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What are the students' housing preferences?

A case study of Lublin, Poland.

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Master of Science thesis

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Abstract

Housing preferences are unique to each individual. Nevertheless, there are certain similarities between the residential needs within the same demographic groups. This research will focus on the students' housing preferences. The aim is to understand the factors affecting the decision-making process regarding the choice of housing by students in Lublin, Poland. The findings provide guidelines for the future student housing (re)development in the local area. The theoretical concepts used are The Theory of Basic Human Values and The Means-End Chain Theory. They assume that when making decision, the consumer is affected by his/her core values. The research strategy uses qualitative approach. It consists of both primary and secondary data. The first includes conducting interviews with 15 students. The second is based on the literature review and the official documents available at the official local government's website. The limitations of the research are the bias of authors' interpretation and exclusion of the students attending smaller, private universities, which may give an inadequate picture for the generalisation of the population. The findings are that the location, finance, privacy continue to be the key determinants in students' housing choices. Moreover, students value the ability to personalise their rooms and having no noise distractions. They are also attracted to the attributes that improve their sleeping quality. The new generations of students value happiness and have high expectations. Thus, people responsible for the future (re)developments should keep those in mind, when designing the accommodation for students. The implications and guidelines are at the end of each section of data analysis.

Examensarbete

Titel	Vad har studenter för boendepreferenser? En studie från Lublin, Polen.
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Nyckelord	Boendepreferenser, studentboende, means-end värdekedja

Sammanfattning

Bostadspreferenser är unika för varje individ. Dock, finns det vissa likheter i bostadsbehov inom samma demografiska grupper. Denna studie fokuserar på studenternas boendepreferenser. Syftet är att förstå de faktorer som påverkar beslutsprocessen kring val av bostad för studenter i Lublin, Polen. Resultaten ger ett förslag till framtidsutvecklingen för studentboende i lokalområdet. De teoretiska begreppen som används är Teorin av grundläggande mänskliga värderingar och The Means-End Värdekedja. De innebär att när beslut fattas då påverkas konsumenten av sina grundläggande värden. Forskningsstrategin är baserad på kvalitativ metodologi. Den använder både primär och sekundär data. Den första inkluderar intervjuer med 15 studenter. Den andra baseras på litteraturöversikten och de officiella dokumenten som finns på den offentliga kommunens hemsida. Forskningsbegränsningarna här är bias som kommer ifrån författarnas tolkning och resultatet är begränsat med syn på eleverna som går på privata universitet, vilket kan ge inte tillräcklig bild för generaliseringen från den statistiska populationen. Slutsatser är att lokaliseringen, finansieringen och integriteten fortsätter att vara de viktigaste determinanterna i studenternas bostadsval. Dessutom värderar eleverna förmågan att anpassa sina rum på individnivå och inte ha bullerstörningar. De lockas också till de attributen som förbättrar deras sömnkvalitet. De nya studentgenerationerna uppskattar lyckan och har höga förväntningar. Således bör personer som är ansvariga för framtidsutvecklingen tillämpa dem när de utvecklar studentboende. Slutsatser och förslaget på de nya riktlinjerna finns i slutet av varje dataanalyskapitel.

Glossary of Abbreviations

MEC: Means-End Chains

HVM: Hierarchical Value Map

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1 Introduction

This chapter provides a brief explanation of the research topic area. It justifies the importance of the study and describes the value added to the existing knowledge. The section explains the purpose and the aims of the thesis and suggests who may benefit from the findings. The issues of ethics and sustainability are briefly touched upon here. The chapter ends with a short summary of the research approach, followed by its delimitations and the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Rationale of the research question

The housing supply is, in general, trying to respond to the existing or expected demand. *“Residential demand (...) depends on many demographic and social characteristics of the country’s population and is also related to economic factors”* (Consuelo Colom and Cruz Molés, 2008, p. 917). For that reason, the housing demography became a popular research field in the urban studies analysing correlations between population’s demographic factors and the housing demand and supply. Haase et al. (2012) prepared a simulation model that shows how the housing prices, the housing preference and the supply of housing space change depending on whether the population is growing or declining. Their simulation pointed that even with population decline, young single households would play a crucial role in the inner-city developments because their housing preferences tend to focus around accessibility to social and cultural life. Clearly, despite the housing preferences being personal, there are similarities between certain groups that share the same demographic background, for instance, age (Nijënstein et al., 2015).

Despite having an extensive research about young households’ impact on the housing demography, the studies about students are limited. This group is often neglected by the society because students are assumed to accept any condition of housing (Dwyer, 2008). Nevertheless, the times are changing, and the new generations are needier and refuse to be pushed away (Hope, 2017). They were raised to express their opinions and believe in dreams (Erickson, 2012). Therefore, they demand more from their life, career and even accommodation. Moreover, the student dormitories become home to students for between a semester up to even five years (Khozaei et al., 2014). This makes the building, the room, the facilities and even the area, a particularly important part of their life. Thus, their preferences should be perceived as important and continuously adapted to the arising needs.

Nevertheless, Khozaei et al. (2014) highlights that in the recent decade, more researchers began to approach a case of student accommodation, in particular their satisfaction of the current environment. Unfortunately, the amount of research is still limited. There is a clear gap in the existing knowledge pointed

by Khozaei et al. (2014), who identified differences in housing preferences depending on the nationality background. It is, therefore, interesting to investigate a Polish city, where students represent a major part of the housing demand. Gawlik et al. (2017) investigated a case of Krakow but focused on the quantitative approach, which caused them inconsistency issue. Therefore, it is worth applying a qualitative method of semi-structured interviews to allow for a deeper understanding of the problem and students' perspective. The research will deepen the knowledge about current (Y and Z generation) of students' housing preferences in Lublin, Poland and provide a better understanding of how students choose their accommodation. For this reason, the research question is *“What are the students' housing preferences? A case study of Lublin, Poland”*.

1.2 Purpose, aim and objectives

The aim of this study is to understand the factors affecting the decision-making process regarding the choice of housing made by students in Lublin, Poland. This thesis will illustrate the housing issues and provide guidelines for the future student housing (re)developments in the local area. To achieve this goal, the thesis attempts to answer the following critical questions.

1. What are the key housing characteristics that students in Lublin value?
2. What are the implications for the student housing (re)development in Lublin?

The results contribute to the better understanding of how students choose their accommodation, allowing to tailor the supply to the needs. This will lead to a more sustainable housing market and the city itself.

1.3 Benefits, Ethics and Sustainability

In Poland, there are both public and private owners of the student dormitories. Thus, the findings provide information for developers and universities regarding building and refurbishing student housing to match the target group's preferences. This will allow to match the supply to the demand and lead to a more sustainable development of the city of Lublin. Moreover, urban planners would benefit from the findings to properly adjust the local development plans and strategies for the city and the region. That is because it is unsure whether students prefer to live in student halls, studios or shared flats. This is especially important due to the specification of the land being a scarce resource. Therefore, the research would contribute to a sustainable space planning according to the current and the future needs.

The economic aspect touches upon adding value to the buildings by making them more attractive for the current generation. Hentschke et al. (2014) explains that the customisation successfully generated value in housing, in countries such as UK and Japan. The focus on providing supply that responds

to the demand can help the developers and the universities regarding what students value, so that the rooms can be appropriately designed, and profit maximised. The environmental aspect is highlighted through the young people's arising interest in the ecological life style. Addressing their needs for contributing to the better future, boosts the environmental-friendly solutions for the developments (Gutfreund, 2016). Finally, tailoring student accommodation to the current generation of students ensures social inclusion and controls the potential negative effects of the studentification of the areas of the city that are designed for students (Sage et al., 2013). Following students' preferences regarding location will help them feel better and contribute to creation of a successful space.

The ethical issues that arise from the project are related to the methodology and are further explained in the section *4.4 Methodology ethics*.

1.4 Research approach

This short subsection is a brief introduction to the philosophy and the approach chosen for the research.

1.4.1 Philosophical assumptions

The chosen philosophy is interpretivism. This is preferred due to the applied philosophical assumption that the researched phenomenon is depending on the subjective perception of the interviewees and their personal preferences, and thus, implies that the reality is not external (Saunders et al., 2016). Ontologically, it is created by the author and the study's participants. The outcome depends on the conceptualisation and the interpretation, which is in line with the social constructionism (Saunders et al., 2016). The respondents perceive the reality differently but create it together and share parts of it. In addition, to understand deeply the phenomenon, the study should explore the wider contexts such as culture and demography. Thus, epistemologically, it is the opinions and reasons of the participants that will create the knowledge. Axiologically, the study will focus around the values of the respondents. It is certainly not going to exclude them.

1.4.2 Research approach

The research approach chosen is qualitative due to the specification of the social phenomenon and the philosophical assumptions applied. It is more subjective form due to an extent of interpretation input from the author. In addition, it allows for more of a deeper insight into the way the participants of the study perceive the issue. While quantitative methods could provide objective data, the results would be regarding specifically what the author has asked about, limiting the scope of the findings. It would result in a less detailed explanation, and consequently, a loss of knowledge.

1.4.3 Research methodology

While the student housing preferences have been studied using both the interview and the survey techniques, there have been studies in Poland using the survey methods. Gawlik et al. (2017) identified issues of inconsistency of their data. Thus, a semi-structured, laddered interview was chosen to allow the author to ask additional questions and clarify the deeper reasons and meanings behind the students' behaviour. Being able to have a conversation with a participant minimises the inconsistency problem because the respondent can explain the context of the answer, if it is unclear.

1.5 Delimitations

To provide a more valid and reliable findings and implications, the following delimitations were applied.

To ensure the data is credible, the research is based on the case study of Lublin, Poland. The collection of the primary data will be based on the sample of students studying in the city. This, however, does not imply that all of them will be Polish. A subgroup of international students was created to compare and include their preferences. This promotes social inclusion, studentification and internationalisation that is mentioned as one of the goals of the city's development strategy (Wydział Strategii i Obsługi Inwestorów, n.d.).

Nevertheless, the generalised findings and implications are for the students from the generation Y and Z. Due to the inconsistency in the information regarding the exact intervals of each generation, in this study, the generations Y and Z are defined as people born in the 1990s and 2000s, respectively.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

The thesis is divided into eight chapters. The second chapter (*2 Literature Review*) reviews the current research done in the field and the wider contexts such as the values of the new generation. It is divided into five main topics. The next chapter (*3 Theoretical Background*) illustrates the two theories used to understand the phenomenon. The fourth chapter (*4 Research Methodology*) explains the research strategy and design. The ethical issues associated with the methods are acknowledged. It also includes the validity and the reliability of the applied methodology and its limitations. The fifth chapter (*5 Case Study of Lublin, Poland*) introduces information about the demography, educational profile, housing supply and the city's development strategy to provide a context for the later data analysis. It is followed by the sixth chapter (*6 Data Analysis and Results*) that analysis the answers from the interviews providing the findings. The next chapter (*7 Discussion*) contrasts the findings with the existing knowledge in the field and reflects on the aim and objectives of the research. Finally, the last chapter (*8 Conclusion*) summarises the thesis and

gives the final conclusion to answer the aim and objectives of the research question. It also suggests the recommendations for the further research.

2 Literature Review

This chapter includes a review of the past research done in the related fields and contexts. The first section explains the core values and behaviour of the new generations (Y and Z). The following sections are regarding housing preferences. They narrow down towards the existing knowledge in the exact area of study.

2.1 New generations

As the society is progressing, each generation is different to the previous one. They grow up in certain conditions and, therefore, share certain values that are specific for people of the same age. For example, generations Y and Z were raised in the era of digitalisation. Hope (2017) says that because of the fast pace of improvements in the technology, the generations assume all the information needed can be found in a matter of moments, through the internet. Looking for a journal on the shelf of the library is something they do not consider. This changes their lifestyle differentiating them from previous generations. Gutfreund (2016) points that due to being raised in the era of the digitalisation and the social media being present everywhere and at all times, the generation Z is especially concerned about the privacy.

Hope (2017) highlights the numerous of characteristics of the generation Z. The author explains that they value freedom and being their own bosses. Moreover, as they see how the companies such as Uber became successful without even owning cars, they believe that information sharing will generate profits. Thus, they are constantly connected with friends to be updated about occurring events. Cho et al. (2018) also describes the generation as being the most diverse regarding the ethnicity and the religion. Hope (2007) further explains how they hear about gender and racial equality, which drives their sense of justice, and seeing the minorities slowly succeeding, young people are reaching high for their dreams, yet being more realistic than the generation Y that is far more optimistic. Due to the arising issues with finding jobs, they are aware of the need to control their expenditure. Motivation was another characteristic mentioned by the author. The generation is effectively encouraged by making a change for someone, for the world or themselves. According to Gutfreund (2016), the new generations have all the skills required to succeed in this. Moreover, Cho et al. (2018) suggests that they are more confident than the previous generations. All of these values shape their behaviour and influence their choices, including accommodation.

It is clear that cities with at least a few universities, have a number of student accommodation options. That being said, many of them are old or based on a standard design for a student hall that worked in the past. The times are changing, and the new generations (Y and Z) are needier (Hope, 2017). They

were raised to express their opinions and believe in dreams (Erickson, 2012). Therefore, they demand more from their housing. According to Zubairu et al. (2018), the students' expectations regarding accommodation are increasing. The researchers point that due to the discovered profit potential of student housing investments and the raising needs of the new generations, many dormitories providers begun to refurbish their buildings to increase the standards of living. The authors emphasise that this allowed students to begin evaluating housing opportunities and choosing them more carefully. Thus, it is crucial to update the designs of student halls to make them fit to the new generation that is picky and does not accept anything below their standards. This is extremely important for countries such as Poland, where the communism ended in 1989, and its effects can still be seen in the urban development.

2.2 Housing demography

Housing preferences have been studied in a range of locations, based on various socio-demographic factors. Nevertheless, housing decisions are not based entirely on the demography. Nijënstein et al. (2015) explains that the cultural aspect and the model of life is highly influencing the choice behaviour. He elaborates on an example of the Western culture, where due to the social diversity, the life styles are also varied. The more options there are, the more different the preferences. For this reason, he claims that the power of generalising preferences is weaker for highly diverse countries.

Housing preferences vary among people due to taste heterogeneity (Nijënstein et al., 2015). One cannot, however, discuss housing preferences without exploring housing satisfaction. Housing satisfaction is a measure between the expected standard and the experienced standard (Thomsen, 2007). Thomsen (2007) emphasises that there is evidence that in Norway, the housing satisfaction is decreasing due to bad flow of information and lack of perception for students to get an accurate expectation. Nevertheless, he says that the expectations are important decision component, when choosing a housing.

Opoku and Abdul-Muhmin (2010) examined the case of a growing housing market of Saudi Arabia with a focus on the factors affecting housing decisions and preferences towards certain types of accommodation. The researchers examined differences between these among the socio-demographic groups of low-income consumers. Their results suggest that there is a strong preference for buying houses. Despite a budget constraint, low-income individuals would still choose to buy a smaller house than rent a better quality dwelling. Another surprise was the level of importance varied between different genders because women valued aesthetics factor more than men. Adama et al. (2018) came to a different conclusion. The researchers conducted questionnaires among students accommodated in housing provided by private institutions to assess

the factors affecting their choices. The study was based in Nigeria. The results suggest that the gender had no significant influence on the decisions, while the age and the level of the academics are affecting the decision-making process. Moreover, Barrios et al. (2013) focused on the age as the demographic factor that affects housing decisions. Their results are based on the case study of Spain and suggest that age plays a primary role in the decision-making process regarding choice of housing tenure and possibly other housing preference factors. This suggests that the students that are represented by the group of a relatively similar age, may share similar preferences.

2.3 Students' housing preferences

Khozaei et al. (2014) conducted surveys among public university's students in Malaysia to identify their preferences regarding residence hall design. Their results showed that students prefer suite-style, single rooms with shared bathroom to traditional, double-sharing rooms. Verhetsel et al. (2017) came to similar conclusions. They studied preferences of Belgian students in Antwerp between shared and private housing. Their findings show that students are most concerned about housing type, followed by rent and size. Students prefer studio flats, which emphasises the importance of privacy. Mentioned in the previous section, Adama et al. (2018) also identified the privacy as the most significant factor. The researchers also mentioned the rent, the quality of the area and the social benefits of being near friends and other students.

Krum et al. (2013) explored another issue regarding ethics and inclusion that is often overlooked by the university authorities that decide about types of residential halls. The researchers examined the issue of the United States student housing that is traditionally gender specific. This causes problem for the transgender students that are put in dorms with the colleagues of the gender they do not identify themselves with. Authors conducted 103 surveys asking transgender students about the preferred type of housing. Their results were aligned with Khozaei et al. (2014) and Verhetsel et al. (2017). The single, apartment-style housing and was preferred compared to other four housing options that were at the time used across US.

Nijënstein et al. (2015) conducted questionnaires with simulations of housing offers among students. They concluded that price is the most significant attribute, followed by commute time, size and kitchen sharing. However, student accommodation should be also visually appealing. Thomsen (2007) analysed how the architectural aspects affect housing satisfaction by interviewing students from two different residences. His results show that student housing is associated with institutional character instead of a "*feeling of home*". Researcher highlighted that to change it, there should be possibilities to personalise the rooms as students appreciate it. This is in line with Khozaei

et al. (2014), who emphasised the privacy that together lead to a sense of identity.

Students are not only living on-campus. An off-campus accommodation is often chose as an alternative, in case of high competition and demand for the on-campus units. Noraini et al. (2017) studied students' preferences regarding an off-campus housing in Malaysia. They conducted questionnaires with open-ended questions and concluded that there are 46 variables that have good validity and reliability. That is because of different contexts of the districts. Therefore, they concluded that further research is needed to avoid generalisation.

Hubbard (2009) also examined off-campus accommodation but on the case study of Loughborough, England. The researcher explains that British students used to have a strong preference towards shared, rented houses. Nevertheless, his findings suggest that due to the developers becoming more active in the investment in private student accommodation, there is a shift in the preferences towards the residence halls. Developers are constantly driving the quality standard of the rooms and services and nowadays, en-suite rooms with high speed data network are an absolute standard, as well as shared social areas, gyms or studying rooms. Nevertheless, his respondents identified the need to be surrounded by other students, which was also a result in Adama et al. (2018) study of students in Nigeria. Hubbard (2009) also mentioned the proximity to the city centre as the major deciding factors, which highlights the importance of location factor that was also emphasised by Zubairu et al. (2018). They studied the student housing market in Nigeria. Despite focusing on the economy and the investment potential of the sector, the researchers came to a conclusion about students' preferences. They interviewed housing providers that rented their properties to students. The landlords explained the huge advantage of having the building located within small range from the university. The participants in their study confirmed that this is what determines the level of attraction of the place to students.

2.4 Students' housing preferences in Poland

There are however researchers that examined specifically the cases of students' preferences in Poland. Gawlik et al. (2017) conducted a number of surveys among students in Krakow, Poland to identify their housing preferences. However, due to the methodology, they highlighted inconsistent responses from the participants. Nevertheless, the researchers concluded that the factors affecting decision-making process regarding renting a flat stayed relatively the same, and the level of preference changed slightly with location and rental cost being always statistically significant regardless of the consistency of data. Unlike the results of Opoku and Abdul-Muhmin (2010), students in Krakow were highly concerned about their financial expenses.

