

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OPEN-PLAN CONCEPT IN THE MUSLIM RESIDENTIAL

Maysarah Bakri*

*Architecture Department, Faculty of Science and Technology, Banda Aceh, Indonesia,
maysarah.bakri@ar-raniry.ac.id

Email Correspondence : maysarah.bakri@ar-raniry.ac.id

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Abstract: Muslims have to live based on Islamic values that include domestic activity in the dwelling. However, currently, people's paradigm shifts towards modernism and also impacts the house's preference. Architecturally, this condition is a challenge for the architect as there is a contradiction between Islamic and modern housing. One of the different principles is the closure in the Islamic dwelling and the exposure in the open-plan practice of modern residents. This research suggests how to practice the open-plan concept in Muslim residential without ignoring Islamic house principles. The research method is descriptive qualitative which the primary data is obtained through the literature review. The open-plan concept is analyzed through the principles of Islamic dwelling. The finding shows that a semi-public area of Islamic houses such as a living room or a dining room can implement the open-plan concept. The house resident uses these rooms without providing physical and visual access to non-mahram relatives, thus maintaining family privacy. The practice implications are increasing natural lighting and natural air, flexible space occupancy, and strengthening family bonding.

Keywords: open-plan, Islamic house, Muslim residential.

Abstrak: Muslim harus menjalani kehidupan berdasarkan ajaran Islam, termasuk kegiatan domestik di hunian. Namun, saat ini paradigma masyarakat berubah ke arah modern dan berdampak pada preferensi hunian. Secara arsitektur, kondisi ini merupakan tantangan bagi arsitek karena terdapat kontradiksi antara hunian Islami dan modern. Salah satu perbedaan prinsipnya adalah aspek privasi pada rumah Islami dan keterbukaan dalam bentuk *open-plan* di hunian modern. Penelitian ini menyarankan bagaimana menerapkan konsep *open-plan* pada hunian Muslim tanpa mengabaikan prinsip-prinsip rumah Islami. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif dimana data primer diperoleh melalui studi literatur. Konsep *open-plan* dianalisa dari perspektif prinsip hunian Islami. Hasil temuan mengindikasikan konsep *open-plan* hanya dapat diterapkan pada area semi-publik di hunian Islami seperti ruang keluarga dan ruang makan. Hal ini dikarenakan ruang-ruang ini hanya digunakan oleh penghuni rumah tanpa menyediakan akses fisik dan visual pada tamu/kerabat *non-mahram* sehingga tetap menjaga privasi keluarga. Dampak penerapan konsep ini pada zona semi-publik adalah meningkatnya cahaya alami dan sirkulasi udara pada area tersebut, fleksibilitas penggunaan ruang, dan menguatkan ikatan antar anggota keluarga.
Kata kunci: *open-plan*, rumah Islami, hunian Muslim.

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Introduction

People's paradigm and behavior are currently shifting towards modernism, which impacts the preference of house style and consuming space's ways (Farasa & Kusuma, 2018; Khalifah et al., 2015; Malik & Mujahid, 2016). In Indonesia, the trend of designing minimalist houses has also increased. This phenomenon occurs mainly because of customer preference (Farasa & Kusuma, 2018; Khalifah et al., 2015; Soenarto et al., 2017). It attracts society as it is less ornament, clean, and different from any previous style. Many people claim this practice in their houses, although they only implement some principles (Wahjutami, 2017). The minimalist dwelling optimizes the steel structure, providing space efficiency and flexible spatial arrangement by applying open-plan and optimizing openness to enhance natural sunlight into the building (Wahjutami, 2017).

On the other hand, Muslims should apply Islamic values in all of their activity. It includes architectural activities such as producing and consuming space in the residential. The house is the smallest unit of the universe that accommodates the daily Islamic practices (Junara & Putrie, 2009; Malik & Mujahid, 2016), a place for strengthening family bonding (Hwaish, 2015), and a resting place for both physically and psychologically (Babangida & Sani-Katsina, 2018). The Islamic house differentiator is the closure that applies in the form of the public-private zone. These zones accommodate the householder (mainly women) activity without being seen by non-*mahram* eyesight, known as visual privacy (Manaf et al., 2019; Rahim, 2015).

