

Concept of Co-Living and its Application: The Case Study of Padova

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Abstract

Today, factors such as rapid and unplanned urbanization and high living costs shape the concept of housing. The concepts of co-housing and co-living emerged with the desire to reduce the living costs of individuals in the city and to have a social life by becoming a part of a small community, which are offered as potential solutions to high living costs in densely populated areas. The co-housing model aims to provide a minimum standard of living for singles, students or professionals. In this study, adequacy analyzes were carried out in terms of the user requirements of a residential flat in the city of Padova, Italy, where 6 individuals aged between 20-25 years lived between 2021-2022. The study is aimed to identify the deficient aspects of housing in terms of user needs and to guide the professionals who will design this type of housing in the future. As a result of the study, it was determined that co-living is ideal for young singles in terms of their user requirements, especially for short-term accommodation in their abroad experience.

Keywords: Padova, co-housing, co-living, co-living, user requirements.

Birlikte Barınma Kavramı ve Uygulaması: Padova Örneği

Öz

Günümüzde hızlı ve plansız kentleşme, yüksek yaşam maliyetleri gibi faktörler barınma kavramını şekillendirmektedir. Ortak konut (co-housing) ve birlikte barınma (co-living) kavramları yoğun nüfuslu bölgelerde yüksek yaşam maliyetlerine potansiyel birer çözüm önerileri olarak sunulan, bireylerin kent içerisindeki yaşam maliyetlerini azaltmak ve küçük bir topluluğun parçası haline gelerek sosyal bir yaşama kavuşma isteğiyle ortaya çıkmıştır. Birlikte barınma modeli bekârlar, öğrenciler veya profesyoneller için asgari bir yaşam standardı sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışmada İtalya'nın Padova şehrinde birlikte barınma özelliğine sahip, 2021-2022 yılları arasında yaşları 20-25 yaş aralığında 6 bireyin yaşadığı konut tipindeki bir dairenin kullanıcı gereksinimleri bakımından yeterlilik analizleri yapılmıştır. Çalışma ile birlikte barınmanın kullanıcı gereksinimleri açısından eksik olan yönlerinin tespit edilip ileride bu tip konutları tasarlayacak meslek insanlarına yol göstermesi hedeflenmiştir. Çalışma sonucunda birlikte barınma (co-living) kavramı, genç bekarların özellikle yurt dışı deneyimlerinde kısa süreli barınmaları için kullanıcı gereksinimleri açısından ideal olduğu tespit edilmiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Padova, birlikte barınma, ortak konut, kullanıcı gereksinimleri.

Citation: Elinç, E., Aşikkutlu, H. S. & Kaya, L. G. (2023). Concept of co-living and its application: The case study of Padova. *Journal of Architectural Sciences and Applications*, 8 (1), 54-66.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30785/mbud.1258066>



1. Introduction

The challenge of shelter has begun with the emergence of humanity on earth. Throughout history, the qualities of the shelters/housings he used and built to meet his needs have changed. But what has not changed is the need for him a "Place to lay his head" (Önver, 2016). Housing is not only defined area within the physical environment, but also a cultural product (Kan Ülkü, 2018). The fact that people spend most of their time outside their homes and the loss of time in transportation in crowded cities has encouraged users to calculate their basic needs at home with minimum dimensions (Tavşan & Bektaş, 2022).

Housing, which has been one of the common concepts for human beings from the past to the present and has various meanings, expresses more than just the structure that brings together stone, brick and other materials that undertake the function of shelter. The type of building that forms the interface between private spaces belonging to individuals and society is defined as housing (Acar, 1999). Housing is the first type of building that has emerged since the day human beings existed on earth. The housing concept began in the tree and rock hollows, developed in the process, and reached today with the modern housing. The process of change and evolution within houses has never ceased and continues to evolve today (Salihoğlu, 2001).

The terms "Co-living" and "Co-housing" are two interrelated concepts presented as potential solutions to high living costs in densely populated areas (Ehrenberg & Keinanen, 2021). McCamant and Durrett (1989) defined the term "Bofællesskab", which means living community in Danish, as co-housing in their published communal housing book (Beck, 2019). Szypulski (2016) defines the concept of shared housing as inclusive housing for all people with and without disabilities. Therefore, describes shared housing projects as predominantly community based. In this lifestyle, users share a social life based on community activities, mutual aid and a reliable neighborhood phenomenon. Osborne (2018) defines communal living (co-living) as a form of rental housing that aims to create community among users by providing features such as community managers, paired with large communal spaces and typologically small and furnished private spaces. Moreover, it has been determined that the lack of sufficient research on the common living typology causes the designers not to adhere to a certain principle while designing the common living spaces and to make different applications.