There was another attempt in assessing the residential preferences of students in Poland. Roman and Sawczuk (2017) analysed a case study of Siedlce. The authors explain that despite the city being relatively small (population of 77 000) compared to Krakow or Lublin, the students represent a significant number of the housing demand. Similarly to Gawlik et al. (2017), the methodology chosen was a questionnaire. However, they used a second method of an interview to verify the data. Their findings showed that students, who were interested in buying a flat, wanted to start living on their own, to be more independent, to start a family or move to another city. Interestingly, some students identified housing as a long-term investment and not simply an accommodation. That being said, students that did not consider buying a house were represented by about 75% of respondents. The main reason for the decision was lack of jobs and financial background. The authors conclude that students in the city of Siedlce, choose to rent due to the financial constraints.

Mach (2018) took an interest in student housing due to the popularity of the rental agreements among this social group. He created four general categories regarding preferences: the legal aspects, the flats' characteristics, the local infrastructure and the rental costs. His results show that 88% of participants would like to rent a flat privately, without involving any agency to cut fees and minimise the overall rental costs. Regarding the privacy, most of the respondents (47%) lived in a double room, followed by renting the entire flat (26%) and a single room (22%). Other options were chosen by less than 5% of the students. The participants showed preference towards average to high standard of the room's quality. 90% of the respondents chose furnished and clean flats. 26% of students preferred new furniture or newly refurbished flats. Furthermore, 71% of the participants spend less than 15 minutes to commute, followed by 28% that spend between 15 and 30 minutes to arrive to the university. As the final conclusion, the researcher listed the top five factors that are the most crucial for students. These are, from the most important: the costs, the distance to the university, the rental time period, the deposit and the availability of transportation network. His results were based on the case study of Opole, which is an average sized city in Poland.

Skotarczak and Nowak (2010) studied housing preferences of the first-year students of the Agricultural University of Szczecin and the future students to identify the needs of the approaching, at that time, generation of young people. They used surveys conducted in two time periods in 2008: at the time of applications to the university and just after the admissions were done, and the candidates selected. Their findings show that the high school graduates are willing to pay a higher rent compared to the current students. Moreover, students that are coming originally from the cities can afford higher rent than students raised in villages, on the countryside. Moreover, only 16.7% of the respondents stated that they want to live in a student dormitory. On the other

hand, 38.9% wanted to rent a room in the city, and the remaining decided to stay in their family home. Moreover, when ranked, the factors affecting students' decisions regarding housing are, from the most important: the rent, the distance to the university and other answers, the communication and the relationship with the landlord, and lastly, the aesthetics of the space and area.

Clearly, Polish students highly value the financial aspects, which was proven by all of the researches the author about the students' housing preferences in Poland. Nevertheless, despite the several studies undertaken in Poland, clearly, there is a knowledge gap and need for further research. All of the mentioned authors conducted studies using quantitative approach. Thus, there is a lack of a qualitative results that would allow for a deeper understanding and insight into the reasoning of the studied group.

2.5 Summary

Summarising, there were number of research case studies providing to some extent similar results regarding student housing preferences around the world. Those mentioned a few times are: the financial factor (of rent or price), the privacy (whether the type of housing is shared or not) and the location (proximity to the city centre attractions). Nevertheless, as Noraini et al. (2017) concluded, there could be many more significant variables in the real life depending on the demography and the cultural background of the participants.

Additionally, the key characteristics of the new generations are: valuing freedom, seeing the benefits in the information sharing, having a strong sense of justice, being ambitious, thinking optimistically, being motivated, trying to make a difference and sticking to the financial constraints.

3 Theoretical Background

The research is based on the two academic theories explained in this chapter. They are related and create a model used in the data collection and analysis. The sections explain in more detail how the theories are applied and used in the project.

3.1 The Theory of Basic Human Values

One of the main theoretical concepts used to explain the research problem is The Theory of Basic Human Values developed by Schwartz. It is commonly used in the field of marketing (Zinas and Jusan, 2009). Schwartz (2012) found that the theory applies across the worlds' populations. That is because across the globe, people are facing conflicts between certain values (such as hedonism and tradition) that must be prioritised, motivating their actions (Schwartz, 2012).

As mentioned in the literature review, housing preferences are personal and unique. Therefore, when trying to understand them, it is crucial to link the problem to the Schwartz' value system structure. Schwartz (2012) explains that values are vital influencers of the attitude and the behaviour of an individual. He used empirical evidence to derive ten value domains that claim to be motivational and culturally universal (Schwartz, 2012; Zinas and Jusan, 2009). These are:

- “Power (social power, wealth);
- Achievement (success, ambition);
- Hedonism (pleasure, enjoying life);
- Stimulation (daring, exciting life);
- Self-direction (independence, curiosity);
- Universalism (social justice, unity with nature);
- Benevolence (helping, true friendship);
- Tradition (modesty, devoutness);
- Conformity (politeness, self-discipline);
- Security (family security, cleanness)” (Zinas and Jusan, 2009, p. 286)

Each person is aiming to achieve these values, however, the level of importance of each value will vary depending on the individual (Zinas and Jusan, 2009). Nevertheless, the average priority of values a person shares is similar across all societal groups (Schwartz, 2012). This hierarchical system of values an individual possesses, supports the decision-making process. Moreover, they participate in the conflict management between the choices and the core values the person strives to obtain (Schwartz, 2012; Zinas and Jusan, 2009).

Despite the usage of the concept in the context of housing is relatively new, there is evidence in the research that human values affect decision-making process regarding residential options (Nijënstein et al., 2015). For instance, Nijënstein et al. (2015) explained that pervious research illustrated that those

that assign the high significance to the hedonism, and low to the universalism are in general preferring the viable neighbourhoods with a lot of activity happening in the area, round the clock. Another example mentioned by the authors was that people having high values of power and achievement, and low of universalism, have a tendency to live in the cities rather than outside. These findings leave an interesting potential for the research.

Values affect the process of decision-making in a number of ways being the ground for every life decision. Zinas and Jusan (2009) explain further that experts in the field use values to justify the reasons for the behaviour. They highlight that these are the values that make people feel affection towards things. For the sake of values' role in the evaluation of options, choice of behaviour and following consequences, they should be considered in the housing preferences study (Zinas and Jusan, 2009). Nevertheless, it is difficult to differentiate these factors from socio-demographic variables (Nijënstein et al., 2015). Values are likely the most abstract part of the research that would be created and are commonly used in combination with the The Means-End Chain (Zinas and Jusan, 2009).

3.2 Means-End Chains (MEC) Theory

The theory assumes that people make decisions regarding buying products based on how they help them achieve their life goals (Lundgren, 2010). The potential consumer, when deciding whether to buy a product, identifies the good to be “*a means to important ends*” (De Souza Leão and Benício de Mello, 2007, p.4). Thus, this model is often used in a qualitative, in-depth studies of the consumer behaviour (Zinas and Jusan, 2009). The theory assumes that people make decisions based on the attribute (features of the good), its consequences (benefits and liabilities the good causes) and values (emotionally preferred benefits). This means that the consumer is actually interested in the benefits the good provides him/her rather than the characteristics of the product (Lundgren, 2010). It creates a hierarchical chain that drives the decision-making process (De Souza Leão and Benício de Mello, 2007). Figure 1 below illustrates the MEC model and the relationships between its constructs.

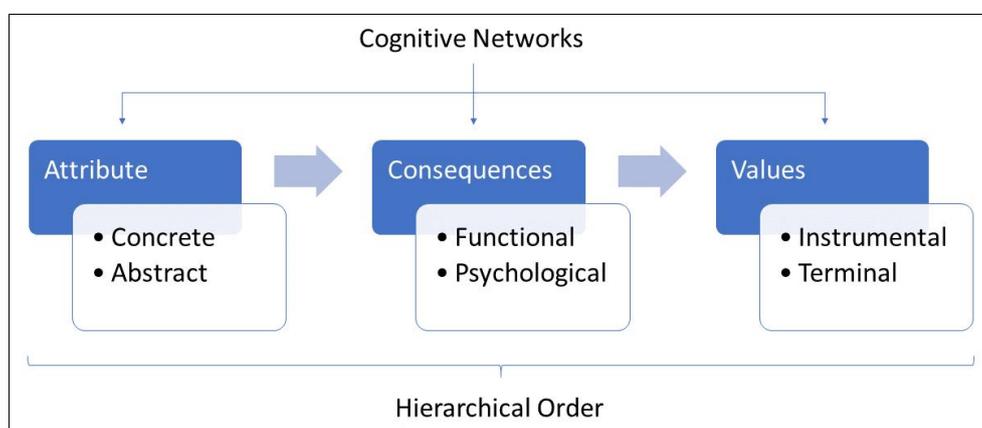


Figure 1. The MEC model. Source: own work, inspired by Zinas and Jusan, 2009, p.285.

Figure 1 represents the subcategories of the attributes, consequences and values. The chain usually begins with a concrete attribute, that is a physical feature that can be pointed to, such as “rent”. Otherwise, it may start with an abstract attribute, which usually is the effect of the multiple concrete attributes, such as “privacy”. The attributes usually have a functional consequence, which is what the product does for the person, such as “better sleep quality”. The psychological consequences are expressing how the person feels after consuming the product, for instance “feel good about myself”. The terminal values are representing the life aspirations of the person, while instrumental values are helping to achieve them. For instance, in order to reach a terminal value of “successful career”, a person could aspire to be “hardworking”, which is an instrumental value that would be boost career progression.

The model is most commonly used with the laddering technique (De Souza Leão and Benício de Mello, 2007). Laddering consists of the seven steps:

1. “elicitation of the attributes;
2. selection of the functional attributes;
3. elicitation of the attribute levels;
4. performing laddering interviews;
5. determination and coding of means-end chains;
6. aggregation: construction of hierarchical value map (HVM);
7. analysis and interpretation of the HVM” (Zinas and Jusan, 2009, p. 288)

The interviews are one-on-one, in-depth and intended to ask questions such as “Why is it important to you?” aiming to entangle the components of the decision-making process rather than the simple answers of “yes” or “no” (Lundgren 2010; Zinas and Jusan, 2009).

3.3 The theories’ relationship and their application in thesis

The Theory of Basic Human Values provides a guide to understand the most abstract part of the MEC model: values. The two theories are supporting each other in the analysis of the collected data and the creation of the HVMs.

4 Research Methodology

This chapter explains the choice of the methods in more detail and provides further justification for decisions made, while producing research strategy and design. The validity and the reliability of the method is discussed, as well as the ethical issues associated with the methodology and society. The chapter ends with the limitations of the chosen strategy and design.

4.1 Research strategy

The research focuses on the case study of a city to narrow down the results and ensure they are more specific to the parties of interest, which in this case are universities and developers (Yin, 2009). Having results of the housing preferences in the local market may lead to a higher validity, especially because of Khozaei et al. (2014), who highlighted that the preferences vary depending on the background of the respondent. The case study was also chosen to ensure that the data collection will be manageable as the population is smaller (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2009). This method is commonly used in number of fields including economics to understand the specific structure in a given industry, for a certain geographical sphere (Yin, 2009).

4.1.1 Qualitative approach

A mono-method qualitative approach was chosen because of the specification of the research question. The purpose of the study is to understand the students' accommodation needs, decision-making processes and opinions regarding housing market, and to produce guidelines for the future (re)development that will respond to the demand. This is a social phenomenon involving a human factor. Thus, the feelings and the perceptions can provide a deeper understanding of the issue and the reasons behind the housing decisions. This will require subjectivity from students' perspective and an interpretative philosophy to interpret their answers. Additionally, it can minimise the risk of inconsistency of the data, if the author is collecting information in person, by asking questions. Therefore, a qualitative method can add value by providing a deeper insight into the issue through more open-ended questions that will collect an extensive dataset needed to fulfil the purpose of the study.

Moreover, a single method approach is chosen because of the in-depth insight that the semi-structured, laddered interview provides and the recommendation of the Means-End Chains (MEC) theory (De Souza Leão and Benício de Mello, 2007; Zinas and Jusan, 2009). Lundgren (2010) suggests that the laddering can provide data that will reduce the risk of the housing developments by tailoring the design to the target group. Thus, the method is believed to be appropriate and sufficient to answer the research question and be manageable to successfully conduct and complete within the given time scale. Despite the

single data collection method, the questions asked and samples chosen suggest the combined nature of the study: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory.

4.1.2 Primary data

The primary data was collected in March and April 2019, through the in-depth, semi-structured, laddered interviews. This allowed the respondent to direct the talk towards the most important aspects, reflecting the core values and reasons that affect the decision-making process regarding housing. To ensure the respondents could express themselves as easily as possible, the interviews with Polish students were conducted in Polish.

To minimise the loss of information, the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed. The transcripts were made using the Intelligent Verbatim Transcription to keep them focused on the data. The purpose of the interviews was to gather information about a product (housing). Thus, a Verbatim Transcription was not necessary. For the interviews conducted in Polish, the author translated the transcripts. Thus, the transcripts are available in Polish and English.

Data collected through the laddered interviews were categorised into: concrete attribute, abstract attribute, functional consequence, psychological consequence, instrumental value or terminal value. The codes created the MECs, resulting in six HVMs for all students and six HVMs per subgroups: Polish and Taiwanese students. The visualisation of the associations between attributes, consequences and values allows for a clearer illustration of the findings regarding the key housing characteristics. According to Lundgren (2010), the developers on the advisory board recognised the use of HVMs as beneficial and more useful than the traditional interview regarding the understanding of the reasons why potential buyers disliked certain aspects about the project.

4.1.3 Secondary data

The secondary data will be collected from the national and the regional statistics to understand the wider context of the research problem and the case study, including education potential and economic profile of the city.

Other secondary data will be obtained from the literature review. The findings about the student housing preferences from other countries will be used in the theory building to create hypothesis for the attributes that are key influencers in the decision-making process. Moreover, the data will be used in the codes' preparation prior to the interviews. New codes are expected to be identified during the analysis stage. Nevertheless, it is beneficial to the interviewer to have expectations regarding the answers. It helps in MEC visualisation.

4.2 Research design

The sample and the interview questions were tailored to the specification of the chosen research topic, theories and methodology.

4.2.1 Sample

Due to the specification of the research topic, the sample includes current students of Lublin. Most of them are at their final year of studies. However, a few first year students were interviewed to check, whether there are any differences between their preferences.

The author assumes that the target group of students from generations Y and Z, are having similar preferences and have a uniform view at the world. The author believes that they can form a uniform group because they were both raised in the era of digitalisation and globalisation and therefore share common characteristics (Erickson, 2012; Hope, 2017).

The sample size is 15. That is because of the information saturation that occurs after a number of interviews. Conducted interviews illustrate the patterns of the important MECs. Thus, adding more interviews would not add much more value but a repetition of the information. Therefore, the sample of 15 is considered to be sufficient for this study.

The participants consist of: 8 Polish and 7 Taiwanese students. Taiwanese nationality was chosen as a representative of the international group for a number of reasons. Firstly, among all of the international students in Lublin, those from Taiwan account for the second largest group (Urząd Statystyczny w Lublinie, 2017). The first largest group, which is Ukrainian, was difficult to obtain consent to participating in the study (Urząd Statystyczny w Lublinie, 2017). Secondly, having representatives from a significantly distant culture will allow for a wider context due to a potential diversity in the answers. According to Khozaei et al. (2014), the housing preferences may vary depending on the cultural background. Thirdly, since the local government of Lublin aims to make the city more internationalised, and the population of the international students is rapidly growing, it was decided to take them into consideration (GUS, 2018, Wydział Strategii i Obsługi Inwestorów, n.d.). Moreover, this will ensure that the minorities are included, and social sustainability can be achieved easier.

Aiming to eliminate a gender specific answers, the sample consists of 8 female and 7 male students.

4.2.2 Questions' justification

Due to the specification of the semi-structured, laddered interview, the questions asked differed depending on the answers provided. For instance, an interviewee may answer *"I like that I am living in a single room"*. Then, the

next question would be “*Why is living in a single room important to you?*”. However, an interviewee that did not mention living in a single room, will not be asked this question. Instead, the questions will be regarding his/her answers. Nevertheless, the general structure of the interview consisted of the following:

1. What do you like about your current accommodation?
2. Are you planning to move in the Lublin area? What kind of place are you going to search for?
3. Have you moved before in the Lublin area? What is it that you did not like about your previous place?
4. Would you be interested in any of these accommodation options?

The case studies (Appendix 2):

- A studio flat
 - A 3-bedroom flat
 - A single room in a private dormitory with shared facilities
 - A shared room in a private dormitory with shared facilities
 - A single room in a public university’s dormitory with shared facilities
 - A shared room in a public university’s student hall with shared facilities
5. What advice would you give to the person designing accommodation for students?

Each question reflects the positive and negative attributes of the respondent. Followed with the supportive questions, such as “*Why is it important to you?*” and “*How does it affect you?*”, the deeper reasons and values can be revealed, and MECs created.

The case studies in the question number 4 were used to help the interviewee identify the attributes by looking at the actual housing options available at the time on the market in Lublin.

4.3 Validity and reliability

The MEC model was studied by researchers to assess whether it can be successfully adapted in the housing research. “*MEC has been found to be very valid, reliable and potent in performance for measuring both objective and subjective aspects of housing environments and users intrinsic choice behaviors respectively*” (Zinas and Jusan, 2009, p.545). The researchers recommended the use of MEC model in the studies with a housing context after analysing the examples of its application in the existing researches. Moreover, the method is considered to be more beneficial in a consumer behaviour studies than other approaches because it focuses on the consequences, which are linking the attributes and the consumer’s hidden values (Coolen and Hoekstra, 2001, cited by Lundgren, 2010). In addition, Nijenstein et al. (2015) claims that the generalisation depends on the level of diversity in the studied population. Lublin, although becoming more internationalised, is still dominated by Polish

students. This suggests that the generalisation is possible. Thus, the method is believed to be valid and reliable.

4.4 Methodology ethics

The interviewees had to read and sign a consent form that explains the purpose of the study, process of data collection and the way their input will be analysed and used (Appendix 1). The interviews were audio-recorded. Therefore, to ensure that the participants feel safe, any of the interviews' citations used is anonymised to avoid any risks on the behalf of the respondent.

Due to the specification of the laddered interview, the questions asked were personal. Thus, to ensure the participants feel as relaxed as possible, the interviews were preceded with a small talk and a beverage of the respondent's choice. It allowed the participants to relax, feel more comfortable and open up to the interviewer.

A challenge was to carefully observe and listen to the interviewee, and judge whether to proceed with questioning further regarding each of the aspects. The author tried to drop the topic and move on once she has sensed that the participant is stuck or feels uncomfortable talking about the issue.

All the case studies used during the interviews were obtained from the publicly available sources and referenced to ensure no plagiarism occurs.

4.5 Concerns and limitations

Qualitative approach has several disadvantages that limit the results. First of all, it is a more subjective method, as opposed to the quantitative study. It involves interpretation of the data by the researcher, which despite the best efforts to stay neutral, could lead to a bias in the analysis, and consequently, the results. Moreover, the interview as a data collection method involves a degree of influencing the interviewee through the body language, the facial expressions, the choice of words or the tone of voice. The applied cut-off levels are also resulting in the loss of knowledge. Finally, there are no representatives of the smaller, private universities' students, which could affect the generalisation of the findings. Nevertheless, due to the specification of the research topic, it should not have a significant impact on the reliability and validity of the results.

