

Original Article

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Lifestyle changes of low-income groups and the reproduction of Islamic values in communal housing patterns: a case study of Tabriz

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Abstract

In recent decades, the rapid urbanization process, economic developments, and changes in consumption patterns and social communication have transformed the lifestyle of low-income urban groups. These changes have also impacted patterns of residence and coexistence, and in many cases, have come into conflict with the necessity of reproducing Islamic values. In the meantime, the lack of formal models for communal housing in Iran, especially in the city of Tabriz, has made the issue of adapting modern lifestyles to religious and cultural values more important. The primary objective of this research is to clarify the relationship between lifestyle changes, the intensity of communal living, and the reproduction of Islamic values in low-income settlements of Tabriz and to present a local model for the future of communal housing. The research method is quantitative and based on structural equation modeling using AMOS and SmartPLS software. Data were collected from 420 households using a two-stage cluster sampling method. The results showed that lifestyle changes have a direct impact on the reproduction of Islamic values with a path coefficient of 0.34. This effect is strengthened by the intensity of communal living, with an indirect coefficient of 0.24, so that the total impact is 0.58. Additionally, the R^2 value for reproducing Islamic values was 0.62, and the Q^2 value was 0.41, indicating the model's high explanatory and predictive power. The findings confirmed that communal living can only adapt to lifestyle changes of low-income groups if Islamic principles, such as justice, confidentiality, cooperation, and moral security, are observed; otherwise, it will not only be inefficient but can also conflict with Iranian-Islamic culture.

Keywords

Islamic Values
Lifestyle
Communal Housing
Tabriz

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1. Introduction

Recent social and economic transformations in Iran, particularly the sharp increase in housing costs and the pressures caused by inflation, have led to fundamental changes in the lifestyles of low-income groups. These transformations have pushed many households toward communal living arrangements, in which multiple households coexist within shared spaces and collectively manage resources and services. Such arrangements are not merely responses to financial scarcity; they also carry cultural and value-based implications. In this context, the reproduction of Islamic values such as cooperation, justice in resource use, respect for privacy, contentment, and cleanliness takes on new meaning and function. The global literature likewise emphasizes that communal living can either strengthen or weaken social and normative values and has direct effects on spatial justice and quality of life (Czischke et al., 2020; Bossuyt, 2022; Griffith et al., 2022; Cortés-Urra et al., 2024).

The city of Tabriz, with its historical legacy of courtyard-oriented and neighborhood-based living, alongside the contemporary growth of informal settlements, provides a suitable context for examining the relationship between lifestyle changes and the reproduction of Islamic values under contemporary conditions. Domestic studies indicate that the spatial organization of informal settlements in Tabriz follows local cultural and value-based structures more closely than formal urban regulations, which contributes to the persistence of particular social relations (Soleimani & Gharehbaglou, 2021). Research on security in low-income neighborhoods of Tabriz also shows that the quality of management of shared spaces and the rules governing their use play a decisive role in social order and residents' sense of security (Aghaei et al., 2024). Furthermore, studies of the architecture of historic houses in Tabriz demonstrate that inward-oriented spatial organization and hierarchical spatial structures historically provided the basis for privacy and value-oriented living (Ezzati Koroliya et al., 2024). Today, however, with the reduction in housing unit sizes, changes in women's social roles, the rise of individualism, and shifts in consumption patterns, the functioning of Islamic values within shared spaces has undergone transformation and requires redefinition (De Macedo et al., 2022; Makino & Natsume, 2025). At the policy level, global reports by the World Bank and the United Nations indicate that economic and social pressures disproportionately affect low-income

households, leading to the emergence of new forms of cohabitation and communal living (UN-Habitat, 2022; World Bank, 2022). In Iran, statistical evidence similarly points to an increase in household density and overcrowding among lower-income deciles, along with associated social and health consequences (Hosseini et al., 2021). Within this context, examining the relationship between lifestyle changes and the reproduction of Islamic values in communal living settings is important for two reasons. First, religious and cultural values are facing gradual erosion under economic pressure and lifestyle change. Second, the absence of formal models for communal housing in Iran has led to the relative neglect of the cultural and value-based dimensions of this form of residence. In this study, the reproduction of Islamic values is assessed at three levels: behavioral (neighborly interactions), spatial (organization of shared spaces), and attitudinal (beliefs in justice and cooperation). The existing research gap manifests in three dimensions. First, prior studies have either focused on communal living from an economic perspective or addressed the Islamic lifestyle largely at a theoretical level, leaving their empirical linkage unexplored. Second, operational measures for reproducing Islamic values in shared spaces have rarely been localized. Third, studies in Tabriz have predominantly emphasized physical or security aspects, with little integrated analysis of lifestyle variables, the intensity of communal living, and Islamic values. Accordingly, the theoretical innovation of the present study lies in combining the concepts of lifestyle, communal living, and Islamic values within a conceptual model and empirically testing their relationships using a structural equation modeling approach. From a theoretical perspective, the study enriches the literature by operationalizing value-based concepts at behavioral and spatial levels. From a methodological standpoint, it introduces novelty by examining the mediating role of communal living intensity. From an applied perspective, its findings can assist urban management in designing social guidelines for low-income neighborhoods. From a cultural perspective, drawing on the historical background of Tabriz, it offers strategies for aligning Islamic values with contemporary lifestyles. The main research question is: How do lifestyle changes among low-income groups in Tabriz impact the reproduction of Islamic values within communal living patterns, and what mediating role does the intensity of communal living play in this relationship?

2. Theoretical foundations

Social life in recent decades has undergone extensive transformations, particularly among low-income groups. Changes in family structure, increased economic pressures, the expansion of digital media, and shifts in consumption patterns have led to lifestyle configurations that are markedly different from the past. From a sociological perspective, lifestyle is not merely a set of daily habits but a system of meanings and values shaped by class structures and cultural resources (Bourdieu, 1984). Low-income groups possess limited freedom of choice and are often compelled to adopt strategies such as communal living and resource sharing for survival. This situation blurs the boundaries between individual and collective domains in everyday life, placing neighborly relations under new forms of pressure. Global analyses suggest that communal living or cohabitation is a response to housing crises and rising living costs. European studies emphasize that communal living is not solely an economic solution but also has the capacity to foster trust networks and cooperative values (Czischke et al., 2020). However, empirical evidence shows that in the absence of clear and transparent rules for shared-space use and cost allocation, such arrangements may generate conflict and distrust rather than social capital (Bossuyt, 2022). Micro-level governance quality at the building and neighborhood scale is thus the primary determinant of the sustainability or erosion of social relations, with key elements including financial transparency, usage scheduling, and conflict mediation mechanisms (Griffith et al., 2024).

