

Choice of Use of the Kitchen by the Gender Group: Kitchens in Married Households in Dhaka City

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ABSTRACT

Design and spatial variation of kitchens impact the different gender groups from country to country, society to society, which largely depends on the degree of openness and enclosure (closed kitchen to open kitchen). Although numerous analysts have speculated about the relationships between residential architecture, the use of space, and changing gender patterns within married households, only a few researchers have empirically investigated these connections (Kent, 1990; Lawrence, 1979; Tog-noli, 1980). A kitchen connects various household spaces like dining, bedroom, living room, etc. It also defines the public and private zone of a household. But the research keeps focusing on the gender perspective. So, gender is the driving force. The women have in-depth relationships in both eastern and western cultures. In both eastern and western cultures, most of the time, the kitchen is used by women rather than men in both cultures (Csikszentmihalyi et al., 1981; Madigan et al. 1990; Rappoport, 1982; Saegert et al., 1980. Architecture can play a vital role in this perspective. Different types of spatial organization can change the feminine perception of the kitchen. Dhaka is the capital of Bangladesh, carrying the shadow of its gender-specific culture with a breakthrough of the masculine lens. Because here both gender is busy with the race of economy. So, here the perception of a kitchen is in a contemporary state, which will give the research another dimension for married households.

Keywords: Gender Choice, Domestic Space, Kitchen, Married Household.

INTRODUCTION

Since this study focuses on space and people, the residential scale of persons and their environment is investigated to discover evidence for spatial and social changes that benefit women. In Barker's (1963) terms, Kitchens needed multiple function areas that physically support many activities and more than one person in space. Thus, armed with the theoretical perspective of reciprocity between people (changing lives) and space (open and multifunction settings), interactions among the complex issues of couples' preferences were examined for open and multifunction versus enclosed and restricted use

kitchens. According to Rapoport (1990), the non-fixed types of equipments like dining table, sofa, chairs, bed, almirah, etc can be shifted easily. But the fixed gear, like floors, walls, etc., are articulated by users for defined activities. For the spatial analysis, these pieces of equipment are very significant. Hence, as Rappoport and others argue, the built environment can be neutral or guide. So, the users can enhance the behavioral pattern of a space.

Psychosocial and behavioral patterns are the passive force, but spatial behavior is the active force (Anthony, et al, 1990). Gender conception might be varied from

time to time, culture to culture. But they are carrying their traditional waves. Several scholars focused on spatial change rather than the change of conventional behavioral patterns. So, the architecture focusing on openness or closeness can guide the traditional social norms.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

This study examined married men's and women's residential spatial preferences – specifically the kitchen, dining, and family living areas. The goal was to test a theory of reciprocal influence between people and space. It was argued that just as men's and women's lives are changing because of the women's employment revolution, their preferences are changing in favor of spatial arrangements supporting their new lifestyles. The present research intended to test the reliability and thus the validity of conclusions from the prior study through a random sample and by utilizing refined and spatial measures.

OBJECTIVE

Twelve married men's and women's spatial preferences for four kitchen models are investigated. Half of the kitchens are open to the dining and family areas, which could support the other various functions with the presence of two persons. On the other hand, half of the kitchens are merely enclosed where multi usable areas are

restricted. This study aims to specify threads between household space and women's autonomy. Being able to shape one's physical environment is one indicator of the larger question of control over one's life.

METHODOLOGY

Primarily this research is qualitative research where qualitative data and some quantitative data are used. There are different tools of qualitative research. This research uses participant observation (Marshall, M.N., 1996) and interviews as research tools.

Sample Selection

Twelve married men's and women's spatial preferences for four kitchen models were investigated. Half of the kitchens are open to the dining and family areas, which could support the other various functions with the presence of two persons. On the other hand, half of the kitchens are merely enclosed where multi usable areas are restricted. Here sample eligibility was defined as a man and a woman living together as a married couple in Dhaka city, Bangladesh; there are no religious issues to focus on in this research. These 12 (twelve) families are from four locations in Dhaka city: Jahanara garden residential area, Bashundhara residential area, Wari, and Mirpur.