5 Case Study of Lublin, Poland

This chapter provides a background context of the case study. It illustrates the educational profile, narrowing it from the national level to the studied city. This section is followed by brief information about the demography and the housing supply of the city, as well as the local development plans.

5.1 Educational profile

Education sector is growing in European Union (EU) to hit the targets (Eurostat, 2018). Universities are expanding and developing new courses to attract both local and international students. Because of that, some cities have a significant number of students that affect housing market's demand, tenure, etc. Unfortunately, the supply is not always responding to the actual preferences of the society because the research is limited, and students' voices are often neglected because they seek temporary housing. Therefore, many cities with significant students' population experience problems with inadequate housing market. It is even more common in less mature markets that follow old strategies and are not eager to adapt to the changing society's structure.

5.1.1 Poland

Poland has the 6th biggest number of students in the EU accounting for 8.2% of total number of students in the EU (Eurostat, 2018). Furthermore, in the ranking of EU countries with the largest number of tertiary graduates in 2016, Poland achieved fourth place with 488 000 graduates (Eurostat, 2018). Table 1 illustrates in numbers how student population in Poland is changing.

Table 1. A table showing numbers of students in each academic year in Poland. Source: GUS, 2018, p.5.

Academic year	All students	International students	% of international students
2016/17	1 348 800	65 800	4.88
2015/16	1 405 100	57 100	4.06
2010/11	1 841 300	21 400	1.16

The overall number of students in Poland is decreasing. On the other hand, the number of international students is increasing at a faster rate, which hints to their increasing importance for the future housing market.

5.1.2 Lublin

Lublin, in Poland, is one of the major cities in the country. It is the biggest in the region (Lubelskie) with the population of 339 850, of which 65 212 are students (Statistics Poland, 2018; Table 2). This means that about 20% of Lublin's population consists of students, of which 6 312 (about 10%) are international, and 500 are from Erasmus+ programme (Urząd Miasta Lublin, 2018). Table 2 presents the numbers of students in Lublin per academic years.

Table 2. A table showing numbers of students in each academic year in Lublin. Source: Urząd Miasta Lublin, 2018.

Academic year	All students	International students	% of international students
2017/18	65 212	6 312	9.67
2016/17	65 564	6 234	9.50
2015/16	68 130	5 639	8.28
2014/15	70 919	4 395	6.20
2013/14	73 091	3 034	4.15
2012/13	75 906	2 314	3.05

Although, the number of students in Poland is dropping, Lublin is experiencing only a 0.5% decrease, while number of international students is increasing on average by 23.2% annually (Table 2; Urząd Miasta Lublin, 2018).

Lublin has 9 universities attracting 80% of the students in the Eastern part of Poland, which makes it one of the top academic cities in the national ranking and top in the Eastern part of the country (Urząd Miasta Lublin, 2018). Therefore, it would be interesting to provide an insight into students' housing preferences as they are a significant part of the housing demand, and international students as a sub-group may be worth investigating for the sake of the sustainable development as their numbers are increasing annually.

5.2 Local development plan of Lublin

In 2016, Lublin had 149 506 flats, which is 18% more than in 2002 (Urząd Statystyczny w Lublinie, 2017). Despite drop in city's population and number of students, Lublin faces a shortage of housing due to the change of lifestyle. Therefore, the city is putting effort in encouraging residential investments. In 2016, among 286 new buildings, 231 were housing units, which resulted in 2 298 new flats, which is a 41% increase compared to newly built flats in 2000 (Urząd Statystyczny w Lublinie, 2017).

Wydział Strategii i Obsługi Inwestorów (n.d.) explained the strategy for the development of the city. Beside the already mentioned goal of expanding the housing supply, the city aims to attract more international people. The local government wants to make Lublin attractive for young people to keep them after they graduate. Currently, the demography is disturbing with an increasing number of young, educated people emigrating (Wydział Strategii i Obsługi Inwestorów, n.d.). This suggests the importance and need for this research to allow understanding of the young people and providing them with the attractive options.

6 Data Analysis and Results

Due to the detailed coding to avoid the loss of knowledge, the author identified a large group of components. Consequently, the HVM including all of them are unclear. To minimise the issue, the author divided the codes into the following subgroups: the location, the building, the flat, the room, the furniture and the other characteristics. Nevertheless, a few HVMs were still unclear, so the author decided to apply a cut-off level. Grunert et al. (2000) explains that to determine the cut-off level, the implication matrix is commonly used. However, it is highlighted that in a case of detailed coding, it may result in a huge loss of knowledge. The authors claim that the cut-off level can be decided by the researcher to balance the loss of knowledge and the clarity of the key results on the map. Thus, for this thesis, the author decided to apply a 0-2 cut-off levels depending on the HVM's clarity. Each diagram has its cut-off level written in the top right corner.

While designing the HVM, the author followed suggestions of Gengler et al. (1995), who studied alternative, improved ways to visualise the HVM. To ensure the maximum clarity of the key components and associations, the sizes of the circles and the font were increased relatively to the frequency of their appearance during the interviews. Similarly, the thickness of the lines showing the links between the components, was increased according to the number of times the participants identified the association.

Due to the difficulties in the access to the specialised analysing software for the qualitative studies, the maps were created manually, by the author, using the Microsoft PowerPoint programme.

Beside the HVM of all the interviewed students, the author created the HVMs for the following subgroups: Polish and International (Taiwanese) students. This allowed to analyse how the preferences differ. Thus, beside the HVMs for all students included in the main text, the HVMs of the subgroups are available in the appendices.

6.1 Location

This section explains students' housing preferences regarding the surrounding area. For instance, the distance to the university or the availability of shops nearby.

According to figure 2, the strongest MEC is:

Near university → Saving time → Better sleep → Feeling good → Happiness

This means that students wish to live within a short distance from the university to have an opportunity to sleep longer because it helps them to feel good and be happy.

“It’s near the university ... I like to sleep for a long time ... I am well rested and I can focus on the classes ...” [Respondent 7]

“... we get more sleep. Because we don’t have to plan what bus, what route to take to go to the university ... So that is quite nice.” [Respondent 13]

“I like to sleep for a long time.” [Respondent 4]

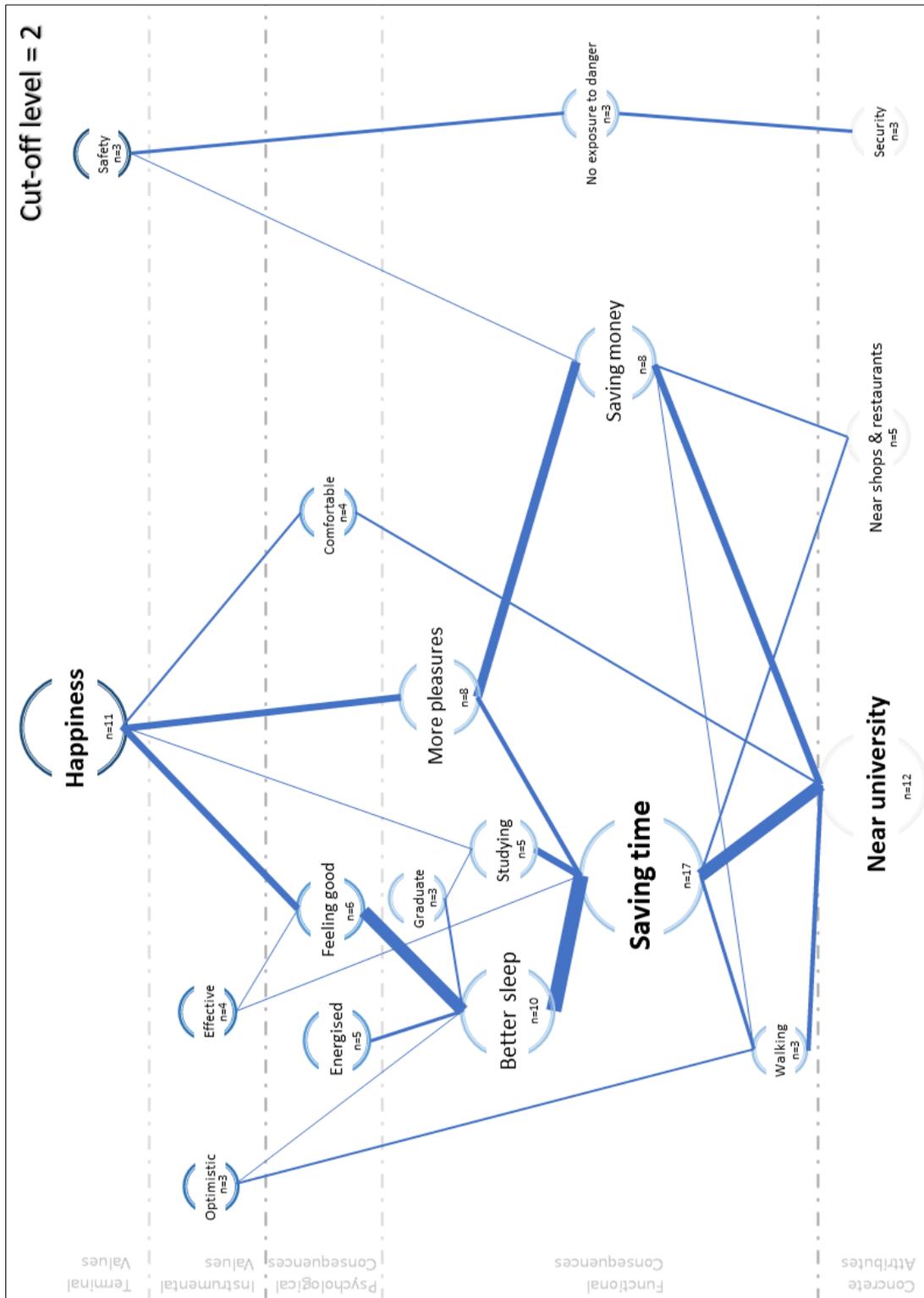


Figure 2. The HVM of the location’s attributes representing all students’ answers.

That being said, the code “*Saving time*” was mentioned the most frequently, five more times than the second most frequent component. It highlights the importance of time that students also spend on studying, and even more on other, more enjoyable activities that, again, help them achieve happiness in life.

“It can cost me little time from my room to the university ... when there’s a class and class, between, and there is only one hour ... I can back to my room to do some other thing like sleeping or drinking ... Is very happier to back to my room sooner.” [Respondent 11]

“If I have early, 8am class ... I’ll have longer sleep and feel more energetic during the day and feel happy about it. And I will have time for preparing my breakfast or something.” [Respondent 14]

Students also showed an interest in feeling energised from the better sleep quality and the general feeling of comfort from being near the university that makes them happy.

“... I will have more time to prepare for my morning or for my classes ... Means you can sleep more and you feel more energetic ...” [Respondent 10]

“When you get a whole night sleep, aside from having a lot of energy, you are more optimistic and positive, and with a good attitude towards doing things you’re supposed to do.” [Respondent 1]

Interestingly, three respondents talked about the component “*Walking*”, while stating the importance of saving time, while commuting.

“... when a man moves, endorphins are produced, he’s happy, ... when I exercise, I am more motivated to do other things.” [Respondent 4]

Students see the walk to university as a form of exercise that helps them be more optimistic, when approaching activities, people and reacting to situations.

Another MEC that attracts attention is:

Near university → Saving money → More pleasures → Happiness

It is a similar chain to the previous one. Clearly, students see the importance of managing their limited resources to maximise their happiness.

“... when I’m living nearby, I simply walk to class, so I’m automatically saving by not spending extra money on public transportation ... There’s always more for food ... I am happy, when I’m not hungry ...” [Respondent 3]

Finally, three participants mentioned the issue of safety. They wish to be able to safe, while going back home at night, after socialising.

“... I think it’s very important to live in safe room because sometimes, if you go home very late and you live in a not safe location, is very dangerous for you to get to your room.” [Respondent 11]

“... the area should not be too dangerous ... there may be different conflicts between different locations, so it is dangerous for them to expose themselves to these situations.” [Respondent 1]

It is even more important for the international students that may not know the local culture and most importantly, the neighbourhoods that are more dangerous, where more crime occurs.

6.1.1 Differences between Polish and Taiwanese students

There are no major differences in the general trends regarding location preferences between Polish and Taiwanese students (Appendices 3 and 4). Nevertheless, the chains of the Taiwanese sample are clearer, and the answers are more repetitive. They were the only ones mentioning that having the shops and restaurants nearby is important.

“I don’t have to carry heavy stuff for a long time. Oh, and the downstairs’ shop has a lot of Asian import stuff.” [Respondent 9]

Surprisingly, only one, Polish student mentioned the importance of the sustainability.

“And ecology, (...) we need to worry about the future. We can’t just live thinking about the present.” [Respondent 4].

It would be beneficial to try creating stronger links between green transportation and ecology, and to increase the importance of ecology as a value for the new generations.

6.1.2 Implications for the future (re)developments

An implication for the future (re)development is to ensure the student housing is built within close, preferably walking, distance from the university to maximise students’ resource management opportunities and mood.

The area should include shops and restaurants to attract international students.

To fulfil the exercising need, the (re)development could include the gym in the building or choose a location near such a facility.

Before buying the land for student housing development, it is advised to contact the local urban planning department and request a crime statistic for the area.

Finally, it is recommended to try and enhance the awareness and importance of the environmental-friendly lifestyle. Advertising on the website ways in which the company helps to minimise the ecological footprint and how students can contribute to it, could be a step in the right direction.

6.2 Building

This section illustrates students’ housing preferences regarding the building’s characteristics. For example, the age of the edifice or the quality of installations.

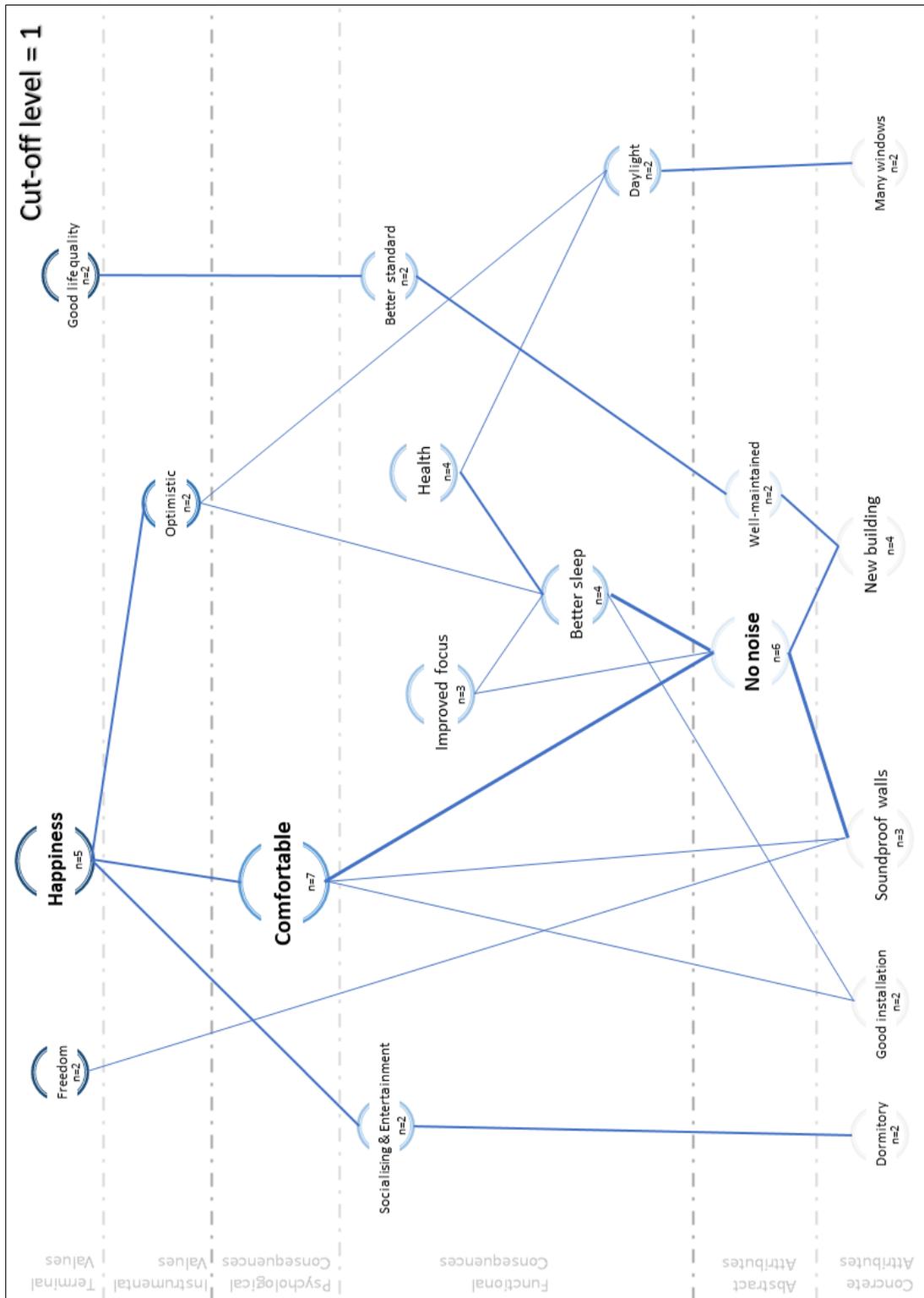


Figure 3. The HVM of the building's attributes representing all students' answers.

Figure 3 shows that, regarding the building characteristics, the main MEC is:

Soundproof walls/New building → No noise → Comfortable → Happiness

This is another chain that leads to the value of “Happiness”. It suggests that students want to have quiet conditions at their room to be able to feel

comfortable. It is associated with being distracted by neighbours' noises, when they need and want to study.

"... quiet, so students won't be disturbed by noises." [Respondent 15]

"I think the other important one is quiet. If the rooms, the wall is not thick enough, sometimes, I will hear my neighbour is talking and I think it's very uncomfortable ..." [Respondent 11]

"It annoys me a lot, especially when I'm studying and I have to focus ... and I hear from beneath a mum shouting at kids. In addition, I feel sad, when I hear how she's shouting at them ..." [Respondent 4]

They also wish to be able to be louder themselves, when they feel the need to listen to the music or watch a movie. They do not have to worry about disrupting others, which increases their comfort and consequently, happiness.

"I will just feel totally comfortable ... and if I want make a lot of sounds, no one will know." [Respondent 9]

The most mentioned codes are: "Comfortable", "Happiness" and "No noise" respectively. Similarly, to the location's attributes, students truly aim to achieve happiness in their lives. They wish to be feel comfortable in the building, which is mostly affected by the absence of noise. Another important and very similar MEC is:

Soundproof walls/New building → No noise → Better sleep → Health

The noise can influence the sleep quality, which is important to students because it affects their health, both physical and mental.

"I don't like to hear any others near me because it will affect my sleeping quality." [Respondent 11]

"... better sleep can make people have more healthy and have better mind ..." [Respondent 11]

This again confirms the importance of sleep from the results of the location's attributes and reveals a new consequence that is of importance to students.

