



LIFE AT HOME:

SPACES, THINGS, EMOTIONS AND PROCESSES

Qualitative Research Report

August 2018

Main Goal

To explore how residents of Latvia and Lithuania fit in the global picture presented by IKEA LIFE AT HOME 2017 report.

Main tasks

- To investigate attitudes, perceptions and feelings related to 5 main areas:
 - Home and emotional presence at home
 - Things present at home
 - Personal space
 - Technology at home
 - Implementing changes

Research methodology:

Homework task followed by in-home visits

Fieldwork:

July 20th in Vilnius, July 21st and 24th in Panevėžys

In-home visits	Description	City	Verbatim code
1	Family of 4, children aged 16 and 18	Vilnius	Small age gap, Vilnius
2	Family of 4, children aged 8 and 15	Vilnius	Large age gap, Vilnius
3	Family of 3 generations living together, grandmother, parents and one child aged 8	Vilnius	3 generations, Vilnius
4	Family of 4, children aged 5 and 7	Panevėžys	Small age gap, Panevėžys
5	Family of 5, children aged 16, 9 and 2	Panevėžys	Large age gap, Panevėžys
6	Family of 3 generations living together, grandmother, parents and children aged 10 and 12	Panevėžys	3 generations, Panevėžys



ON HOME AND EMOTIONAL PRESENCE AT THEM



HOME - spontaneous associations

EMOTIONAL ASSOCIATIONS



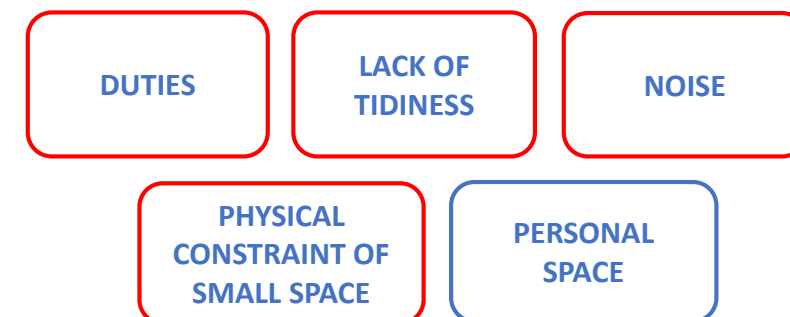
"Home is like a shelter where you can relax, where your loved ones are, where there is no tension. It's like your own world where you feel safe" (Small age gap, Panevėžys)

"Home is where you are needed and everyone is waiting for you to come back" (3 generations, Panevėžys)

"Home is a place where you can relax and be yourself" (Small age gap, Vilnius)



RATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS



"First thing that comes to mind while thinking about home is what I am going to cook tonight" (3 generations, Panevėžys)

"I feel as if am living in a box" (Large age gap, Vilnius)

"We have three children and it is never quiet in our home" (Large age gap, Panevėžys)

"Surely, we sometimes have a problem of tidiness because we live in a small space" (Small age gap, Vilnius)

"Home first of all is my personal space" (Large age gap, Vilnius)

- Spontaneous associations' task revealed that home is primarily associated with positive emotional states.
- Rational associations in most of the cases were secondary and were more related to obstacles that respondents face in their everyday lives.
- Nevertheless, positive home associations dominate regardless of physical obstacles and constraints that study participants have to deal with on a day-to-day basis.
- Home is often viewed as an antipode to the outside world which is full of stress, obligations, necessity to act according to the rules rather than being genuine.

MAIN ELEMENTS OF HOME

FAMILY

- Family is at the heart of home

ATMOSPHERE

- Home is primarily related to the feeling that is present there

SENTIMENTAL OBJECTS

- There is little attention given to things at home, except for when they bear some sentimental value

"Home consists of people who live together. That feeling that we are together, that we are a family. At the moment I cannot imagine how I could possibly be on my own. Of course, you get tired of family sometimes, but completely alone... It's good to have time on your own but only when you know that someone will be coming back home" (Small age gap, Vilnius)
"Home is where the family is. You can create a home anywhere as long as your family is with you" (Small age gap, Panevėžys)

HOME

ACTIVITIES WHEN FEELING AT HOME THE MOST

- Being involved in favourite activities / hobbies
- Cooking
- Reading, watching a movie
- Shared activities with family members, especially children
- Having a bath
- Moment of reflection at the end of the day

MAIN OBSTACLES TO FEELING GOOD AT HOME

LACK OF SPACE

- Can be a possible cause for communication problems among family members, especially when it comes to personal time
- Inability to have all the loved things at home, e.g. books

LACK OF TIDINESS

- Potential cause of conflicts, especially between children and parents
- There is a belief that larger space could solve this problem

NEIGHBOURS

- Complaints about children causing too much noise
- Smoking

LACK OF FREEDOM TO RE-ORGANIZE THE SPACE

- Regulations that do prevent from organizing the space according to one's needs and likes (e.g. knocking down a wall)

FURNITURE / STORAGE

- Conflict between need of space and necessity to store things, some furniture has to stay so that things are kept inside

- Home is mostly perceived through people living together – a family – and the feeling that is dominant at home. Respondents rarely mention tangible objects that make a home, except for those that are of sentimental value.
- Study revealed that there is little attachment to the actual living space (a flat). Almost all study participants would actually like to live in larger properties, however their current financial situation prevents them from doing so. Due to this, current living spaces are viewed as possibly temporary with a hope to expand living area in the future and as a result not much nurturing of current living space is taking place.
- There are number of factors that prevent fully enjoying life in small spaces. Main struggle identified by study participants is general lack of space that can put a strain on both communication among family members and physical constraint on the number of things that can actually fit into space.