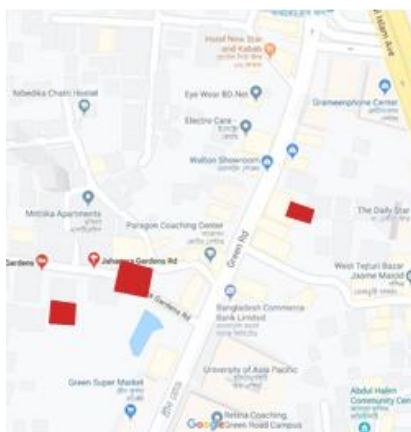


Fig.1: Green Road (sample no 1,2 & 3)

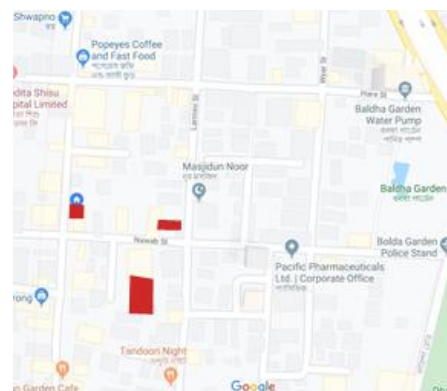


Fig.2: Wari (sample no 4,5 & 6)

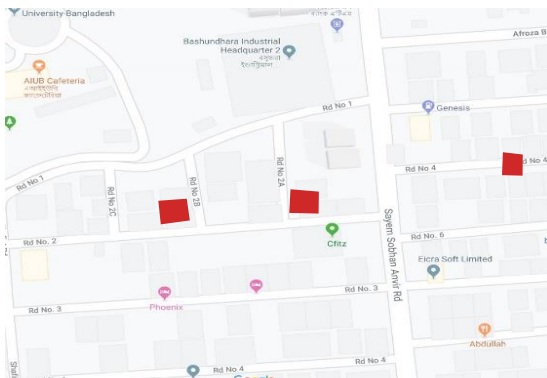


Fig.3: Bashundhara R/A (sample no 7,8 & 9)



Fig.4: Mirpur Shewrapara (sample no 10,11 & 12)

Data Collection Criteria

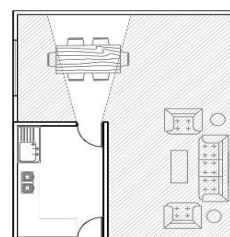
The interview schedule with both partners focused on four-scale models of residential kitchens. Each partner was asked to choose the single kitchen model that was most like their present kitchen and then rank all models in order of preference. Each respondent then indicated the relative influence of a few design features on their choice of kitchen model. The four design features or spatial measures - are:

- 1) The amount of wall enclosure to openness surrounding the kitchen.
- 2) The amount of available counter

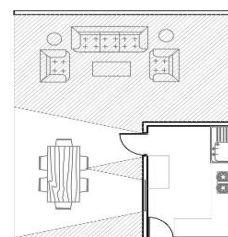
workspace in the kitchen.

- 3) The inclusion of an eating counter or table in the kitchen; and
- 4) the relative visibility out of the kitchen to the dining and seating areas.

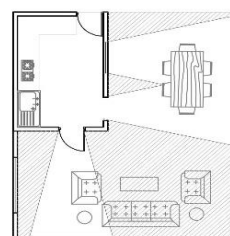
The four models varied in terms of spatial tent measures. The first three measures are easily understood, but the fourth measure requires more explanation.



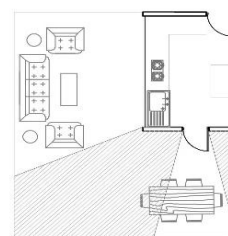
KITCHEN A
Single Function : Closed
(Similar to Sample 1,4 & 10)



KITCHEN B
Mixed Function : Closed
(Similar to Sample 2,5 & 11)



KITCHEN C
Single Function : Semi-Open
(Similar to Sample 6,9 & 12)



KITCHEN D
Mixed Function : Semi-Open
(Similar to Sample 3,7 & 8)

Fig.5: Plans of three-Dimensional kitchen models ranging from the closed kitchen (A) to the semi-open kitchen (D). Kitchens A & C are functionally restricted, and kitchens B & D are

functionally non- restricted. The non-shaded areas represent a 180-degree view from 'X.'

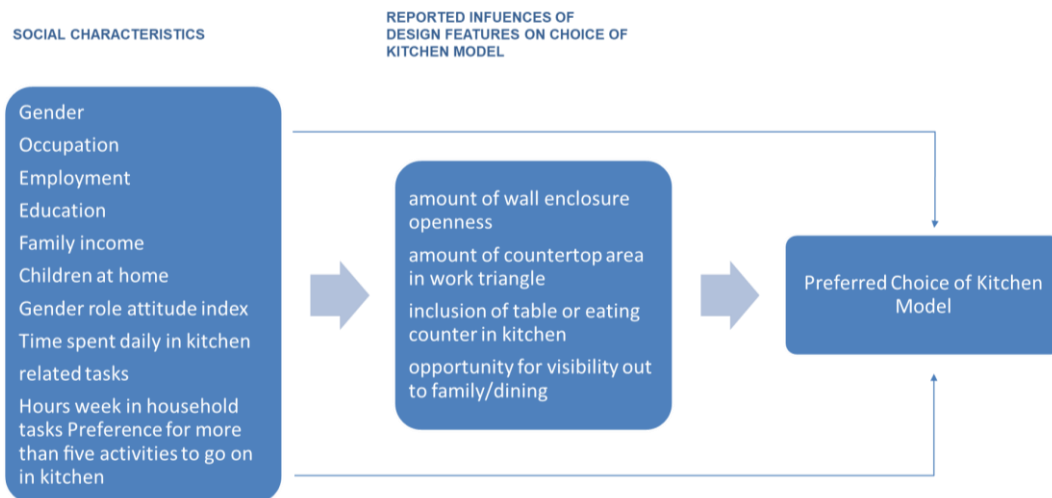


Fig.6: Relationship among social characteristics and reported influences of design features on the choice of kitchen model and preferred choice of kitchen model