Less important, but also mentioned, was that the new building will have little signs of usage. This suggests better conditions and standard of living. Students begin to care about the condition of the housing and accepting the bare minimum may become less common.

"Because in modern life, we are not only concerned about to live. We also concern about the quality of living." [Respondent 10]

"... it's only a problem, if they don't renew it or try to fix it. I think the student company, they are really keen on making sure we have the best quality, so they are always fixing something, whenever we're calling them and stuff." [Respondent 13]

Based on the information from Respondent 13, the private student dormitories are trying to ensure the best experience for students, the highest quality and that the standards are improving.

Finally, the dormitories are recognised as being a good place to socialise, find new friends, spend time with peers and party together, which leads to an increased happiness.

“... Because after class, they just go straight home. They don’t have time to go to dinner with friends or go to party and stuff ... whenever they’re tired or they want some socialising time, it’s a good place for them to go depending on who’s there.” [Respondent 13]

6.2.1 Differences between Polish and Taiwanese students

The main difference between Polish and Taiwanese students is that they have different opinion regarding the importance of the building. While Taiwanese students see it as crucial to reach happiness, Polish students have not much to say about it claiming that the structure of the edifice does not matter.

“Regarding the building, I think it doesn’t matter ...” [Respondent 8]

*“Building by itself doesn’t really make a factual sense from the outside.”
[Respondent 2]*

It can be seen on the HVMs of subgroups (Appendices 5 and 6). In fact, there was so little information from the Polish students that there are no clear trends visible. On the contrary, the HVM of the Taiwanese students is much more detailed with visible trends. In addition, the information regarding health and good quality of living is from the Taiwanese students only. This suggests that they care more about the conditions they live in and expect more from housing.

Another major difference is regarding the dormitories. The social advantages mentioned before were the opinion of Taiwanese students only. While international students consider them as, in general, good, Polish students have the opposite view. They try to ensure and pay more just to not live in the dormitories. Interestingly, most of international students lived in the dormitory in Poland, while most of the Polish students did not.

*“... I don’t have to live in the dormitory because I didn’t want that ... Maybe I believed the stereotypes or something like that, but it often is noisy ...”
[Respondent 5]*

It may be that Polish students are affected by stereotypes of dormitories that they hear from their parents. It suggests that dormitories have bad image or simply too thin walls for students to enjoy themselves at the place they want to call home for some years.

6.2.2 Implications for the future (re)developments

The most important implication is to ensure the walls are soundproof, and the floors and ceilings thick enough to provide students with a silent atmosphere at their rooms, so that they can feel comfortable at their homes, can study or be louder, if they wish to.

Furthermore, the dormitories have to invest in changing the image because Polish students do not seem to be interested in living in the dormitories. It is interesting because they do not care as much about the quality of living, and yet, do not want to live in a dormitory. This indicates a need for image improvement. Maybe some representatives of the companies could visit universities or high schools showing and explaining how the dormitories look, function and what benefits they can provide.

In addition, international students are interested in the quality of living. Thus, the existing dormitories could refurbish their buildings to attract attention.

Finally, the dormitories should ensure they have spaces for students to socialise in. It is considered as one of the potential advantages that private dormitories already benefit from, so the public could refurbish their buildings and use some vacant rooms as the common rooms for students.

6.3 Flat

This section illustrates students' housing preferences regarding the flat's characteristics. For example, the living-room or the kitchen.

According to figure 4, the main MEC regarding the flat's characteristics is:

*Living-room → Socialising & Entertainment → Studying → Motivated →
→ Energised*

Despite having their rooms, students wish to have a living-room or a kind of common room to have space to invite friends over, have a dinner together or a small party. They linked having friends over with studying opportunities. The chain suggests that working in a group can boost motivation and make students energised.

"... I have some friends to hang out with and sometimes you have a party, for example food party or hot pot party. You can hang out with them in your living-room and even with the television, it's perfect." [Respondent 10]

The most frequently mentioned codes are "Living-room", "Socialising & Entertainment" and "Feeling good". Clearly the students feel the need to socialise in their flats, apartments or otherwise called common rooms. However, they appear to be aiming to feel at home. Despite no full MEC including the component "Feeling good", there are relatively strong connections between it and the "Comfortable" and "Clean". This suggests that students want to live in clean environments because mess annoys them and

There are also strong relationships between how spacious the flat is, so that a student can rearrange it to fit his/her taste. He/she could even bring own furniture or buy it, as long as there is space. This allows students to express themselves and make the flat more personalised.

“A kind of pleasure. A matter of ease of furnishing the flat, that it is all not cramped in one corner ... That I can express myself. I can, most importantly, make it comfortable to live ... It for sure is more relaxing, if I am in a flat that is arranged up to my liking, that expresses me. I know that there is nothing that bothers me, nothing annoys me ...” [Respondent 3]

*“... if there is a minimalistic style, then we, as people that move in for ... for the time of studies, can bring more of our own stuff, which will make the flat reflect our personalities more than what the landlord prepared.”
[Respondent 7]*

Interestingly, the “*Relaxation*” code was, relatively, frequently mentioned. Despite stronger importance of “*Studying*”, the students acknowledge the need to take a break and relax in order to be effective in their work and studying. This is not necessarily the case for previous generations in Poland.

“... in general the society thinks that relaxation is something bad ... and actually, relaxation is very important because otherwise there are some mental illnesses, you fizzle out, depression and disorder of the entire life and I just can't live like that. I must have separate things that are equally crucial.” [Respondent 1]

6.3.1 Differences between Polish and Taiwanese students

Similarly to the case of the building characteristics, when describing preferred features of the flat, Polish and Taiwanese students expressed different opinions (Appendices 7 and 8). This time Taiwanese respondents had little to say. However, they raised the importance of having the living-room to study or relax.

Polish students expressed much more interest in the flat. They also saw it as an option to socialise but not necessarily in the living-room. Instead, they value spacious areas. Moreover, only Polish students were talking about the kitchen or the bathroom, with the first one being more crucial. Respondents even mentioned the microwave as equipment that should be mandatory in every kitchen because it saves time.

“I like the kitchen very much ... This is a sphere of connection with the fiancé, that we can eat together, we value it a lot.” [Respondent 6]

“... sharing the kitchen wouldn't bother me because eating, the kitchen is a place to talk with someone.” [Respondent 6]

“... and to make it up to students’ needs. Like, when you have the equipment in the kitchen, to always include a microwave ... As a student you often buy ready to eat meals ... and this is speed, comfort ...” [Respondent 2]

6.3.2 Implications for the future (re)developments

Build spacious common areas such as kitchen or living-room, so that students can socialise there and study in groups. This will allow them to rearrange the place and make it more fitting for them, more personalised.

In general, when designing the flat, think about making it comfortable, easy to clean and welcoming so that students can feel good there.

Include the basic equipment in the kitchen that allows easier preparation of meals, such as a microwave.

6.4 Room

This section illustrates students’ housing preferences regarding the size of room and the privacy. That is whether they want to live in a single or shared room.

Figure 5 illustrates two main MECs. The first, with stronger links, identified more often, is:

Single room → Privacy → Do what you want → Freedom

Another major chain that shares the same attributes and the functional consequence is:

*Single room → Privacy → Do what you want → Comfortable →
→ Feeling good → Happiness*

All of the respondents admitted they currently live in private rooms. Those that previously had a roommate, talked about bad experiences associated with the lack of privacy, being limited to certain hours to do what they want and often having problems with the roommates’ behaviour that made them feel uncomfortable and, generally, had a bad impact on them.

“Your personal room should be secret. It should be a place for you to rest and to do whatever you want ... It’s really important for me. When I’m in my room, I expect there to be no one else there, and for me to do whatever I want ... I’m not scared of what my roommate will do or just any type of arguments and stuff like that. It’s just me, my alone time and relax.” [Respondent 13]

“I wouldn’t like to share a room with a stranger because I need a bit more privacy ... A kind of inner freedom that I don’t have to feel embarrassed ... I need it for the psychological comfort.” [Respondent 6]

“... when people are alone, they are not embarrassed at all ... They feel more free and it simply makes them happy. There are no limits. You don’t feel enclosed.” [Respondent 4]

“Freedom ... I lived with a roommate before and I always felt worried, if I woke up too early and I will wake him up, too. Or if I stay up too late, I will disturb his sleeping time, too.” [Respondent 15]

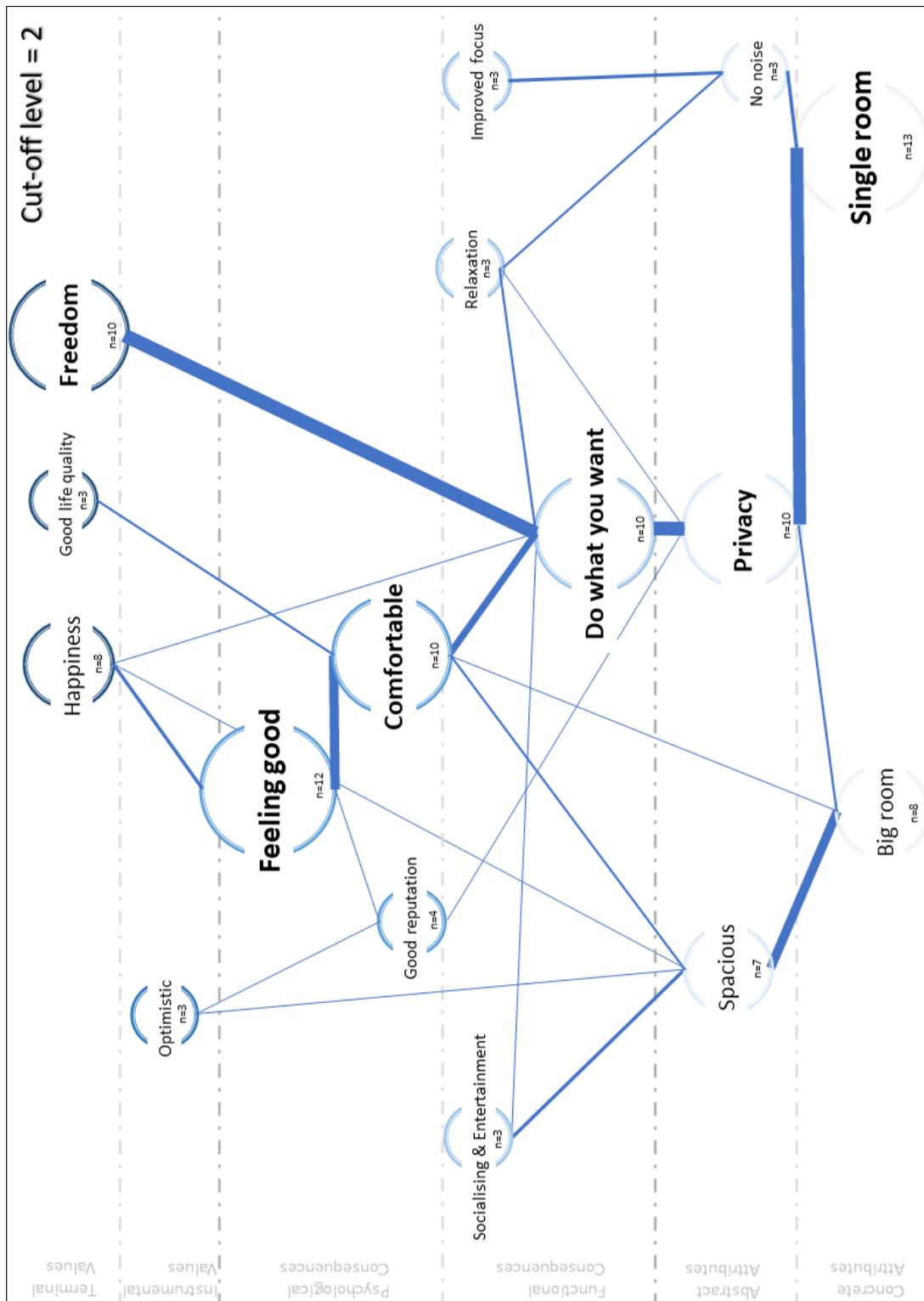


Figure 5. The HVM of the room's attributes representing all students' answers.

The codes mentioned the most frequently were “Single room” and “Feeling good”, respectively. This highlights the importance of building private rooms,

instead of the shared. This is an extremely important feedback to the public dormitories, which still have significant amounts of rooms for two, three or even four people.

“My optimal is a single room in a few bedroom flat.” [Respondent 2]

“For me the most important are single rooms.” [Respondent 3]

“I want to have a single room.” [Respondent 5]

The remaining components of the mentioned above MECs were also popular among respondents. It emphasises the importance of having own space and being able to be one’s true self.

“I don’t like to pretend in front of someone that I am actually learning a lot, and when I don’t want to study ... others’ opinion is also important ... Of course, everybody needs privacy to have own place, not paying attention to who does what, at what time, when.” [Respondent 3]

“... we are at the university, so we have to limit ourselves ... to some basic rules of behaviour, and when we’re alone, then we’re no longer beautiful women but simply humans. This is important.” [Respondent 4]

In addition, students associate big rooms with being spacious, which allows them to socialise. This, similarly to the previous section, emphasises the importance of having friends and deep relationships with them.

*“... you can invite friends, more friends because there is more space.”
[Respondent 4]*

“... when you bring some friends home, they want to talk with you privately, you have this kind of private space. That’s important for me.” [Respondent 10]

6.4.1 Differences between Polish and Taiwanese students

In regard to the privacy in the room and its size, there were no significant differences between Polish and Taiwanese students (Appendices 9 and 10). Both subgroups identified the MEC of “*Single room*” leading to the “*Freedom*” as the most important. The only interesting relation is that two respondents of the Polish sample associated big rooms with being uninviting, leading to the feeling of emptiness and the impression of not being cosy.

“... the room was big and the ceiling was very high. Kind of empty, unfriendly. When there is a big room with not many things in it, it gets uninviting, cold regarding the atmosphere.” [Respondent 2]

*“... this room is big, that this is a part of it and it’s not very cosy.”
[Respondent 8]*

Nevertheless, the vast majority of Polish students identified big rooms as not depressing, convenient for socialising and allowing them to express themselves.

Polish participants showed the need to personalise the rooms to feel better in their private space.

“Staying in small rooms makes you want to leave, I feel bad, it causes a discomfort, and when I’m in the bigger rooms, I feel better. I have a better mood, staying there is simply more enjoyable.” [Respondent 6]

“To not make a little box, which can fit a bed, a desk, a wardrobe and nothing else. But to have space because when someone is renting a room, he wants to have a space to stay in this room ... So that you can bring in your things ...” [Respondent 3]

“If I have more space, I have more motivation to act ...” [Respondent 4]

“The main reason was that it is spacious ... Here you sleep, here you can keep some books, and here have a studying space. So, I could rearrange that...” [Respondent 1]

6.4.2 Implications for the future (re)developments

The implications for the (re)development of the students’ housing is to certainly drop the idea of shared rooms. Students value their freedom and are afraid of getting a “*bad roommate*”. Thus, they want the privacy and the personal space in their rooms. The existing buildings could divide the rooms designed for three students into two single rooms. Most certainly, the interest in them will be much higher than, when they are advertised as shared.

Another guideline is to ensure the rooms are spacious, so that people do not feel claustrophobic or depressed. Nevertheless, they should not be too big, to avoid the feeling of emptiness. Maybe providing rooms in two sizes could be more suitable for the range of opinions students share. That being said, the majority of the rooms should be on the bigger side.

Students want to have opportunities to personalise rooms and express themselves. Thus, leaving space to bring a new chair or a cabinet is attractive to the target group. Similarly, the walls could be designed to put posters or hang some pictures there to feel at home.

6.5 Furniture

This section illustrates students’ housing preferences regarding the furniture’s characteristics. For example, the comfortable bed or thick curtains.

Figure 6 illustrates that the major MEC is:

Comfortable bed → Better sleep → Optimistic → Happiness

Another significant chain, similar to the mentioned above, is:

Comfortable bed → Better sleep → Relaxation → Energised

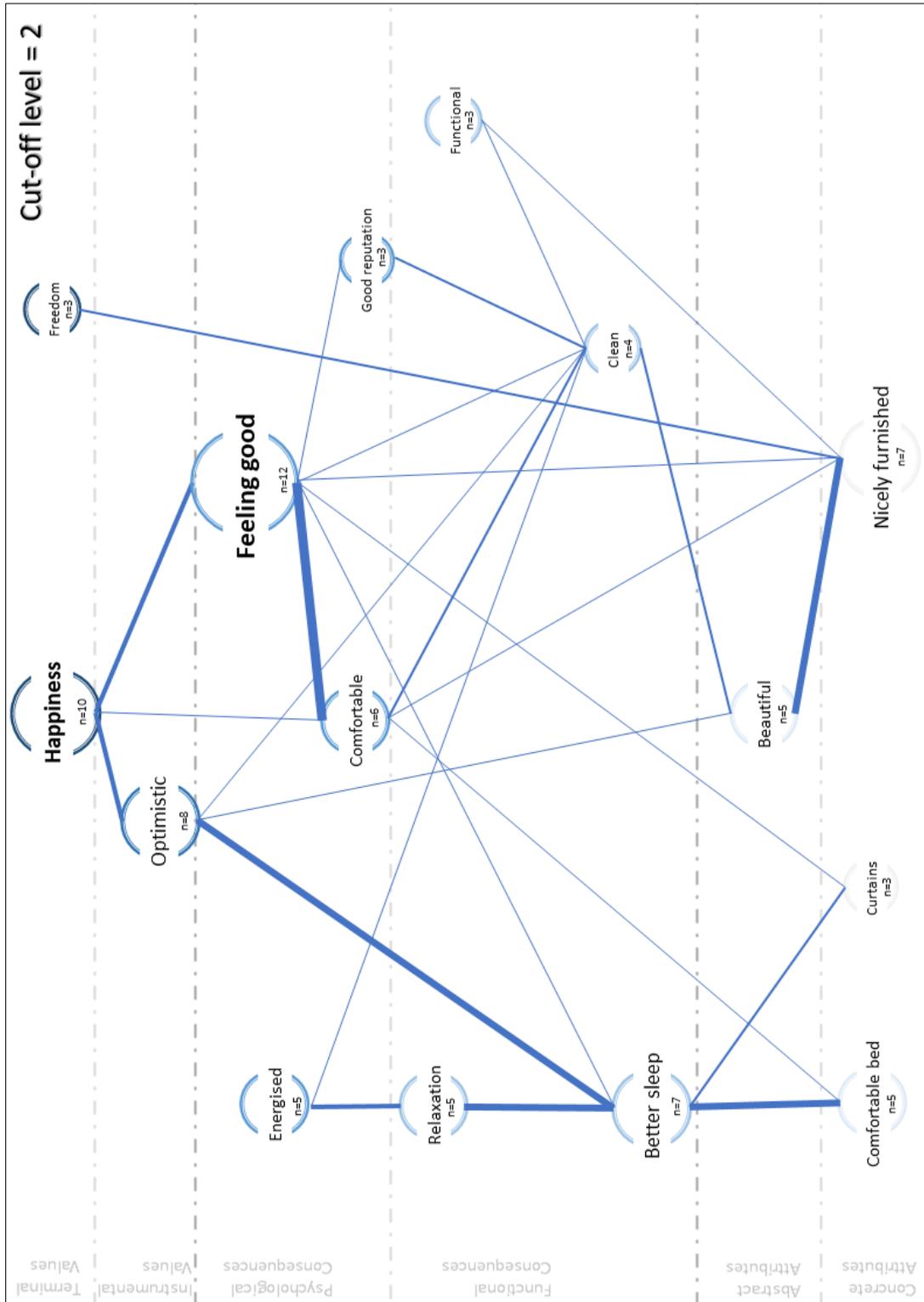


Figure 6. The HVM of the furniture's attributes representing all students' answers.

