

A Comparative Study of the Impact of Modern Lifestyle on Residential Unit Design in Iran and the UAE

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ABSTRACT

Rapid social, economic, and technological changes have caused fundamental shifts in lifestyle and the design of residential spaces. Modern lifestyles, characterized by individualism, consumerism, the pace of life, and technology-centricity, have had a direct impact on the structure, function, and spatial organization of residential units. Iran and the United Arab Emirates, despite sharing similar cultural backgrounds, have followed different paths of urban development, and the influence of modern lifestyles on housing design in each country differs accordingly. In Iran, housing design in major cities has moved toward smaller, more functional, and less expensive spaces, while cultural and traditional values have been partially preserved. In the UAE, rapid economic growth and a multicultural population have led to residential architecture being heavily influenced by global lifestyles, consumerism, and technology. Lifestyle changes in both countries have resulted in a redefinition of private and communal spaces, the reorganization of interior spaces, and greater attention to welfare facilities and modern technologies. The aim of this study is to comparatively examine and analyze the influence of modern lifestyle on residential unit design in Iran and the UAE, identifying similarities and differences in spatial, functional, and cultural patterns. The research methodology is descriptive-analytical with a comparative approach; data were collected from scientific sources, urban development documents, and real-world examples in Tehran, Tabriz, Dubai, and Abu Dhabi, and analyzed through comparative analysis. Research findings show that in Iran, modern residential design, while retaining some traditional values, has led to smaller communal spaces and larger private spaces. Space optimization, cost reduction, and attention to functional use are evident. In the UAE, large, luxurious, and technology-driven residential units reflect a global and consumerist lifestyle. Private spaces have gained greater importance while communal spaces have diminished, with design largely shaped by international standards. A comparative analysis reveals that both countries have experienced similar increases in private spaces; however, in Iran, economic and cultural constraints have preserved some traditional elements, while in the UAE, changes are extensive and free from local constraints. These findings highlight the necessity of considering culture and indigenous conditions in modern residential design, and can serve as a guide for architects in creating residential units compatible with modern lifestyles.

Keywords: Modern lifestyle, housing design, residential architecture, Iran, UAE, comparative analysis, private and communal spaces, consumerism, technology-centricity.

INTRODUCTION

With the expansion of urbanization, technology, and the changing social values and human needs in different societies, the concept of "home" has undergone fundamental transformation. In the twenty-first century, modern lifestyles, characterized by individualism, speed, consumerism, and a focus on physical and technological comfort, have directly influenced the design of residential spaces. In Iran and the UAE (two countries that share an Islamic cultural backdrop but have followed different paths of urban development) these changes have manifested differently. This research, using a comparative approach, examines how modern lifestyle has affected the design of residential units in these two countries. Social and economic changes in recent decades have caused modern lifestyles across various countries to transform the traditional structure of the family, living patterns, and spatial needs of housing. In Iran, while many cultural elements are still preserved in everyday life, in major cities such as Tehran and Isfahan, housing design has progressed toward smaller, more functional, and less expensive spaces. In contrast, in the UAE (especially Dubai and Abu Dhabi), rapid economic growth and a multicultural

community have led to residential architecture being strongly influenced by global modern lifestyles. The main research question is: How has modern lifestyle differently affected the design of residential units in Iran and the UAE, and what similarities and differences exist in the spatial, functional, and cultural patterns of these two countries?

The growing need to have a greater understanding of the relationship between culture, lifestyle, and architectural design within modern Islamic countries is the reason for the importance and necessity of this research. Residential surroundings in Iran and the United Arab Emirates have been significantly impacted by rapid globalization and the widespread adoption of international architectural ideas, frequently at the price of local identity and cultural values. Therefore, it is crucial to look into how global design patterns might be modified to fit these regions' unique cultural, socioeconomic, and climatic settings while maintaining their unique features. Additionally, the goal of this research is to help architects and designers create housing models that adapt to the demands of contemporary life, technological advancements, and evolving family forms without sacrificing the fundamentals of traditional architectural identity. The study helps create more sustainable, context-sensitive, and culturally significant residential environments by addressing this balance between modernization and cultural continuity.