Co-housing structures is a residential project planned for the first time outside of Copenhagen, Denmark in 1972 by 27 families who wanted to experience a greater sense of community alongside the possibilities offered by suburban subdivisions or apartment complexes (McCamant & Durrett, 2011). Co-living first appeared in newspaper advertisements in 2011 and 2012, when the housing need of technology workers arose during the rise of Silicon Valley, but it has been heavily taking part in people's lives since 2016 (Steding, 2019). There is a graph of the searches on the concepts in the Google search engine since 2010 (Figure 1). In accordance with the data, it was seen that the concept of co-living decreased during the pandemic period and increased again in the last two years.

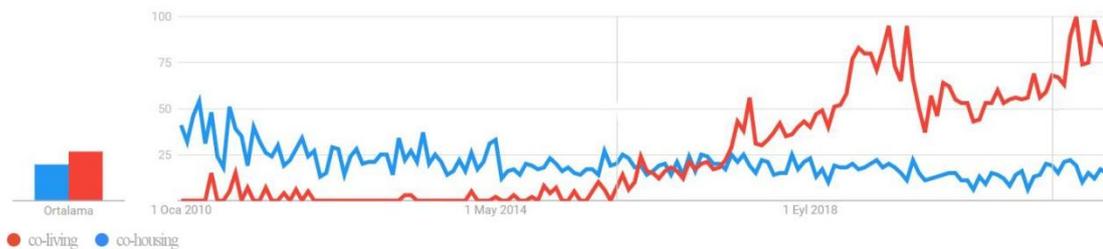


Figure 1. Google trend analysis of the words Co-living and Co-housing after 2010 (Google Trends, 2022)

Another difference between the concepts of co-housing structures and co-living is the ideological motivation. While the definitions of co-housing are often based on feminist discourses such as cleaning services, maintenance of common areas, and equality of labor in these fields, co-living is a market solution created by companies or landlords that can offer similar services as specified. Co-living aims to provide a minimum standard of living for singles, students or professionals (Ehrenberg

& Keinonen, 2021). Co-living is associated with individuals having better life opportunities in smaller spaces and increasing their level of well-being. The community in a residence should not be more than 8 to 12 people to establish and maintain these values, because individuals in small communities can get to know each other in a shorter time establish friendships and have a sense of belonging to the place (Steding, 2019). In other words, co-living is a leaseable place where a group of people live under the same roof but each person in the residence has a contract independent of the other. Residences rented in this group usually have single rooms with private or shared bathrooms and have common areas (laundry, library, gym, etc.) where people can eat and interact. University students, professionals working in precarious jobs, the need for a dynamic and flexible lifestyle, low income, and increasing housing rents have given birth to this new lifestyle (DoveVivo, 2022a). The concept of co-housing structures was brought up for discussion at the international conference on co-housing structures held in Stockholm in 2010 (Vestbro, 2010). The concept of co-living was not fully expressed in those years but was expressed under the heading of co-housing structures until 2011. To measure the suitability of co-living, the spaces in the residence must meet the basic requirements for the people living in that place (Steding, 2019; Ehrenberg & Keinonen, 2021).

Throughout history, individuals have needed settlements to survive, ensure their security and meet one of their basic needs, which is shelter. These basic needs are expressed in a pyramid form within the scope of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Maslow addresses the basic needs in a certain order, stating that the only way for individuals to move to the upper level is to meet the needs at the lowest level (Çoban, 2021). To date, researchers have determined different classifications for user requirements. Buğday (1991) and Gül (1993) classified user needs under two main headings as physical and psycho-social needs. Then, they divided the physical user needs into 4 sub-headings as spatial, health, physical environment and security. Psycho-social user needs are grouped under 4 subheadings: privacy, behavioral, aesthetic and social (Korur, Sayın, Oğuzalp & Korkmaz, 2006). Spatial requirements are primarily to respond to the dimensions where individuals can perform their actions (individually or collectively) in accordance with the variability of the number of users. Furthermore, it should have features such as dimensional ratio, color, and lighting suitable for the number of users that will provide psychological comfort to the users in the space (İmal, 2009). Health requirements are the whole of the measures taken to prevent all the negative factors that will affect the health of the users in the space. At the beginning of these factors is the proper discharge of sewage, garbage and other wastes, and then ensuring the air quality in the space, and the supply of clean water (Korur, Sayın, Oğuzalp & Korkmaz, 2006). Physical environmental requirements are to create a visual and acoustic comfort area in the space and to provide appropriate temperature control and humidity balance in accordance with the number of users. On the other hand, the safety requirements consist of measures to be taken against basic risks such as the strength of the structure of the apartment against fire and other disasters that may occur there (Bekar & Koç Altuntaş, 2021).

