

Cultural Influence On Kitchen Design: Integrating Architecture, Cuisine and Culture

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doi: <https://doi.org/10.37745/ijcecem.14/vol14n11015>

Published April 01, 2026

Citation: Sajjad M.H.S. and D'Mello S.J. (2026) Cultural Influence On Kitchen Design: Integrating Architecture, Cuisine and Culture, *International Journal of Civil Engineering, Construction and Estate Management*,14(1),10-15

Abstract: *In the current world of trends, modernity and globalization, designs are becoming increasingly standard and similar throughout the globe, while ignoring traditional architectural elements and artistic heritage. This research proposes an investigation into culturally connected domestic design, with a focus on kitchen spaces as cultural, functional, and social environments. This study takes information from architectural and cultural studies from Pakistan as well as comparative perspectives from Russian, South Korean and Chinese kitchens and examines how art and food culture can be incorporated into domestic design today. It uses qualitative analysis of existing literature and ends up with ways to combine traditional and cultural values with modern requirements. The main question of this research is how culture and tradition can be integrated into kitchens and homes today without compromising functionality. Furthermore, it explores how these cultural and traditional insights can promote sustainability and identity in living spaces.*

Keywords: kitchen design, traditional architecture, domestic spaces, food culture, functionality

INTRODUCTION

Domestic spaces tend to be very intimate and personal as they have the ability to express personality and likes. They can also express cultural identity and connection to tradition, religion and values. In some societies, architecture evolved gradually in response to climate, religion and artistic tradition. However, modern residential design has a globalized standard, or follows trends that come and go, which prioritize efficiency, aesthetics and modernism over cultural identity and representation. This is evident in Pakistan through the shift of traditional courtyard houses to modern detached residences, which is at the cost of environmental responsiveness (Malik & Hassan, 2019).

Similarly, they are spaces that are strongly associated with food culture, gender roles and social interaction have been redesigned with layouts for efficiency but disregard local practices. However, research from around the world proves that culturally responsive design is both possible and necessary. Chinese kitchen studies show how food culture and user behaviour influences kitchen layouts, and Russian kitchen designs show how global aesthetics and trends can be adopted without compromising tradition and culture (Li & Choi, 2023) & (Naumova, 2025). Furthermore, differences in cuisine (e.g., stir-frying vs. slow-simmering), food-related rituals, gendered labour divisions and values about privacy and sociability produce different spatial, material and technological requirements for kitchens across regions and cultural groups. The aim of this research is to combine architectural, cultural, traditional, artistic and behavioural perspective to explore how domestic design (particularly kitchens) can sustain cultural elements while still adapting to contemporary lifestyles. This research study aims to answer the question on how can traditional architectural and cultural elements be integrated into modern kitchen and domestic design to preserve cultural identity while meeting functional and technological environments of modern homes?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pakistan's traditional architecture reflects centuries of adaption to climate, social organization and cultural norms and values. Courtyard houses served as climate-regulating and socially cohesive environments. They accommodated extended families and joint-family systems very well while still providing privacy (Bhatti, 2018). Architectural elements such as thick walls, shaded verandas, and inward-facing layouts solidified cultural values of modesty and communal living. Malik & Hassan (2019) explore how residential buildings in Lahore, Pakistan have transitioned towards western-influenced and extremely modern homes. These homes offer the latest technological conveniences and hold up to modern beauty standards. However, they are extremely disconnected with culture and neglect environmental efficiency. The removal of communal spaces such as courtyards and verandas has weakened the possibility of social interaction within the family, an act that holds high value in Pakistani culture.

Muiz (2020) states that architecture functions as a cultural text and encodes values and identity within it. Design risks becoming culturally detached when it focuses on foreign aesthetics and trends over old traditions and values. These studies establish architecture of a living space as the foundational layer through which cultural identity is represented. Culture heavily influences domestic routines in Pakistan. In Pakistani society, collectivism, hospitality and tradition are all given heavy importance and they all influence the use of domestic spaces. Kitchens reflect gendered roles, food preparation patterns, and social boundaries between private and guest areas (Haleem, 2016). Bhatti (2018) underlines the importance of how modern housing often fails to accommodate culturally specific practices such as large-scale cooking for extended families or flexible seating for religious and social gatherings. This leads to spaces that can be functionally restrictive. Understanding that culture and behaviour patterns significantly impact the use of space is essential for developing domestic designs that are both functional and meaningful.