Emotional image of Home – home personality



AGE & GENDER: Study participants, especially those living in Panevėžys, were surprisingly consistent while projecting their home onto a person. All participants in Panevėžys have personified their home as a woman around 60 years old.

There was somewhat more diversity in Vilnius: two respondents have seen their home as a 70-year old, one male and one female, and there was just one personification of a younger woman, aged 45.

APPEARANCE: Neat and tidy, modest

OCCUPATION/ SOCIAL STATUS: Retired

TEMPER/ QUALITIES:

- Patient, strong, resolute, gentle, likeable, melancholic, persistent, family oriented
- Stubborn, overly pedantic and perfect, closed, angry at the world, stuck in the past

HOBBY: Cooking, tidying, painting, reading

RELATIONSHIP WITH TG: Relationships between study participants and their projected personas are somewhat mixed: half of the respondents indicated that they could be acquaintances at the most whereas others indicated that they could possibly be friends.

Projective task allows to make several conclusions regarding study participants' emotional relationships with their homes:

- *There is little [physical] resemblance between respondents themselves and their home personas, indicating that their current living places are not quite reflecting their personalities, who they really are.*
- *Senior age of the personas may reflect the fact that study participants live in older houses built during the soviet era and a lot of the heritage from the past is being passed onto the present, in other words – lack of modernity at home.*
- *Few study participants indicated that their home personas might possibly be similar to their mothers, which in addition to traditional rather than modern view of home, adds all the positive emotions and warm feelings associated with the image of a mother.*
- *Some respondents do feel emotionally close to the projected persona, especially those who do see similarities with their mothers, suggesting that emotional element of home is attuned with the inner self of the respondents, whereas physical appearance of home is something that possibly prevents close emotional relationship with home.*



ON THINGS

Perception of things at home

- Majority of research participants indicated that they have somewhat too many things and they constantly face a struggle to reduce number of items at home.
- Those who indicate that the number of things at home is just right, are consciously trying to control number of objects at home and employ strategies to keep the amount of things manageable.
- Those living in small spaces often need to make sacrifices because of the lack of space, and oftentimes items that provide emotional comfort that have to be left out – much beloved books, a dining table that would bring a whole family together for a shared meal.

NOT ENOUGH

- Items related to extra storage space (wardrobes, cupboards, book cases)
- Items making everyday chores easier – a dishwasher, an ironing system

"I would like to get a coffee table when people come to visit, it would be more pleasant to sit. I also need another wardrobe. But again, it would make the place even more crowded." (Small age gap, Vilnius)
"I wish I had a bookcase where I could keep all my books. Now I cannot even collect books, I buy them and then re-sell them again." (3 generations, Vilnius)

TOO MANY

- Outdated and clumsy furniture
- Toys
- Husbands' belongings

"There are clearly too many things here, quite a few came with the flat." (Large age gap, Vilnius)
"We are trying, very consciously trying to have less. But the place is small and things accumulate. New things appear and old ones do not go so easily." (Small age gap, Panevėžys)

JUST THE RIGHT NUMBER

- There are no predominant areas with just the right number of things, usually it is either too many things or controlled number of things across all areas of home

"Given what kind of flat it is, everything is right. Everything has its meaning, its place and everything is being used. There are no things that are not necessary. The place is small." (3 generations, Vilnius)
"I don't think it could be any less. There are few people living here and it's just impossible to have less." (Small age gap, Vilnius)

Throwing-away process

FEELING

- Predominant feeling of throwing away things is a RELIEF.
- All survey participants indicated that throwing away unused, unnecessary items is associated with relief and even happiness.
- Exceptions are items bearing sentimental value, especially related to children.
- Items of substantial sentimental value are normally kept even at the expense of having more things at home.

"My heart is singing when we throw away something" (Small age gap, Panevėžys)

"I was sorting children's clothes recently and cried. We have a lot of unused books for children. We could give them away, but will they be loved and looked after? Every single one was bought with love. It's not the time yet." (Small age gap, Vilnius)



DECISION MAKING PROCESS

- Decision to throw away an item is usually triggered by internal psychological discomfort when item becomes too annoying to bear.
- Some respondents have rules of thumb related to the period that an item has not been used – it can vary from six months to two years.
- According to study participants, throwing-away decision usually is made rather easily, especially when decision can be made by a single person.
- Decision making process becomes more difficult when items belonging to other people need to be thrown away.
- Mothers sometimes secretly tidy up and throw away toys belonging to younger children
- Most complicated decision making process is undergone when items belonging to partners/husbands need to be thrown away. Study participants were surprisingly united indicating that their husbands are more attached to things than they are.
- Men tend to move unused items to other locations for storage rather than just throwing them away.