Architecturally, this situation creates a challenge for the designer. On the one hand, Muslims should provide an Islamic way of life, while on the other hand, society shifts to the modernism paradigm. There is some contradiction in both modes, that is, the closure and modesty versus exposure. This circumstance challenges the designer to provide a contemporary Islamic house that fulfills society's preferred house style without disobeying Islamic rules. Without lessening other minimalist housing features, the open-plan concept can be implemented in Islamic houses, considering its advantages. This concept refers to Mies' vision of providing flexible interior arrangements based on the user's needs (Wahjutami, 2017). The plan only applies partition (whether reliable or void) in its practice depending on its necessity. It offers many benefits to the building (physical aspect) and the inhabitant (social and psychological factor). Therefore, this research aims to find the proper implementation of open-plan in the Islamic house. Furthermore, it offers advice on how a Muslim family adjusts their contemporary house's interior spatial arrangement in a broader sense. Muslims can use this research finding to optimize the open-plan concept's benefit without ignoring the house's Islamic values.

Modern Architecture

The emerging of modern architecture has impacted the architecture field significantly. It marks western architecture history because architecture's inspiration has shifted from tradition and history toward development and technology (Amiri, 2016). Through this time, there is paradigm-shifting in society toward the art and architecture perspective. Instead of the unfunctional ornaments, modern architecture building's beauty appears through the building's functional elements (Sumalyo, 2005). In other words, the building aesthetic occurs from its element composition as the openings, the roof, and the void. Modern architecture characteristics are less ornament, minimalism, attention to the space function, and the use of human-made materials such as concrete and steel (Hapsoro, 2020). During this period, the building design consideration is effectiveness and efficiency in all aspects (Amiri, 2016). It includes space, form, and materials. Modern architecture has several characteristics that are open-plan design-based, providing indoor-outdoor connection, flexibility in creating an interior wall, using new technology, providing a spatial experience and additional concept that are roof garden, and the use of pulled window (Amiri, 2016)

Modern architecture does not apply ornaments that create a clean look facade. Moreover, the windows' size is large, allowing natural lighting to penetrate the building's interior. As the product of the industrial revolution, the use of steel supports the large window construction. It also creates a connection between the building and nature or surroundings. Some modern facilities expose their materials. So, the inhabitants can see the texture and the original color of the materials. It creates a sense of purity. Modern architecture also applies open-plan design, which allows the inhabitant to explore the interior space.

Open-Plan Concept in Modern Architecture

The open-plan is a significant distinction of modern architecture concepts. Inspired by traditional Japanese architecture (Alfirevic & Simonovic-Alfirevic, 2016), the open-place concept is preferable as it responds to the economic considerations in a house plan design caused by small lot problems, and the answer of society's lifestyle changes in the early modern architecture phase (Elliott, 2002). The implementation of an open-plan creates high flexibility in the modern house compared to the other previous architectural style. An open-plan design provides few or no partitions as the space divider (Alfirevic & Simonovic-Alfirevic, 2016; Elliott, 2002). In this practice, the space divider varies from the screen, glass partition, curtains (Alfirevic & Simonovic-Alfirevic, 2016), the floor level, the flooring materials, or the furniture arrangement. Thus, the interior space is displayed and illuminated with sufficient light (Sumalyo, 2005).

Consequently, the open-plan house has a high level of openness, flexibility, and fluidity. There are three levels of openness as follow: (1) closed-plan, where a house applies clear separation thus clear function in each room; (2) half-open,

where it offers flexible interior space arrangement based on the tenant's need; and (3) open-plan, where it exhibits no barrier at all, and the user tends to occupy the rooms as one space (Alfirevic & Simonovic-Alfirevic, 2016). The variation of interior arrangement in a modern house is shown in figure 1. This practice is based on the common understanding of an open-plan concept (Alfirevic & Simonovic-Alfirevic, 2016). Although in a different pattern, all of it provides openness quality.

