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Achieving sustainable urban housing through policy-based measures: A Socio-cultural Approach (The Case of Hanoi, Vietnam)

The Vietnamese strategic development to 2025 with vision towards 2050 commits to sustainability and call for a set of policy to support sustainable housing, especially in urban areas where overcrowding has been creating a burden on people's living standard. Although it is recognized that sustainable housing policies in isolation will not overcome the urban problems that we face, it is suggested that without such policies, there is no hope at all in finding a solution.

Though the urbanization rate in Vietnam barely reaches 30%, leaving a lot of room for future development, lessons from other developing countries already made it apparent that mere expansion is not the answer. Rather, we need to start planning for sustainable housing for the existing housing infrastructure as well as those being developed.

Purpose: This study aims to critically evaluate the effect of socio-cultural characteristics on housing in order to provide policy makers with a specific set of tools to gear urban cities in developing countries towards sustainable development.

The significance and application of this research does not lie in advanced technologies or multi-billion overhaul projects but in financial feasibility and organic approach rooted from the very people that inhabit residences and carry out housing policy. Housing, after all, is to meet human's needs for shelters and therefore, inducing changes in housing practices through habitants is a sustainable practice itself.

The study serves to connect the needs and desires of the resident with policy makers and community leaders, and vice versa, provides a channel for policies makers to communicate important issues that can heighten community spirit and sustainable living awareness.