Art and craft traditions are integral to Pakistan's cultural identity. Khan et al. (2018) examines traditional Pakistani carved wooden furniture, along with its symbolic meanings and its role in use of sustainable materials and also sustaining craft industries. Historically (and in villages today), such crafts were integral

in domestic interiors as they reflect culture and wealth. Khun (2023) stresses the importance of art education in preserving cultural identity and tradition. Giving contemporary design education importance while ignoring traditional crafts has already caused much cultural erosion and loss of heritage and it will only increase until this issue is addressed. Including traditionally and culturally reflected art and craft into domestic design is a social and educational responsibility as it is a way of keeping traditions alive.

Similarly, Chinese domestic and food culture puts heavy emphasis on food preparation and communal dining. Li and Choi (2023) explore how Chinese food culture influences kitchen design and identify cooking techniques and traditional values. This study uses the traditional cultural theory and demonstrates how these factors can influence kitchen layouts and workflows. Li and Choi (2024) examine user behaviour in modern Chinese families in modern kitchens and highlights the importance of keeping these customs and values in mind while designing compact kitchens that includes modernity. The authors support user centred design that prioritize user behaviour and workflow. These Chinese studies reveal a shared cultural emphasis with Pakistan on food and family.

Russian kitchen designs show how globalization and trends influence interior design and how they can be adopted without letting go of traditional and cultural elements. Naumova (2025) notes how modern Russian kitchens adopt trendy aesthetics while staying culturally connected through house layouts and material choices. This selective adaptation proves that globalization does not equal cultural loss and that a middle ground can be found and implemented. This Russian example supports the achievability of this concept which is modern in concept with a touch of culture and tradition.

Cross-cultural research reinforces the significance of culture in domestic design and shows how diverse culture is and how influential it can be. De Leur et al. (2006) provides a comparative analysis of South Korean and Dutch kitchens demonstrates how norms and values influence layouts, appliance usage and social interaction. With all views in mind, we see a pattern which is that domestic design is most effective when it is aligned with values, norms, food culture and user behaviour.

METHODOLOGY

The literature reviewed confirms that domestic architecture and kitchen design are highly influenced by climatic factors, cultural values, food habits, artistic traditions, and user behavior. International comparative studies add weight to this claim. Cross-cultural comparison of South Korean and Dutch kitchens also confirms the influence of societal norms and values on domestic design, appliance use, and social interactions (De Leur et al., 2006). Taken together, these studies confirm that domestic spaces work best when spatial designs directly address cultural values, food habits, climatic factors, and user behavior. Nevertheless, whereas existing literature confirms these relationships within specific cultural milieus, there is a relative scarcity of comparative, integrative research that combines architectural traditions, artistic culture, food culture, and user behavior across multiple societies to develop general design principles for modern residential interiors.

This identified gap directly informs the methodological approach of this present research. Instead of focusing on one national context and/or employing stylistic analysis exclusively, this research follows a qualitative cross-cultural comparative methodology based upon secondary literature and architectural case study. Through such an examination of Pakistani home architecture in relation to Chinese, South Korean, Dutch, and Russian kitchen environments, this research attempts to identify commonalities and differences in spatial organization, materiality, ventilation, and user workflows. The methodology of this research is thus designed around an analysis of four connected aspects of home architecture, culture, food ways, and user behavior. formulation of culturally responsive design principles for modern domestic environments.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The comparative analysis suggests that architecture provides one of the key means through which cultural identity is expressed and enacted within domestic and kitchen spaces. In Pakistan, for instance, traditional courtyard houses reveal a high degree of climatic responsiveness through inward-facing plans, shaded verandas, thick walls, and ventilation strategies. These spatial strategies support extended family living and reinforce social structures at the community level, thus making the kitchen a social space rather than a functional work space.