Psychosocial requirements are the minimum conditions required for users to be able to perform their actions in space without experiencing any negativity and without feeling uncomfortable. The privacy requirements are providing the users with visual, auditory and social privacy conditions both within the space and with the immediate surroundings it is in. The concept of social privacy tried to be explained here is that the user can protect the social privacy (secrecy) between him/her and other individuals in the space he/she is in (Bekar & Koç Altuntaş, 2021). For aesthetic requirements, first of all, the minimum conditions of all basic physical requirements for individuals must be met within space. Aesthetic requirements are creating values related to visual effects such as color and texture in spaces, designed with aesthetic concern to ensure that the users are psychologically satisfied in spaces that meet these conditions at a minimum (Korur, Sayın, Oğuzalp & Korkmaz, 2006). Behavioral requirements are subjective judgments that can vary depending on the wishes and psychology of the users. This type of requirement consists of subjective phenomena such as the thoughts of the users when they enter the space (such as the space being large, having high ceilings or having too many windows), and the expectations of the individuals from the space. Social requirements are the reflection of the relations of the users with each other in space (Bekar & Koç Altuntaş, 2021).

Special standards have been established by calculating the physical space requirements of the users for new buildings to be built in European countries and for buildings to be renovated. As stated by Yunitsyna (2014), the average of the mandatory standards for living spaces in the housing standards of 31 European countries and 7 regions was taken and the minimum dimensions that the most common user spaces should provide were determined (Figure 2).

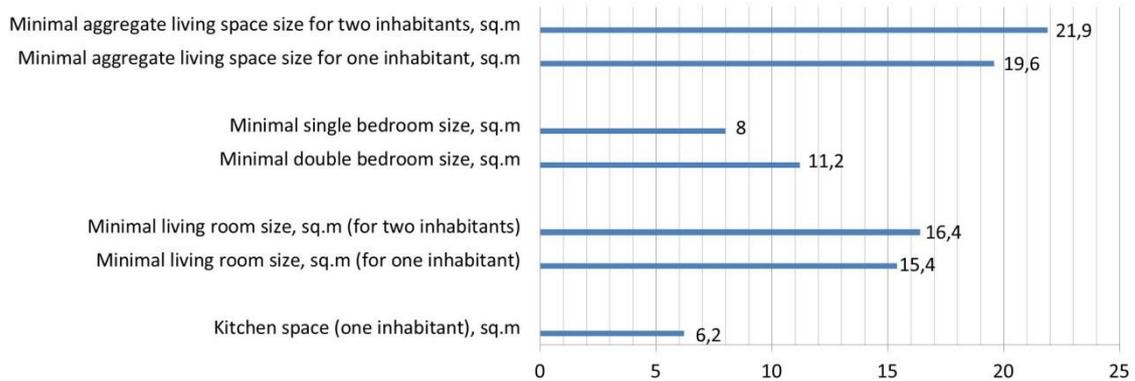


Figure 2. Minimum living spaces according to European housing standards (Yunitsyna, 2014)

As a result of Yunitsyna's (2014) study, he classified the size of the space according to the function numbers it contains in European House Standards. Accordingly, these standards,

- If it is between 15.4 m² and 16.4 m², that place is universal,
- If it is between 11.2 m² and 15.4 m², it can have 3 functions,
- If it is between 8 m² and 11 m², it can have 2 functions,
- If the area of the place is less than 8 m², that place is specialized it can only exist within 1 function.