"I try to part with things that I know I will not use anymore. They just start to annoy" (Small age gap, Panevėžys)

"My husband is very attached to things, he collects lots of them" (3 generations, Panevėžys)

THROWING-AWAY PROCESS

- Throwing-away usually takes two possible forms:
 - A spontaneous and quick throw-away, usually involving small number of items or just one item;
 - A thought-through and longer process of auditing all the belongings at home and deciding which ones are not being used anymore.

"If you do not need an item for two years, it means you will hardly ever need it in the future. Usually it all starts with the feeling that it's all so messy, it needs to be tidied up. Then I go through all the wardrobes in one day and throw away or give away everything that I do not need anymore" (3 generations, Vilnius)

EASY WAY TO GIVE AWAY UNNECESSARY ITEMS

- The easiest way of throwing away unnecessary items is simple throwing in the bin, however, survey participants indicated that often times, especially when items are in good condition, unused items are given away to someone else.

"We have just what we need. I do not like collecting things, as there is not enough space anyway. I try to give away or throw away, I am not attached to things. Sometimes I even give away things too soon and then regret it" (Small age gap, Panevėžys)

- Parting with belongings is a highly emotionally charged process: it usually starts with psychological discomfort and can possibly be accompanied by internal obstacles of parting with items that bear sentimental value.
- Majority of study participants find parting with things rather easy, especially when they anticipate a feeling of relief when things are actually thrown away and space at home is freed.
- Men find parting with their belongings more difficult (according to their partners), they also tend to move unused items to some transitional place rather than throwing them away straight away.
- Positive emotions related to parting with things are enhanced if unused belongings are given away rather than just thrown away.

Organizing things at home

- *Effective organization of things is a constant concern of families living in small spaces.*
- *Families in living in small spaces permanently need to face trade-offs between having things to satisfy needs of all family members and space constraints for keeping all those things.*
- *Study participants identified two main strategies of coping with things at home: having less things and having specific places for all items at home.*
- *Study participants believe that key to having things at home organized are spacious wardrobes, where things can be kept out of the way.*

ORGANIZING & STORAGE

HOW

- Avoid accumulating things, regularly revisit all the storage places and get rid of items that have not been used recently
- Have specific places for all the items at home. This rule often times is difficult to implement practically, especially in the households with children where their things are being left all over the place.

WHERE

- Study participants believe that ideally most of things at home should be kept in spacious wardrobes or storage rooms. However, reality is oftentimes rather different and there is a genuine need of larger storage spaces in small spaces.

"My secret is not to accumulate things." (Large age gap, Panevėžys)

"The best is not to have many things and leave only those that are absolutely necessary." (Small age gap, Panevėžys)

"I am trying to make sure that all things have their places. But it's difficult in our home, as my daughters are always in a rush. There are wardrobes, shelves where things belong but sometimes it just doesn't work, things are just lying on beds." (3 generations, Panevėžys)

"Every item should have its place – in the wardrobe or hanging somewhere. If an object doesn't have its place, it becomes a total mess." (Small age gap, Vilnius)



“LESS IS MORE” approach at home

ENCOUNTERING AND GENERAL EVALUATION

- All of the research participants, except for one person, are strongly in favor of „Less is more“ approach.
- „Less is more“ approach is primarily associated with having less things at home, minimalistic style. There are no links to being more environmentally friendly.
- Totally minimalistic style with almost no things at display is perceived rather skeptically – study participants believe that home without any objects at all is cold and faceless. There is a strive for balanced amount of things – enough to make home cozy and reflect people who live in it but not overwhelmed by things.
- This approach might be more difficult to implement in families with more senior people (three generations sharing one roof) as quantity of things at home used to be a symbol of success.

IMPLEMENTATION AT RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS HOME

- Most of research participants try to implement this approach in their everyday life without consciously calling it „Less is more“, however, many admit that under their current living circumstances it is complicated to fully implement this approach, especially in homes with smaller children as their need for things is high. Yet, for many it is a dream of a future.

RELEVANCE TO RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

- It seems that it might be difficult to find any other setting where „Less is more“ approach would be of more relevance than in homes restricted by small places.
- Majority of research participants completely agree that having less things at home can potentially free them from clutter created at home as well as disagreements in the families related to keeping of belongings.

“This approach is acceptable, however, if there are only two chairs and a table in the room, that would not be acceptable anymore. There should be minimal number of things, only what is absolutely necessary, but it should be cozy at the same time.” (Small age gap, Panevėžys)

“100% acceptable. It is our vision.” (Large age gap. Vilnius)

“I envy those who live like that. I wish there were no things, would be easier to clean. But I also understand that I cannot make it beautiful without things.” (3 generations, Vilnius)

“If only there was a possibility, I would like minimum amount of everything, but here a lot of influence is made by my mother, there have to be lots of things, otherwise others will consider as poor”. (3 generations, Panevėžys)