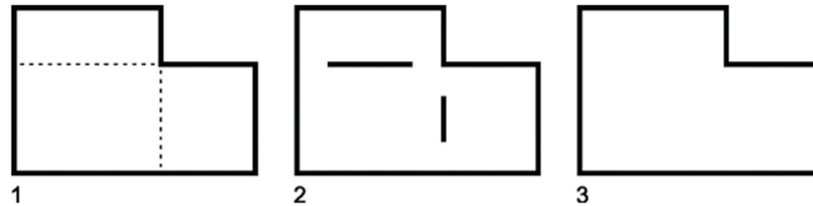


Figure 1. Interior arrangement of a modern house (1) flexible space arrangement; (2) fluid space arrangement; (3) all-in-one space arrangement (Alfirevic & Simonovic-Alfirevic, 2016)

The benefit of the open-plan practice is optimizing the natural lighting to the interior space. Implementing the open-plan concept creates a tight spatial connection because of its continuity, accelerates the airflow and the sunlight, and creates a spacious sense since less space is used (Akmal, 2008). Akmal (2008) also states that its benefits pleased the householder and created a healthy and fresh house. Good airflow and optimum natural lighting in the house are some characteristics of a healthy place. Furthermore, the open-plan allows space integration. There are several choices of room integration in a modern house. Those are the kitchen opens out to the dining room (Liddar, 2013) or the integration of the dining room and living room (Alfirevic & Simonovic-Alfirevic, 2016). Since it has no partition, the condition allows interaction amongst family members, whether in the same or different zones. Based on the arguments above, the architect can integrate the dining room, living room, and kitchen in the dwelling. Other benefits of using an open-plan concept in a house are larger space for family activities; the connection amongst the family member although doing a different activity; indoor-outdoor connection; the fluidity of activities and movement; optimizing the living room; and the possibility of re-arrange the furniture based on the occasion (Liddar, 2013).

However, there are several drawbacks of using an open-plan concept. Those are less privacy and high noise level because there are no walls that also functions as a noise barrier (Akmal, 2008; Liddar, 2013). Not only noise, but the smells will travel around the house. Therefore, the tenant provides a private living room – if possible and provides an adequate ventilation system (Liddar, 2013). The weak privacy level is the main issue in applying the open-plan concept.

The Principles of Islamic House

The main concern in Islamic architecture is the division of public-private areas. It creates closure in the Islamic house. However, in the traditional Islamic dwelling, the existence of an inner courtyard allows the optimum opening towards it, thus creates private openness into the garden as the heart of the house (Clark, 2007). This setting enables the practice of open-plan in the house, particularly in the semi-public area (Clark, 2007). Nevertheless, applying the open-plan concept in another latest dwelling should be done carefully to maintain the privacy level as the priority in the Islamic house.

In the Islamic perspective, privacy is protection from distractions such as visual distraction, audio distraction, or other distractions that requires a permit before doing something around (Babangida & Sani-Katsina, 2018; Manaf et al., 2019; Ratodi & Hapsari, 2017; Razali & Talib, 2013a, 2013b). It relates to the concept of *awrat*, which has to be covered from non-mahram, and it is reflected in the existence of the private zone in the house (Junara & Kusumadewi, 2013). The privacy practice aims to maintain the domestic activities' privacy and control outside - inside visual exposure (Babangida & Sani-Katsina, 2018; Manaf et al., 2019). However, as it works in two ways, it should consider the visual access to the outside for surveillance reasons (Manaf et al., 2019). There are three types of privacy: privacy against the outside world, privacy against those allowed into the house, and privacy among household members (Babangida & Sani-Katsina, 2018). The Muslim residential should facilitate these types of privacy to provide comfort for the residents. In order to protect privacy, there are alternatives to be applied inside or outside of the house, such as (1) Categorizing a public, a semi-public zone, a semi-private zone, and a private zone in the house; (2) Arranging proper room orientation and spatial organization; (3) Providing flexibility in consuming space particularly in a semi-public area; (4) Implementing multi-mass building (in a wide lot); and (5) Providing different access (for women tenant) (Junara & Kusumadewi, 2013). The architect and the house owner can implement some or all of those alternatives to achieve the required privacy level.

For Muslims particularly, the house accommodates daily religious activities (Ardhy, 2018; Junara & Kusumadewi, 2013; Junara & Putrie, 2009). Therefore, it applies Islamic teachings comprehensively. These values are the house's spirit and implemented since the intention to build a house appears, during the planning and designing, during the construction, and until the consumption of space process in that house (Junara & Putrie, 2009). The architectural considerations should be based on the inhabitant's necessity. The environment of the house (whether inside or outside) should support religious activity. Another advice related to the house's spatial arrangement is keeping privacy at three certain times; separating the bedroom for the children; keeping the privacy of the occupant towards the guest and non-mahram relatives; toilet orientation guidance

in the building and bed orientation guidance (Junara & Kusumadewi, 2013; Junara & Putrie, 2009).