This study aims to determine the suitability of the co-living concept in terms of the basic requirements of the residential users by examining the floor plan of the apartment for six people located on the second floor of the Ospedale Civile building of DoveVivo Company in the Veneto Region of Italy (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Map of Europe, Italy and Padova (Turismoitalia, 2022)

2. Material and Method

2.1. Material

As the material of the study, a 6-person apartment on the second floor of the Ospedale Civile building owned by DoveVivo Company in Padova, Italy, was chosen (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Ospedale Civile Building, Furnished Plan for 6 Person

There are several factors in choosing this apartment. This communal lifestyle, which mostly appeals to young professionals and students, further highlights the location of the building. The fact that the building is located in the historical city center of Padova and close to the hospital and school districts (Figure 5) is one of the important factors in choosing the apartment.



Figure 5. Workspace environmental analysis (adapted from Google Maps, 2022)

Another reason for choosing the apartment is that a historic building was recycled and reintroduced to the city. This building (Figure 6), which used to be a religious boarding school, was transformed into a structure consisting of all shared apartments by DoveVivo company in 2021 by preserving its exterior and renovating its interior and plumbing systems.



Figure 6. Ospedale Civile Building, old view (Google Earth, 2022)

There are 12 shared apartments in total in the renovated building. The number of users of the apartments in the building may vary. Apartments are designed for 4 to 7 people. At the rear of the building, apart from the bicycle and parking areas (Figure 7), there is another single-storey building independent of the main building. There are three shared apartments in this independent building (Moranduzzo, 2021).



Figure 7. Ospedale civile building, current view (DoveVivo, 2022b)

In Italy, there are sanitation provisions as a factor in determining that buildings are habitable by governments. The selected building is deemed suitable according to the living space sanitation provisions of the Italian Government.

Sanitation is the definition given to the whole of the work done to protect the health of individuals and to ensure hygiene in societies. Sanitation provisions include the basic principles to be applied for protecting and improving the user's health, and in the case of loss of health, in the recovery (Şimşek, 2014). There are different sanitation provisions according to the conditions of each country. While there is the provision of "TS13811 Hygiene and Sanitation Management System" in Türkiye, the "Main Sanitation of Living Spaces" legislation of the Ministry of Health with the 5 July 1975 date is applied in Italy (Anonymous, 2022).

The last factor is that DoveVivo is Europe's largest co-living company in terms of room and revenue (3 Countries, with 10,000 rooms in 15 cities) (DoveVivo, 2022c). The mission of the company coincides with the concept of co-living. Within this context, the company expresses its main purpose as follows; *"We aim to create a platform where individuals can connect with a local and international community as long as they want, by making use of personalized services in an all-inclusive life module. Whether users have moved to a new country for professional reasons such as education, work, or for personal reasons, the company's aim here is to provide individuals with a good living experience while they are getting to know a new country"* (DoveVivo, 2022c).

2.2. Method

This study consists of five stages. In the first stage of the study, one of the authors between the years 2021-2022 first experienced the lifestyle in the apartment, as the study material. In the second stage of the study, the suitability of five clauses related to accommodation, which is one of the living space sanitation provisions put into effect by the Italian Government in 1975, for the apartment as the material of the study was examined (Table 1).

In the third stage of the study, separate building surveys of the common and individual spaces of a shared apartment were taken and the layout plans were drawn in the AutoCAD software. Each place has been examined according to the functions consisting of 6 parameters in accordance with the information obtained from the literature (Table 2). The functions of the spaces are defined within the context of these 6 headings provided. These functions are respectively working, sitting, sanitation, social environment, sleeping and eating.

In the last stage of the study (Table 3), in the light of the information obtained from the literature, two basic principles of user requirements, the physical and the psycho-social requirements and the adequacy status of the spaces were evaluated within the scope of the sub-parameters of this principle. Physical user requirements were examined in four sub-parameters: spatial, health, physical environmental conditions and safety. Psycho-social user needs are discussed under four headings: privacy, behavioral, aesthetic and social. The tables in the second and third stages of the study were created as a result of the observations and analyzes that were personally experienced between the years 2021-2022 in the apartment, which is the material of the study, and the method flow diagram of the study is provided in Figure 8.