The main objective of this research is to comparatively examine and analyze the impact of modern lifestyle on residential unit design in Iran and the United Arab Emirates. The study aims to investigate how the spatial organization and architectural features of housing in both countries have been impacted by social transformation, cultural shifts, and modern living habits. A number of particular goals are established in order to accomplish this goal. First, the study pinpoints the signs of a contemporary lifestyle that impact residential space design, such as shifts in family dynamics, privacy needs, technology use, and daily activity patterns. In order to comprehend how modern demands are combined with traditional values and local identity, it also examines the physical, functional, and cultural aspects of Iranian modern housing. Third, the study looks at the design and features of contemporary housing in the United Arab Emirates, taking into account the nation's fast urban growth, diverse population, and international architectural influences. In order to determine the main parallels and discrepancies in home design strategies, cultural adaptability, and lifestyle-related spatial changes, a comparative study between Iran and the UAE is also carried out. Lastly, based on the results, the study suggests a residential design model that both satisfies the needs of contemporary life and is suitable with Iran's cultural and socioeconomic circumstances.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Lifestyle, in its broad sense, refers to individuals' and societies' ways of living, encompassing everyday behaviors, consumption patterns, values, and social interactions. This concept directly influences the needs, expectations, and spatial structure of residential units (Chaney, 2002). Rapid urbanization, changes in gender roles, globalization, and technological advances have caused modern lifestyles to be redefined and, along with greater privacy, flexibility, and widespread use of new technologies, to influence the design of modern living spaces (Giddens, 2009). From an architectural perspective, housing is more than a physical shell; it is a reflection of lifestyle, cultural identity, values, and the social interactions of its residents (Rapoport, 1988). Modern housing design must simultaneously reflect the local needs and culture of users (Rapoport, 1977). The transformation of traditional spatial patterns such as the central courtyard and the division of inner (andaruni) and outer (biruni) spaces has been accompanied by changes in family and individual life (Alinaghizadeh & Afshari, 2012). Furthermore, attention to climatic conditions and sustainability principles, aligned with modern lifestyle needs, has gained particular importance (Arzaqi et al., 2019). Table 1 demonstrated Scholars' Perspectives on Lifestyle and Residential Unit Design.

Table 1. Scholars' Perspectives on Lifestyle and Residential Unit Design

Scholar	Key Perspective and Role in Lifestyle and Residential Architecture	Reference
Amos Rapoport	Residential architecture must reflect the indigenous culture and real needs of users; the home is more than a physical shell—it is an environment that shapes identity and social interactions.	(Rapoport, 1977; 1988)

Alinaghizadeh & Afshari	Changing or eliminating traditional patterns such as the central courtyard and the inner-outer division has led to changes in spatial structure and lifestyle.	(Alinaghizadeh & Afshari, 2012)
Chaney et al.	Lifestyle includes everyday behaviors, consumption patterns, and social interactions that influence the choice and design of residential space.	(Chaney, 2002)
Thyra	Lifestyle is a reflection of social interactions and cultural structures that play an important role in designing living spaces.	(Thyra, 1996)
Giddens	Globalization and urbanization have led to diversity in lifestyles and a direct impact on the spatial organization of housing.	(Giddens, 2009)
Zheng et al.	The integration of modern technologies with traditional architectural elements forms a new lifestyle that preserves cultural identity while meeting modern needs.	(Zheng et al., 2016)
Boubekri	The relationship between the physical structure of the residential environment and family social interactions is of great importance.	(Boubekri, 2008)

These viewpoints offer an analytical framework for researching and contrasting how modern lifestyles affect residential unit design in Iran and the United Arab Emirates. Iran, with its strong heritage of traditional architecture and emphasis on cultural and climatic elements, seeks to integrate modern innovation with indigenous principles. On the other hand, the UAE prioritizes the use of cutting-edge technological systems, large private areas, and contemporary technologies. The development of more effective, ecological, and lifestyle-compatible residential spaces that are in line with the social and cultural requirements of both nations can be aided by an understanding of these variations in contemporary house design. Figure 1 showed the research framework.