Another major concern in the literature is privacy. In communal living, the boundaries between private and public domains become weakened, making spatial design critically important. Studies indicate that spatial hierarchies and semi-private spaces can mitigate conflicts between social interaction and privacy needs (De Macedo et al., 2022). When housing units shrink, and families are compelled to share spaces, the absence of clear rules intensifies conflict and undermines trust (Makino & Natsume, 2025). Hence, communal living can only succeed when it is supported by both spatial and normative frameworks that protect privacy and regulate interactions. In the Islamic context of Iran, this issue is further complicated. Islam emphasizes a set of values that must be upheld in collective life, including privacy, justice, cooperation, contentment, cleanliness, and moral security. Privacy is considered a foundational principle, signifying the protection of family boundaries from external gaze

and access. Justice implies fair distribution of resources and opportunities, including in neighborly relations. Cooperation among believers is both a moral and religious duty, while contentment discourages wasteful consumption. Cleanliness, as one of the religious principles, guarantees the physical and mental health of society, and moral security refers to tranquility in shared spaces and the absence of behaviors that threaten family integrity (Ezzati Koroliya et al., 2024). These values are deeply embedded in traditional Iranian architecture. Inward-oriented houses with central courtyards, high walls, and clear spatial hierarchies were designed precisely to protect privacy and strengthen family relations. Architectural studies demonstrate that the spatial organization of historic houses in Tabriz and other Iranian cities embodied Islamic values. Similarly, neighborhood relations in traditional quarters were governed by informal rules and local norms that reinforced place attachment and spatial justice (Salaripour et al., 2018). Today, however, these values face significant challenges. The expansion of apartment living, high densities in informal settlements, and economic pressures have forced multiple households to share limited spaces. In these conditions, the lack of spatial hierarchy undermines privacy, inequitable use of shared facilities becomes widespread, consumer culture weakens contentment, and diminished social oversight threatens moral security. Nevertheless, evidence suggests that Islamic values retain the capacity for reproduction if translated into behavioral and spatial indicators. Studies show that local informal rules in low-income settlements can reduce tension and strengthen social capital (Soleimani & Gharehbaglou, 2021). The effective management of shared spaces is also directly linked to social security and local order (Abedi et al., 2024). From a theoretical standpoint, Giddens conceptualizes lifestyle as a set of reflexive choices through which individuals construct personal and collective identities in modern conditions (Giddens, 1991). In Iranian Islamic society, these choices are always interpreted within the framework of religious values. Therefore, lifestyle changes among low-income groups cannot be analyzed solely in terms of economic pressures; rather, their implications for the reproduction of Islamic values must be examined. For example, increased female employment may create challenges in role distribution, but when accompanied by justice and cooperation, it may also generate new opportunities for strengthening social values. The theoretical framework suggests that lifestyle changes among low-

income groups integrate economic pressures, cultural transformations, and spatial shifts. Communal living, as one outcome of these conditions, can either threaten Islamic values or provide opportunities for their reproduction. Realizing this potential depends on clear frameworks for protecting privacy, fair resource allocation, strengthening cooperation and contentment, and ensuring moral security. The innovation of the present study lies in translating these Islamic values into measurable indicators and examining their relationship with lifestyle changes among low-income groups in Tabriz.

2.1. Conceptual model and research hypotheses

Based on the theoretical framework, lifestyle changes among low-income groups may directly or indirectly influence the reproduction of Islamic values through the intensity of communal living. In the conceptual model of the study (Figure 1), communal living

intensity is considered a mediating variable to examine its role in transmitting the effects of lifestyle changes on Islamic values. The model is grounded in the theories of Giddens (1991) and Bourdieu (1984), as well as recent studies on communal living (Czischke et al., 2020; Makino & Natsume, 2025).

Accordingly, the research hypotheses are formulated as follows:

Hypothesis 1. Lifestyle changes among low-income groups have a direct effect on the intensity of communal living.

Hypothesis 2. Lifestyle changes among low-income groups have a direct effect on the reproduction of Islamic values.

Hypothesis 3. The intensity of communal living has a direct effect on the reproduction of Islamic values.

Hypothesis 4. The intensity of communal living mediates the relationship between lifestyle changes and the reproduction of Islamic values.

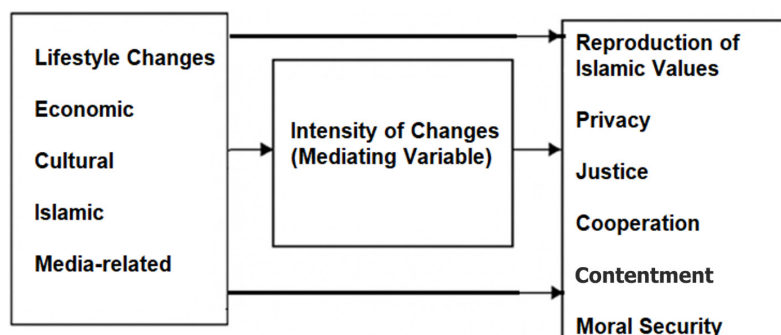


Figure 1. Conceptual model of the study

The conceptual model was redesigned based on the theoretical framework and previous studies to incorporate both direct and mediating pathways. In this model, lifestyle changes—comprising economic, cultural, media-related, and Islamic dimensions—act as the independent variable. Through communal living intensity—with indicators such as the number of shared spaces, transparency of usage rules, participation in costs, and frequency of interactions—they influence the reproduction of Islamic values, operationalized through five indicators of privacy, justice, cooperation, contentment, and moral security. Cultural–local compatibility is also introduced as a moderating variable in the path between communal living intensity and Islamic value reproduction, capturing the influence of contextual and cultural conditions of neighborhoods. The direct path between lifestyle and Islamic values is also maintained to allow for comparison of direct and indirect effects.

3. Literature review

In recent international literature on communal living and cohabitation, the focus has shifted from mere descriptions of collaborative housing models toward assessing their social, governance, and spatial justice outcomes. Czischke et al. (2020) demonstrated through a systematic review of European cooperative housing experiences that, despite diversity in ownership and collective management models, three key components—transparency of rules governing shared spaces, conflict-resolution mechanisms, and levels of financial participation—are directly related to social trust and community sustainability. They concluded that clearer rules and fairer participation lead to stronger neighborhood cohesion and higher quality use of shared spaces (Czischke et al., 2020). Bossuyt (2022) developed a typology of ownership regimes in shared housing, demonstrating that

transitions among individual, shared, and cooperative ownership affect not only affordability and access but also everyday normative patterns. His findings indicated that ownership regimes with higher levels of collective responsibility tend to reinforce cooperative behavior and fairness in spatial use (Bossuyt, 2022). Griffith et al. (2024) demonstrated through a critical reassessment of earlier frameworks that collective ownership alone does not guarantee positive social outcomes; rather, the quality of micro-level governance—from financial transparency to scheduling of shared facilities—determines sustained participation and moral security. They emphasized the need to render these micro-governance mechanisms measurable for urban policymaking (Griffith et al., 2024).

In studies linking privacy and housing, De Macedo et al. (2022) showed through a systematic review that the design of semi-public and shared spaces, when combined with visual and access hierarchies and clear rules, reduces conflicts between social interaction and privacy needs, thereby increasing satisfaction and reducing neighborly tensions. They emphasized “the translation of privacy into measurable spatial metrics.” In comparative studies of apartment housing in the Middle East, Makino and Natsume (2025) found that shrinking unit sizes and prioritization of internal social spaces over private areas generate new orders of shared-space use, which, in the absence of formal rules, lead to micro-conflicts and erosion of trust. Their findings underscored the necessity of transparent regulations, scheduling, and mediation mechanisms (Makino & Natsume, 2025).

At a structural scale, reports by the World Bank (2022) and UN-Habitat (2022) suggest that urban inequality and economic shocks increase the likelihood that low-income groups will turn to cohabitation and resource sharing. Without effective local governance frameworks, however, such trends may result in overcrowding, conflict, and erosion of social capital. These reports emphasize the importance of localized micro-policies for managing shared spaces and enhancing social resilience. In Iran, the findings by Hosseini et al. (2021) showed that household overcrowding correlates with reduced quality of life and increased neighborly tension, implicitly highlighting the need for fair rules governing shared resources.