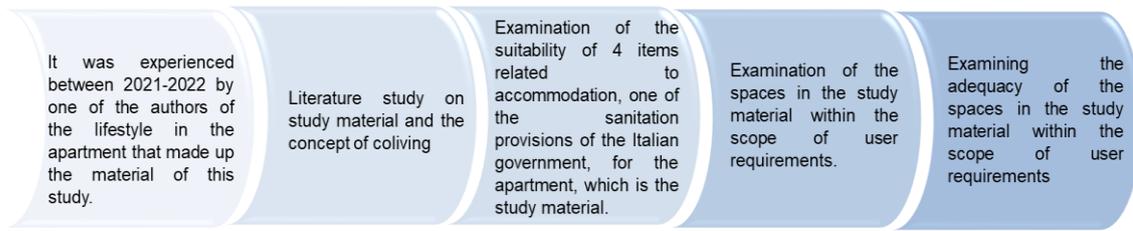


Figure 8. Method flow chart

3. Findings and Discussion

In the study, firstly the suitability of 5 clauses related to accommodation, which is one of the living space sanitation provisions put into effect by the Italian Government in 1975, was examined in terms of the floor plan of the apartment as the material of the study (Table 1). It has been determined that the apartment is in accordance with 4 clauses.

Table 1. The living space sanitation provisions issued by the Italian Government in 1975, 5 articles related to accommodation (Anonymous, 2022)

Article No	The Content Of The Substance	Suitability of the apartment
2.1	For each user, a minimum living area of 14 m ² , for the first 4 users and no less than 10 m ² for each subsequent user must be provided.	Suitable
2.2	The bedrooms should be at least 9 m ² for single people and a minimum of 14 m ² for two people.	Suitable
2.3	Each accommodation must have a living room of at least 14 m ² .	Unsuitable
2.4	Bedrooms, living room and kitchen should have a pop-up window.	Suitable
5.1	All rooms of the accommodation unit, except for rooms reserved for toilets, corridors, stairs and storage areas, must have natural lighting suitable for the purpose of use and direct lighting.	Suitable

In Table 2, the concept of co-living was examined within the scope of their functions. Because of the examination of the apartment within the scope of their functions, it has been concluded that the spaces contain more than one function, regardless of whether they are for individual or shared use. The kitchen and balcony direct the users to activities that enable them to act collectively with other individuals (working, eating, etc.) and at the same time turn into social spaces where individuals spend time together. Shared bathrooms 2 and 3 can no longer be spaces where users only see sanitation, such as washing, but can also turn into spaces where female users can socialize by dyeing each other's hair. Since they are common spaces, the cleaning of the bathrooms is carried out by the users in the order they determine or jointly. If we take the functions of individual spaces into account, it is possible to say that they mostly have the same functions. Apart from working, sitting and sleeping functions, also different functions are seen for room 1. Since Room-1 has a bathroom that is only used by its user, sanitation processes are also included in the room. It has been determined that all the spaces in the examined apartment have been renewed in accordance with the articles 2.1, 2.2, 2.4 and 5.1 of the living space sanitation provisions put into effect by the Italian Government in 1975 regarding accommodation provided in Table 1 and it does only not fulfill the obligation in the article 2.3 of the same provisions. In the examined flat, there is no requirement to have a living room of at least 14 m² in each flat specified in article 2.3. In the examination, it was seen that the individuals met their living room needs from the kitchen and balcony. Moreover, Yunitsha (2014) determined that the kitchen area should be at least 6.2 m² per person and accordingly, the kitchen should be 37.2 m² for an apartment used by 6 people. The existing kitchen of the flat is 18 m², which is insufficient by European standards. According to European standards, a single bedroom should be at least 8 m² (Yunitsha, 2014). Each room within the scope of the study meets this criteria, but the provision in the same study indicating that if the width of a room is between 8 and 11 m², it only accommodates two functions, does not meet the standard (Room 2-6). The residents of the Rooms in Room 2, Room 3, Room 4, Room 5 and Room 6 perform their functions of sleeping, working

and sitting. Regarding Room 1, which is 14 m², was again indicated to have three functions according to the average of the European standards, but it was experienced that the Room 1 was used for sleeping, working, sitting and sanitation functions.

Table 2. Inspection of the apartment in the scope of their functions

		PLAN	m ²	FUNCTIONS
COMMON SPACES	Kitchen		18 m ²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working • Sitting • Social environment • Eating
	Corridor		11.2 m ²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social environment
	Balcony		10.3 m ²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working • Sitting • Social environment • Sitting
	Bathroom - 2		3.8 m ²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sanitation processes • Social environment
	Bathroom - 3		4.9 m ²	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sanitation processes • Social environment

INDIVIDUAL SPACES

Room - 1



14 m²

- Working
- Sitting
- Sanitation processes
- Sleeping

Room - 2



11 m²

- Working
- Sitting
- Sleeping

Room - 3



9 m²

- Working
- Social environment
- Sitting

Room - 4



9 m²

- Working
- Sitting
- Sleeping

Room - 5



10 m²

- Working
- Sitting
- Sleeping

Room - 6



11 m²

- Working
- Sitting
- Sleeping

If we analyze the adequacy status within the scope of the user requirements of the apartment, it is observed that the individual spaces are more adequate than the common spaces (Table 3). If we consider user requirements under two main headings physical and psycho-social needs, physical needs are examined according to whether the physical conditions in the space are sufficient for the user and whether they can meet the physical requirements of individuals.

