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# Conflict and Integration: A Qualitative Study on the Dormitory Life Experience of Freshmen

**Liao Kangli**

Accounting College, Jiujiang University, Jiujiang City, China

**Email address:**

[liaokangli@126.com](mailto:liaokangli@126.com)

**To cite this article:**

Liao Kangli. Conflict and Integration: A Qualitative Study on the Dormitory Life Experience of Freshmen. *Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies*. Vol. 6, No. 4, 2021, pp. 109-114. doi: 10.11648/j.tecs.20210604.11

**Received:** September 8, 2021; **Accepted:** September 28, 2021; **Published:** October 12, 2021

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**Abstract:** Dormitory is an important place for college students to live and study. Dormitory life is the starting point for college students to adapt to collective life. Paying attention to the dormitory life experience of freshmen will help colleges and universities improve and optimize their dormitory management strategies, so as to improve the overall level of serving students. Using qualitative research methods, this paper analyzes the dormitory life experience of 50 freshmen in Jiujiang University. The study found that the dormitory life experience of freshmen has significant characteristics of conflict and integration. The dormitory life conflict is mainly affected by living habits, personality differences, communication barriers, interest disputes, interest concepts, growth background and so on. Learning and cooperation can well promote the integration between dormitory members. The conflict between dormitory members is not irreconcilable, and the transformation from conflict to integration can be realized under certain conditions. Therefore, the dormitory management of colleges and universities needs to minimize or dilute the factors that cause conflicts among dormitory members, strengthen or highlight the factors that promote the integration of dormitory members, such as collective activities, dormitory gatherings, casual communication, food sharing, learning cooperation, actively create a dormitory living atmosphere of unity, harmony, equality and cooperation, and finally realize the transformation from conflict to integration.

**Keywords:** Dormitory Life, College Students, Conflict, Integration

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## 1. Introduction

Cornell University in the United States conducted a famous experiment called "boiled frog effect" at the end of the 19th century and found that animals' induction to the environment is gradual. When the environment changes rapidly, the body's rapid response mechanism can be activated rapidly. If the change of the environment is slow, the body may not make behavior adjustment in time due to inertia. Therefore, the slowly changing environment may have a subtle impact on people's thoughts and behaviors. In the practice of student education and management in Colleges and universities, university dormitories are a relatively stable learning and living environment for students during their college life. They often have a silent but tangible impact on students' success. There are often "boiled frog effect" similar to "good nest" or "poor nest" in dormitories.<sup>1</sup> In the student dormitory

management system of colleges and universities in China, "centralized accommodation" is the most important management mode [1]. This management mode comes from the relevant requirements of the competent department of education for the accommodation management of colleges and Universities: in 2004, the Ministry of Education issued the notice of the Ministry of education on strengthening the accommodation management of college students (ZSZ [2004]

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dormitory 502, building 3, girls in xundong campus of Jiujiang University under the title of "the best dormitory in a university in Jiujiang, Jiangxi Province: six girls in the same dormitory have passed the line for postgraduate entrance examination"; Coincidentally, on July 9, 2014, chinanews.com Jiangxi News reported on the fact that all 6 boys in the first dormitory of Jiujiang University were admitted to "985" and "211" graduate students under the title of "Jiujiang University has a" learning bully "dormitory and 6 people" hold a group "to be admitted to famous universities and graduate students"; The situation is not uncommon. In 2016, there was a case that all six people in a dormitory served as student cadres of the school, college, grade and class, which not only formed a positive learning and working atmosphere in the dormitory, but also led to a positive atmosphere of positive progress and hard work in the whole college.

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1 On April 1, 2013, China Daily reported the common progress of six girls in

No. 6), and in 2005, the Ministry of Education issued Notice of the general office of the Ministry of education on Further Strengthening the accommodation management of college students (JSZT [2005] No. 4). In 2007, the Ministry of Education issued the notice of the general office of the Ministry of education on further improving the accommodation management of college students (JSZT [2007] No. 4) It is clearly required to standardize the management of students' accommodation, arrange students to live in class in dormitories and apartments, and create a good environment and atmosphere for students to grow and become talents [2]. According to the requirements of the above notice, at present, most colleges and universities have formed a pattern of "colleges and departments live in a centralized manner according to buildings, grades live in a centralized manner according to floors, and classes live in a centralized manner according to dormitories" [3].