The respondents recognise the quality of the bed as crucial in ensuring a good sleep that will help them feel relaxed, energised and optimistic about the situations that occur. In previous HVMs, the sleep was vital to the participants (Figures 2 and 3). This HVM only confirms that students need to feel rested to be mentally healthy, and consequently, happy. Respondents identified a

comfortable bed as double, or even a king size. In addition, the mattress should be thick enough to ensure they do not feel the bars beneath it.

“I simply like to have a comfortable sleep, and I’ve experienced different beds, a beam poking you or legs sticking out of the bed, which always annoys me, so simply my comfort.” [Respondent 5]

“... my bed is king size bed right now ... It affects my sleeping quality and thus, affect my daily life ...” [Respondent 10]

“It makes me happy and so my life is so good to have a new bed and comfortable.” [Respondent 14]

“Must have double bed.” [Respondent 11]

Although, there are no other strong MECs, many respondents associated the feeling of comfort with feeling good, and therefore, reaching happiness in life. Interestingly, the link between “Comfortable” and “Feeling good” was mentioned the most frequently. It means that students identify comfort as being beneficial to their mood and wellbeing. The codes that were the most crucial for the participants, are “Feeling good” and “Happiness”, respectively. Clearly, students highly value being happy in life, above other goals. These codes were mentioned on the multiple occasions in the analysis of the previous maps, which emphasises their importance (Figures 3, 4 and 5).

Among the attributes, the most crucial was “Nicely furnished” associated with “Beautiful”. They are connected to the mentioned before, happiness. Clearly, the respondents value the aesthetics of the flat, which similarly to the quality of the furniture, leads them to being happy.

“... the dorm or the company has to have good sense of interior design ... We also accept more information about definition of beautiful and also, indirectly affect your mental satisfaction.” [Respondent 10]

“I will like to decorate my bedroom, sometimes. So, for example, I also like to some decoration of some little lamp on the wall, so basically it just make me happy. To live a happy life.” [Respondent 14]

Lastly, a few respondents mentioned the need for better curtains that will block the light coming into the room. This would boost their sleeping quality, which was identified as crucial.

“If I sleep, I need quiet and dark place.” [Respondent 11]

6.5.1 Differences between Polish and Taiwanese students

In general, the students agree about the aspects mentioned above (Appendices 11 and 12). Nevertheless, the suggestion about the thicker curtains was made only by Taiwanese respondents. While Polish participants highlighted the need to not have too much furniture in the rooms because they want to have a sense

of openness of the space and the option to rearrange the interior because it makes them happy and provides them with more freedom regarding personalising the room.

“So it won’t be cluttered. Because that optically makes the room smaller. Moreover, a student doesn’t need many pieces of furniture ... I moved many pieces of furniture from my flat to the basement. Almost half. I didn’t need that much furniture. All walls were encumbered.” [Respondent 6]

*“For sure it should be done, so there is not too much furniture in the flat.”
[Respondent 8]*

6.5.2 Implications for the future (re)developments

The interior design of the rooms should not be neglected. Students expect nice furniture that will make the room visually appealing to make them feel good. In addition, the furnishing should not be overwhelming. A minimalistic style is recommended to let the students personalise their rooms.

The quality of beds is crucial. The respondents highlighted the preference towards bigger sizes. Thus, a double bed is recommended. The attention should be also paid to the mattress. A person laying on top should not feel the bars below to ensure a good quality of sleep.

Thick curtains covering the entire window, to fully block the light are suggested to increase the sleeping quality. Students have different sleeping patterns depending on the classes, assignments and examinations. Thus, they may need to sleep during the day, and a dark room can make such sleep more efficient.

6.6 Other characteristics

This section illustrates students’ housing preferences regarding the remaining characteristics that did not match the previous categories but were mentioned by the respondents on multiple occasions proving their importance. For instance, the affordable rent or having flatmates.

Figure 7 illustrates the main MEC being:

Affordable rent → Saving money → More pleasures → Freedom

The general trend shows that students care about the money. They wish to pay a reasonable rent for the accommodation to try and save their resources because they want to spend them on other goods and activities that give them joy and happiness. Being able to afford and having the option to decide whether they want to buy certain product gives them the autonomy. They wish to have the freedom in their life to decide rather than being forced to decline themselves some pleasures. The respondents mentioned the most frequently *“Affordable rent”* and *“Saving money”*, respectively. These two codes vastly influence students, when making decision regarding housing. They are aware of their

“It’s [rent] not the lowest but I think that comparing to the quality and other house, is pretty nice deal ... if I spend less on rent, then I can spend more on other stuff ... Autonomy.” [Respondent 9]

“... a matter that one thing at the cost of another. You have more things for which you have money to spend ... going somewhere to meet with your friends, drink. That you don’t have to count each penny ...” [Respondent 2]

As proven in the previous sections, students aim to be happy in their lives and this should not be neglected. Although, the terminal value “Happiness” was mentioned more frequently than “Freedom”, more respondents associated “Freedom” with having more money for enjoyable activities and goods. Therefore, “Freedom” was chosen as being part of the general trend. Students appear to want to live on their own, rather than with their families or flatmates to be able to do whatever they want at any time that suits them. This helps them learn to be independent and experience the autonomy.

“... the time comes ... that you just want to start living on your own and organise your life the way you want it ... It’s better to be kind of independent ... I don’t like, when someone forces me to do something ...” [Respondent 1]

“... I couldn’t invite a friend, when I was living with my grandma ... I decided that it is the best moment to start living on my own ...” [Respondent 2]

Moreover, strong link was also identified between “Flatmates” and “Mess”. In general, the participants were afraid to take the risk of having or changing a flatmate because a new one may be messy. They do not want to live in dirt, with bed smell or having to do the chores for someone. Thus, they try to live alone or stick to the flatmate they already know and tolerate. This suggests that students are more risk averse in regard to sharing the accommodation.

“... there were cleaning turns and she didn’t clean ... didn’t throw away trash from her room ... Or when it was beginning to stink, she would put the trash in the corridor and it stinked in the flat ...” [Respondent 2]

“I’m fine to live in there in the last year but ... he’s [flatmate] definitely going to move ... I don’t want to take the risk to live with someone new ... Maybe he have party everyday and listening music very loud ...” [Respondent 12]

6.6.1 Differences between Polish and Taiwanese students

Both Polish and Taiwanese respondents recognised “Affordable rent” as the most important attribute (Appendices 13 and 14). They also associated it with saving money and spending it on other goods that give them satisfaction. Nevertheless, Taiwanese participants talked about this a lot more. In addition, they were more interested in the “Happiness” as a terminal value, while Polish students focused on the “Freedom”. Only Polish respondents emphasised being able to live on their own. However, it may be the result of studying in their home country, while for the international participants, there is no option to stay with

the family. They can only live on their own, which means it is granted. Thus, they may have skipped it.

Interestingly, the negative aspect about flatmates being messy is present only among the Polish respondents. Nevertheless, both sides recognise some benefits of having flatmates, such as sharing bills and delivery fees.

6.6.2 Implications for the future (re)developments

The main implication for the future developments is to carefully prepare the costs of the construction or the refurbishment to see what is the required rent to charge per room to ensure the project generates profits. It should be compared to the rent available on the market for a single room or a studio. That is because the students are interested in saving money and wish to pay a rational rent for the given standard. It is crucial for the developer or the university to balance the expenditure with the students' needs. Despite wanting a high standard rooms, students talk about the minimalistic style and comfort. Thus, it is possible to ensure what they consider good quality at a lower cost. For instance, simply choosing thicker material for the curtains will boost the quality of the room. It does not have to be a high end material. This is about listening to their specific needs. This can most likely be achieved resulting in tailored housing at an affordable rent.

Another recommendation is specifically for the administration of the dormitory's building. Students are afraid about the risk of having a "*bad flatmate*". Thus, giving them the opportunity to apply together with a friend for rooms with the same shared kitchen or bathroom facilities could reduce the risk, even if it would not be granted that they will be together. To minimise the risk further, together with the application, students should fill in a survey, where they answer questions about their life style and habits. This may increase the chances that the people that will be living together, will not annoy each other but maybe even become friends.

7 Discussion

This chapter compares the findings of the study with the results of the past researches mentioned in the chapter 2 *Literature Review*. It involves discussing the main housing characteristics as well as the cultural differences between the respondents and their values.

7.1 Key housing preferences

This thesis also recognised an extensive range of variables. Nevertheless, the critical questions of this study aim to identify the main housing characteristics that students value. Thus, due to a vast number of components analysed in the MECs, only the codes that appeared the most frequently on the HVMS are considered as the key factors. They are discussed and compared to the previous research in this section.

7.1.1 Location

Certainly, the location plays a major role in a decision-making process regarding housing for both Polish and international students. It was the same for the students in another Polish city, Krakow (Gawlik et al., 2017). This thesis' study showed that the students highly value their time and money, and thus, prefer to live near the university. Nijënstein et al. (2015) also emphasised the importance of resource management. The commute time was the second most important factor affecting students' decisions regarding housing. Moreover, Mach (2018) showed that for Polish students, the location, and the commute time, to be exact is among the top five crucial factors.

Hubbard (2009) explained that the distance to the city centre was important for British students. Similarly, Zubairu et al. (2018) discovered that the location has a significant impact on the attractiveness of the rented place for students in Nigeria. Interestingly, it was not considered as crucial for the participants of the study in this thesis. Nevertheless, the reason for that may be that the universities are located in the city centre or within a close range. Consequently, having the accommodation located near the school, students also have an easy access to the night life events and the other benefits of the city centre.

7.1.2 Finance

This thesis emphasises the significance of the financial aspect. Students wish to pay an affordable rent. They have also mentioned a "*rational rent*". It means that students want to pay the money that is relative to the offered standard of the room and other facilities of the flat or the building. It remains as one of the crucial factors, but it has another consequence than simply minimising the expenditure. Students want to manage their resources to balance the goods and activities, and thus, maximise their happiness. The financial aspect was confirmed by most of the past researches as crucial in a decision-making

process regarding housing. According to Verhetsel et al. (2017), it was the second most important factor. While Nijënstein et al. (2015) concluded that it is the most significant attribute. Gawlik et al. (2017) that used a Polish city as a case study identified rental costs as crucial regardless of the problem with the inconsistency of the data. The final conclusion of the case study of Siedlce, in Poland, was that financial background forces students to rent despite them wanting to buy a housing (Roman and Sawczuk, 2017). Mach (2018) stated that the rental costs was the number one, the most important factor among Polish students. Clearly, the issue of money is crucial for students in Poland.

7.1.3 Privacy

One of the factors that was dominant in the HVMs and was considered as important by both Polish and Taiwanese students is the privacy. According to Gutfreund (2016), this is a huge concern of the new generation and they approach it with caution. Khozaei et al. (2014) and Verhetsel et al. (2017) stated similar findings in their studies. They studied Malaysian and Belgian students, respectively. Their results show preference towards single rooms, or even studios. Moreover, Adama et al. (2018) emphasised that the need for privacy among Nigerian students is one of the major factors in the decision-making process. On the other hand, Mach (2018) showed that the most popular option in among Polish students was a double room followed closely by single room and renting the entire flat. Nevertheless, it may be due to the costs that Roman and Sawczuk (2017) identified as a limitation to many students in living in the right conditions that match their preferences. Because Mach (2018) conducted surveys, it is not clear whether the respondents chose the double rooms because they prefer to share a room or maybe had a budget constraint that forced them to choose it. This would explain the unusual result to the previous studies.

The literature review, together with the findings on this thesis, show that for many nationalities, the preferences regarding the privacy are shared. The mentioned researches are from years 2014 and 2018, which means their findings refer to the same generation of students as in this thesis. It could suggest that all students in the new generations are sensitive to this issue of privacy due to being raised in the same times. New generations want to have personal space and live in a single room. It may be associated with the changing life style. More families can afford single rooms for their kids, when they are raising them. Young people raised in this way, have never experienced sharing a room with a sibling. A bedroom is a crucial space, where they rest, relax, study and enjoy themselves. Never having to share a room means that a person is unexperienced in compromising and understanding other people's feelings and needs. They are unaware of how their actions affect their roommates and that, at times, they need to step back to learn to coexist together. This may be the reason for the many "*bad roommates*" situations that the students participating in this thesis' project experienced.

Despite not willing to share a room, students recognised the social advantages of common areas, such as a kitchen or a living-room. However, Roman and Sawczuk (2017) concluded that students wish to buy housing to start living on their own. The issue of students wanting living by themselves was also intensified in this thesis. However, it was related to living with the family members that limit the freedom of the respondents. On the other hand, Skotarczak and Nowak (2010) show that 44.4% of students plans to stay at their family homes. It makes almost a half of the participants, certainly an alarming number opposing the findings of this thesis. Nevertheless, Skotarczak and Nowak (2010) was based on the university in Szczecin, which is located on the North-West of Poland. This is the opposite end of Poland as compared to Lublin that is placed in the South-East part. This may include the cultural differences. Poland is located in the Central Europe. Thus, the western part of the country is often compared to the Western Europe, while the eastern part has some influences in the culture from the Eastern Europe. Moreover, the different findings may be a result of the old research that is not up to date. Skotarczak and Nowak (2010) collected data in 2008, which is 11 years prior to this thesis. It may involve participants of the past generations. In addition, the majority of the articles studied in the literature review and this thesis suggest that students would rather aim to live on their own and control their lives by themselves.

In the thesis' results, the peers as flatmates were considered as an advantage, as long as their lifestyles match. On the other hand, Nijënstein et al. (2015) explains that sharing a kitchen was not considered as attractive in their study. The researchers identified that depending on the gender, the significance of having own kitchen was changing with females preferring private facilities. However, in this thesis, the sample had an almost equal male to female ratio (7:8). Moreover, the social benefits of sharing kitchen space were recognised by the respondents of both genders. Thus, the results may be specific for the case study.

7.1.4 Feeling of home

Feeling comfortable and being able to personalise the space students live in was identified in this thesis as important. It can help them feel good at the places they call "*home*" for up to a few years. It is crucial to be happy in the place you live in and spend most of your time at. Students expressed the need for rearranging their rooms to match their personalities. Spacious rooms could allow them to bring in the furniture and decorations they consider fitting for themselves. Nijënstein et al. (2015) and Verhetsel et al. (2017) agree that the size of the room is the third most significant factor that students are most concerned about.

Moreover, the furniture, colour scheme should be universal and neutral to allow more freedom in the rearrangements. There is no need for many cabinets,

wardrobes or other pieces of furniture. In fact, students prefer to have a minimalistic style to be able to bring in more of their belongings and buy things tailored up to their preferences.

Thomsen (2007) emphasised the issue in his research explaining that students do not feel “*at home*” in the dormitories because they lack options to personalise the rooms. Clearly, there is a room for improvement in designing the dormitories. They should be visually appealing and flexible to style. This will increase students’ sense of identity.

7.1.5 Socialising

Respondents of this thesis identified having space to socialise as important. They wish to invite friends to their homes to study, talk, eat or party together. The studying aspect seemed to be the most important among them as it makes them feel motivated to work and energised. Hubbard (2009) revealed that the socialising aspect was vital for students in the UK. They wanted to live in the areas, where the demography is dominated by their peers. Adama et al. (2018) highlighted that Nigerian students also want to live near friends and other peers and it is one of the major factors affecting their housing decisions.

7.1.6 Noise pollution

Students expressed intolerance to noise, whether made by roommate, flatmate or neighbour. Although the young people enjoy to party and socialise, they show need for silence to focus at their rooms. They want to ensure nothings distracts them but also that they are not limited to being quiet. Students may have changing sleeping patterns. Thus, they may be distracted by someone playing music in the middle of the day because they were writing the essay the whole night until morning. It is not uncommon to see and yet, respondents of this study pointed at the thin walls and the need to soundproof them. There is also the issue of the privacy. They want to feel comfortable, talk with friends freely in their room or through the phone and not be stressed that someone is listening to every word they say. The noise was not mentioned by the previous studies as significant. It may be that because of choosing the interview as the method, the issue was revealed. Polish students expressed negative feelings and associations with the dormitories because of the noise. Fixing the noise pollution may be first step in changing the image of the dormitories that is strongly discouraging Polish students from living there. Hubbard (2009) explained how the preferences of the British students changed from renting houses to private dormitories. It has occurred because the developers providing private dormitories with higher standards that were tailored to the needs of the young people. It is a proof that the negative image and the stereotypes may be countered.

7.1.7 Comfort of sleep

The study revealed that in the three out of the six main categories of attributes, students mentioned as crucial the quality of sleep. Living near the university, having double bed or thick curtains that do not let the light into the room are what the respondents linked to improving their sleeping experience. This leads to the feeling of comfort, the wellbeing and the overall happiness in life. Nevertheless, the past researches did not focus on the sleep quality as a decisive factor influencing housing decisions. This component is not a direct, housing characteristic. Thus, it was not discussed with details by the past studies. Nevertheless, it certainly supports the mentioned above attributes in the decision-making process regarding housing.

7.2 Cultural differences

Although the findings show students share some values and preferences, there certainly are differences based on the nationality. For instance, according to the results of the study, the international students are more interested in having the retail facilities nearby to be able to save the time and even get the products from their home countries. Thus, the study proves the statement of Khozaei et al. (2014) that the preferences differ based on the nationality. It is possible that the differences are existing due to the cultural aspect even more than the nationality. Countries living nearby are sharing some traditions, customs or behaviours. However, Taiwanese culture varies significantly, when compared to Polish. Nijënstein et al. (2015) emphasised that and suggested that the model of life shapes the choice behaviour. This is present in the results of this thesis.

Nevertheless, both subgroups also share values and preferences because they are all students, raised in the similar times, with the relatively comparable level of digitalisation, globalisation and ICT. Thus, it is not surprising that many of the general trends are similar for both groups.

An interesting conclusion that the study revealed is that the main trends are more clearly visible on the HVMs of Taiwanese students, than those of Polish subgroup. It may be because the Taiwanese students in Poland are already sharing even more similar experiences and values because they decided to study abroad and are minority group. Thus, they may express different values to the Taiwanese students studying in Taiwan. Therefore, it may be easier to find the same reasoning and values in a group that is more specified.

7.3 Values of the new generations

Due to the specificity of the MEC, the author could identify the core values and characteristics of the respondents to see whether they match those of the new generations, according to the existing knowledge.

7.3.1 Optimistic

The study showed that both Polish and international students highly value happiness. They wish to be happy, to feel good, be energised and optimistic. They try to achieve that from all kinds of consequences of the housing attributes. This confirms the information of Hope (2017) that the generations Y and Z are more optimistic than the previous generations. In addition, the generation Y is believed to be even more optimistic than the generation Z. Most of the respondents in this thesis' study were from generation Y, and thus, the optimistic trait is still present as important.