- *Families living in small spaces are probably the best practitioners of “Less is more” approach, for they have to restrict number of things they purchase because of the physical constraints of space.*
- *This approach might be somewhat more difficult to implement in families with small children because of their relatively higher demand for things (not only toys, but items that are absolutely necessary – prams, feeding chairs, etc.) and in families with senior members because of cultural importance placed on physical objects.*



ON PERSONAL SPACE



Ownership of the places/ items/ furniture at home

Computers / tablets

Armchairs / sofas

Seats at the dining table

Beds

Books

Kitchen



DECISION PROCESS

- Research participants in both towns were united indicating that items that have the most defined ownership are computers / tablets.
- It is also very common to „own“ an armchair or a specific spot on the sofa - it is very common among both children and adults.
- Members of the family are actively defining their “territory” and other family members are expected to respect this.
- Ownership of an object or a place is defined by frequency of usage or by emotional attachment.
- Kitchen is perceived as a personal space of a mother both by mothers themselves and by other family members. However, women are not always pleased with this ownership and often say that this place is associated not with pleasure but with obligation.

“Sofa is divided by children. They always shout if someone sits in their spot” (Small age gap, Panevėžys)

“Certainly yes, everyone has got a personal computer” (Large age gap, Panevėžys)

“When my child was small, he used to call kitchen my room. All the family understood that kitchen is my space” (Large age gap, Vilnius)

“I wish kitchen wasn’t just my space, but it just happens so” (Large age gap. Panevėžys)

- *Members of families living in small spaces do not have the luxury of defining large areas of the flats as their own, yet, most of research participants and their family members are expressing ownership of at least a part of a shared space at home, such as designated seat in the living room or at the dining table.*

NEED TO HAVE PERSONAL SPACE

- All study participants indicated that they do not have more substantial (e.g. a room) personal space at home, except for the kitchen.
- There was a rather significant difference among research participants in Vilnius and Panevėžys on how absence of personal space is perceived - study participants in Panevėžys seemed rather content with the absence of personal space and did not indicate need for it whereas respondents in Vilnius were more keen on having personal space.
- On the other hand, all study participants were united in expressing need for personal time. This time would not necessarily be spent in a designated personal space.

PERSONAL SPACE AND CHILDREN

- Absence of personal space becomes most acute when children of different ages are sharing one space, especially when one of the children reaches teenage years.
- Sharing one space among children of the similar age and same gender is even perceived beneficial.

- *Not everyone needs a personal space and some study participants see advantages of shared small spaces, as it does promote communication among family members in the age where personal communication becomes a scarce commodity.*
- *Need of personal space highly increases in teenage years. Mothers are willing to make sacrifices in order to satisfy the need of privacy for their teenage children.*

"One needs time to be with oneself and distance from the others. I would never like an open space living room and kitchen, for us feeling of personal space is very important. We have a great relationship but we still need a corner just for oneself." (Small age gap, Vilnius)

"I do not really feel a need for personal space. My family members do not get in my way, I don't want to distance myself, quite the opposite, I want to be with them. We already lack time together because of work, school. We rarely see each other so I want to do everything together." (Large age gap, Vilnius)

"Yes, sometimes I wish I had a place to go when I lose temper. But sometimes I wonder whether it would really make me happier." (Large age gap, Panevėžys)

"Currently they are doing really well at sharing a room, especially because the younger one always wants to be with his brother, but the older one is growing and more often expresses a wish to be left alone." (Small age gap, Panevėžys)

"There is no place in our flat where you can close the door and just be with yourself. That is the reason why we might be considering moving into a larger flat. My daughter is already a teenager, she wants her room and I fell sorry for her not having it." (Large age gap, Panevėžys)

Disputes and tensions at home

REASONS AND CAUSES

- **Tidiness** - there are some differences based on the age of the children:
 - When children in the family are small, tensions are more common between parents. Husbands are expected to contribute to household chores, however, oftentimes most of the workload rests on the shoulders of a mother, primarily because she usually has a greater need for tidiness compared to other family members.
 - When children are older and have responsibilities themselves, tensions are more common between a mother, who usually insists on tidiness at home, and children who are expected to perform their duties, but are not always meeting expectations of their parents.
 - Children sometimes have disputes among themselves regarding the amount of chores each is supposed to be doing
- **Financial restrictions** – inability to satisfy some current needs when all the savings go to the implementation of future dreams (bigger living space).

INFLUENCING FACTORS

- **Absence of personal space** – tensions become more acute when there is no possibility to withdraw oneself to a place and just let things that are irritating go.
- **Tiredness** – tensions at home are intensified when feeling tired and unable to find peace and a chance to rest in a crowded household.



