



## Better Campus Dormitory Living Experiences: The Case of King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi, Bangkhuntien Campus

Chanida Lumthaweepaisal

Interior Architecture Programme, School of Architecture and Design  
King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi, Bangkok, Thailand  
Email: [chanida.lum@kmutt.ac.th](mailto:chanida.lum@kmutt.ac.th)

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### Abstract

This study focuses on the 'transitional experience' from Kenyon concept (1999) confronting students who leave home to live in the new environment of a university dormitory. Observing the university dormitory from the perspective of an interior architect, this study aims to understand what constitutes comfortable living for students. The objectives of this research are to establish applicable strategies for a campus dormitory design that responds to the psychological and physical comfort of undergraduate students and encourage universities to rethink dormitory design. The first part of the study examines the theories relating to psychological and physical comfort, and the role of dormitories within campus environments. The second part of the research focuses on dormitory case studies and investigates the current conditions in a university dormitory. Finally, the research topic is applied to a lab-based learning project for second-year students of Interior Architecture. As a result, this study identifies the appropriate design criteria for improving the dormitory of King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi, Bangkhuntien Campus, which, if adopted by the university, can be used to provide a better experience for students.

**Keywords:** *Dormitory, Physical comfort, Psychological comfort, Shared space, Temporary dwelling*

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### 1. Introduction

A dormitory for undergraduate students is an ambiguous space, uniquely providing them with half temporary and half permanent accommodation, and they may decide to spend at least four years residing there. A dormitory is not only a place to sleep but can be perceived as a temporary home for students over a certain period of time during the formation of their adulthood and transition to a professional career. This research considers the dormitory as being equivalent to a home – a simple space that triggers all kinds of complex sentiments – fondness, intimacy, warmth, attachment, and comfort, affecting psychological and physical states of a person. Examination of the university dormitory raises the following questions: *What if a home happens to be temporary? What if a home happens to be small? What if a home happens to have unfamiliar persons living together?* Living in a new environment represents a significant life change, and this research focuses on the process of leaving the family home (a dependent dwelling) and moving to a university dormitory (an independent dwelling). Many freshmen are confronted with this 'transitional experience' (Kenyon, 1999) when moving into a university dormitory. The research questions form the basis of an investigation into how students inhabit the dormitory under sharing and temporality conditions since space is linked to social behaviour and human geography (Temple, 2014). This research tackles the psychological and physical comfort materialising in the dormitories of undergraduate students.

Firstly, this research examines the theories relating to the physical and psychological comfort of spatial design and the role of dormitory within the campus environment. Secondly, case studies are explored to expand the dormitory concept within the universal campus environment using the existing dormitory at King Mongkut's Technology Thonburi (KMUTT), Bangkhuntien Campus. Lastly, this research is conducted in collaboration with a study by second-year Interior Architecture students on a lab-based design studio under the theme '*co-living space*' to seek creative ideas and design solutions from the actual users of the KMUTT's Bangkhuntien Campus dormitory. The comfort situation inside the dormitory is measured on both the macro and micro scale, influenced in many ways by the '*Ecology of Individual Students*' (Figure 1) (Renn and Arnold, 2003).