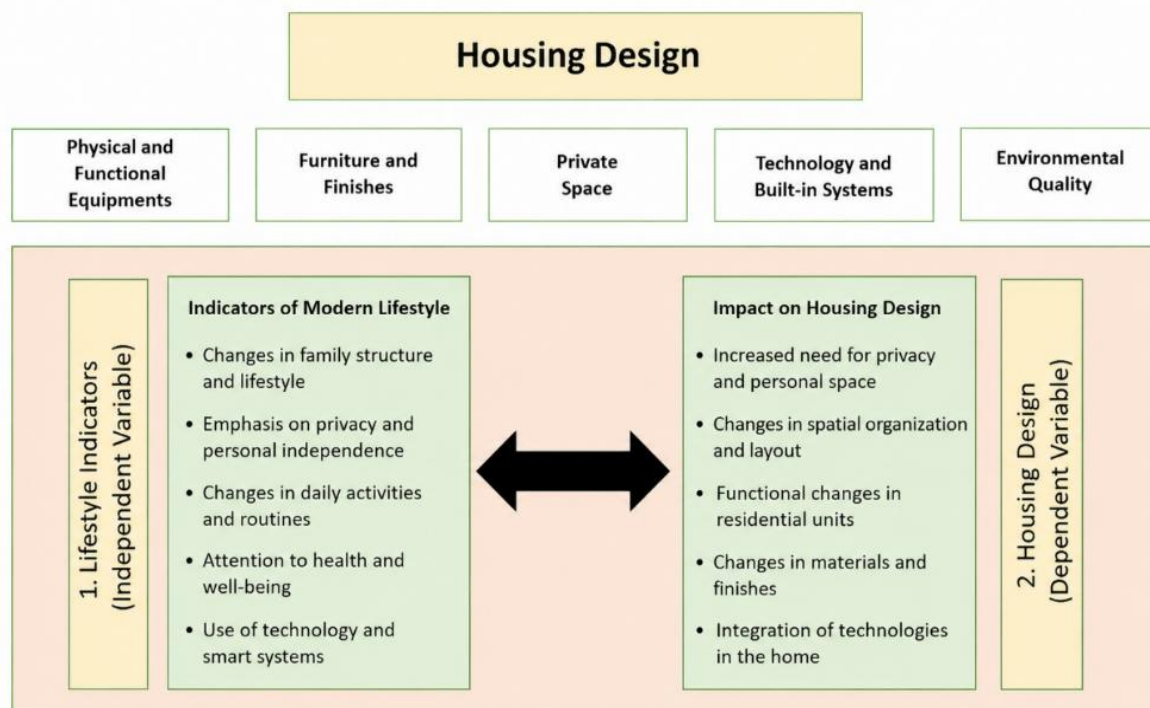


Fig 1. Research framework

2-1. The Concept of Modern Lifestyle

Economic, social, cultural, and modern technological trends have transformed the behavioral patterns and daily choices of contemporary humans and directly impacted the way people live and design residential spaces. In this

new context, homes have become multifunctional environments where, in addition to the role of dwelling, work, leisure, and the use of smart technologies are also possible. Simultaneously, the tendency toward personal comfort and increased spatial efficiency has grown, reinforcing private spaces while reducing communal spaces in residential units. The result of this trend is a movement toward smaller and more independent urban units that meet individual needs with greater flexibility. In Iran, modern lifestyle coexists with the preservation of traditional and cultural elements. Families observe religious and communal values, but the floor plans of their homes have moved toward smaller units, increased private spaces, functional design, and the use of appropriate terraces and skylights. Studies in Tabriz and Tehran show that contemporary residential units, by reducing public spaces and expanding private spaces, respond to residents' welfare and modern needs without completely erasing their cultural and traditional identity (Tahmasbi et al., 2018). In contrast, countries like the UAE, with rapid economic growth and globalization, have embraced a consumerist and technology-driven lifestyle, and residential spaces are designed to be large, luxurious, and equipped with numerous welfare facilities.

2-2. The Impact of Social, Economic, and Cultural Changes on Housing Design

Modern lifestyle is a set of behaviors, values, and daily choices shaped by economic, social, cultural, and technological changes, and has a direct effect on the way people live, family interactions, and the use of residential spaces. In modern urban societies, there is greater emphasis on individual welfare, comfort, efficiency, and productivity of space, and homes are no longer merely places for sleeping and rest, but have become spaces for work, leisure, and the use of modern technologies. One result of this lifestyle change is the increase in private spaces and the decrease in communal spaces, such that individuals have gravitated toward greater independence in homes and smaller urban units.

In Iran, modern lifestyle coexists with the preservation of cultural and traditional elements. Families still observe religious and communal values, but the floor plans of their homes have moved toward smaller units, more private spaces, and the use of terraces and skylights. Studies show that contemporary residential units, by reducing public spaces and increasing private spaces, meet the welfare and modern needs of residents without eliminating their cultural and traditional identity (Ismaili et al., 2018). This combination of modern lifestyle and traditional elements is a reflection of Iranian cultural identity and society's sensitivity to preserving its roots.

2-3. Impact of Lifestyle on Housing Design in Iran

Lifestyle in the UAE has undergone significant changes in recent decades that have directly affected housing design. Rapid economic growth, globalization, and the presence of a multicultural population have led to the formation of a diverse and consumerist lifestyle (Boubekri, 2008). Modern residential units in the UAE are often designed to be large, luxurious, and equipped with advanced welfare facilities, with welfare, comfort, and new technologies being the main axis of their architecture. One of the most important consequences of modern lifestyle is the increase in private spaces and the decrease in communal spaces. Separate rooms, bathrooms, and service spaces for each family member strengthen personal privacy and increase individual independence (Giddens, 2009).

The impact of globalization has led housing design in the UAE to be inspired by international patterns. The use of modern materials such as glass and steel and the design of Western forms responds to the consumerist and diverse lifestyles of residents (Thyra, 1996). Smart technologies and energy management systems are also employed in homes to enhance residents' welfare and comfort. Modern lifestyle in the UAE has also affected social interactions. Living in densely populated, multicultural urban environments has led to a reduction in collective activities and an increase in the tendency toward private activities at home. Thus, modern residential design is a combination of welfare, technology, consumerism, and individual lifestyle that responds to the real needs of residents while being harmonious with the values and cultural conditions of society.

2-4. Similarities and Differences between Residential Units in Iran and the UAE

The evolution of lifestyle in Iran and the UAE over recent decades has created different frameworks for the formation of residential units. In Iran, today's lifestyle is still rooted in Iranian identity—an identity that emphasizes family dignity, personal privacy, inner tranquility, and spatial order (Rahmani, 2019). This cultural

continuity has meant that even in modern units, the separation of guest and family spaces, the presence of semi-open spaces, and conservative designs continue. The diverse climate of Iran and the family-oriented structure have also influenced the formation of multi-bedroom floor plans, more enclosed spaces, and the use of sustainable and economical materials.