7.3.2 Free and in control

Students of the new generation value freedom. They want to have the ability to make their decisions, for instance, about their expenditure. They also wish to live on their own, rather than with their families. Despite that being an additional spending, the young people want to be able to be in control of their lives and do what they want. Hope (2017) said that they want to be their own bosses. This thesis confirms that they want to decide about their schedules and manage their resources.

7.3.3 Have high expectations

It was mainly the Taiwanese subgroup that has mentioned the standard of living and the overall quality of life. That being said, Polish students expressed strong standards regarding not living in the dormitory. Thus, in a way, both subgroups stick to certain standard of living. However, they appear to be different. According to Erickson (2012), the new generations are aiming high, believing that they deserve only the best and that they can achieve anything. These values are expressed through the respondents in the study. Taiwanese students clearly stated they look at how old is the building and whether it is well-maintained. While Polish students expressed the type of housing (dormitory) being below their acceptable standards. They are not living there.

Moreover, high expectations were seen in the responses regarding the furniture. Participants mention comfortable, double beds, curtains that will fully block the light and beautiful interior design. This reveals the shared characteristic of the new generations. They expect the best experience, and not simply enough to live and function. Having a single bed is no longer considered as sufficient for a single room. Zubairu et al. (2018) also confirmed the raising quality of housing for students in Nigeria due to the increasing expectations of the target group. This means that the general belief about students living in "*just enough*" conditions, is a myth or the reality of the past.

7.3.4 Stay connected

Despite being associated with addiction to their smartphones and relying on the internet, this thesis suggested that students of the generations Y and Z value the

traditional, face to face socialising with peers. This does not exclude usage of the technology and the internet, but highlights that students still feel the need to have real connections and not just through the screens of their smartphones. They also acknowledge the importance of the information exchange and the profits it generates.

7.3.5 Sustainable

Both generations Y and Z are believed to be goal oriented and wishing to change the world and make it a better place (Hope 2017). Unfortunately, based on the thesis' results, the students do not consider sustainability, when choosing their accommodation. Contribution to minimising the ecological footprint and the advantages of walking as a way of green transportation was mentioned by only one respondent. It is extremely surprising because a vast majority of participants mentioned living near university as an important attribute because they can save time by walking instead of driving or even taking a bus. Still, except one person, they did not link the component of walking to the impact on environment. This is certainly alarming and should be treated as a wake up call to plant the idea of environmental-friendly lifestyle as the key to the better future. Despite the growing interest and attention towards climate change and ecology, the new generations seem to not be aware of the fact that they could affect the future by even choosing the housing option.

8 Conclusion

This chapter includes a reflection on the research aim, a summary of the main findings and implications, an evaluation of the work and a suggestion for the future studies.

8.1 Summary, main findings and implications

The aim of the study was to understand the factors affecting the decision-making process regarding the choice of housing made by students in Lublin, Poland. It was achieved through answering the two critical questions. First, by identifying the key housing characteristics that students in Lublin value. All factors collected through the interviews were analysed in the chapter 6 *Data Analysis and Results*. They were compared in the chapter 7 *Discussion* with the findings from the past researches in the field. The second critical question regarding the implications for the future (re)development of the student housing was answered in the chapter 6 *Data Analysis and Results*. The author included guidelines and suggestions for the developers and the universities regarding each subsection of preferences, such as location or room.

To conclude, the main concerns that students have, when deciding about their housing are regarding:

- The proximity to the university
- The affordable rent
- The higher standard of living
- The privacy and the autonomy
- The space and the freedom
- Expressing themselves and feeling comfortable
- The noise-pollution

Students are highly interested in living near the university, so that they can manage their time and money better to maximise their happiness. Therefore, the student housing developments should be built within close, or preferably even walking, distance from the school. To attract the international students, there should be shops and restaurants in the area.

The money continues to be a crucial factor in the decision-making process regarding housing. Students want to pay a fair, affordable rent that is relative to the quality of the room, the facilities and the services in the building.

The study confirmed that new generations have high expectations and standards by expressing strong opinions regarding housing type and quality. Therefore, it is not surprising that students expressed strong preference towards single rooms that ensure they have the privacy and the freedom to do whatever they desire in their own space. This helps them feel more comfortable and happier in their homes. They also wish to have a visually appealing interior

and good quality furniture, such as a double bed, to ensure the comfort of sleep, mental health and a good mood. Moreover, they feel the need to express themselves and personalise their homes. They can achieve that, if they have big enough rooms. Thus, they value spacious areas. By rearranging them, bringing in new furniture and decorations, they can feel comfortable and call the place “home”.

Students of the new generation value autonomy and want to make their own decisions about their schedule and resource management. Thus, they prefer to live on their own. It is also associated with the risk of having a “*bad flatmate*” that is messy and loud. Thus, they will not choose to share a room, and if they find a flatmate they tolerate, they may even follow him/her. Nevertheless, students are seeing homes as places for the social gatherings. Whether it is for studying, for fun or to relax together, they wish to have the space to invite friends over and have a good time. This proves that despite being from the digitalised generations, they still need a real-life connection with peers.

Surprisingly, the study revealed that students are sensitive to the outside noises, when they are in their rooms. They wish to be not distracted, when they sleep, study or socialise. Similarly, students want to be able to act louder themselves and not annoy others by doing so. It is an attribute that was not considered by the literature review as crucial, while the study proved otherwise because it affects the image of the dormitories. Which consequently, discourages Polish students from renting a room there.

The importance of sustainability and ecological life style should be encouraged and advertised to increase the awareness of ways the new generations can minimise their impact on the environment. That is because the results of the thesis show that students appear to be lacking that awareness, despite being considered the generations that aim to contribute to the better future (Hope, 2017).

Finally, the cultural differences in the preferences are present. They still share some opinions because they all belong to a social group “*students*” and were raised in the same times. That being said, if the city aims to be internationalised, when (re)developing student housing, the preferences of the international students should be taken into consideration, to attract them to living in the city.

8.2 Limitations and recommendations for future research

The research is based on the case study of Lublin, Poland. Thus, due to the cultural specifications of the consumer preferences, the findings can be useful only for the city of the similar background context. Furthermore, as the time progresses, the generations of students are changing. Consequently, the results are representing the housing preferences of the generations Y and Z. They may not be valid and reliable for the future generations of students. For this reason,

the recommendation for the future research is to conduct the same study with the sample of the new generation of students, for instance ten years later. Another suggestion is to apply a quantitative approach, for instance through questionnaires. It would provide a confirmation of the findings. Moreover, the factors could be objectively ranked regarding their importance using statistics. Another idea for the further research is to study students' satisfaction with the dormitories' facilities and comparing public dormitories to the private ones.

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Appendix 1 Consent form for the interview

Consent form

You are being invited to participate in a master dissertation study titled "What are the students' housing preferences? A case study of Lublin, Poland". This study is being done by Katarzyna Strzalka, a student from the KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, Sweden.

The purpose of the study is to determine the optimal strategy for student housing development in the city. This interview will cover your opinions regarding: housing preferences and choices as well as the design process and the future building plans.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time. You may not directly benefit from this research but there is no risk in answering questions. The confidentiality will be maintained. This means that the direct quotations of your answers used in the publication, will be anonymised.

The interview will be audio-recorded and will take about 30 minutes.

Due to the ethical procedures, it is required for the interviewee to explicit the understanding and the voluntary agreement to be interviewed and the data collected to be used in the research explained above.

If you have questions about this project, you may ask them before, during or after the interview, or contact the researcher, Katarzyna Strzalka at strzalka@kth.se or her supervisor, Ph. D. Kerstin Annadotter at kerstin.annadotter@abe.kth.se.

By signing this form, you are indicating that you have read and understood this consent form and agree to participate in this study.

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this research.

Date:

Participant's signature:

Appendix 2 Case studies for the interview

1

Type: studio flat

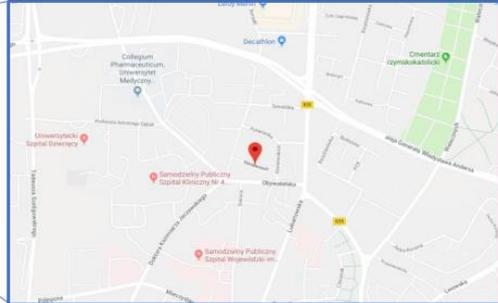
Condition: furnished

Landlord: privately rented

Size: 26m²

Rent: 1 100zł + gas, electricity and water / internet and TV not included

Location: ul. Kleniewskich



photos and information taken from the offer available at: <https://www.olx.pl/oferta/kawalerka-bezposrednie-sasiedztwo-uniwerytetu-medycznego-CID3-IDvWVJ.html#58f7a2da09:promoted>

2

Type: 3-bedroom flat

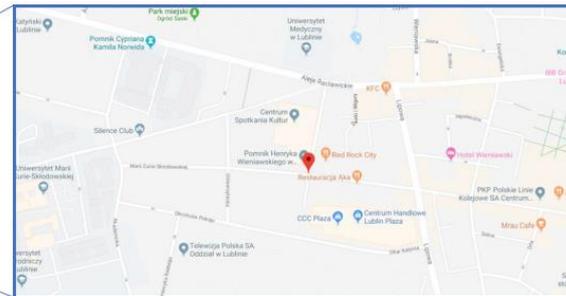
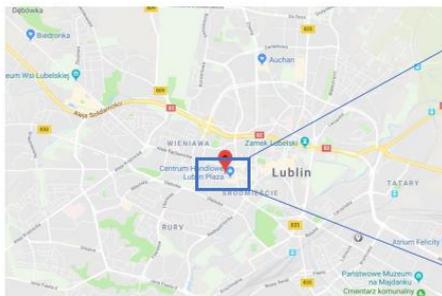
Condition: furnished

Landlord: privately rented

Size: 76m²

Rent: 1 800zł (bills included) + operating charges

Location: ul. Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej



photos and information taken from the offer available at: <https://www.otodom.pl/oferta/mieszkanie-3-pokoje-centrum-miasta-ID3Vn6.html?>

3

Type: single room in 2-bedroom flat

Condition: furnished

Landlord: Private student accommodation

Size: 12m²

Rent: 1 170zł (bills included)

Location: ul. Doktora Witolda Chodzki



photos and information taken from the offer available at: <https://studentdepot.pl/en/pokoi-jednoosobowy-w-komfortowym-apartamencie-dwupokojowym>

4

Type: shared room in 2-bedroom flat

Condition: furnished

Landlord: Private student accommodation

Size: 12,5m²

Rent: 700zł (bills included)

Location: ul. Doktora Witolda Chodzki



photos and information taken from the offer available at: <https://studentdepot.pl/en/pokoi-dwuosobowy-w-apartamencie-dwupokojowym>

5

Type: single room in a corridor

Condition: furnished

Landlord: Public student accommodation

Size: n.d.

Rent: 420zł (bills included)

Location: ul. Langiewicza



photos and information taken from the offer available at: <https://www.up.lublin.pl/4945/>

6

Type: shared room with a bathroom and a kitchen

Condition: furnished

Landlord: Public student accommodation

Size: n.d.

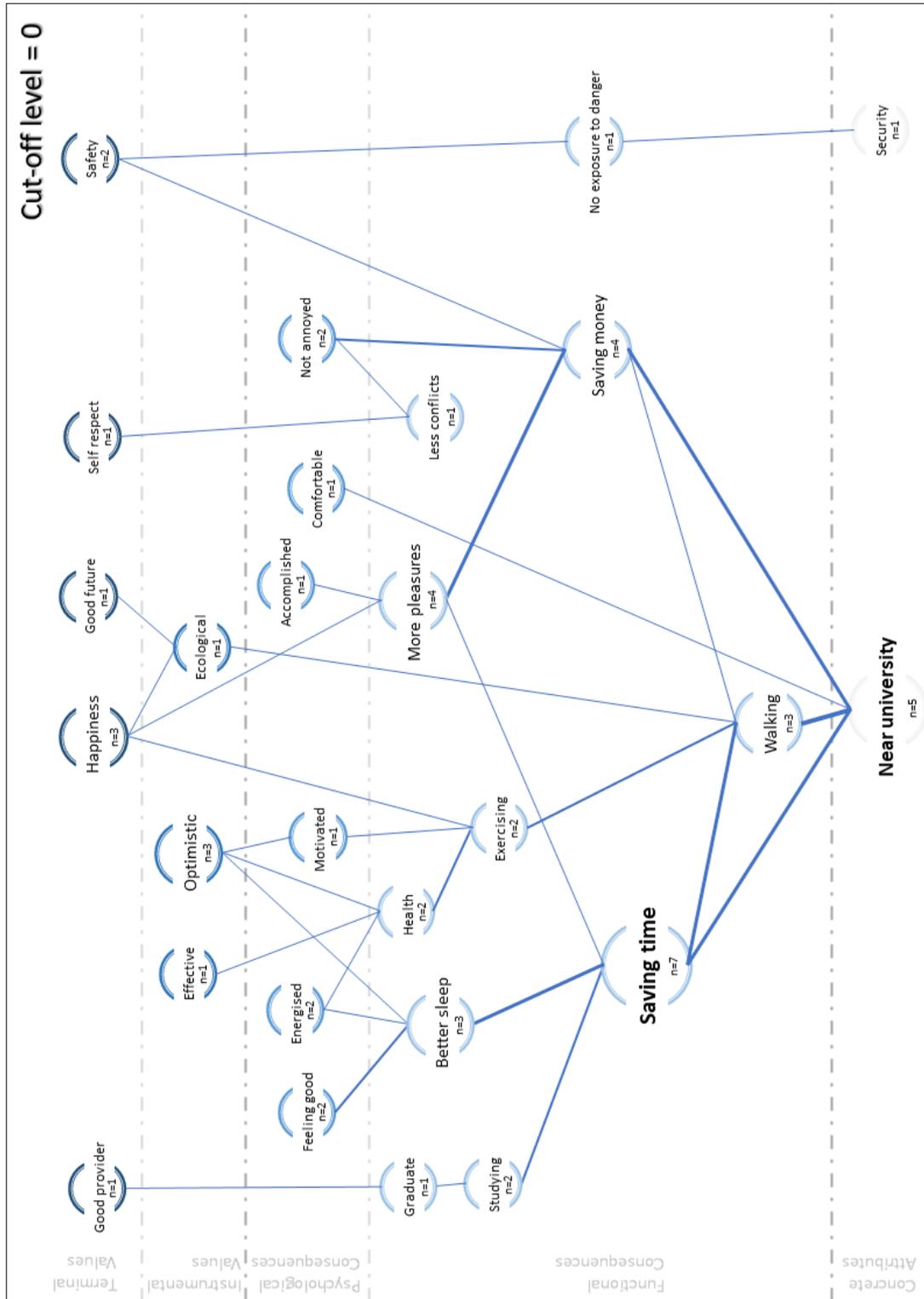
Rent: 480zł (bills included)

Location: ul. Langiewicza

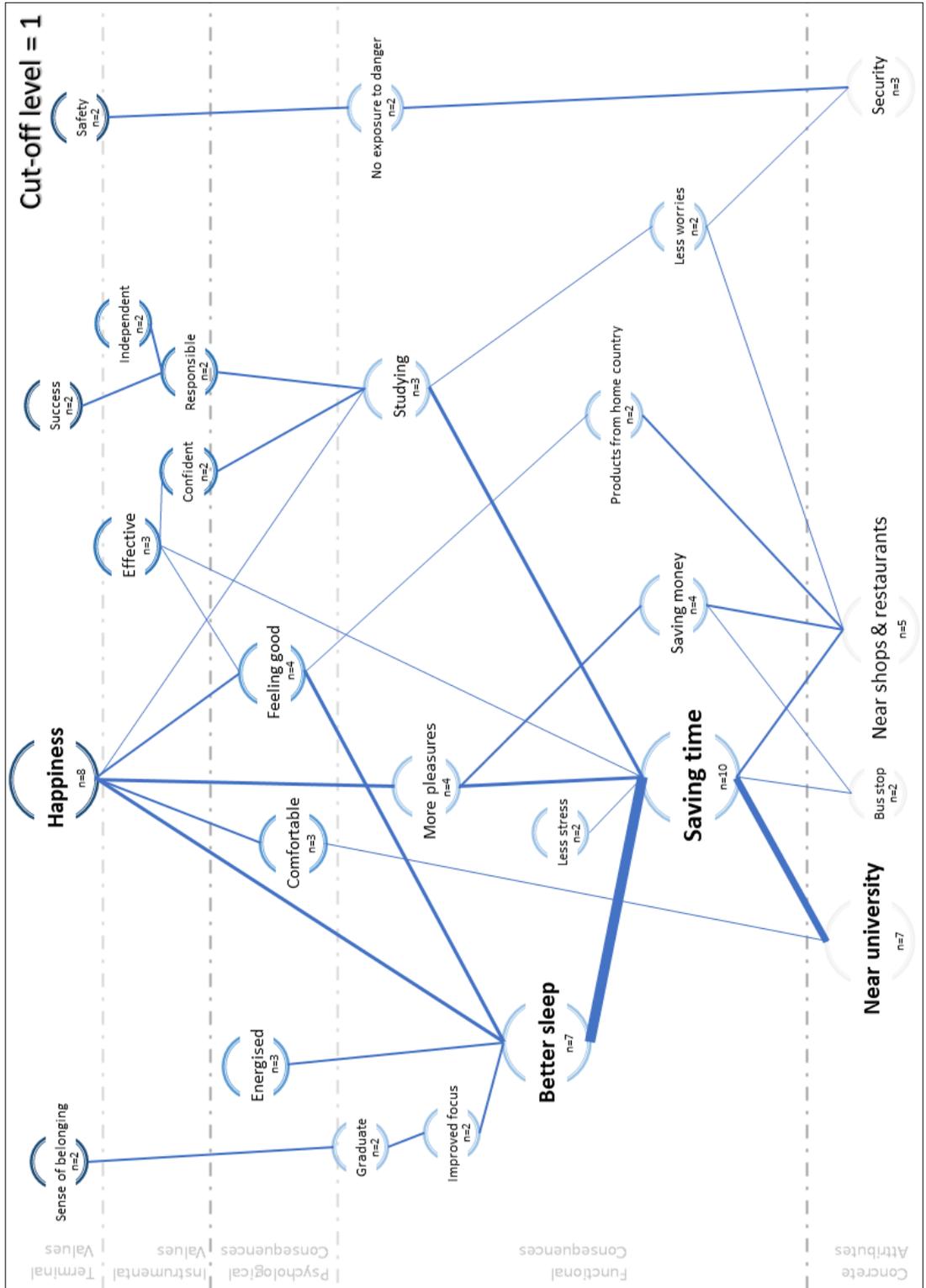


photos and information taken from the offer available at: <https://www.up.lublin.pl/4943/>