The study of Chinese kitchens highlights how food culture and cooking habits, particularly high-temperature cooking and regular food preparation, require ventilation strategies, space efficiency, and material durability. User-centred design strategies highlight efficiency and culturally embedded routines related to food preparation and consumption.

South Korean and Dutch kitchens serve as further examples of how cultural values affect the planning of space, the use of appliances, and the degree of openness between cooking and living areas. South Korean kitchens tend to embody the principles of efficient compactness, as in urban culture and culinary practices, while Dutch kitchens tend to combine openness and visibility, thus underlining the importance of home sociability and transparency.

Modern Russian kitchens provide evidence of the adaptive response to globalization, which has led to the combination of modern design and modular organization with culturally specific spatial planning and material choices. These spaces are exemplary of how global trends can be selectively adopted without losing cultural distinctiveness.

In all cases, the results demonstrate that culturally successful domestic spaces are those in which functional planning is closely attuned to user behavior, culinary practices, social norms, and environmental conditions. Kitchens expand in size and become more flexible in cultures that stress the importance of hospitality and communal living, while compact and highly efficient designs prevail in cultures that stress the importance of urban density and technological integration.

DISCUSSIONS

This study reveals the link between interior design and culture in the context of interior spaces at home, especially with regard to kitchen design. A kitchen is not only a practical interior space used for food preparation but also a cultural space where cultural values, traditions, and social interactions are maintained. This study reveals that the design of traditional kitchens in Pakistan, Russia, Korea, and China reflects cultural values in terms of spatial design, materials used, and interior design elements. For example, the way food is prepared or the types of utensils used in different cultures affect the design of interior spaces.

However, globalization and modern interior design trends promote the standardization of interior design. In modern interior design, especially with regard to kitchens, efficiency, simplicity, and universal design are emphasized, leading to the loss of cultural design elements. Literature reveals that modern interior design technologies and materials may result in the loss of cultural design values with regard to interior design practices.

This can be established through the comparative analysis that shows that the incorporation of traditional elements in modern kitchen designs is possible. This can be done through the incorporation of cultural patterns, traditional materials, spatial layouts that consider the cooking habits of the locals, as well as the incorporation of art that relates to the culture of food. For instance, the incorporation of handcrafted tiles, cultural colours, as well as spaces that can accommodate traditional cooking habits can be effective in ensuring cultural identity while at the same time ensuring modern functionality.

Additionally, the study shows that cultural integration in kitchen designs can be effective in ensuring sustainability. This can be established through the fact that most traditional designs are effective in ensuring sustainability. For instance, most traditional designs ensure the effective use of materials that can ensure sustainability.

IMPLICATIONS TO RESEARCH

This research contributes to the broader discussion on culturally responsive interior design by emphasizing the importance of integrating cultural heritage into contemporary domestic spaces. Future research could expand this work by conducting empirical studies, including field observations, interviews with homeowners and designers, and case studies of culturally inspired kitchen designs in modern homes.

Additionally, further research could explore how designers and architects can systematically incorporate cultural elements into residential design frameworks without compromising functionality or modern living standards. Investigating user experiences and preferences across different cultural contexts may also provide deeper insights into how individuals perceive culturally integrated spaces.

CONCLUSION

This research emphasizes the importance of culture, food, climate, art, and user behavior in residential kitchen spaces. By comparing the architecture of Pakistan with other countries such as China, South Korea, the Netherlands, and Russia, it has been made clear how culturally connected spaces can be designed when the layout of the kitchen is aligned with the values, norms, and routines of the people living in the respective countries.

The research has proved that incorporating culture in modern residential spaces is not only possible but also crucial for developing spaces where people can live in harmony with nature and feel connected to the spaces. Domestic spaces can be considered not only from a practical or aesthetic perspective but also from a cultural perspective.

FUTURE RESEARCH

The study aims at creating a basis for culturally responsive residential design by integrating architectural heritage, food culture, behavioral patterns, and artistic traditions. It is suggested that further studies should include field studies of Pakistani households of the current era and of various socio-economic statuses, along with interviews and post-occupancy studies of technologically advanced and culturally responsive kitchens. This will help in gaining a better insight into the impact of changing lifestyles on residential architecture in the context of a rapidly modernizing society.

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