In contrast, the UAE has experienced a completely different lifestyle. A society that fifty years ago was based on tribal life and courtyard houses has now, with the sweeping wave of globalization, migration, and economic development, arrived at an international, luxurious, and entirely urban lifestyle (Al-Kindi, 2016). The speed of economic growth, the role of tourism and foreign investment, has shifted the pattern of residence from traditional homes to multi-purpose and highly equipped towers. The new Emirati lifestyle rests on luxury consumption, cultural diversity, the presence of immigrants, and the integration of work and leisure in the residential space (Al-Suwaidi, 2021). These two different lifestyles have direct consequences for the form, function, and interior spaces of residential units. In Iran, residential units are more "residence-oriented," with family needs and privacy being the determining factor of spatial organization. In the UAE, units typically have a multiple role including residence, investment, and urban identity formation. While in Iran, quality of space and functionalism have greater importance, in the UAE, emphasis is placed on visual appearance, luxury facilities, and the display of modernity. Table 2 showed Professional Comparison of Characteristics of Selected Residential Towers in Iran (Tehran) and the UAE (Dubai and surroundings) over the past decade.

Table 2. Professional Comparison of Characteristics of Selected Residential Towers in Iran (Tehran) and the UAE (Dubai and surroundings) over the past decade

Parameter	Tehran Residential Towers (Iran)	UAE Residential Towers (Dubai, etc.)
Lifestyle & Culture	Preserving the spirit of Iranian culture; separation of private and public areas, emphasis on family residence and preservation of traditional values	Urban-global lifestyle; combination of luxury, modernity, symbolism, and tourism economy
Floor Plan & Interior Use	Closed floor plans with independent kitchens, storage spaces; semi-private terraces	Open and flexible floor plans; multi-functional spaces and open views to urban landscapes
Dominant Materials	Concrete, stone facade, brick; climate-adaptive and economical materials	Glass and steel dominant; modern materials with emphasis on visual appearance and luxury
Shared Spaces & Amenities	Lobby, gym, green space at standard level; focus on efficiency and family residence	Multi-story lobbies, high ceilings, VIP halls, advanced smart technology
Symbol & Economy	Focus on housing and daily family use	Urban symbol and urban branding; related to tourism economy and investment
Climate & Adaptation	Optimized for Iran's hot and dry climate	Use of advanced ventilation and cooling systems due to hot and humid climate
Height & Floor Area	Medium to high-rise; proportional to population density and domestic housing market	Very high-rise; emphasis on prominent urban landmarks and outstanding views

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Lifestyle, as a collection of behavioral, cultural, and economic patterns, plays a decisive role in shaping the residential environment and architectural fabric. Numerous studies in Iran have shown that lifestyle changes,

especially in the contemporary period, have a direct relationship with changes in spatial patterns, the use of space, and housing design. These changes are largely the result of cultural, economic, and technological transformations and affect the design of residential units in various Iranian cities. According to studies conducted in the field of housing architecture and lifestyle, the body of research indicates that lifestyle transformation has been the primary driving force behind physical and spatial organizational changes in housing in Iran. Traditional housing patterns no longer effectively meet the needs of users due to changes in family roles, cultural values, the shift from traditional to contemporary structures, and the introduction of new urban needs, according to historical and comparative evaluations. The results indicate that basic architectural features, such as the division between private and public zones, spatial hierarchy, room dimensions, and the function of the courtyard, have changed due to factors like smaller family sizes, increased social interaction in shared spaces, decreased reliance on traditional service areas, and changes in consumption patterns. Further research shows that any alteration to a home's physical layout not only reflects lifestyle choices but also has a significant impact on how residents behave and live.

Furthermore, the results of field and comparative research show that contemporary architecture needs to be reevaluated and modified while interacting with Iranian culture. Functional conflicts and spatial dissatisfaction result from simply copying modern design patterns without taking into account cultural identity, privacy, hospitality customs, and gender roles within Iranian families, as demonstrated by the analysis of Iranian examples and their comparison with nations like the United Arab Emirates. However, research on the integration of indigenous and modern concepts has demonstrated that sustainable, efficient, and modern lifestyle-oriented housing may be produced by cleverly combining climatic aspects, semi-open areas, local materials, and new technologies. Overall, the findings of these studies highlight that, in order to effectively address both environmental and identity-related challenges within society, contemporary housing design should be based on the actual lifestyles of users, current cultural, climatic, and social needs, as well as the successful lessons of vernacular architecture. Table 3 showed Research Background.