Scholars point out that the current college students' dormitory has the characteristics of conformity [4], mutual inductance, diversity, flexibility, independence, autonomy, spontaneity, selectivity, recreation, venting, apartment and family [5]. It is the big family of students' life, an important position for ideological and political education and cultural construction [6], an important part of sports and entertainment, and an important place for interpersonal communication [7]. The construction of College Students' dormitory culture has the significance of guiding radiation [8], educational optimization, shaping, condensing incentive, restricting norms and adjusting comfort [9]. Harmonious dormitory has the functions of helping to wear a harmonious campus environment [10], improving the construction of school spirit, cultivating students' noble sentiment, improving students' comprehensive quality and cultivating students' collective consciousness [11]. Under the pattern of centralized accommodation, on the one hand, dormitory members have strong stability during school, and dormitory members are the most important life partners in college life [12]; On the other hand, the dormitory members are basically the same or similar in professional knowledge learning [13], and the dormitory members are the most important learning partners in the college career. For freshmen, because most primary and secondary schools implement the day study system [14], students lack the life experience of collective accommodation, so they need to face a new collective living environment after entering the University [15]. Freshmen are in a mature period with strong plasticity in psychological and physiological development. After entering the University, they are facing a new learning and living environment and are full of expectations and aspirations for good interpersonal relationships. As an important part of university life, dormitory life quality is the concentration of the whole university life quality, and dormitory interpersonal relationship is an important part of dormitory life. Therefore, dormitory interpersonal relationship is the basis of university life quality. For freshmen, having a harmonious, warm and positive dormitory communication environment and dormitory life experience will form a good beginning for

college life. Based on this, this paper will analyze the dormitory life experience of freshmen from positive and negative dimensions based on qualitative research methods, in order to provide reference and reference for colleges and universities to carry out university dormitory management and service more effectively.

## 2. Research Method

This paper takes 50 freshmen of Jiujiang University as the research object. At present, Jiujiang University arranges student dormitories in the way of centralized accommodation. The dormitories are mainly divided into 6 people. Due to the large number of students in some colleges and departments, there are a small number of 8 people. In the allocation of freshman dormitories, the class is taken as the unit and the gender is divided according to the student number. Therefore, the combination of student dormitory members has a strong randomness. Students generally will not adjust their dormitories on a large scale without special circumstances. For the vast majority of students, the roommate relationship with their dormitory members will run through the whole college career. The 50 students selected in this study are from 22 secondary colleges. They are randomly selected through the school's student management information system. For 16 colleges with less than 500 freshmen, 2 students are randomly selected from each college. For 6 colleges with more than 500 freshmen, 3 students are randomly selected from each college. Among the 50 interviewers, 17 were male and 33 were female. The interview place was the student development center office under the student office of the Youth League Committee of Jiujiang University. The reason why they did not choose to interview in the psychological counseling room was to create a more relaxed interview environment and atmosphere. The interviewees described the life experience of the university dormitory in the form of meetings. The interview time is 20 to 40 minutes. During the interview, we first informed the main purpose of the interview and the confidentiality principle we will follow. After obtaining the consent of the interviewee, we recorded the whole interview content, and reconfirmed the unclear or misunderstood statements in the interview with the interviewee. The voice analysis software is used to convert the interview recording, and the qualitative analysis is mainly carried out by nvivo12.0 software.

## 3. Dormitory Conflict Experience of Freshmen

### 3.1. Living Habits Lead to Conflict

Freshmen in the same dormitory often come from different regions, different families and even different nationalities. Moreover, most students live at home in primary and secondary schools and preschool education. They lack the experience of collective accommodation and have great differences in living habits, which often leads to conflicts among dormitory members.

Interviewee A: "There are four students in our dormitory, all from different provinces. On the whole, the living habits of students from the north and students from the south are quite different. For example, I am from the South and another roommate is from the north. My mind is relatively delicate. That roommate is rough. Sometimes he will take my quilt to drink water without consent after sports. There are many reasons. When he didn't have toothpaste, he would directly pick up my toothpaste and squeeze it onto his toothbrush. I couldn't accept his practice in my living habits. I felt it was also very unsanitary, so I couldn't help talking about him once, but he didn't care. He thought that everyone was a friend in the dormitory and sharing some living things was nothing at all, which made me very angry. Although However, he is very nice, warm-hearted and straightforward, but I have always kept an example with him. I think it is mainly caused by different living habits."

Interviewee B: "There is a female classmate in our dormitory. Her work and rest time is basically the opposite. She likes to toss around in the dormitory at night. She just doesn't sleep. She usually doesn't start sleeping until 3 or 4 a.m. during the day. As a result, she has been sleeping in bed. As a result, we often deduct points in the dormitory, and we say she doesn't listen. In addition, she is also aggressive and doesn't think much about it. Other people's ideas, so we basically rarely talk to her and don't play with her. She feels marginalized by us. In fact, we don't want to, but she never corrects, and we can't help it."