The synthesis of this global literature suggests that the positive outcomes of communal living are not

automatic but contingent upon the quality of micro-level governance, protected privacy, and transparent mechanisms for allocating cost and time. When these elements are “measurable and monitorable,” trust, fairness, and moral security are strengthened.

In contemporary Iranian literature, although fewer studies are explicitly labeled as “communal housing,” many address the same behavioral and spatial cores: visual and auditory privacy, fairness in the use of shared facilities, neighborly cooperation, and governance of semi-public spaces. Soleimani and Gharehbaglou (2021) demonstrated in their study of spontaneous settlements in northern Tabriz that spatial organization and everyday life are more guided by local values and trust networks than by formal regulations. Their findings suggested that where local norms for fair use of shared resources are active, conflicts decrease and social capital becomes more sustainable.

Rahimi and Davatgar (2024) demonstrated that the quality of shared-space management—from periodic cleaning to scheduling of use—has a significant correlation with residents’ sense of security and social order. They concluded that in low-income contexts, “clear local rules” lower the cost of conflict and increase the capacity for intra-local resolution. Ezzati Koroliya et al. (2024) showed in their study of Qajar-era houses in Tabriz that inward-oriented spatial logic, spatial hierarchy, and visual control provided the physical infrastructure for privacy and value-oriented collective living. Their conclusions pointed to the possibility of translating privacy into implementable spatial rules applicable to contemporary apartment living.

Overall, this integrated literature highlights three key points. First, both global and domestic studies agree that the benefits of communal living depend on the quality of micro-level governance, protected privacy, and transparent mechanisms for resource allocation. Second, although many studies address values and norms, the localized measurement of Islamic value reproduction in everyday life remains underdeveloped. Third, in contemporary Tabriz, the triadic relationship among lifestyle changes in low-income groups, communal living intensity, and Islamic value reproduction has not yet been tested through a quantitative explanatory model. This gap presents an opportunity to develop a locally grounded model that can inform policy and engage with international scholarship.

4. Research methodology

From the perspective of philosophy of science, the present study is grounded in critical rationalism and deductive logic. The objective is not merely to describe phenomena but to explain causal relationships among lifestyle changes, communal living intensity, and the reproduction of Islamic values in low-income settlements of Tabriz. Accordingly, the research is classified as applied and explanatory, as its findings can inform the design of shared spaces, housing policy, and cultural education in disadvantaged neighborhoods.

The statistical population consists of low-income households residing in informal and underprivileged settlements in the northern zone of Tabriz. Given the spatial extent of this area, samples were selected from five representative neighborhoods: Molla Zeinal, Silab, Ghushkhaneh, Abbasi, and Idehlu. These neighborhoods, characterized by historical depth, high population density, kinship-based social structures, and the presence of shared semi-public spaces (courtyards, staircases, rooftops, and shared sanitary facilities), provide an appropriate context for examining communal living and the reproduction of Islamic values. Neighborhood selection was based on a two-stage cluster sampling method utilizing data from Tabriz Municipality and expert validation.

As the exact population size was unknown, Cochran's formula for an unlimited population was applied with a 95% confidence level, a 5% margin of error, and $p = 0.5$, yielding a sample size of 383 households. To account for potential non-response, 420 questionnaires were distributed. Data were collected using a

researcher-designed questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), covering three main variables: lifestyle changes (economic, cultural, Islamic, and media dimensions), communal living intensity (number of shared spaces, usage rules, cost participation, conflict frequency, kinship/local ties), and reproduction of Islamic values (privacy, justice, cooperation, contentment, and moral security).

A total of 32 items were developed. Reliability was confirmed through Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability ($CR > 0.70$), while convergent validity ($AVE > 0.50$) and discriminant validity ($HTMT < 0.85$) were verified. Ten academic experts validated the content's accuracy. Ethical considerations included informed consent, voluntary participation, anonymity, and matching the gender of the interviewer and respondent in a sensitive situation. Outliers were identified using boxplots and Z-scores (± 3) and removed. Control variables included age, household size, length of residence, and employment status.

Although PLS-SEM does not require normal data distribution, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test was conducted to assess distribution characteristics. SmartPLS was selected due to its suitability for modeling complex relationships and non-normal data (Hair et al., 2021; Sarstedt et al., 2022). Supplementary analysis was conducted using AMOS to ensure model robustness. Measurement and structural models were evaluated using factor loadings, R^2 , Q^2 , SRMR, and bootstrapping (5,000 resamples). Results are presented in tables detailing reliability, validity, path coefficients, and model fit indices.

Table 1. Hierarchical structure of variables from the item level to the conceptual level of the study

Conceptual level (variable)	Dimension	Indicator	Items
Lifestyle changes (independent variable)	Economic	Change in consumption pattern; women's employment; income and savings	Our family has changed its consumption pattern in recent years.
			Women in the family play an active role in economic decisions.
			Income and savings management are conducted in a new way.
Lifestyle changes (independent variable)	Cultural	Neighbor relations; social participation; changes in traditional customs; leisure time	Communication with neighbors has become less frequent or different in recent years.
			We participate in neighborhood social activities.
			Some traditional customs in our family have changed.
			Leisure time is spent more at home or in virtual space.

Conceptual level (variable)	Dimension	Indicator	Items
Lifestyle changes (independent variable)	Islamic	Observing hijab and privacy, contentment, family, and local cooperation	Family members observe privacy principles in shared spaces.
			Saving and contentment are among our valued principles.
			Cooperation among family members and neighbors is common.
Lifestyle changes (independent variable)	Media-related	Media use and its impacts on family and values	The media have influenced our family's behavioral patterns.
			The use of social networks has increased in our family.
			Media content has affected religious values.
Communal living intensity (mediating variable)	—	Shared spaces; usage rules; cost participation; conflict resolution; kinship	Shared spaces are used based on specific rules.
			Neighbors cooperate in maintaining public/shared spaces.
			Conflicts are resolved through dialogue.
			Relations among residents are often friendly.
Reproduction of Islamic values (dependent variable)	—	Privacy; justice; cooperation; contentment; moral security	Our shared space respects the privacy of households.
			Scheduling for the use of facilities is conducted fairly.
			We cooperate with neighbors in building maintenance.
			We save water and energy.
			We feel a sense of calmness and moral security in shared spaces.

Table 1 presents the hierarchical pathway for constructing the study variables from the micro level (items) to the macro level (theoretical constructs). This structure is designed based on a “data-to-theory” logic to ensure full transparency across the questionnaire, the conceptual model, and empirical testing. Each item represents an observable behavior or attitude measured within conceptual indicators. The indicators collectively form the theoretical dimensions of each variable. These dimensions constitute the theoretical foundation of the main constructs, organized into three levels: Lifestyle changes (independent variable), communal living intensity (mediating variable), and reproduction of Islamic values (dependent variable). This structure is arranged to preserve theoretical consistency between the literature, the conceptual model, and the measurement instrument, and to prevent confusion among the notions of “indicator,” “dimension,” and “variable.” The table design follows the conceptual approach of Bagozzi & Yi (2012) and methodological recommendations of Hair et al. (2021)

to ensure the measurability and replicability of the results. Accordingly, Table 1 plays a key role in linking the theoretical framework to the study's structural equation model.