"I ask to tidy up their desks and beds in the evening, I come back from work the next day and find it all messy, then an arguments begins. That is the main cause of disagreements." (3 generations, Panevėžys)

"In general, I like it all to be tidy, but unfortunately none of the other members of the family share my view." (Small age gap, Panevėžys)

"It's only me who always finds it untidy. Everyone else thinks it's all fine. <...> I'm too lazy to get into a quarrel, so I just go and tidy up myself." (Large age gap, Panevėžys)

"It's impossible to live without arguments. Some say that if it is quiet at home, it means there are no relationships at all. We do have disagreements regarding household chores." (Small age gap, Vilnius)

- *According to the research participants, disputes and tensions at home are part of the living in a family. Main causes of disagreements in the family are related to household chores and tidiness in particular.*
- *Families living in small spaces are potentially more affected by tensions related to tidiness – they usually have less possibilities to cope with tensions at home by retreating into a quiet place with personally satisfactory level of tidiness, which would allow to distance oneself from "hot point" and also regain the energy necessary to carry on with busy life.*



ON TECHNOLOGIES AT HOME

Role of technology devices at home



MAIN ROLE

- Source of information
- Communication tool
- Source of entertainment
- Tool for doing some chores – shopping, paying the bills
- Household appliances – helpers in every-day life

“I have noticed that my daughter speaks more English words than Lithuanian. <...> Children don’t know how to play outdoors anymore, only computers.” (Large age gap, Panevėžys)

ADVANTAGES

- **Convenience** – some of the duties can be performed online whilst being at home rather than going somewhere in person
- **Time saving** – especially related to technologies that help with the household chores (e.g. washing machines, dishwashers)
- **Easy access to personally relevant information** – viewing of TV is research sample decreasing, social networks are overtaking role of information bearer
- **Learning opportunities** – from learning a foreign language to learning to create an own video
- **Maintenance of bonds** with people when there is no chance for personal interaction
- **Role of a babysitter** – provides opportunity for personal time or household chores

DISADVANTAGES

- **Reduced time for personal interaction** – both parents and children are too engaged with their electronic devices
- **Cause of dissatisfaction, even guilt for wasting time** – study participants admit that they spend too much time online instead of being with their family
- **Reduced physical activity** – children spend time with their electronic devices instead of being outdoors
- **Social pressure on usage** – especially relevant for teenagers in use of social media.
- **Cause of disagreements and tensions between parents and children** – parents often need to apply restrictions to screen time which cause negative feelings from their children
- **Possibly negative health effects of wi-fi**

“For children their telephones is everything. When our daughter was smaller we could have given her any punishment except for taking away her telephone.” (Small age gap, Vilnius)

- *Study participants have mixed feelings regarding technology – they certainly see advantages of technologies coming into every-day life, yet, for many parents technology usage is an area of great concern both because their personal and their children’s overuse of it.*

RULES / RESTRICTIONS OF USAGE

MOST COMMON:

- Parents control the content that young children are being exposed to
- Some parents find it difficult to impose restrictions to young children because of lack of their impulse-control (avoiding tantrums).
- Some parents try to impose strict screen time limitations, however, they find it difficult to implement them in reality for it often is another cause for disagreements. It is more common to have flexible rules where restrictions are imposed when technology usage gets excessive.
- Usage of technology is normally restricted during family meals.

REASONS WHY

- Most of school aged children find it difficult to self-regulate the time they spend using technologies and neglect their other obligations.
- Teenagers can be engaged with the technologies at home to the extent that parents need to schedule a one-to-one time outside home without distraction of technology.

- *It seems that most of study participants are caught up in the technology trap: on one hand, parents try to impose some restrictions on technology use, however, they feel that this imposing would be somewhat hypocritical as they personally feel spending too much time using technology themselves.*
- *None of the respondents indicated that life without technology would be worse, yet, there is a lack of motivation or will to reduce technology usage.*

HOME WITHOUT TECHNOLOGY

- Most of the research participants indicated that life at home without online technologies would be better.
- However, they would not be willing to swap technology-loaded today to no-technology future.

"My daughter has admitted herself that she is addicted to her telephone. Now she tries to restrict the usage herself, because she has noticed that when she meets her friends they spend more time browsing than talking." (Small age gap, Vilnius)

"I am rather liberal, but if I see that children are crossing the line, that they do not leave home for a whole day, then restrictions kick in." (Large age gap, Vilnius)

"It would be great if there were no [online] technology at home. We could then be a family rather than just individuals with their own computers. It would be easier to agree with a child on studying and reading time. There would be less scandals and door slamming when he doesn't want to read." (3 generations, Vilnius)

"Our life would change for the better. Teenagers have addictions. I do not deny that I spend too much time with my cellphone. Those minutes add up at the end of the day". (Small age gap, Vilnius)

"I think technology is a good thing overall and I would not like to go back to living with candles." (Small age gap, Panevėžys)

"To be honest, I thought it is not relevant to me, I do not miss that Facebook if we go away. But it's like a disease. I feel revived after visiting it. I'm afraid to even begin with Instagram." (Large age gap, Panevėžys)



ON CHANGES AT HOME



Perception of chances at home



- *Attitudes towards changes at home are rather polarizing – study participants have indicated that they either love them or hate them.*
- *In the study sample there were more of those who do love changes at home.*
- *However, in reality changes, even much desired, are not easy to implement due to many potential obstacles.*
- *Most of the renovations are implemented after the purchase of the property as they are perceived as the crucial ones.*
- *Future renovations usually get delayed due to financial restrictions or other more immediate needs of the family.*