Interviewee C: "my sleep quality is very poor. I often have insomnia, and my sleep is very shallow. I wake up when I wake up. It's difficult to sleep again when I wake up. But one roommate often stays up late to read. Her desk lamp is very bright. Sometimes she shakes the table while reading. The table makes a noise when it touches the wall, which makes people feel very uncomfortable."

### **3.2. Personality Differences Lead to Conflict**

Freshmen have different growth environments and growth processes, and develop different personality characteristics, which also leads to conflicts among students due to personality differences in dormitories and other collective life.

Interviewee D: "there is a classmate (girl) in our dormitory. It makes people feel very strange. Her character can't be predicted. No one knows when she will be happy or unhappy. She talks and laughs with you the first second, and may ignore you the next second, and you don't know why. Moreover, she often doesn't speak clearly and always feels weird. The name is the words of praise from her mouth. I always feel like I'm satirizing people. It's very stressful to associate with her."

Interviewee e: "he never considers how people feel. Others will say it out loud if it doesn't agree with him or slightly. Whether it hurts others' self-esteem or not, he often yells at other students in the dormitory because of a small matter."

### **3.3. Communication Barriers Lead to Conflict**

Effective communication is the basis of high-quality

interpersonal communication. From the actual situation of communication among freshmen, due to the lack of systematic training and exercise of communication awareness and communication ability in primary and secondary schools, freshmen generally lack communication ability, which also leads to misunderstandings among dormitory members due to poor communication. Eventually, many contradictions are expanded or intensified.

Interviewee F: "sometimes, in order to take care of other people's emotions or face, I don't want to put the contradictions and conflicts between my classmates on the surface. Instead, I'm willing to say that these contradictions are hidden in my heart and digested by myself. After a long time, I feel more distressed, but I don't know where to start."

Interviewee G: "I feel that there are a lot of things in our dormitory, which are trivial things in themselves. However, due to the lack of timely communication, the contradictions have accumulated and deepened. In addition, one roommate is particularly fond of wishful thinking and always feels that others are targeting him. In fact, we really don't."

### **3.4. Interest Disputes Lead to Conflicts**

The dormitory is a public space with a certain degree of interest distribution and interest intersection. For example, there are many public goods that need to bear the expenses together, but it is easy to have differences in the selection of goods, sharing methods, sharing amount, etc. in addition, most of the dormitory members are members of the same major, grade and class. Honor and other aspects are also prone to conflict of interest.

Interviewee H: "my roommate and I have the same performance in study and work, and we are still good friends, but we gave it to him when we rated it as excellent. I feel very relieved."

Interviewee I: "A roommate in our dormitory is very concerned about money and always likes to take advantage of it. Several other students will take turns to order bottled water on time, but as soon as it's her turn, she will find various reasons for other students to order. We usually share delicious food together, but she will eat it by herself and never share it with everyone. Also Once the lock of our dormitory broke. At first, everyone agreed to share the money for changing the lock, but then she changed her mind and didn't give a penny. We felt that she was too disgraceful."

### **3.5. Interest Leads to Conflict**

College life has diversified characteristics. Freshmen have significant differences in interests, life and learning objectives and values, which requires students to actively expand their interests and hobbies on the one hand, and actively tolerate and accept the differences between others and themselves in interests and hobbies on the other hand.

Interviewee J: "I and another roommate in our dormitory are more fond of musical instruments. He likes violin and I like playing erhu. He often despises my erhu and says that my love is not elegant and thinks I am very rustic, which makes

the gap between me and him deeper and deeper."

Interviewee K: "My roommate spends too much money and has too advanced consumption concept. She often buys things that are useless but expensive. Moreover, every time I go shopping with her, she always encourages me to buy things that exceed my actual purchasing ability. If I don't want to buy them, she will say how I am so stingy with myself. In fact, her family conditions are not very good, she said My parents work very hard, but it's not easy for her not to understand her parents."

### **3.6. Growth Background Leads to Conflict**

Every freshman grows up in a specific family environment, learning environment and social environment. The difference of environment leads to great differences in students' thinking and ways of finding problems, understanding problems, analyzing problems and dealing with problems. If students lack inclusiveness, it may lead to conflicts among dormitory members.

Interviewee L: "her family conditions are very good. Her parents are very rich. I feel that she is too far from our life. She is too particular about her daily life. Everything she buys is very expensive and the things she uses are the best. We throw them away when we don't like them. We usually don't dare to hand them over to her for fear of being despised by her."