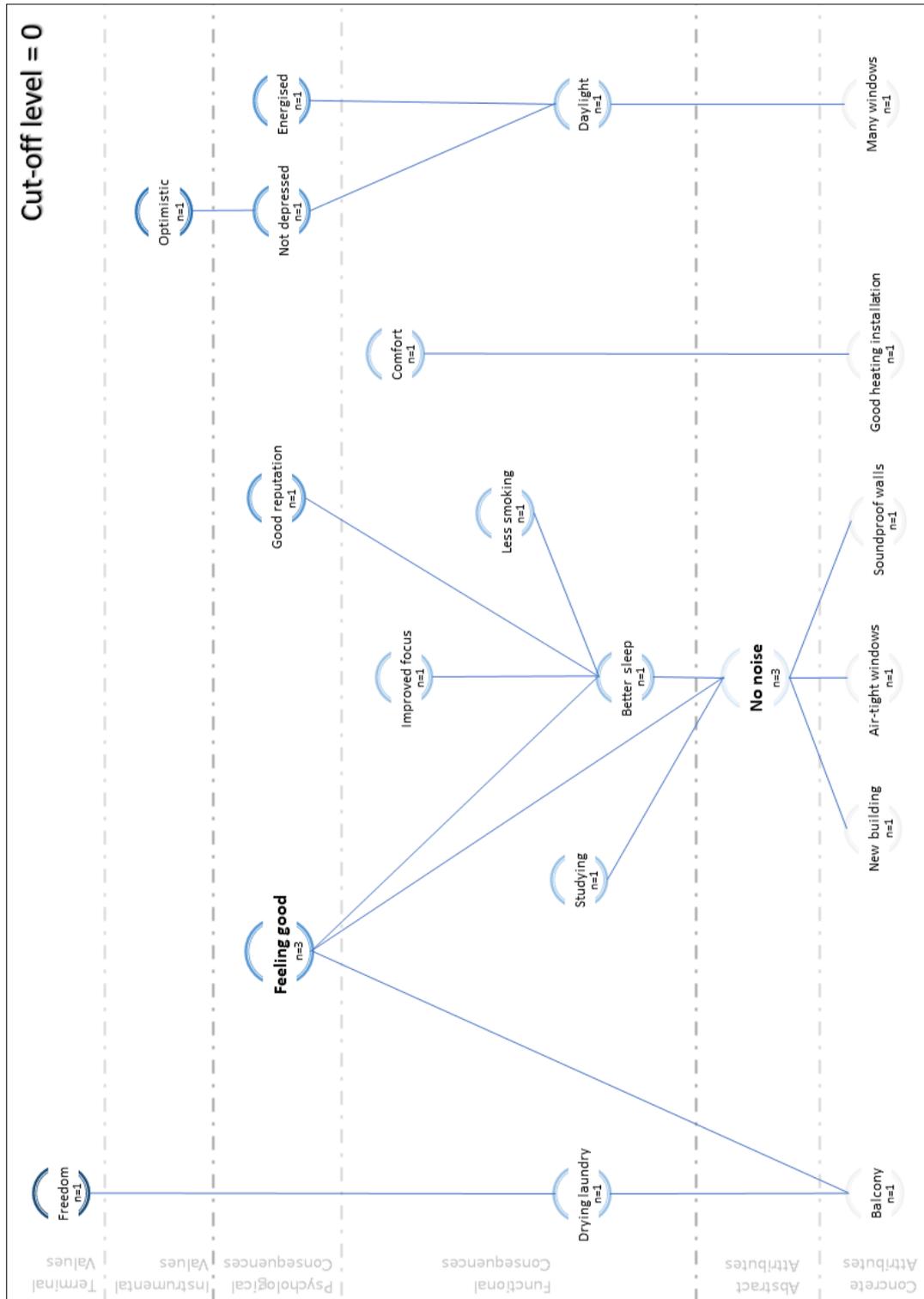
Appendix 3 HVM of the location's attributes with Polish students' answers



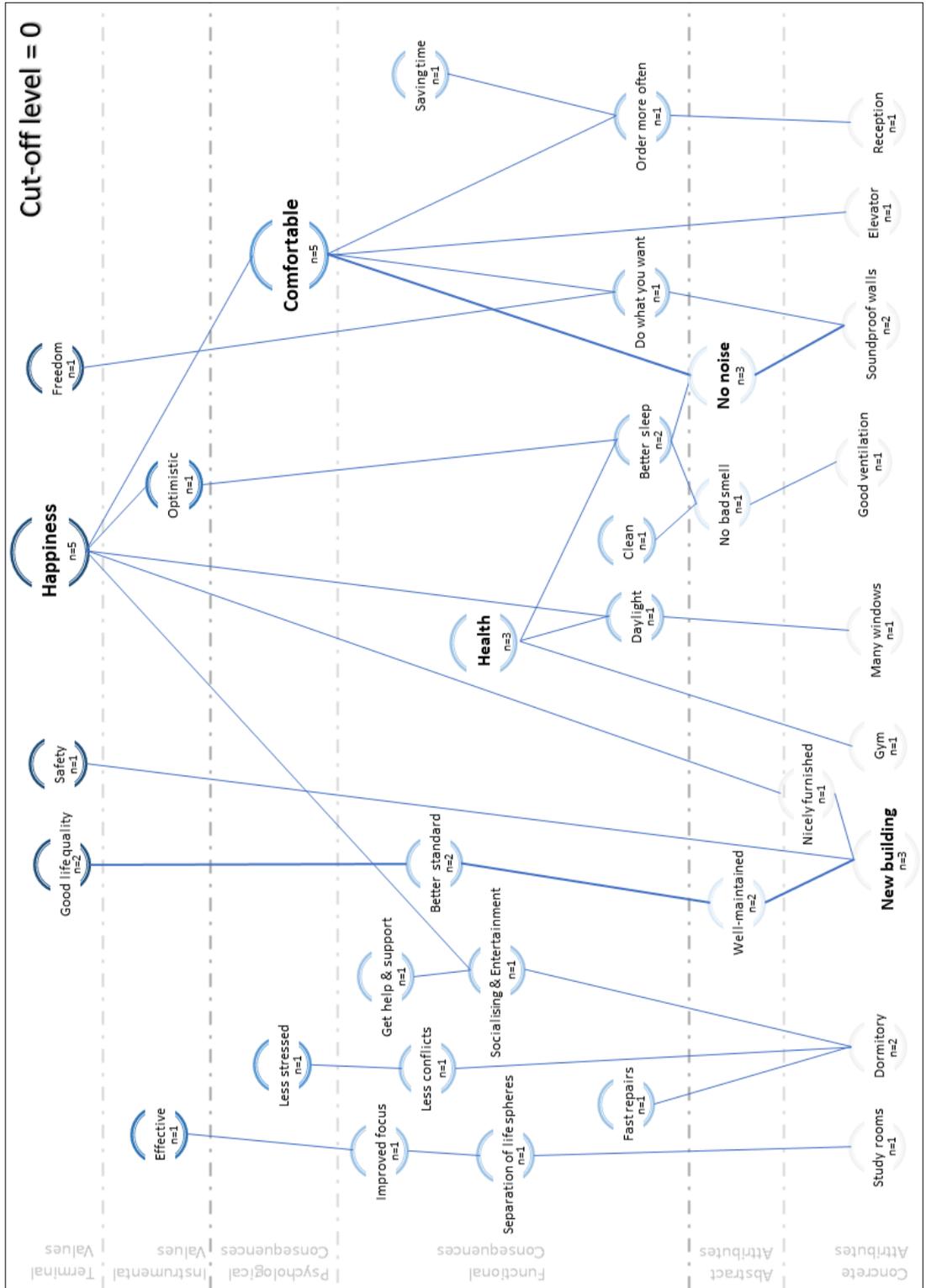
Appendix 4 HVM of the location's attributes with Taiwanese students' answers



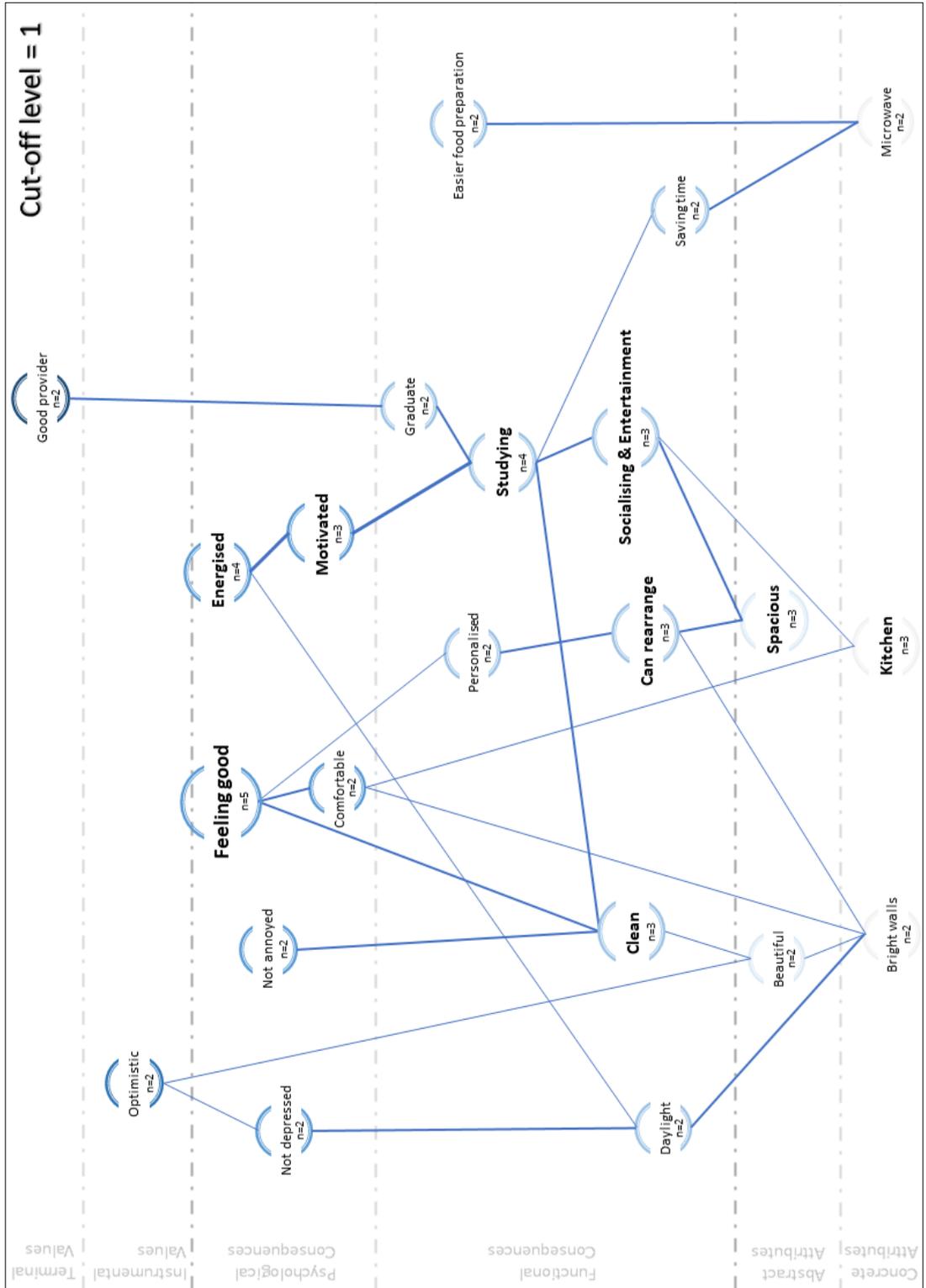
Appendix 5 HVM of the building's attributes with Polish students' answers



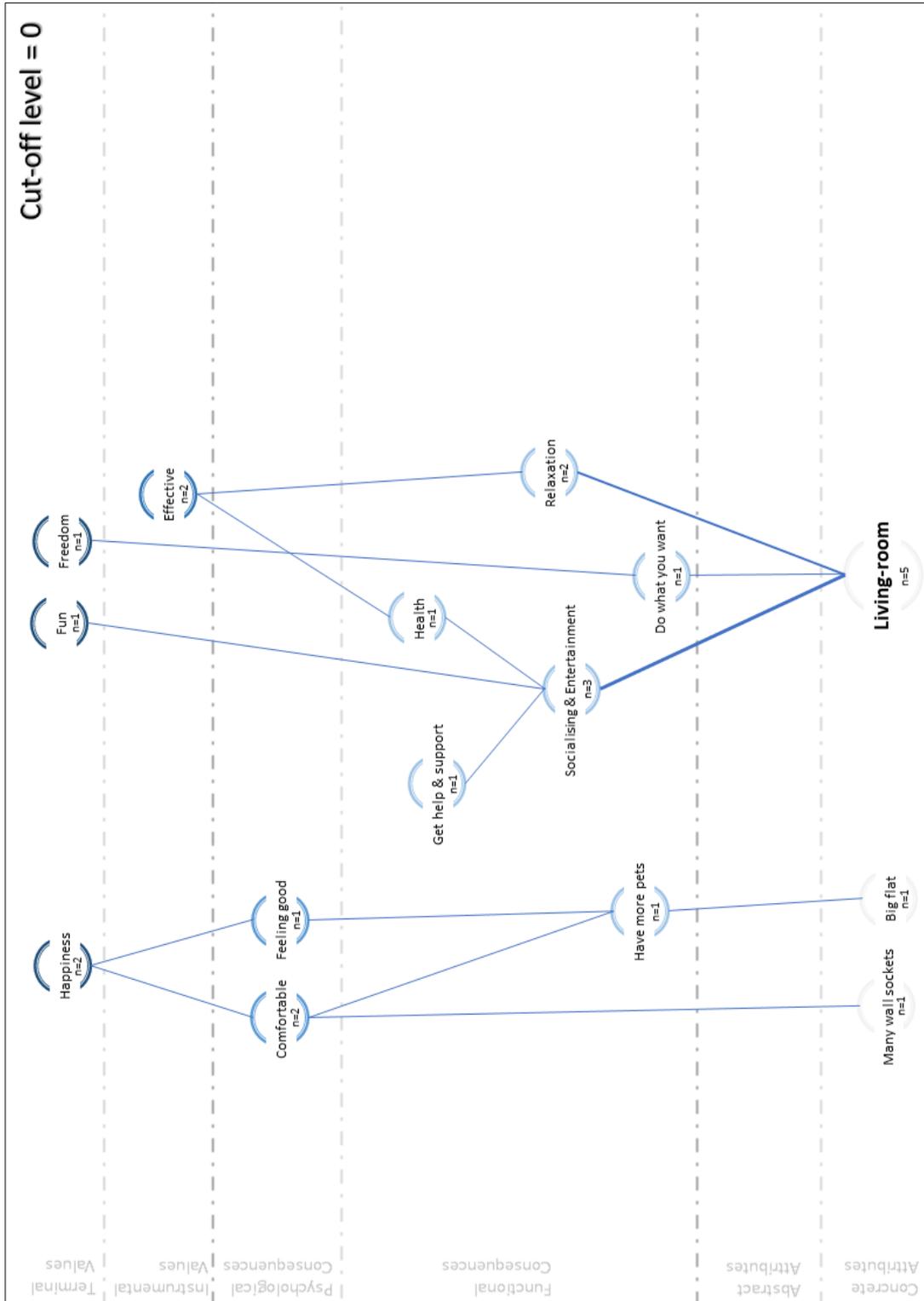
Appendix 6 HVM of the building's attributes with Taiwanese students' answers



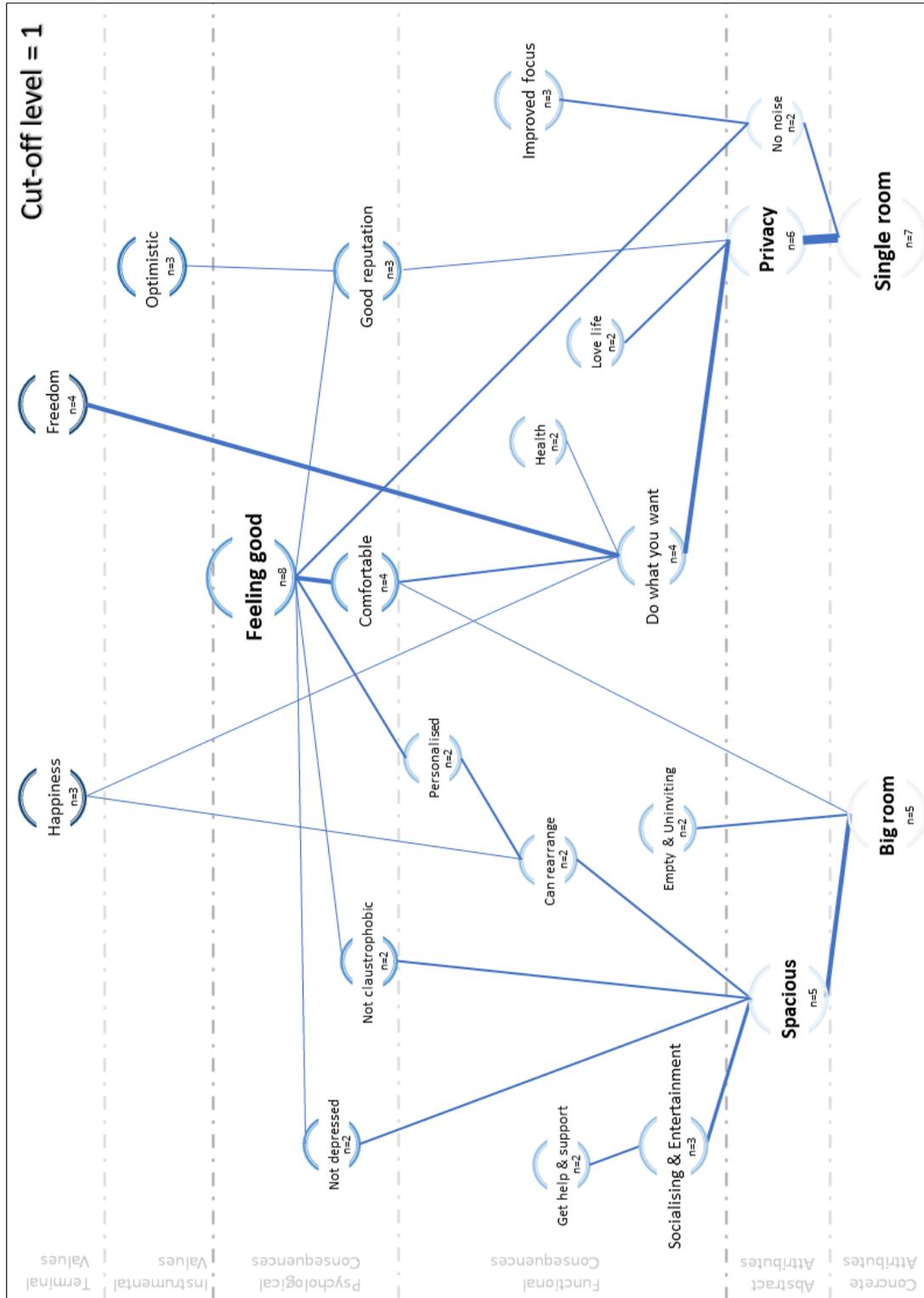
Appendix 7 HVM of the flat's attributes with Polish students' answers