BARIERS TO CHANGES AT HOME

RATIONAL

- **Financial** restrictions is the dominant obstacle. It is especially of great importance for those who have bought their houses during the property bubble and still have to allocate substantial amount of the income to mortgage repayment.
- **Plans to have another property** – quite a few of study participants do not view their current property as a place to live in the long run. Oftentimes larger living space in the future is prioritized over improvement in the current dwelling.
- **Other priorities** such as traveling, experiences, self-development.
- **Lack of time** – some respondents simply cannot fit more substantial renovation of the property into their busy schedules.
- **Burden of old furniture** – sometimes perceived effort of getting rid of an old furniture prevents acquisition of a new piece of furniture

EMOTIONAL

- **Perceived lack of knowledge** – this especially unfolds in the case of disappointing previous experiences when mistakes have been made.
- **Overwhelming choice** – amount of information needed to be processed and options evaluated puts some people off the home renovation altogether.
- **Adaptability** – people get used to the living environment and conditions and just carry on instead of improving it.

"I'm not very keen on changes. We have been moving quite a lot and I've already had enough of changes, really enough." (Small age gap, Panevėžys)

"All the spare money invested in this flat delays our chances of having our house." (Large age gap, Vilnius)

"When it comes to home, I love changes. I could be doing renovation every year. Others might dream about travelling, I always build a house or buy a flat in my dreams." (Large age gap, Panevėžys)

"I like changes, I even have an idea of how things could be changed here, but of course we need to find enough financial recourses to implement that. And also I don't want to take part in it. I greatly dislike shopping. It would be good to do all of it in one day. And also if it was done by the builders. I don't want to be involved myself." (Small age gap, Vilnius)

Implementation of changes at home/ in home interior

SUCCESSSES

- **All the changes implemented in one go** after acquisition of the property
- **Approval of ideas** from significant other

DIFFICULTIES & FAILURES

- **Doing renovation in parts** – prolonged process and inconvenience of living
- **Wrong choices** due to the lack of knowledge
- **Living with the old heritage** from previous owners (furniture)
- **Listening to someone else's' advice** rather than following own intuition

LEARNED LESSONS

- Doing as much as possible right at the start and avoiding wishful thinking that all the changes can be implemented in parts whilst already living in a property. Taking extra time before moving into a property to complete the changes and getting rid of as many old things as possible for it will only get more difficult to do that in the future.
- Seeking for professional advice when it comes to choices of materials and other solutions for home.
- Following own gut feeling about what will look and feel good.

EMOTIONAL LEVEL

RENEWAL -
REFRESH

EXCITEMENT

ANXIETY

STRESS

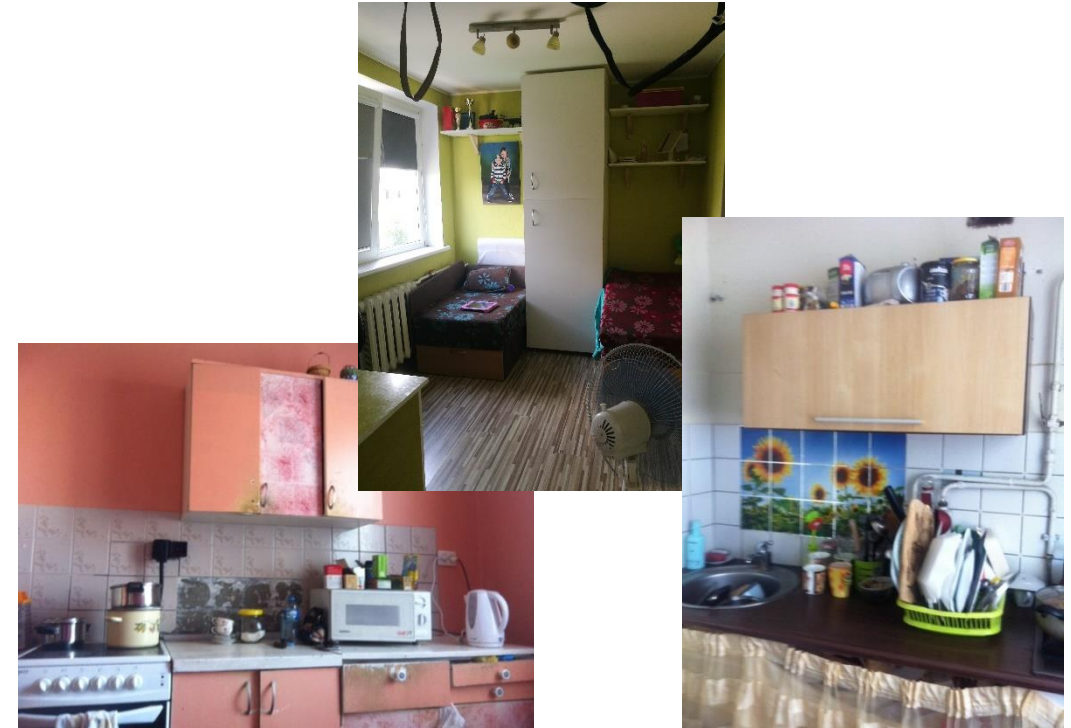
"I know that in perspective it will be beautiful, but at first it is anxiety. There will be stress, that looking for the materials. I have experiences that, it really takes a lot of time, but of course, the result is rewarding." (Small age gap, Vilnius)
"In general, I like all the new things. New emotions, new experiences. Changes rarely make place look worse. Whatever solution you will come up with, it will be good, just because it's new." (Large age gap, Vilnius)