When we conducted a spatial adequacy analysis by considering all the requirements in common spaces (balcony, corridor, kitchen, bathroom 3 and bathroom 2), it was observed that the adequate space was the corridor, and the insufficient space was the bathroom-2 (Table 3). The corridor was found to be adequate for most of the physical and psychosocial requirements. The balcony was found to be insufficient for six users in spatial requirements, and it was sufficient in behavioral requirements. When we compare the shared bathrooms with each other, bathroom-3 seems insufficient under the spatial heading of physical requirements compared to bathroom-2. The increase in the number of users using the space is directly proportional to the increase in spatial requirements. For this reason, bathroom 3, which was considered inadequate, was also deemed insufficient in terms of privacy and social requirements due to the high number of users. The number of users using bathroom-2 is 2 (rooms 2 and 5), and the number of users using bathroom-3 (rooms 3, 4 and 6) is 3. The kitchen, which contains many functions, was found to be sufficient except for the spatial and privacy requirements. When the kitchen is considered within the scope of spatial requirements, it has been determined that it is difficult for six users to use and actively evaluate the space at the same time. This situation negatively affects the privacy requirements of individuals and makes their personal spaces inadequate.

When the adequacy status of the individual spaces (Rooms 1-6) is examined according to the user requirements, it is seen that rooms 1, 2, 4 and 5 are sufficient and room 6 is insufficient. Rooms 1, 2, 4 and 5 were adequate for all requirements except spatial requirements. This state of adequacy is a concept that can vary depending on the experience of the users in terms of psychosocial requirements. Room 3 was found to be inadequate in terms of privacy and spatial requirements. This is because the kitchen, balcony and Room 3 share the same circulation axis. Users who spend time in the kitchen late at night should be quiet or head to another area because of the user in room 3. Likewise, the user in room 3 may experience sleep problems due to the noise made by the users in the kitchen. Room 6 was found to be inadequate in terms of safety, spatial and privacy requirements. The main problem here, as in room 3, is that bathroom 3 and room 6 use the same circulation axis.

Table 3. Adequacy analysis of the apartments user requirements

		USER REQUIREMENTS							
		PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS				PSYCHOSOCIAL REQUIREMENTS			
		Space	Health	Physical environment	Security	Privacy	Aesthetic	Behavioral	Social
COMMON	Kitchen	-	+	+	±	-	+	±	+
	Corridor	+	+	±	±	+	+	±	+
	Balcony	-	±	+	+	+	+	±	+
	Bathroom- 2	±	-	-	±	-	-	±	-
	Bathroom- 3	-	+	+	±	-	+	±	-
INDIVIDUAL SPACES	Room - 1	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Room - 2	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Room - 3	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	±
	Room - 4	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Room - 5	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	Room - 6	-	+	+	-	-	+	+	±

- Inadequate, ± Partially Adequate, + Adequate

4. Conclusion and Suggestions

The co-living model aims to provide a minimum standard of living for singles, students or professionals. These living standards vary according to the specific laws of each country. For the co-living model, which is still a new concept in the world and in Türkiye, to function correctly, it is necessary to determine the minimum standards and the minimum and maximum dimensions required for the design, in accordance with the laws. While creating these standards, physical and psychosocial user requirements, which are among the basic requirements that Maslow created in 1943, must be taken into consideration.

Co-living is a special and highly unusual arrangement that reflects a particular way of life. First of all, this way of life should be handled and analyzed by scientists from different disciplines. This study has been addressed in terms of interior architecture by the author, who has experienced the co-living. As a result, it has been determined that this lifestyle is ideal for short-term accommodation abroad experiences, and people living together at home help each other and socialize a lot.

Acknowledgements and Information Note

The article complies with national and international research and publication ethics. Ethics committee approval was not required for the study.

Author Contribution and Conflict of Interest Declaration Information

All authors contributed equally to the article.

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