Islam does not provide a particular residential form (Hwaish, 2015). Many scholars have shown that various aspects such as cultural values, family need, geography, social, etc., affect the building form and privacy practice (Babangida & Sani-Katsina, 2018; Malik & Mujahid, 2016). The most important thing is the implementation ensures the privacy of family members. In that way, Muslims have implemented one Islamic value, his task as God's servant.

Interior Space Arrangement in Islamic Dwelling

From various references known by the author, Islamic dwelling does not explicitly apply the open-plan concept. However, the traditional Islamic house provides openness inwards by implementing the inner courtyard (Clark, 2007). The Islamic house interior offers a higher openness level compares to the exterior façade. In the interior arrangement, the inner courtyard is the house's heart that provides natural lighting and air. The occupant can do various activities such as gathering in this space. As it is hidden and not accessible to the public, the inner courtyard has a high privacy level.

Although Islamic house does not provide open plan physically, some scholars state that there is flexibility in occupying the interior space. For example, the living room can be functioned both for sleeping (man only) and eating for the family member (Hwaish, 2015; Junara & Kusumadewi, 2013). It means the Islamic dwelling applies the openness concept through flexible space occupation in the semi-public room. Meanwhile, the public space is divided and functioned for the non-mahram visitors (Razali & Talib, 2013b). The private room is also clearly labeled and functions as a sleeping area (Mohd Amar et al., 2012). As it prioritizes privacy, the dwelling should provide clear division in the form of a public, semi-public, semi-private, and private zone (Razali & Talib, 2013a).

Methodology

The research method is descriptive qualitative. According to Neuman (2016), a descriptive describes a phenomenon and answers questions such as how and when. The collecting data uses the qualitative technique by reviewing the open-plan concept, Islamic house principles, and spatial arrangement of Islamic dwellings. Furthermore, the researcher analyzes the possibility of implementing the open-plan concept in a Muslim dwelling. After that, the researcher analyzes the adjustment of open-plan concept implementation in Islamic houses. Later, the results of the research are described in words.

The Implementation of Open-Plan Concept in Muslim House

Implementing the open-plan concept offers benefits such as optimizing the natural lighting into the building (Sumalyo, 2005) that save artificial lighting. The energy-saving meets one of the Islamic architecture principles that is avoiding

redundancy (Edrees, 2010). The open-plan practice also smoothens the rooms' airflow as one implementation of a healthy house (Akmal, 2008). The healthy house concept is relevant to the Islamic architecture value, spreading the benefits to the universe (Edrees, 2010). In this case, the advantage is the inhabitant's health (physically and mentally). There are many other benefits of open-plan implementation, such as increasing family interaction and communication, providing an indoor-outdoor connection that impacts mental health, etc. However, exposure in an open-plan concept should be avoided in the Islamic perspective because it exposes the inhabitant's privacy to the outside world.

Considering its advantages, a Muslim house can apply the open-plan concept. Nevertheless, it is only for the semi-public zone. It is because the open-plan concept applies minimal partition, that in fact, is used as privacy protection. The semi-public area is only for family activities. Thus it still provides privacy for the occupant. The practice of the open-plan concept in the semi-public zone follows Ibrahim's idea of allowing the occupant does several activities in the same zone (Ibrahim, 2012). Meanwhile, the other zones should apply a closed-plan concept that divides the room.

Therefore, Muslims are suggested to adjust an open-plan concept (if any) in their house. The adaptation is implementing this concept in the proper zone. The adjustment is made to maintain Muslim life's required privacy level, not violate Islamic design principles. One way to do it is by practicing the open-plan and closed-plan in the appropriate zone. The explanation below is made based on the public, semi-public, and private area divisions.