Table 3. Research Background

No.	Author/Year	University/ Publisher	Study Objective	Key Findings & Relevance
1	Qadardān Qarāmalaki, 2024	Islamic Art University of Tabriz	Analysis of the evolution of home architecture in Tabriz	Lifestyle change is linked to changes in spatial form and organization. Traditional Tabriz architecture was built on concepts of inner-outer space, privacy, spatial hierarchy, and climatic connection. With modernity, these patterns underwent fundamental transformation.
2	Ismaili Jushkani, 2018	University of Tehran	Study of Iranian-Islamic lifestyle and the effect of cultural and religious norms on housing design	Cultural and religious norms influence residential design. The study shows that in Iran, consumption of goods, use of space, hospitality patterns, family relations, and the importance of private space play a deep role in shaping housing.
3	Shayayeh Golzardi, 2016	University of Tehran	Housing design based on lifestyle; analysis of spatial patterns	Spatial patterns conform to family needs. Housing must be designed based on actual living patterns rather than old stereotypical standards. Flexible spaces are key.
4	Soui Damnahei, 2012	University of Fine Arts	Housing design patterns in Tehran	Economic and social changes affect size and spatial organization. The study shows how changes have led to smaller areas, elimination of

				traditional formal spaces, and integrated kitchens.
5	Davtatabi et al., 2018	Mashhad	Native and modern architecture; comparative study	Combining tradition and modernity contributes to sustainable development. Integrating traditional principles with modern elements can create sustainable spaces meeting new lifestyle needs.
6	Tahmasbi et al., 2018	Islamic Azad University	Impact of modern architecture on lifestyle	More open spaces lead to greater social interaction. Modern architecture can change behavioral patterns of residents.
7	Aghalatif & Hojjat, 2018	University of Fine Arts	Impact of physical transformations on the concept of home	Physical transformations are related to changes in resident behavior. Kitchen has transformed from a hidden service space to a space of display and interaction.
8	Hosseini Tabatabaei & Mousavifard, 2018	Shahid Beheshti University	Modern architecture and cultural identity	Modern architecture changes urban identity and behavior. Replication of Western models can create an "imported identity" incompatible with local culture.
9	Rasoulzadeh Aqdām et al., 2016	Journal of Sociology of Lifestyle	Comparison of traditional and modern architecture	Cultural indicators affect spatial organization. Traditional Iranian architecture was precisely shaped according to lifestyle and cultural needs.
10	Barbari, 2017	University of Tehran	Factors of country development with an institutionalist approach	Policies and institutions influence lifestyle and housing. Comparison of Iran and UAE shows how institutional differences lead to different architectural outcomes.
11	Shouhānizād, 2018	University of Tehran	Housing valuation in hot and humid climate	Sustainable development must be aligned with modern lifestyle. Climate solutions can be integrated with new technology.
12	Zayi, 2007	Islamic Arts Studies	Study of famous Iranian miniatures and their aesthetic influence on residential architecture	The principles of Iranian art aesthetics have influenced residential architecture. Modern housing design must preserve cultural heritage.
13	Bamanian et al., 2008	Iranian Architecture Research Center	Analysis of Islamic architectural principles and their role in contemporary housing	Islamic architecture is a factor in maintaining social and cultural balance in the contemporary era.

3-1. Comparative Review of Research Background in Iran and UAE

Research conducted in Iran over the past two decades shows that most housing studies have focused on the analysis of cultural structures, family settlement patterns, and the impact of social identity on spatial organization. In these studies, the home has been analyzed as a context for the continuity of kinship relations and collective interactions, and concepts such as "privacy," "spatial hierarchy," and "separation of public and private spaces" have played key roles in design. Most related doctoral dissertations have also shown that traditional patterns of urban life in Iran, even in modern residential projects, continue to emphasize the need for semi-private spaces such as middle halls, family sitting rooms, and usable balconies (Rahmani, 2019).

In contrast, UAE studies have focused more on the consequences of rapid modernization, the growth of the urban economy, and the impact of migration on the housing structure. Research shows that a multinational lifestyle and an economy based on tourism and global trade have led to the formation of different residential patterns in which small apartments, short-term rental units, and residential towers with centralized services play the main role. Considerable attention to smart technologies, energy management, and environmental comfort is also evident in UAE residential projects, and doctoral studies in this country mainly focus on the application of up-to-date technologies and thermal performance modeling and energy consumption in residential units (Al-Ketbi, 2020). Table 4 demonstrated Comparative Research Paths and Design Priorities in Housing Studies in Iran and the UAE.