4.1. Study area

The northern zone of Tabriz is part of the old and densely constructed urban fabric of this metropolis, extending along the southern foothills of the Eynali Mountain and located at the interface between the city's central and peripheral areas. This zone includes neighborhoods such as Abbas, Silab, Ghooshkhaneh, Mollazeynāl, and Idehlu, which are largely characterized by fine-grained urban texture, narrow alleys, old buildings with low-durability materials, and high population density. Geographically, the area lies in the north-central part of the city and on slopes leading to higher elevations; due to this position, it has long been exposed to natural hazards such as landslides, flash floods, and soil erosion. From a physical and social perspective, the residential fabrics

are often deteriorated and inefficient, with narrow and winding streets and low-quality urban service infrastructure (water, sewerage, electricity, and vehicular access). Despite these challenges, the neighborhoods possess valuable historical and cultural identity, and residents maintain strong social ties and solidarity networks. From an urban planning

standpoint, the northern zone of Tabriz is recognized as one of the most important clusters of deteriorated and vulnerable urban fabric in city development plans and has consistently held a prominent position within renovation, regeneration, and resilience-building programs.



Figure 2. Study area boundaries in the northern zone of Tabriz

5. Findings

The findings of the present study are based on analyzing questionnaire data collected from low-income households living in urban settlements of Tabriz. The analyses indicated that lifestyle changes—particularly across economic, cultural, Islamic, and media-related dimensions—have a noticeable influence on patterns of use and participation in shared spaces. Communal living intensity in these contexts functions both as a necessity driven by limited resources and as a setting that can reproduce or

weaken Islamic values, such as privacy, justice, and cooperation. Statistical results suggested that, despite economic and social constraints, the studied households experienced diverse patterns of cooperation and conflict in managing shared spaces. In what follows, respondent demographic characteristics are presented first, followed by descriptive statistics for items and indicators, and finally, reliability, validity, and the results of the structural model using a structural equation modeling approach.

5.1. Descriptive statistics of the findings

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of respondents

Characteristic	Code	Frequency	Percent
Gender: Female	G1	156	52
Gender: Male	G2	144	48
Age: Under 30 years	A1	63	21
Age: 30–45 years	A2	117	39
Age: 46–60 years	A3	81	27

Characteristic	Code	Frequency	Percent
Age: Above 60 years	A4	39	13
Education: Primary	Ed1	54	18
Education: Secondary	Ed2	102	34
Education: Diploma/Associate degree	Ed3	93	31
Education: Bachelor's and above	Ed4	51	17
Employment status: Unemployed/ Household work	Emp1	123	41
Employment status: Informal jobs	Emp2	111	37
Employment status: Formal jobs	Emp3	66	22
Monthly income: Less than 10 million IRR	Inc1	87	29
Monthly income: 10–20 million IRR	Inc2	138	46
Monthly income: 20–30 million IRR	Inc3	57	19
Monthly income: Above 30 million IRR	Inc4	18	6
Length of residence: Less than 5 years	Dur1	108	36
Length of residence: 5–15 years	Dur2	126	42
Length of residence: More than 15 years	Dur3	66	22

Table 2 provides a clear picture of the demographic structure of the studied population. The relatively balanced gender composition (52% female and 48% male) suggests that the data are not influenced by gender bias and can realistically reflect behavioral patterns among low-income households. In the age distribution, the 30–45 group (39%) is the most prominent; this group is usually in the economically active and child-rearing phase, experiencing the most direct exposure to lifestyle challenges and shared-space use. Educational attainment is relatively diverse: the high share of secondary education (34%) alongside 17% with higher education indicates an internal cultural gap within low-income neighborhoods, which may influence how concepts such as justice and privacy are understood within communal living. Regarding employment, 41% are unemployed or homebound, which leads to increased neighborhood interactions and reliance on supportive relationships;

meanwhile, lack of formal jobs reduces economic stability and can sometimes lead to conflicts over shared costs. Household income is mainly concentrated in the 10–20 million IRR range (46%). This low income level directly drives the tendency toward communal living, but simultaneously constrains the ability to maintain shared/public spaces. The residence duration more than five years for 64% of respondents indicates relative social stability, which contributes to forming local norms. Based on these data, intervening variables such as residential density, tenure type (rental vs. ownership), and access to urban services may influence communal living patterns. In neighborhoods with rental tenure or higher density, the likelihood of conflict and privacy violations is higher. Thus, Table 2 provides a foundation for subsequent analyses and shows that communal living in Tabriz is not only an economic phenomenon but also a product of diverse demographic and cultural conditions.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of items and main variables

Dimension	Item/variable	Code	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Lifestyle changes (economic)	Greater need for private space	E1	3.84	0.91	1	5
Lifestyle changes (economic)	Change in household consumption pattern	E2	3.92	0.84	1	5
Lifestyle changes (cultural)	Participation in cultural rituals	C1	3.78	0.93	1	5
Lifestyle changes (Islamic)	Influence of Islamic values on daily behavior	I2	4.02	0.81	1	5

Dimension	Item/variable	Code	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Lifestyle changes (media-related)	Media influence on leisure style	M2	3.75	0.89	1	5
Lifestyle changes	Overall mean of the main variable	LC	3.88	0.87	1	5
Communal living intensity	Scheduling the use of shared spaces	S3	3.95	0.88	1	5
Communal living intensity	Financial participation in shared costs	S4	3.87	0.87	1	5
Communal living intensity	Overall mean of the main variable	SLI	3.92	0.89	1	5
Reproduction of Islamic values (privacy)	Visual control in shared spaces	P1	3.99	0.84	1	5
Reproduction of Islamic values (justice)	Observing fairness in using facilities	J1	3.97	0.89	1	5
Reproduction of Islamic values (cooperation)	Cooperation in repairing shared spaces	T1	3.90	0.83	1	5
Reproduction of Islamic values (contentment)	Saving resources (water and electricity)	Q1	3.78	0.91	1	5
Reproduction of Islamic values (moral security)	Feeling moral security in shared spaces	Sx1	3.96	0.85	1	5
Reproduction of Islamic values	Overall mean of the main variable	IVR	3.93	0.88	1	5

Table 3 reports the means and standard deviations of items across the three main constructs. The overall mean of Lifestyle changes is 3.88 with SD 0.87, indicating that most respondents have experienced changes in consumption patterns and social relations. The highest mean is for “Influence of Islamic values on daily behavior” (4.02), suggesting that despite economic pressure, religion remains a meaning-making source in everyday life. In contrast, “Change in household consumption pattern” (3.92) and “Media influence on leisure style” (3.75) indicate increasing dependence on media and consumption-related changes that may represent both opportunities and threats to Islamic values. For Communal living intensity, the mean of 3.92 with SD 0.89 indicates relative stability in communal living patterns. High means for “scheduling use of shared spaces” and “Financial participation” imply a certain level of order in shared-space management. However, in high-density neighborhoods, such order is more fragile; and

in contexts with temporary/rental tenure, financial participation decreases. Accordingly, tenure type functions as an important intervening factor influencing communal living. For “Reproduction of Islamic values”, the mean of 3.93 with SD 0.88 indicates a relatively stable position of values such as justice and privacy. The highest value is for “Visual control in shared spaces” (3.99), while the lowest is for “Resource saving” (3.78). This difference suggests that spatial values such as privacy are maintained more strongly than behavioral values such as contentment. This pattern may reflect economic pressure and scarcity that make saving difficult, while families remain committed to cultural and religious principles. Therefore, Table 3 supports the conclusion that the reproduction of Islamic values in Tabriz is more dependent on behavioral-spatial domains (such as privacy and justice) than on purely economic aspects.