- *Experiences of research participants related to changes at home are somewhat more negative than positive.*
- *When it comes to emotional level, feelings are mixed even among those who do like implementing changes at home: changes do cause quite a lot of stress and anxiety mainly due to negative previous experiences. Yet, future rewards of improved home make a whole process worthwhile.*

Plans of chances at home in the future

PLANNED / DESIRED CHANGES

- Almost all study participants indicated that there are things that they would like to change in their homes.
- Children's needs are at the heart of the renovations or updates: color of walls in the children's room, better storage organization for toys, finding extra place to fit in things of newly arriving baby.
- Quite a few respondents indicated that they would like to improve lightning at home or redecorating walls to get a lighter feeling at home.
- Kitchen areas would also be on a short list as well as extra storage places.
- Some respondents, especially those who have not undergone total renovation before the move / right after moving into a flat would ideally like to change everything about their flats.
- Some study participants desire to change current furniture for a more functional one, where each piece of furniture serves a purpose and provides maximum functionality in a small place.

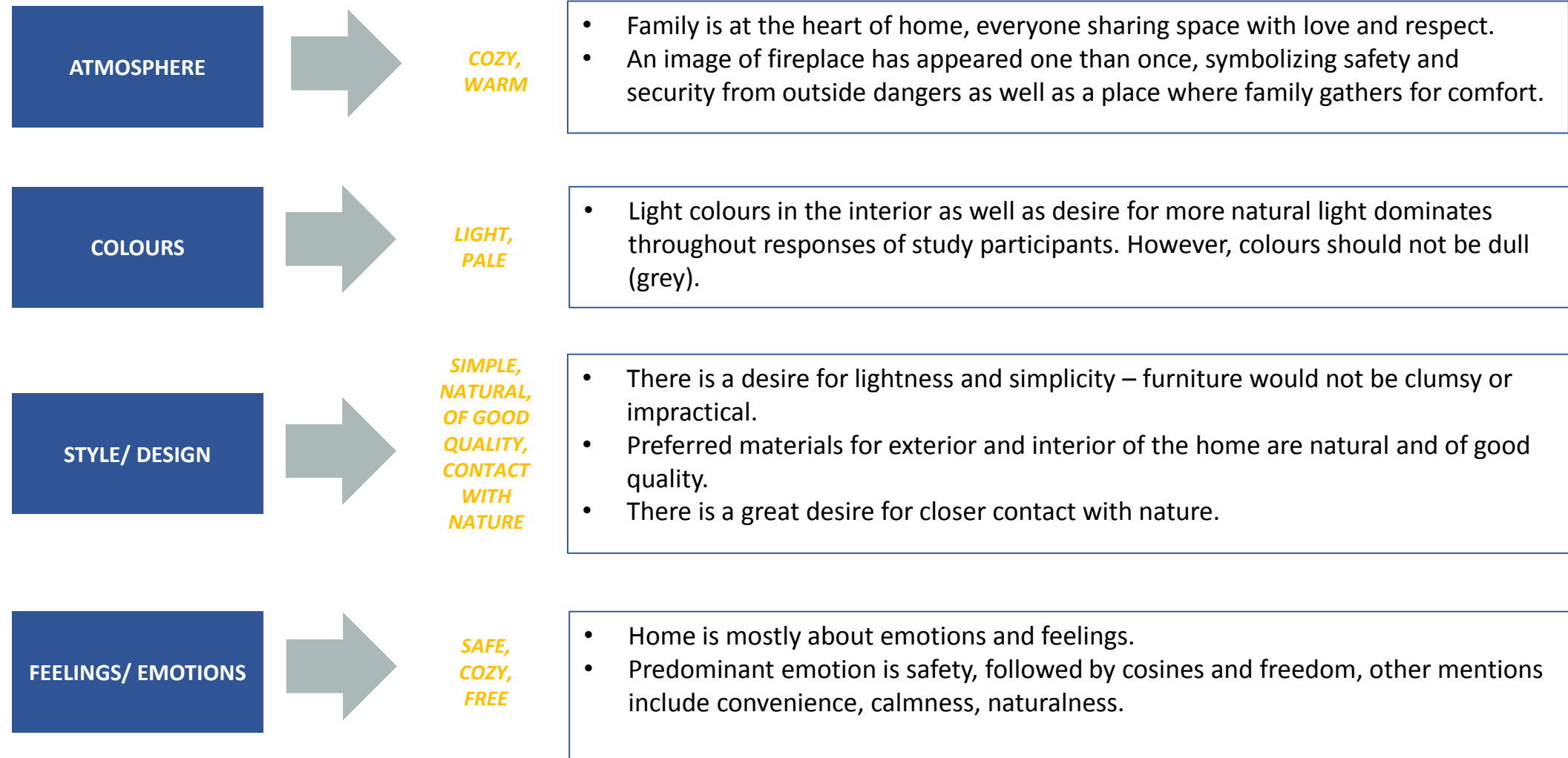


- *Investigation of areas for planned and desired changes helped to uncover most problematic areas in small spaces as well as family values.*
- *Adults are willing to sacrifice their own needs for the comfort of their children.*
- *Kitchen areas are places where mothers of families spend the most time and therefore need of renovation of this area is the most acute for them personally.*
- *Convenient and spacious storage of things is largely unmet need for large families living in small spaces.*
- *Every bit of space in a small living area is of value, therefore functionality of furniture and other household items is of great importance.*