Table 4. Comparative Research Paths and Design Priorities in Housing Studies in Iran and the UAE

Criterion	UAE	Iran
Research Motivations & Contexts	Economy, population diversity, technological innovations; focus on speed of implementation and dynamic market	Family and cultural identity; emphasis on preserving values and traditions
Design & Research Approach	Techno-functional; unit flexibility, response to multinational needs, large and luxury complexes	Cultural-social; strengthening family relations, creating balance between shared and private spaces
Prominent Topics in Scientific Literature	Energy challenges, modern cooling systems, consumption optimization, low-carbon and smart buildings	Improving quality of life, spatial justice, accessibility, sustainable development, housing policy and household economics
Sustainability Approach	Utilizing advanced technologies, smart systems, international standards, green architecture	Emphasis on indigenous values and traditional climatic characteristics; revival of local architectural culture
Overall Balance in Design	Search for balance with special focus on technology, function, and energy efficiency	Alignment of environmental comfort, sustainability, and user needs with emphasis on preserving local identity
Final Focus in Research	New technologies, energy efficiency, design and rapid implementation of large urban projects	Housing policies, urban development patterns, household economic needs

3-2. Theoretical Foundations of Housing Design in Iran and the UAE

Housing design in Iran is rooted in a deep connection between culture, collective identity, and traditional living patterns. Numerous studies show that the concept of home in Iran has always been more than a physical shell, defined as a context for the realization of religious values, privacy-centricity, extended family structure, and multi-generational interactions. Theorists like Rapoport also emphasize that culture is the primary determinant of spatial form and organization, which is fully observable in Iranian studies. In this framework, spatial elements

such as the inner-outer division (andaruni-biruni), the central courtyard, indirect entrances, semi-private spaces, and spatial hierarchy are direct reflections of Iranian-Islamic behavioral styles and lifestyles.

In contrast, the theoretical foundations of housing design in the UAE are built on rapid economic transformations, modernization, migration, and the formation of a multinational society. Unlike Iran's more stable cultural framework, in the UAE, ethnic diversity and the extensive presence of a foreign workforce have caused housing patterns to be more subject to consumption, economic, and functional needs than traditional rules. Research by Al-Kindi and Al-Suwaidi shows that in the UAE, the vertical growth of cities, high-rise architecture, and the emergence of residential complexes with centralized services are a direct response to modern and cosmopolitan lifestyles that emphasize speed, accessibility, technology, and flexibility. In this framework, housing is developed more on the basis of global standards, smart systems, energy control, and functional design, and is less influenced by traditional patterns (Al-Kindi, 2016). From the perspective of lifestyle theorists such as Chaney, Giddens, and Rapoport, the fundamental difference between the two societies is formed when values, social relations, and economic structures differ. In Iran, lifestyle is still based on family cohesion, valuing communal spaces within the home, and the prominent role of cultural identity; while in the UAE, lifestyle is more individualistic, based on movement and consumption, and aligned with the global economic system. This theoretical difference has led housing design in Iran to rely more on identity-cultural principles, while housing design in the UAE focuses on functionalism, technology, and modern welfare (Giddens, 2009).

3-3. Characteristics of Modern Lifestyle in Iran and the UAE

The characteristics of modern lifestyle in Iran and the UAE, although formed in the context of modernity and globalization, have different manifestations in living and residential patterns due to cultural, economic, and social differences. In the UAE, modern lifestyle is mainly recognized through consumerism, technology-centricity, apartment living in high-rise towers, and an emphasis on welfare, speed, and display of social status, and housing has become less a context for social interaction and more a private, individualistic space based on global standards. In contrast, in Iran, modern lifestyle has gradually and adaptively formed, and alongside a tendency toward individualism and private spaces, it is still influenced by cultural values, social norms, and economic constraints; such that efforts to preserve concepts such as privacy, spatial flexibility, and some traditional patterns are observed in housing design. Table 5 showed Comparison of Modern Lifestyles in Iran and the UAE.

Table 5. Comparison of Modern Lifestyles in Iran and the UAE

Aspect	Iran	UAE
Form & Design	Simple geometric, distinct facade, functionalist with integration of Iranian tradition	Complex geometric, organic, neo-futurist with Islamic inspiration
Common Materials	Concrete, glass, new local materials	Steel, precast concrete, advanced heat-resistant glass
Technology & Construction	Climatic sustainability, medium speed with local quality	Advanced technology, high speed with global companies
Sustainability	Modernized wind towers and natural light	Modern Mashrabiya, orientation-based cooling
Impact on Lifestyle	Everyday simplicity, cultural identity	Luxury, tourism, economic display
Notable Examples	Towers in District 22, Elahiyeh, Sa'adatabad, Tehran	Marina 101, DAMAC Hills

Modern lifestyle in Iran is the result of a complex interaction between globalization processes, economic changes, family structural transformation, and shifts in residential patterns. In this lifestyle, the role of

individuality, speed, consumerism, and changing patterns of social interaction has become more prominent, and the home is no longer merely a space for traditional communal life, but has become a context for responding to diverse individual and family needs. These transformations have led to changes in the use of space, reduction of traditional communal spaces, and increased importance of private spaces in residential units (Giddens, 2009). In Iran, the rapid modernization of cities and the expansion of apartment living have directly affected residents' lifestyles. Reduction of neighborly interactions, changes in the pattern of hospitality, and the limitation of family activities in interior spaces are among the physical and social consequences of this trend. These changes show that the spatial organization of modern housing is no longer based on traditional collectivist values, but has been harmonized with new behavioral patterns and the needs of contemporary urban life (Rapoport, 1977). Modern lifestyle in Iran has always been accompanied by the challenge of cultural identity. The effort to combine traditional architectural elements with the requirements of modern life has led to the formation of new spatial patterns that are neither fully traditional nor completely aligned with Western models. This situation has created a kind of spatial and behavioral duality in contemporary residence in which residents oscillate between preserving cultural values and accepting the requirements of modernity (Hosseini Tabatabaei & Mousavifard, 2018).