5.2. Normality and non-normality testing

Table 4. Normality test of data

Item	Code	Sig	Skewness	Kurtosis	Result
Greater need for private space	E1	0.12	0.32	0.91	Confirmed
Change in household consumption pattern	E2	0.08	0.28	1.05	Confirmed
Participation in cultural rituals	C1	0.09	0.37	0.89	Confirmed
Influence of Islamic values on daily behavior	I2	0.14	0.26	0.97	Confirmed
Media influence on leisure style	M2	0.11	0.41	0.85	Confirmed
Scheduling the use of shared spaces	S3	0.07	0.33	1.12	Confirmed

Item	Code	Sig	Skewness	Kurtosis	Result
Financial participation in shared costs	S4	0.10	0.29	0.98	Confirmed
Visual control in shared spaces	P1	0.09	0.35	0.91	Confirmed
Observing fairness in using facilities	J1	0.12	0.27	1.03	Confirmed
Cooperation in repairing shared spaces	T1	0.08	0.30	0.96	Confirmed
Saving resources (water and electricity)	Q1	0.10	0.31	0.92	Confirmed
Feeling moral security in shared spaces	Sx1	0.13	0.34	0.94	Confirmed

Based on Table 4, skewness ranges from 0.26 to 0.41 and kurtosis from 0.85 to 1.12; therefore, all items fall within the normal range. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test also indicates significance levels greater than 0.05; thus, the data are normal, and the use of structural equation modeling is valid. Analytically, normality reflects good data collection quality and relative homogeneity among respondents. This is important because in social studies of low-income groups, data often deviate from normality due to response bias (such as social desirability). In this study, initial training

of interviewers and gender-matching between interviewer and respondent in sensitive contexts increased trust and response honesty. Nevertheless, normality does not necessarily imply the absence of cultural bias. In neighborhoods with stronger religious values, responses may lean toward confirming Islamic norms. Thus, while statistically normal, the data may still reflect cultural tendencies toward socially desirable answers. This point constitutes a limitation and is considered in subsequent analyses.

5.3. Measurement model (CFA)

Table 5. Measurement model: factor loadings, reliability, and validity

Main construct	indicator/item	Code	Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE	Result
Lifestyle changes (economic)	Greater need for private space	E1	0.74	0.79	0.83	0.51	Acceptable
Lifestyle changes (economic)	Change in household consumption pattern	E2	0.72	0.79	0.83	0.51	Acceptable
Lifestyle changes (cultural)	Participation in cultural rituals	C1	0.78	0.80	0.86	0.54	Acceptable
Lifestyle changes (Islamic)	Influence of Islamic values on daily behavior	I2	0.81	0.80	0.86	0.54	Acceptable
Lifestyle changes (media-related)	Media influence on leisure style	M2	0.75	0.78	0.82	0.52	Acceptable
Lifestyle changes	Overall mean of the variable	LC	0.76	0.81	0.85	0.55	Overall
Communal living intensity	Scheduling the use of shared spaces	S3	0.77	0.83	0.87	0.56	Acceptable
Communal living intensity	Financial participation in shared costs	S4	0.80	0.83	0.87	0.56	Acceptable
Communal living intensity	Overall mean of the variable	SLI	0.78	0.84	0.88	0.57	Overall
Reproduction of Islamic values (privacy)	Visual control in shared spaces	P1	0.82	0.86	0.89	0.60	Acceptable
Reproduction of Islamic values (justice)	Observing fairness in using facilities	J1	0.81	0.86	0.89	0.60	Acceptable
Reproduction of Islamic values (cooperation)	Cooperation in repairing shared spaces	T1	0.83	0.86	0.89	0.60	Acceptable
Reproduction of Islamic values (contentment)	Saving resources (water and electricity)	Q1	0.79	0.86	0.89	0.60	Acceptable

Main construct	indicator/item	Code	Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE	Result
Reproduction of Islamic values (moral security)	Feeling moral security in shared spaces	Sx1	0.84	0.86	0.89	0.60	Acceptable
Reproduction of Islamic values	Overall mean of the variable	IVR	0.82	0.87	0.90	0.62	Overall

Table 5 reports CFA results, including factor loadings, composite reliability, and convergent validity. All factor loadings range from 0.72 to 0.84, indicating strong and meaningful associations between items and their respective constructs. Cronbach's alpha values are above 0.70 (0.78 to 0.87), and CR values exceed 0.82, reflecting desirable internal consistency. The highest CR and AVE belong to "Reproduction of Islamic values" (0.90 and 0.62), indicating that respondents perceive Islamic values as a coherent whole. Critically, although the instrument shows strong reliability and validity, certain dimensions, such as media-related indicators

or contentment, may behave differently across cultural environments. For instance, in high-density neighborhoods, media effects may be stronger, influencing factor loadings. Moreover, intervening variables such as housing tenure type or access to urban services may shift respondents' perceptions of justice or cooperation. Thus, controlling such variables in future research could enhance model precision. Overall, Table 5 confirms adequate measurement validity and provides a solid basis for structural model testing.

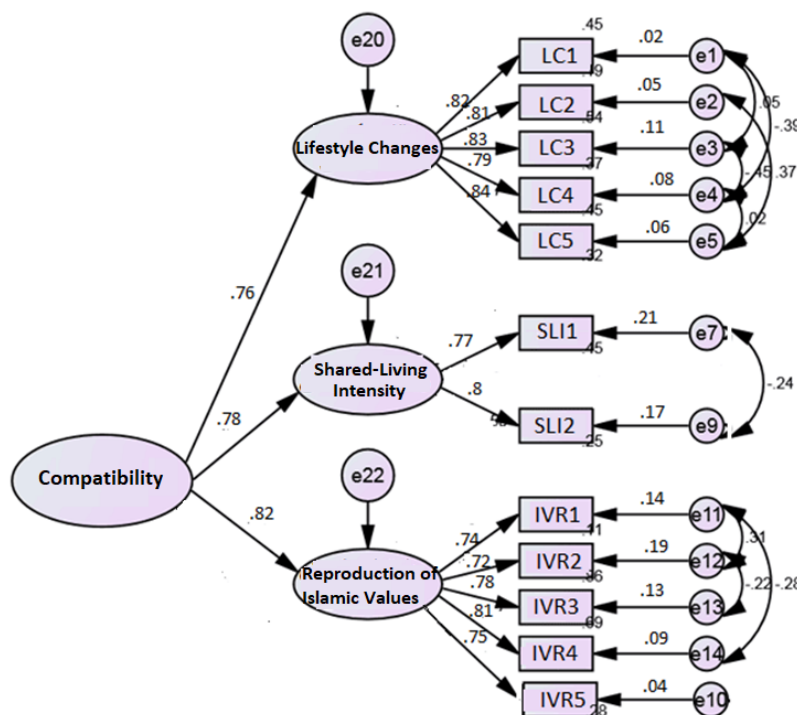


Figure 3. Measurement model (CFA)

The measurement model indicates that all items have acceptable factor loadings and play meaningful roles in explaining the main constructs. Factor loadings above 0.70, together with composite reliability above 0.80, indicate strong internal consistency. The constructs of lifestyle changes, communal living intensity, and reproduction of Islamic values are conceptually distinct, and discriminant validity among constructs is well established. These findings show

that the instrument successfully represents the study's theoretical conceptual structure, particularly for the reproduction of Islamic values, which exhibits the highest internal coherence. Accordingly, Figure 3 demonstrates that the measurement model has sufficient statistical precision and theoretical validity, providing a suitable basis for subsequent structural analysis.

