Abstract

Qualitative aspects of housing always considered as the most critical planning tools and have gained great interest in recent housing research. Housing areas in order to provide social development, involved the environment around in addition to residential units. This paper tries to assess the quality of traditional houses, describe and analyze them to achieve the criteria to devise guidelines in the next step which are effective for increasing the quality of contemporary housing. Iranian traditional houses have a kind of internal spaces structure on the basis of religious and traditional ideas of Iranian families. These houses have manifested native-traditional models of the past history of Iran which have originated from individual and collective cultures of the people, who have been formed, have grown, have been manifested and have reached perfection. Study of Iranian contemporary architecture indicates that it has been changed with regard to its rich and meaningful history during the time. Roots of the principles governing the traditional houses can be found in Iranian thoughts and culture. Any building which is constructed aims at fulfillment of some living needs. Traditional houses are not only a shelter. Residence indicates meaningful link with the place which can include all of the different levels of private and general life environment. This link is an effort to find identity and to have attachment feeling toward a place while our modern houses couldn’t have fulfilled the most primary needs of residence i.e. tranquility and physical relaxation and generally inspired quality expectations. In this regard, to reach the aim through qualitative approach and case study strategy, this value of the Iranian traditional housing was investigated.

This study was carried out by qualitative method and in order to final assess of the data, AHP method was used. The analytic hierarchy process (AHP) is a structural technique to organizing and analyzing complex decisions, based on mathematics and psychology. Rather than prescribing a «correct» decision, the AHP helps decision makers find one that best suits their goal and their understanding of the problem. It provides a comprehensive and rational framework for structuring a decision problem, for representing and quantifying its
elements, for relating those elements to overall goals, and for evaluating alternative solutions. Therefore the method of collecting data was based on lists for interview techniques, observation, investigate the features of place and space, measuring attitudes and by searching the literature and documents and maps about the subject. So at first multiple systems of residential environment quality assessment were studied and then a model to assess the quality of housing for this paper was developed. In the second step through the main factors of the model, 5 criteria have been determined to assess the quality of housing. In the next stage parameters derived from the lists in relation to each criterion were analyzed compared to the data of other criteria and the overall impact of research factors in reciprocating reviews and alternatives obtained in relation to the main criteria have been introduced in traditional houses. Then by analyzing and interpreting of these alternatives and considering the effects of lifestyle, human needs and conditions of contemporary society strategies to improve the quality aspects of contemporary housing have been proposed. The term lifestyle can denote the interests, opinions and behavioral orientations of an individual, group, or culture. The term refers to a combination of determining intangible or tangible factors. Tangible factors relate specifically to demographic variables, i.e. an individual’s demographic profile, whereas intangible factors concern the psychological aspects of an individual such as personal values, preferences, and outlooks. Therefore, a lifestyle is a means of forming a sense of self and to create cultural symbols that resonate with personal identity. Not all aspects of a lifestyle are voluntary. Surrounding social and technical systems can constrain the lifestyle choices available to the individual and the symbols she/he is able to project to others and the self. According to the results of the research there is a significant relation between the quality of traditional houses, human, the architecture and the past lifestyle that emanates from traditions and original values. The evaluation showed that in order of importance the criteria of human needs, environmental, physical, functional and structural qualities have contributed in this meaningful relation and among them the first three criteria are more effective. Although in general comparison the coordinated presence of all proposed criteria resulted in lasting quality. Recognizing the traditional strategies and perception the Persian culture and life style can help modern architects to design suitable contemporary house design. People really need a house that response all its duties, not only merely be a shelter. Hence the main orientations for the development of housing in the qualitative aspects should be provided with development of long-term, medium-term and short-term goals. Providing desirable housing according to the physical and spiritual needs of Iranian families is one of long-term goals that must be met in the future.

**Keywords:** housing, residential environment, housing qualities, Iranian traditional houses, contemporary housing.