Public Area

In the dwelling, the public zone consists of the terrace and the living room. As this room functions as a place for entertaining the guest, this room cannot apply an open-plan concept. Instead, it should implement the closed-plan that provides no visual exposure to the female inhabitant. So, the guest has no visual access to other zones in the house. A close-plan concept means the room is divided by a solid partition. In a limited space case, the house owner can use a sliding partition or movable partition to provide spacious space based on the necessity. However, it does not implement open space as "all in one space". Therefore, the living room still has flexible quality. Practicing the closed-plan in the public area allows the owner to host guests without disturbing other female inhabitants.

Private Area

Furthermore, a closed-plan is also implemented in the private area such as the bedroom or the restroom. These rooms are the most private room in a dwelling. Therefore, the partition should be a solid partition to maintain the inhabitant's privacy. It is stated in Al-Quran that the family member should knock on the door of the parent's bedroom (before entering the parent's bedroom) at three times,

namely between *Dhuhr* and *Asr*, after *Isha*, and before *Fajr* (*QS. An-Nur (24): 48*, n.d.). The family member can enter the bedroom if the parent has allowed them. As the prone room, the bedroom has to implement the Islamic design principle to protect privacy. Besides practicing a closed-plan in the bedroom, the designer should consider the room's opening orientation to increase the privacy level. The opening should avoid exposure to the public zone. So, any activities held in the public area will not cause visual distraction or audio distractions. The door can be oriented to the semi-public room, while the windows can be faced towards private outdoor space.

Meanwhile, the restroom should implement the closed-plan concept. In this room, the user's *awrat* is also not covered. In addition, there are several Islamic design principles to be practiced in this room, which are: (1) Avoiding Qibla direction for toilet orientation; (2) Placing the toilet's hose on the right side of a toilet; (3) Separating space for a toilet and a bathroom if possible; and (4) In the case of toilet and bathroom integration, providing a partition as a barrier in the room to avoid the water splash to the ablution area (Mohd Amar et al., 2012).

Semi-Public Area

Generally, the house has the family room and the dining room as a semi-public area. In Muslim residential, these rooms can apply the open-plan concept because it is only occupied by the family member so that the required privacy level is not so high compared to the other rooms. This integration is the most common function integration in the dwelling (Alfirevic & Simonovic-Alfirevic, 2016). The use of an open-plan concept in these rooms will create intense communication amongst the room users. For example, a mother can interact with her children in the family room while she is in the dining room. The communication and interaction amongst them will strengthen the family cohesion (*habluminannas*).

Besides, the implementation of this concept will smoothen the airflow in the house. Usually, the family room is in the center of the house. The proper air circulation will cool the house and impact the occupant's health. Moreover, the open-plan concept in these rooms will save energy. As the permanent partition does not cover it, the rooms can optimize the natural lighting. So, there is no need to turn on the lamps in the daylight. A large window can be placed in the family room or the dining room to the private side yard or backyard. That way, the rooms will get optimum natural lighting without disturbing the room user's privacy. Although in a different practice, providing an opening towards the garden maintains openness value in an inner courtyard of a traditional Islamic house.

Conclusion

Some values of the open-plan concept are following Islamic values. Its efficiency and the saving concept are the representation of not being wasteful. As

known, being redundant is prohibited in Islam (*QS. Al-Isra' (17): 26-27*, n.d.). Another benefit impacts the family psychologically, such as increasing family interaction amongst the family member, a better quality of health, etc. However, there is a contradiction between the open-plan concept of modern architecture and privacy in Islamic architecture. The solution is practicing the open-plan and the closed-plan in the appropriate zone.

An Islamic house or a Muslim dwelling can implement the open-plan concept by practicing it in a semi-public area of the house. It cannot be practiced in the whole room of the house as some rooms should provide a higher privacy level than the other, as stated in Islamic design principles. The semi-public area can implement open-plan concept because the resident only occupies this space. Meanwhile, other zones, such as private and public areas, should implement the closed-plan concept. In a Muslim dwelling, the bedroom should implement a permanent partition to achieve a closed-plan concept. On the other hand, the family room and the dining room can apply the open-plan concept. The combination of the open and closed plan in the house, as explained above, can maintain the tenant's privacy.

The finding also indicates an integration opportunity of modern value and Islamic design as long as it obeys the Islamic design principles. However, as this research only focuses on the open-plan concept, further research might focus on other modern principles combined with Islamic dwelling. So that, Muslims inhabitants have alternatives in practicing contemporary value in their house without disobeying the Islamic design principles.

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