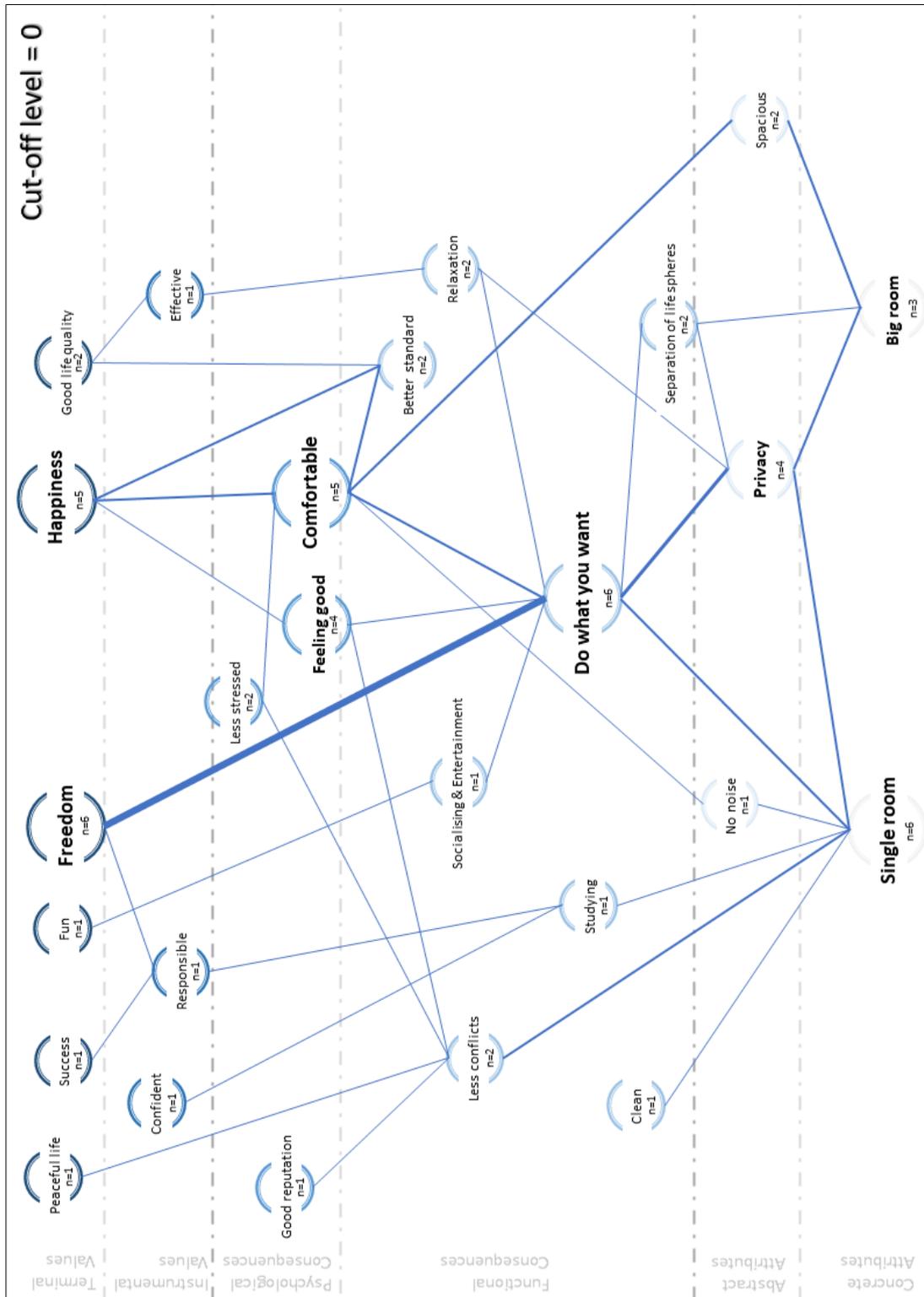
Appendix 8 HVM of the flat's attributes with Taiwanese students' answers



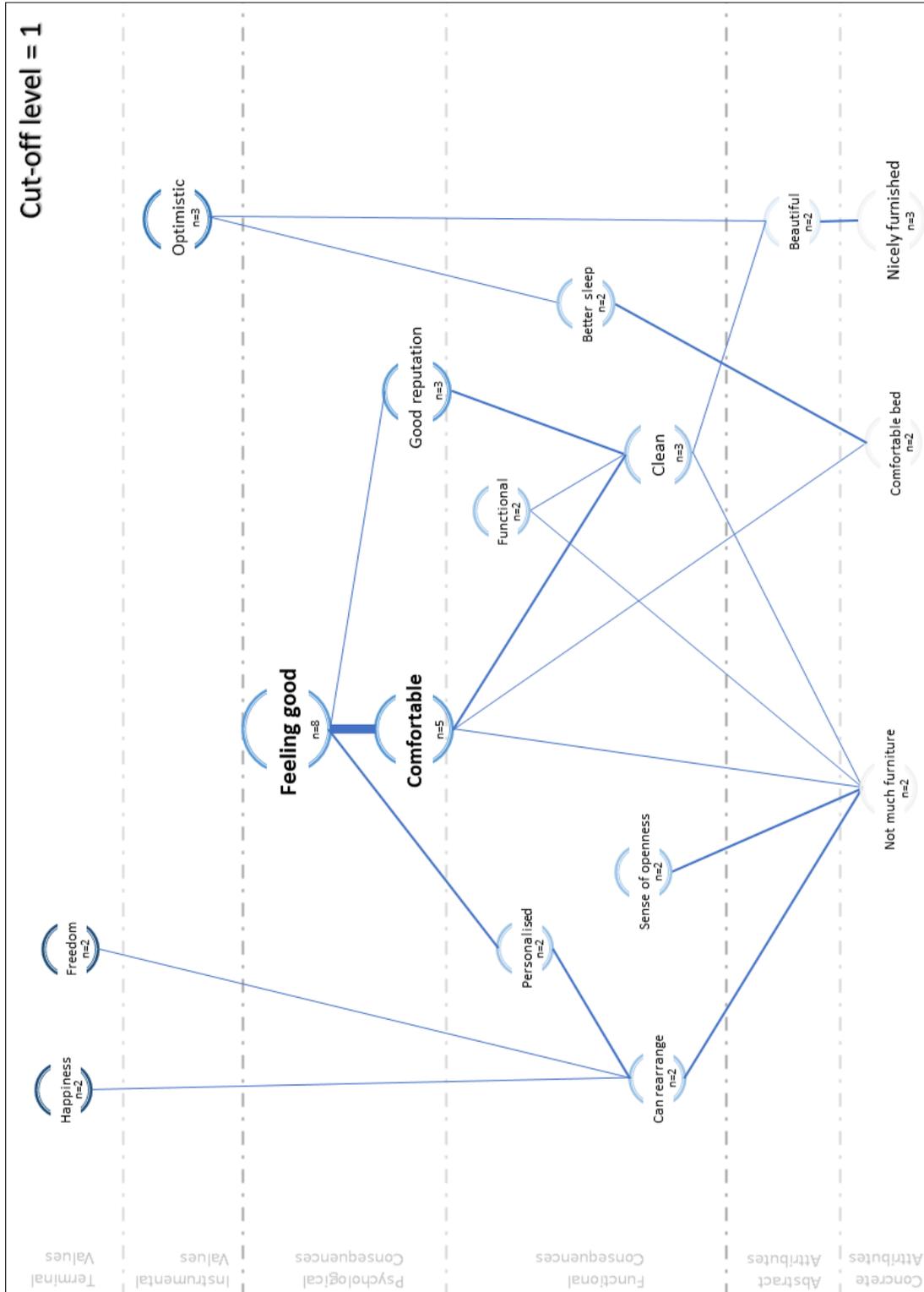
Appendix 9 HVM of the room's attributes with Polish students' answers



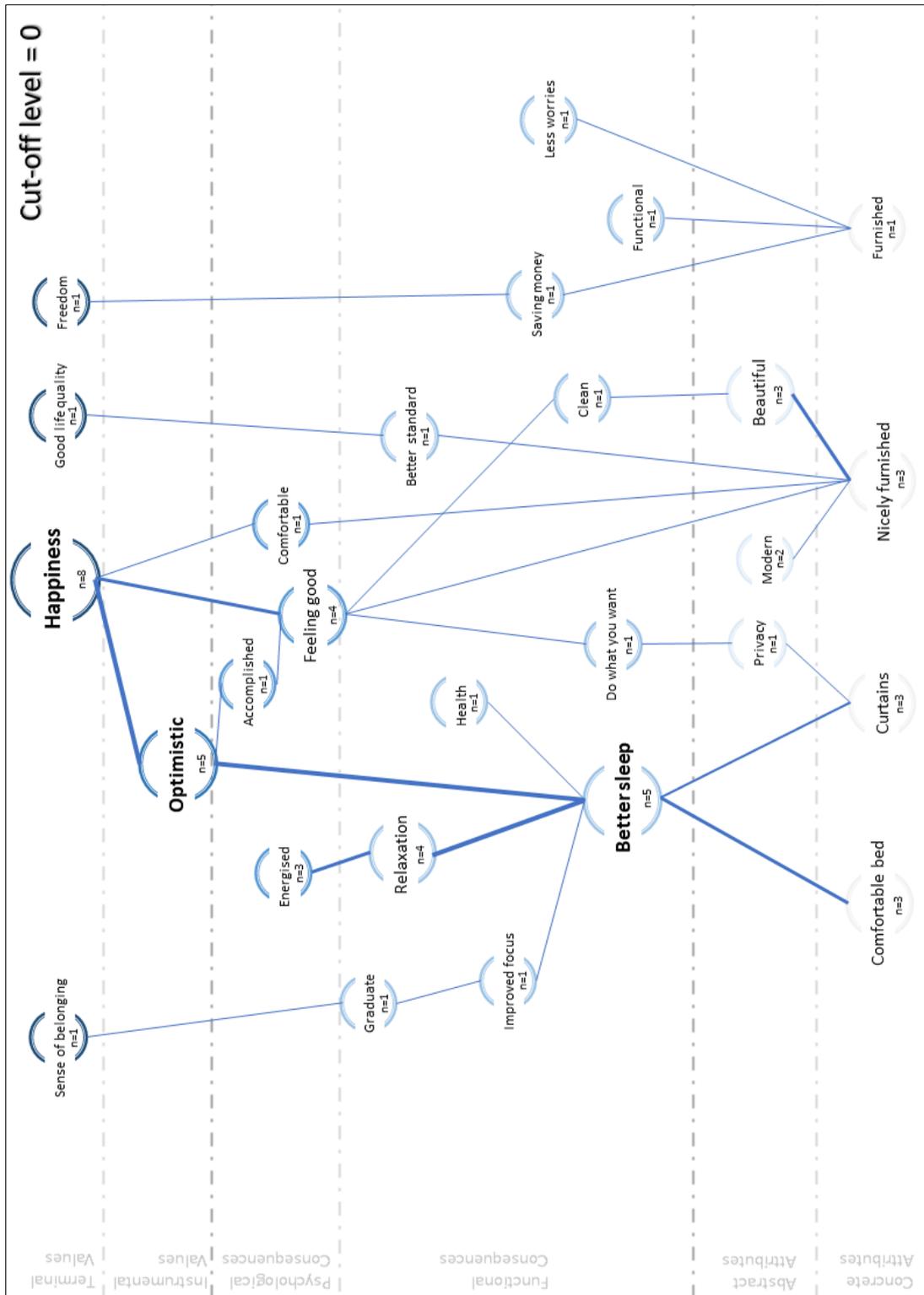
Appendix 10 HVM of the room's attributes with Taiwanese students' answers



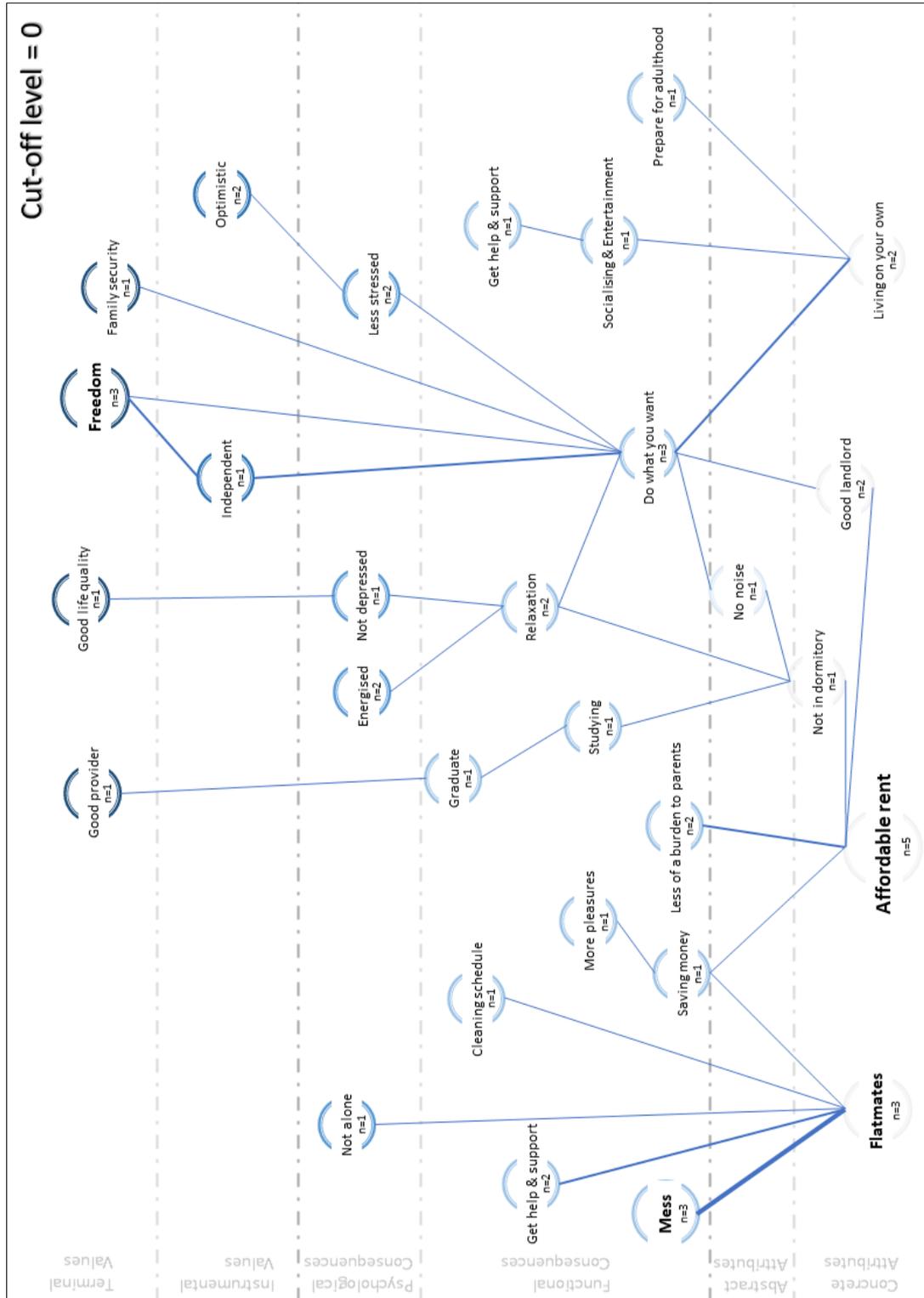
Appendix 11 HVM of the furniture's attributes with Polish students' answers



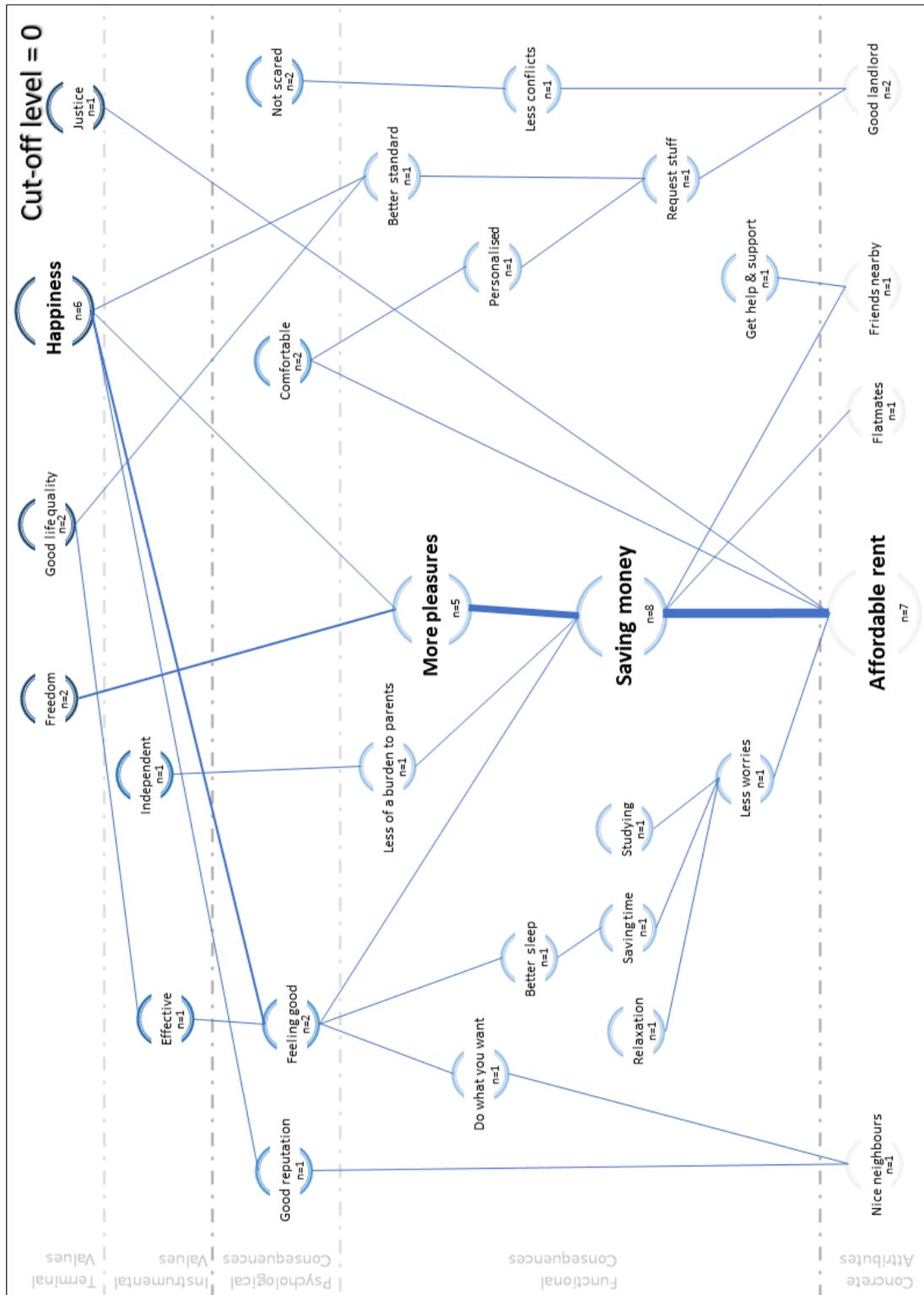
Appendix 12 HVM of the furniture's attributes with Taiwanese students' answers



Appendix 13 HVM of the other significant attributes with Polish students' answers



Appendix 14 HVM of the other significant attributes with Taiwanese students' answers



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