Modern lifestyle in the United Arab Emirates is the result of a combination of globalization processes, rapid economic development, and state policies based on consumerism and technology-centricity. This lifestyle has formed more as a result of rapid economic changes, the growth of global cities such as Dubai and Abu Dhabi, and the absorption of international residential patterns, rather than developing gradually and endogenously. Based on theoretical views of lifestyle, in societies where modernity enters at high speed through capital and technology, behavioral and spatial patterns also change heterogeneously and exogenously. One of the main characteristics of modern lifestyle in the UAE is the dominance of consumerism and the display of welfare in the pattern of residence. Residential units, especially in high-rise complexes, are defined not only as living spaces but also as symbols of social status and a luxury lifestyle. This approach has led to the formation of spaces with high square footage, extensive welfare facilities, hotel-like services, and an emphasis on visual qualities; while social connections and neighborly interactions are of lower priority (Al-Suwaidi, 2021). Another important characteristic of modern lifestyle in the UAE is technology-centricity and heavy dependence on smart systems in residential spaces. The widespread use of smart technologies, artificial climate control, elevators, and advanced vertical access has led to the formation of a specific pattern of apartment living in which vertical movement and living in towers has become part of everyday lifestyle. Modern lifestyle in the UAE can be described as a consumerist, technology-driven, individualistic lifestyle reliant on global residential patterns that has had a direct impact on the design of residential units, spatial organization, scale of spaces, and reduction of communal spaces. Table 6 showed Impact of Modern Lifestyle on Housing Design in Iran and the UAE.

Table 6. Impact of Modern Lifestyle on Housing Design in Iran and the UAE

Impact Aspect	Iran (District 22, Elahiyeh, Sa'adatabad Towers)	UAE (Marina 101, DAMAC Hills)
Smart Technology	Basic BMS for lighting/heating/ventilation, local security cameras, digital locks, fiber optic, 16-person fire-resistant elevators; limited to elite with focus on family security	Full IoT with Alexa/Google, biometric iris/fingerprint, 62 AI high-speed elevators at 8m/s, Dyson robots, VR Metaverse, full voice control; international immigrant-friendly standard
Welfare Facilities	Pool/gym/sauna, 360-degree rooftop garden, home cinema, billiards/bowling, in-house clinic/supermarket, 24/7 maintenance, double-story mechanical parking; economical-family-oriented	57 private freefall pools, 18-hole championship golf, 120,000 m ² yacht marina, Olympic aqua park, thalasso/IMAX/VIP club spa, butler/Michelin restaurant, helipad; luxury recreational self-sufficient
Climatic Sustainability	UPVC insulation, anti-seismic composite concrete (8 Richter), backup generator,	BIPV solar panels (40% energy), VRV cooling for 50-degree temperatures, Low-

	double-glazed windows, lake/garden view; medium consumption with basic water/waste recycling	E UV-resistant glass, 80% grey water recycling, desert hydroponic turf; LEED Platinum with moisture-resistant composite materials
Social-Cultural Dimensions	Traditional-modern family-oriented (green terrace/small courtyard), armed security, urban fabric integration (5-min metro, Iran Mall), inflation-driven long-term tenancy with local security	100% foreigner-friendly individualistic, absolute privacy (dedicated elevators), Arabic-minimal Islamic arch theme, dollar tourism with no income tax
Economic-Market	National housing plan, 65-650 m ² medium units, low price/income ratio (40% inflation), bank loans, new construction growth in north/west Tehran, domestic investment	Full foreign ownership, 200-1000 m ² luxury units, excellent purchase power (high income), 10-20% annual dollar return, tax-free, attraction of 9,600 Iranian units
Density & Access	13-21 stories, 400+ m ² lobby, high urban density, mechanical/metro/highway access (5-min Hemmat-Hakim)	101 stories or VIP 5-10 stories, 600+ VIP parking/EV chargers, marina/helicopter with open beach horizon

3-4. Comparative Analysis of Housing Design in Iran and UAE: Notable Examples

A comparative examination of housing design in Iran and the UAE through the study of notable examples such as the residential towers of District 22 Tehran, Elahiyeh and Sa'adatabad in Iran, as well as the Marina 101 and DAMAC Hills projects in the United Arab Emirates, provides the opportunity for an objective analysis of the differences and similarities arising from modern lifestyle in the two countries. These samples represent the dominant approaches in contemporary residential design and have been shaped by cultural, economic, social, and urban development policy factors. The residential towers of District 22 Tehran, Elahiyeh, and Sa'adatabad represent the efforts of Iranian residential architecture to respond to the needs of modern lifestyle while preserving some cultural and social values. Although these towers have been shaped by trends toward modernization, increased density, and apartment living, their design still features attention to spatial separation, family privacy, and spatial flexibility. Economic constraints, urban regulations, and the social fabric have caused housing in these areas to be defined more as a space for everyday family life rather than merely as a symbol of consumerism, and this is what creates a difference in scale, facilities, and the way spaces are organized compared to UAE examples.