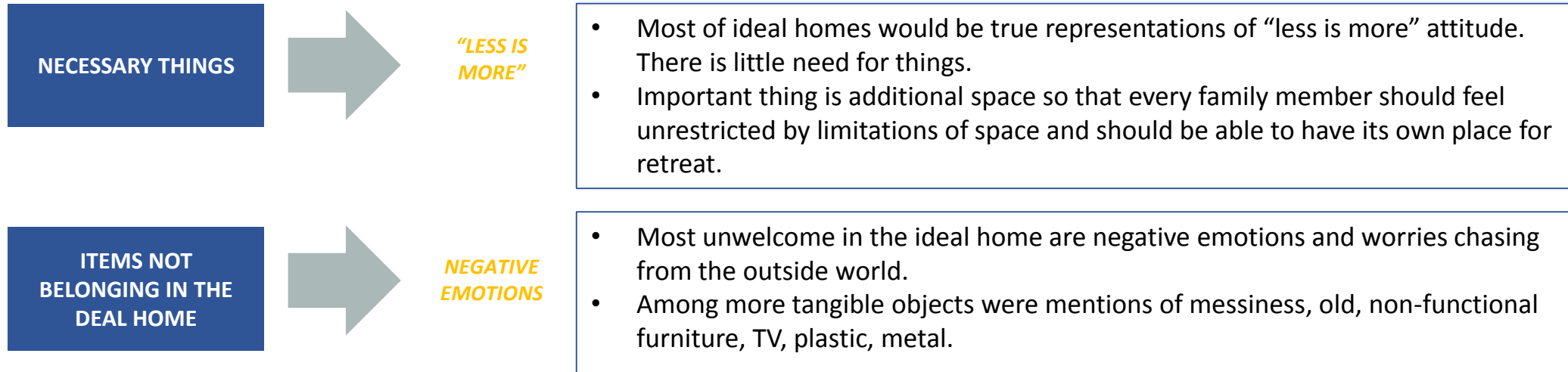


IDEAL HOME PERCEPTION: home task

Perception of ideal home



Perception of ideal home



- Home task of ideal home revealed unmet needs by research participants which are mainly related to disproportion of living space and all the necessary things that could be fitted into the space. Almost all respondents indicated that ideally they would like to live in a separate house or at least a flat where all the children could have their own rooms. Also, there is a predominant desire to declutter.
- Ideal home persona would be very different from the current one, indicating a substantial mismatch between reality and ideal. The only thing that seems to be attuned is atmosphere at home – current home elicits as many positive emotions as an ideal one.



CONCLUSIONS

- All study participants indicate that home as an important part of their lives and **most emotions associated with home are positive**. Further investigation revealed that families living in small spaces do face quite a few challenges, yet emotional image of home is the most positive.
- When it comes to relationships with things, families living in small places are probably the **best living examples of 'less is more attitude'**. It may not necessarily be a voluntary choice, it's just that these families are very often faced with choice of having less things and less crowded limited space or more things and more clutter at home.
- Larger number of **things** may not only **contribute** to diminishing free space at home but also **to tensions at home**. The more things there are, the more effort is needed to keep them organized, stored and tidied up. There is a strong inclination towards having less things, yet there should be a balance between less things and opportunity to keep the home cosy.
- Role of technology has certainly increasing in modern houses. There certainly are advantages of opening doors to technology at home, yet there is a feeling that **technology might undermine bonds between family members** and become new reasons for tensions at home.
- Most of study participants do have **mixed feelings about renovations**: on one hand, process of renovation is associated with anxiety and stress but on the other hand, anticipated rewards are making a whole process worthwhile. It is important to note that sometimes renovated and beautifully looking home is a dream of the future, as many families living in small spaces do so not by choice but because of financial constraints. Same constraints may prohibit updates and renovations, especially when mind is focused on future extensions of the living area.
- Finally, good news that regardless of all the difficulties and challenges families living in small spaces face, there is one important thing that unites them – **it's an atmosphere that family members share that makes a house a home**.

I love this home.. and its inhabitants
I respect them and I am honestly happy about their achievements
I am happy because I have a wonderful family
I help family members to achieve more
I say „sorry“, „thank you“, I give a kiss and definitively give a hug
I do not get angry, I do not shout or quarrel
I try to communicate more and spend time together
In this home I feel safe, loved and always waited for
This is my home.
This is my family.
This is my happiness.



Report prepared by
Indrė Sandell

RAIT UAB

Švitrigailos 11M | Vilnius | Lietuva
indre.sandell@raitgroup.com
M +370 686 07692
www.raitgroup.com