ANALYSIS

Data Analysis

The analyses used several techniques to assess men and women to identify

1. The effects of social characteristics on the choice of kitchen mode
2. The products of social attributes on reported influence of design features for kitchens
3. The influence of design features in the selection of kitchen models
4. The effects of social characteristics and the influence of design features on the choice of kitchen model.

Different types of kitchens are analyzed based on the mentioned kitchen layout to understand the choice of the kitchen from a gender perspective. Here, inclusiveness act as an indicator. Inclusiveness is guided by the proximity of openness rather than gender, age, or tradition. Using these simple three-dimensional models for communicating spatial qualities was considered a significant improvement over a questionnaire alone.

When preferences are discussed, the researcher and the respondents could have a similar image of spatial features. Other

researchers have used simple models (Keplam et al., 1914) and visuals (Sanoff, 1990) to understand respondents' preferences more clearly. The use of models in combination with a questionnaire contributed substantially towards increasing the validity of information supplied by respondents and appeared to restore some of the limitations of preference studies about which Weidemann EL Anderson (1985) have cautioned researchers

Sample Characteristics and Limitations of the Research

The 24 persons ranged in age from 24 to 60 years. With a mean age of 36 for men and 34 for women, 20 percent of the couples had no children at home; of these who did, 30 percent had one child, 50 percent had two children at home, and 20 percent had three or more at home 45 percent of the male respondents had a college education or more; only 25 percent of the women had the same, and Our sample was relatively mature, well-educated and had few children at home. The sample characteristics are not descriptive of other social arrangements, and the findings are thus limited in

generalizability.

FINDINGS

Table 1: *Women's and men's first choices for kitchen model openness.*

		Model	Women % # 1 preference	Men % # 1 preference
Degree of Openness	Low	A	12	9
		B	23	15
			35%	24%
	High	C	37	35
		D	28	41
			65%	76%
			n=12	n=12

Men were somewhat more conventional in their attitudes toward gender roles than women. On the gender orientation scale, Women's scores ranged from 2-28 (mean - 14.13) while men's went from 0—34

(mean = 15.33). The slightly lower scores for women indicate their greater egalitarianism and are consistent with the literature.

Table 2: *Women's preference for kitchen model openness by employment status*

		Non-employed Women	Employed Women	
Degree of Openness	Low	60%	28%	n=5
	High	40%	72%	n=7
		n=5	n=7	

In this part, men's response was different than women's. Women are more likely to choose single-function type models, and men prefer mixed types. However, when we examine the same variables for the couple's choice of model (Table 1 & 3), gender emerges as the strongest predictor of an open kitchen choice, with wall enclosure and preference for multiple activities closely behind. The direction and strength of gender indicate that, once again. When men and women choose as a couple, the women's choices are subordinated to the men's. This is ironic

considering the old assumption that the kitchen is the woman's place and may indicate a cultural bias. However, at least within this sample, men's preferences for open kitchens dominate, and women's mixed feelings about openness are subordinate.

Table 3: *Women's and men's first choice for kitchen model considering the functions*

		Model	Women % # 1 preference	Men % # 1 preference
Functions	Single	A	20	20
		C	50	15
			70%	35%
	Mix	B	10	20
		D	20	45
			30%	65%
			n=12	n=12

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CONCLUSION

The most important contribution of this study is women's growing autonomy in married households. And the impact of this development on the residential kitchen/family setting in terms of its openness and multi-use. The ultimate issue of feminism is the conditions of women's autonomy (Mitchell, et. al, 1986; Rhode. 1990) throughout all spheres of society. Space is one of these spheres, and it is argued that within such married

households, spatial choices may be predicted by factors such as gender, the presence of children at home, women's employment, and so on. Gender attitude among women and self-monitoring personality type.

In addition. Preference for design features may also predict preferences for types of spaces in kitchen/family settings. While economies and availability play a substantial part in house selection, it has been argued that human agency affects the preference for particular types of tiny family spaces. Within this study, assessing the value was both a goal and a complication. Although no superficial relationships between space and user response about the area were found, many factors were significant.

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