Fig 2. Residential high rise in Iran

Marina 101 and DAMAC Hills are among the most notable examples of modern housing in the UAE that represent the dominance of a luxury, consumer-oriented, and technology-driven pattern in the design of residential units. These projects, with their emphasis on high-rise tower construction, extensive use of smart

technologies, integrated welfare services, and private recreational spaces, have turned housing into a symbolic commodity indicating social status. In these samples, the spatial organization of the units is mainly based on international models, and the role of traditional communal spaces and neighborly interactions has diminished; such that the main focus is on individual comfort, privacy, and the visual and luxury qualities of the space.



Fig 3. Marina 101 and DAMAC Hills in UAE

The comparative analysis of these notable samples shows that housing design in the UAE is mainly based on global models, luxury, and technology-driven approaches, and is less dependent on indigenous and cultural components, while in Iran, the design of residential towers, despite accepting modernity, has a more adaptive and cautious approach and tries to balance contemporary needs and cultural values. These differences are a direct reflection of the dominant lifestyle in each country and show that residential architecture is not only responsive to functional needs but is also a reflection of the value system and way of life of different societies.

CONCLUSION

This research was conducted with the aim of comparatively studying the impact of modern lifestyle on the design of residential units in Iran and the United Arab Emirates, attempting to examine the extent and manner of modern lifestyle's influence on design patterns through the analysis of physical, spatial, and conceptual indicators of contemporary housing in the two countries. Research findings show that modern lifestyle, as a pervasive factor, has played a decisive role in the transformation of the spatial structure of residential units, but different cultural, economic, and social contexts have caused distinct patterns to emerge in each country. The first research hypothesis states that modern lifestyle in both countries has led to a reduction in communal spaces and an increase in private spaces in residential units. An examination of case studies and the analysis of spatial organization of residential units in Iran and the UAE shows that this hypothesis is substantially confirmed. In both countries, changes in social interaction patterns, the reduction of extended family interactions, and the increase in individualism have caused traditional communal spaces such as large sitting rooms, shared courtyards, and multi-purpose spaces to give way to more private and function-oriented spaces. The increase in the number of independent bedrooms, the separation of parents' and children's spaces, and emphasis on personal privacy in interior design are among the most prominent manifestations of this spatial transformation. Therefore, it can be concluded that modern lifestyle, regardless of cultural differences, has led to a redefinition of the concept of collectivism in housing and a strengthening of private spaces in both countries, and the first research hypothesis is fully confirmed.

The second research hypothesis emphasizes that the impact of modern lifestyle in the UAE has manifested more in the form of consumerism and technology-centricity, while in Iran, aspects of cultural and economic adaptation are more prominent. Research findings show that in the UAE, residential unit design is heavily influenced by consumer patterns, the display of welfare, and the widespread use of new technologies. The use of smart systems, luxury equipment, private recreational spaces, and emphasis on visual and symbolic qualities is indicative of the direct connection between modern lifestyle and consumerism in this country. In contrast, in Iran, modern lifestyle has manifested more as an adaptive and gradual process in housing design. Economic constraints, cultural values, and the structure of the Iranian family have led designers and residents to reinterpret existing spaces and adapt them to new life needs rather than fully accepting consumer patterns. As a result, the second research hypothesis is also confirmed and shows that although the nature of modern lifestyle's influence in both countries has a common root, it differs in terms of direction and intensity.

The third research hypothesis states that modern residential design in the UAE has been inspired by Western and international models, while in Iran an effort has been made to maintain a combination of tradition and modernity. Analysis of architectural design approaches in UAE residential architecture shows that spatial patterns, forms, and even the functional organization of units are mainly derived from international and Western models, with less attention to indigenous and traditional elements. In contrast, in Iran, although the impact of modern lifestyle is undeniable, efforts to preserve traditional concepts such as privacy, introversion, spatial separation, and spatial flexibility are still observed. This combination of tradition and modernity shows that Iranian residential architecture seeks to create a balance between cultural values and the needs of contemporary life. Accordingly, the third research hypothesis is also fully confirmed. The results of this research show that modern lifestyle is the common factor in the transformation of residential unit design in Iran and the UAE, but the way this transformation manifests is heavily dependent on the cultural, economic, and social contexts of each country. The confirmation of all three research hypotheses indicates that contemporary housing design cannot be based solely on global models, but requires deep attention to indigenous lifestyles and the contextual conditions of each society. These findings can provide an appropriate basis for housing policy-making and design tailored to the real needs of residents in both countries.

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