned, the analysis highlighted that factors, such as climatic conditions during the winter season, the natural light, the internal spaces accessibility and the noise of environments, significantly affect the level of welfare in a negative way. In some cases it is possible to achieve improvements by using few simple steps, in order to increase the level of welfare.



Quality evaluations on the real home

As the analysis of the questionnaire's results has been concluded, we agreed to present our proposal for an ideal home. Our attention was focused on distributional interior aspects, trying to create flexible rooms that could satisfy the emerging demands more easily.



Rooms' demand in the ideal home compared to the real one



Project proposal of an ideal home

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