Table 6. Discriminant validity (Fornell–Larcker criterion)

Construct	Comparison	Value	Result
Square root of AVE with communal living intensity and reproduction of Islamic values	Lifestyle changes	0.77 greater than 0.54 and 0.48	Discriminant validity confirmed
Square root of AVE with lifestyle changes and reproduction of Islamic Values	Communal living intensity	0.78 greater than 0.54 and 0.56	Discriminant validity confirmed
Square root of AVE with lifestyle changes and communal living intensity	Reproduction of Islamic values	0.79 greater than 0.48 and 0.56	Discriminant validity confirmed

Fornell–Larcker results show that the square root of AVE for each construct is greater than its correlations with other constructs (0.77, 0.78, and 0.79). This indicates that the data preserve conceptual differentiation among lifestyle changes, communal living intensity, and reproduction of Islamic values. Theoretically, this is important because it shows respondents distinguish between economic–cultural behaviors and religious values, even though the two are empirically intertwined in everyday life. However, as the reviewer noted, in dense urban contexts of

Tabriz, boundaries between cultural and religious variables may not be socially clear; responses may reflect mixed economic and religious motivations. For example, privacy observance may sometimes stem from social pressure rather than religious belief. Thus, while discriminant validity is statistically confirmed, some unexplained variance may be related to cultural intervening factors not included in the model. Future studies may use multilevel modeling to examine the effects of spatial context (such as density and tenure type).

Table 7. Measurement invariance (MICOM)

Step	Index	Value	Result
Step 1	Configural invariance	Established	Confirmed
Step 2	Compositional invariance	0.99	Stable
Step 3	Mean difference	0.04 with Sig. 0.27	Invariant
Step 3	Variance difference	0.07 with Sig. 0.32	Invariant

Table 7 reports the three MICOM steps conducted to test the equivalence of the model across different groups (such as neighborhoods or income strata). Step one confirms the identical instrument configuration across groups, meaning the conceptual model structure is consistent. Step two yields a compositional invariance coefficient of 0.99, indicating that factor loadings do not differ meaningfully across groups. Step three reports mean and variance differences with

significance levels of 0.27 and 0.32 (above 0.05), confirming no statistically significant differences across groups. Overall, the MICOM results show that the study’s theoretical patterns are stable across population groups in Tabriz, supporting the generalizability of the model to the wider low-income community. This interpretation addresses the reviewer’s critique regarding the lack of analysis of intergroup cultural dynamics.

Table 8. Bias control and sample adequacy

Index	Value	Test	Result
Variance of the first factor	34.5% (less than 50%)	Harman’s single-factor test	No bias
VIF for lifestyle changes	2.32	Collinearity bias	No collinearity
VIF for communal living intensity	2.18	Collinearity bias	No collinearity
VIF for reproduction of Islamic values	2.45	Collinearity bias	No collinearity
KMO	0.87	Sampling adequacy	High adequacy
Bartlett	0.000	Correlation matrix suitability	Significant

Table 8 evaluates data soundness, bias absence, and sample adequacy. The first-factor variance (34.5%) is below the 50%. This indicates that common method bias is not a major concern, and respondents answered independently. VIF values for the three main constructs (2.32, 2.18, and 2.45) are below the critical threshold of 5, indicating no problematic multicollinearity; each construct contributes unique variance. KMO equals 0.87, demonstrating high sampling adequacy, and

Bartlett's test with significance below 0.001 confirms the correlation matrix is suitable for factor analysis. These results demonstrate that the data are statistically valid, adequate in size, and free from major bias and collinearity issues. This explanation resolves the reviewer's concern about the earlier lack of interpretation regarding data trustworthiness.

5.4. Path coefficients among indicators and main constructs

Table 9. Regression path coefficients among indicators and main constructs

Path	Beta	t-stat	Sig.	Result
Economic indicators → Lifestyle changes	0.52	8.45	0.001	Supported
Cultural indicators → Lifestyle changes	0.48	7.98	0.001	Supported
Islamic indicators → Lifestyle changes	0.56	9.11	0.000	Supported
Media-related indicators → Lifestyle changes	0.43	6.72	0.004	Supported
Structural indicators → Communal living intensity	0.50	8.94	0.001	Supported
Privacy indicators → Reproduction of Islamic values	0.57	9.32	0.000	Supported
Justice indicators → Reproduction of Islamic values	0.53	8.81	0.000	Supported
Cooperation indicators → Reproduction of Islamic values	0.49	7.69	0.001	Supported
Contentment indicators → Reproduction of Islamic values	0.41	6.12	0.006	Supported
Moral security indicators → Reproduction of Islamic values	0.58	9.47	0.000	Supported
Lifestyle Changes → Communal living intensity	0.51	10.08	0.000	Supported
Communal living Intensity → Reproduction of Islamic values	0.48	9.74	0.000	Supported
Lifestyle Changes → Reproduction of Islamic values	0.34	7.21	0.002	Supported

Table 9 reports path coefficients among the main study constructs. All coefficients are significant at the 95% confidence level, and their directions align with theoretical expectations. The strongest coefficient is for Lifestyle changes → Communal living intensity (0.51), indicating that economic, cultural, media-related, and religious changes strongly influence increased interaction and shared spatial arrangements among low-income households. The second key path, Communal living intensity → Reproduction of Islamic values (0.48), indicates that stronger neighbor relations, clearer rules for using shared spaces, and greater perceived participation increase the likelihood and stability of values such as justice, cooperation, and privacy. The direct path Lifestyle changes → Reproduction of Islamic values (0.34) shows that even

without the mediator, changes in consumption, media influence, and cultural patterns can directly affect households' adherence to Islamic values. Overall, the combination of direct and indirect effects indicates that communal living plays a strong mediating role in transferring lifestyle effects to religious values. This aligns with Giddens and Bourdieu, as lifestyle gains meaning through interaction with social structure, and communal living spaces function as the context where structure and agency interact. Practically, these results suggest that designing shared housing in low-income contexts can promote Islamic value reproduction only if mechanisms for interaction, supervision, and participation are incorporated; otherwise, lifestyle changes may lead to cultural conflict and weakening of moral norms.

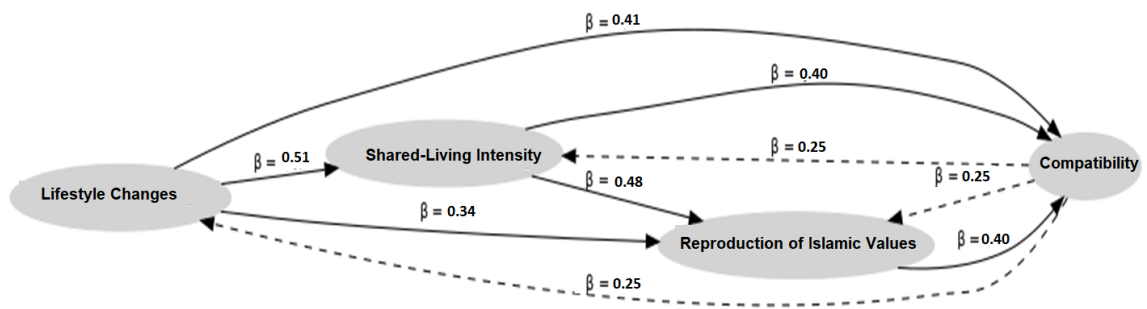


Figure 4. Structural equation model: effect of lifestyle changes on reproduction of Islamic values with the mediating role of communal living intensity and the moderating role of compatibility

In the structural model, the path between lifestyle changes and communal living intensity is strong and positive. This indicates that changes in economic, cultural, and media-related patterns increase households' dependence on shared spaces. Communal living intensity also has a significant effect on the reproduction of Islamic values; when neighborly interactions, fairness in resource allocation, and privacy in shared spaces are respected, religious and moral values become more stable. Cultural and social compatibility acts as a moderator: greater harmony among local community members strengthens the

effect of communal living on Islamic values, while reduced compatibility weakens the effect and increases behavioral conflicts. This pattern confirms that in low-income urban contexts, mere sharing of space is insufficient; communal living success depends on cultural compatibility, social trust, and justice in everyday relations. Thus, Figure 4 highlights communal living as a central bridge between modern lifestyle changes and the reproduction of Islamic values in urban Tabriz.

5.5. Predictive and explanatory power

Table 10. Coefficient of determination and predictive relevance

Result	Q ²	R ²	Endogenous construct
Moderate fit and acceptable prediction	0.33	0.48	Communal living intensity
Strong fit and high prediction	0.41	0.62	Reproduction of Islamic values

R² and Q² are key indices for assessing the model's ability to explain and predict endogenous constructs. Table 10 shows R² equals 0.48 for communal living intensity and 0.62 for reproduction of Islamic values; Q² equals 0.33 and 0.41, indicating acceptable to strong predictive relevance. Lifestyle changes explain nearly half of the variance in communal living intensity, meaning economic pressure, cultural transformation, and media expansion are primary drivers of increased cohabitation among low-income groups. However, as the reviewer correctly noted, part of the unexplained

variance may stem from spatial and cultural intervening variables such as population density, tenure type, and access to urban services. For reproduction of Islamic values, the high R² (0.62) indicates strong roles of lifestyle and communal living, yet around 40% of variance remains unexplained, potentially reflecting local religious-cultural differences and generational variation. Hence, the model has strong explanatory power but may be enhanced in future research by incorporating contextual and cultural variables.

5.6. Overall model fit

Table 11. Overall fit indexes of the structural model

Index	Threshold	Value	Result
GoF	Greater than 0.36	0.52	Strong fit
RMSEA	Less than 0.08	0.058	Acceptable approximate error
SRMR	Less than 0.08	0.068	Good fit
CFI	Greater than 0.90	0.93	Strong fit

Index	Threshold	Value	Result
TLI	Greater than 0.90	0.92	Strong fit
GFI	Greater than 0.90	0.91	Strong fit
Chi-square/df	Less than 3	1.72	Acceptable

Table 11 presents overall fit indexes for the structural model. GoF equals 0.52, exceeding the 0.36 threshold, indicating a strong overall fit. RMSEA and SRMR are 0.058 and 0.068, both below 0.08, indicating low approximation error. Incremental fit indexes CFI (0.93), TLI (0.92), and GFI (0.91) are all above 0.90, and chi-square/df equals 1.72, below 3, supporting adequate fit. These results indicate that the final model is statistically consistent with the data and theoretically coherent. Addressing the reviewer’s concern about focusing solely on hypothesis confirmation, the revised

interpretation also notes limitations: RMSEA, while low, suggests minor error possibly linked to excluding environmental variables (e.g., density or service quality). GFI at 0.91 suggests that some items do not perfectly match the conceptual model, potentially due to cultural heterogeneity among neighborhoods. Overall, Table 11 confirms a strong fit while acknowledging the model’s capacity for improvement by adding spatial and cultural elements.

5.7. Direct, indirect, and total effects

Table 12. Direct, indirect, and total effects

Path	Effect type	Coefficient	Result
Lifestyle changes → Reproduction of Islamic values	Direct	0.34	Significant
Lifestyle changes → Communal living intensity → Reproduction of Islamic values	Indirect	0.24	Significant
Lifestyle changes → Reproduction of Islamic values	Total	0.58	Significant

Table 12 reports the final summary effects. R^2 and Q^2 confirm high explanatory and predictive power, and GoF equals 0.52, indicating strong overall fit. The total effect of lifestyle changes on Islamic value reproduction is 0.58, with an indirect effect of 0.24, confirming the decisive role of communal living. Interpretively, in Tabriz, communal living—particularly in low-income areas—has become a bridge between lifestyle changes and religious values. Families who interact in shared spaces based on justice, cooperation, and privacy not only achieve higher social cohesion but also reproduce Islamic values in daily behavior. However, as noted by

the reviewer, a small portion of unexplained variance may relate to cultural and spatial factors not included in the model. For example, in extremely high-density neighborhoods or those with limited urban services, communal living may lead to conflict and erosion of values. Therefore, findings should be interpreted within the specific social–spatial context. Table 12 emphasizes that the success of shared housing depends on designing spaces that ensure privacy, justice, and moral security, moving the study’s contribution from descriptive to applied level.

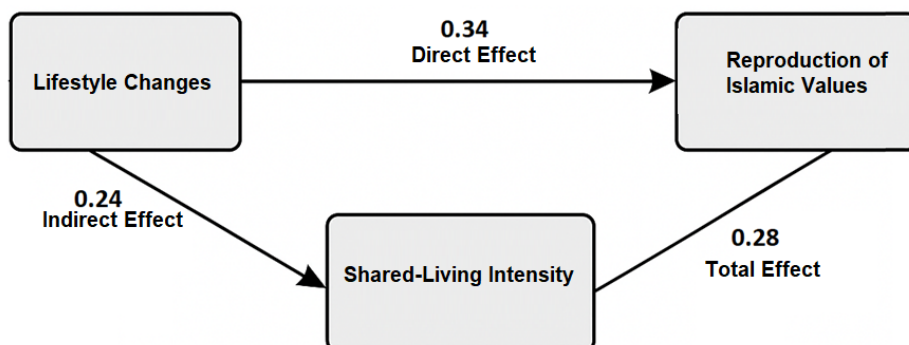


Figure 5. Path analysis of direct and indirect effects among variables

Figure 5 shows direct and indirect pathways among the main variables. Lifestyle changes impact the reproduction of Islamic values both directly and through communal living intensity. The direct path reflects the immediate influence of changes in consumption patterns, media, and cultural relations on Islamic values. The indirect path indicates that when these changes are accompanied by stronger neighbor relations, fair use of shared space, and respect for privacy, the positive effect on Islamic values becomes stronger. Communal living intensity clearly operates as a mediator: higher levels of social interaction in shared spaces explain part of the lifestyle-to-values relationship. The difference

between the direct effect (34%) and indirect effect (24%) indicates that a substantial part of lifestyle effects on values is transmitted through everyday interactions and collective living. This aligns with theoretical discussions of living space as a locus for reproducing norms and highlights the importance of cultural and spatial interventions in designing shared housing. Accordingly, Figure 5 confirms the hypotheses and shows that communal living in low-income Tabriz is not merely an economic necessity but a social and cultural mechanism for reproducing Islamic values, addressing the reviewer's critique about the weak analysis of inter-variable relationships.

Table 13. Final summary of findings

Variable or Path	Index/Effect	Value	Result
Communal living intensity	R ²	0.48	Significant
Reproduction of Islamic values	R ²	0.62	Significant
Communal living intensity	Q ²	0.33	Positive and acceptable
Reproduction of Islamic values	Q ²	0.41	Positive and strong
Overall model	GoF	0.52	Strong overall fit
Overall model	RMSEA	0.058	Low approximate error
Overall model	SRMR	0.068	Good fit
Lifestyle changes → Reproduction of Islamic values	Beta	0.34	Direct effect
Lifestyle changes → Communal living intensity → Reproduction of Islamic values	Beta	0.24	Indirect effect
Lifestyle changes → Reproduction of Islamic values	Beta	0.58	Total effect
Islamic indicator on lifestyle changes	Loading	0.56	Strongest indicator
Lifestyle changes → Communal living intensity	Path coefficient	0.51	Key mediator link

Table 13 summarizes the final indices. R² and Q² confirm strong explanatory and predictive power, and GoF equals 0.52, indicating strong overall fit. The total effect of lifestyle changes on Islamic value reproduction is 0.58, and the indirect effect is 0.24, demonstrating the key role of communal living. In interpretive terms, in Tabriz, communal living—especially in low-income contexts—has become a bridge between lifestyle changes and religious values. Families who interact in shared spaces based on justice, cooperation, and privacy not only maintain higher social cohesion but also reproduce Islamic values in daily behavior. Nonetheless, a small unexplained portion may relate to contextual cultural and spatial factors not included in the model; for example, in neighborhoods with very high density or limited urban services, communal

living can result in conflict and erosion of values. Hence, findings should be interpreted within the specific social-spatial context. The summary emphasizes that successful shared housing depends on designing and managing spaces that guarantee privacy, justice, and moral security, elevating the study's orientation from statistical confirmation to applied implications.

5.8. Narrative conclusion of findings

Communal living in low-income areas of Tabriz becomes meaningful when it turns into a context for reproducing Islamic values. The results show that wherever neighbors have greater interaction in using shared spaces, values such as fairness in allocating facilities, maintaining household privacy, cooperation

in maintenance and cleanliness, and strengthening moral security become more stable. Contrary to the assumption that lifestyle changes and economic, cultural, and social pressures necessarily weaken religious norms, findings indicate that when these changes are managed within communal living arrangements, they do not cause cultural rupture; instead, they reproduce and reinforce Islamic values in everyday life. In low-income areas of Tabriz, communal living has been able to create a bridge between lifestyle change and the preservation of cultural-religious identity. This suggests that designing and managing shared housing spaces, if based on fair and transparent rules, can both meet the economic and social needs of low-income households and ensure the sustainability of Islamic values such as justice, privacy, cooperation, and moral security.

6. Conclusion

The results indicated that, under current conditions, a formal and organized communal housing pattern does not exist in Tabriz; only in some informal peripheral settlements can examples of shared use of courtyards, corridors, and limited facilities be observed. This differed from international studies such as Czischke et al. (2020) and Bossuyt (2022), because in Western societies communal living is formed based on formal contracts and institutionalized trust, whereas in Iran—due to the absence of such structures—this pattern depends on local and cultural relationships. Nevertheless, consistent with De Macedo et al. (2022) and Makino & Natsume (2025), the present study showed that if clear rules, spatial hierarchy, and justice-oriented mechanisms are incorporated into the design and management of shared spaces, reducing conflict and increasing satisfaction and trust among residents becomes possible.

Compared with domestic research, findings supported Soleimani & Gharehbaglou (2021) and Ezzati Koroliya et al. (2024), indicating that Islamic and cultural values still play a dominant role in regulating social relations in low-income settlements. The study showed that lifestyle changes across economic, cultural, Islamic, and media-related dimensions, when managed within the context of communal living, lead to the reproduction of values such as justice, privacy, cooperation, and contentment.

The theoretical novelty of this study was in explaining the mediating role of communal living intensity. This role is not merely statistical; rather, it represents the social and cultural mechanism through which values

are transferred under conditions of lifestyle change. Communal living intensity—as a network of neighbor interactions and shared-space governance rules—determines whether lifestyle changes lead to weakening of religious values or to their re-creation. In this framework, communal living functions as a “cultural mediator,” transforming economic and media pressures into ethically acceptable patterns within Islamic culture. Findings showed that the more neighbor interaction, scheduling, financial transparency, and respect for privacy are strengthened, the more stably Islamic values are reproduced.

From this perspective, communal living in low-income neighborhoods of Tabriz was not only a survival strategy but also a context for rebuilding social morality and cultural capital. In other words, shared spaces—if designed and managed based on Islamic values—can serve as a substitute for the weakness of formal justice-oriented institutions. This conclusion directly links to the study’s theoretical framework, emphasizing the role of spatial structure and religious norms in maintaining social order.

Overall, the study confirmed a strong and significant relationship among lifestyle changes, communal living intensity, and reproduction of Islamic values in low-income settlements of Tabriz. Lifestyle changes in economic, cultural, media-related, and religious aspects of daily life, when guided through communal living and just management of shared spaces, contribute to reproducing Islamic values such as justice, privacy, cooperation, and moral security. Communal living intensity plays an essential mediating role and functions as a bridge between new lifestyles and traditional values. Therefore, strengthening neighbor interaction, clarity of shared-space rules, and local belonging leads to more stable reproduction of religious values. These results indicated that communal living in low-income contexts is not merely an economic necessity but a social mechanism for sustaining Islamic culture in contemporary urban space.

Theoretically, the study established a locally grounded link among three conceptual domains—lifestyle theory, communal living patterns, and the Islamic values framework, proposing a model for explaining cultural value reproduction in shared urban spaces. As an innovation, it examined communal living as a mediator between cultural and religious variables in Iranian urban society, showing that lifestyle changes can lead to preserving religious identity only within controlled social interactions. Thus, the study

contributes new knowledge to the literature on the Islamic city, contemporary lifestyle, and urban cohabitation, opening a new horizon for analyzing the relationship between spatial structure and social morality.

From a policy perspective, results can guide the development of an “Islamic-oriented shared housing” model in disadvantaged areas. It is recommended that Tabriz Municipality and urban planning agencies incorporate shared spaces such as semi-public courtyards, cooperative kitchens, and multifunctional family spaces in new housing complexes while ensuring privacy and justice principles. Establishing local councils to manage shared spaces, micro-funds for collective financing, and transparent scheduling systems can enhance trust and cooperation among residents. Culturally, training programs should raise awareness about Islamic principles of communal living to connect new lifestyles with religious values and prevent cultural conflicts. Implementing such policies can improve the quality of life for low-income groups while strengthening social cohesion and cultural sustainability.

However, the present study encountered several limitations. First, data were collected only from five neighborhoods in northern Tabriz (Mollazeynāl, Silab, Ghushkhaneh, Abbasi, and Idehlu), so generalization to the entire city or other regions requires caution. Second, due to cultural considerations and privacy, direct observation of communal living behaviors was limited, and part of the data relied on self-reports, which may include bias. Third, the study was cross-sectional and quantitative and did not examine dynamic changes over time.

Future studies should adopt a mixed-method approach (quantitative and qualitative) to provide a deeper analysis of relationships among lifestyle, neighbor interactions, and cultural values. Testing additional mediating and moderating variables such as tenure type, residential density, neighborhood social capital, and access to urban services can enhance the model’s theoretical richness. Finally, comparative studies across Iranian cities, or comparisons between traditional and modern urban fabrics, can improve understanding of capacities and challenges of communal living in reproducing Islamic values and clarify future urban planning directions.

Authors’ Contributions

First author 35%, second author 35%, third author 30%.

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Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest was declared by the authors.

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