Interviewee M: "Two students in our dormitory are from rural families. Their families are not very well-off. They live a frugal life at ordinary times, and both students are able to bear hardships and are willing to help others. However, there are great differences in the performance of the two students in their daily life. Although one student lives a frugal life, the money he should spend is never stingy and does not occupy the convenience of others. Yes, but the other student is just the opposite. He is very selfish in dealing with money and often secretly uses the goods of other students. He is not willing to share the public goods that need to be shared. The reason for this difference may be the influence of the family."

## **4. Dormitory Integration Experience of Freshmen**

### **4.1. Promoting Integration Through Collective Activities**

Collective activities are an effective link for harmonious dormitory relations in universities. In collective activities, dormitory students are more likely to produce interdependence and cohesion. Collective activities can promote mutual understanding and deepen friendship between students, and promote the formation of good dormitory culture.

Interviewee n: "in the dormitory, we don't have the so-called regional differences. At first, we joke with each other and get along very well. We often participate in collective activities organized by the class. The dormitory students are together, which shortens our distance to a great extent."

Interviewee o: "my roommate and I also get along well and have a harmonious relationship. We help each other, do hygiene together, hold dormitory group construction together, and build a warm dormitory environment."

### **4.2. Promote Integration Through Dormitory Gathering Activities**

There are many forms of dormitory party for college students, such as birthday party, dinner, etc. regularly organizing dormitory party can help alleviate the tense learning pressure, enhance the students' previous in-depth understanding and enhance the cohesion of the dormitory.

Interviewee P: "On my birthday, my roommates gave me a big surprise. This was the first birthday I had outside in my memory. I thought this birthday passed quietly, because I didn't tell my roommates about my birthday, and they never mentioned to celebrate my birthday, but when I returned to the dormitory that day, I saw cakes and candles on the table and the roommates singing suddenly I was stunned by your birthday song!"

### **4.3. Promote Integration Through Bedroom Conversation Activities**

As a typical symbol of university dormitory culture, the talk is a beneficial way to relieve the pressure of study, resolve the contradictions in the dormitory and enhance the feelings of students. At the same time, it is also an effective channel for dormitory students to deepen understanding and express their views on matters of common interest. When the dormitory lights out, the students can't see each other, and the spirit will be in a relatively relaxed state. The vigilance between the students will be weakened, which is conducive to the frank communication before the students, so that the dormitory members can listen to each other and express themselves to the fullest, so as to make the dormitory atmosphere more harmonious.

Interviewee R: "the talk in our dormitory has become a normal situation. It seems that we can't sleep without talking for a period of time every night. We talk about everything from the world pattern to personal development, from human destiny to classroom homework, from economic and social chat to love business, which makes us more and more harmonious."

Interviewee s: "I've been getting along with my roommates for almost a semester. I've been very careful to meet them at the beginning, and the atmosphere is quite embarrassing. Up to now, I don't talk about anything and get along very well. Even if I sometimes get very angry about some small events in life and have a headache, as long as everyone opens up, it won't affect our friendship."

### **4.4. Promote Integration by Sharing Food with Each Other**

In dormitory life, dormitory members come from different regions, and each region has its own characteristic food. The sharing of characteristic food can deepen the understanding of dormitory members about their hometown customs. In

addition, in the daily life of the dormitory, the dormitory members share what they have bought. On the one hand, they can experience the joy of sharing. On the other hand, they can also promote the communication between students and deepen the friendship between the dormitory members through the common topic of food.

Interviewee T: "the four students in our dormitory come from different places. Everyone has their own special food. During the long holiday, some students will go home and bring some delicious food to share with everyone. Usually, some students' parents will mail some food to share. When tasting the food, everyone can talk very well and feel very warm."

Respondent U: "Getting along with students in the dormitory: getting along well with roommates is very harmonious. Everyone can accept each other's small problems. At the same time, they can also solve small contradictions in a correct way acceptable to each other. They can eat in the dormitory in extracurricular time, promote emotional communication, understand each other's eating habits or hobbies, and sometimes hold activities in the dormitory, such as group Cosplay Disney animation Role, give each other snacks."

Interviewee V: "of course, it's also necessary to travel in the dormitory. When you go out of the village to the city center, you can taste all kinds of delicious food and enjoy the scenery. Of course, it's also necessary to take photos."

#### **4.5. Promote Integration Through Learning Cooperation**

Dormitory members have common professional courses and learning objectives, which makes the dormitory a natural cooperation platform for students' learning and communication. On the one hand, effective learning cooperation can deepen the mutual understanding between dormitory students and improve students' sense of cooperation. On the other hand, it also provides a practical platform for teachers to promote the reform of classroom teaching organization and improve teaching effect and quality.

Interviewee W: "Our dormitory has been running in and getting along well. From the small dispute over the chorus competition at the beginning to now, my class and my family have entered the finals. The group debate homework on Si Xiu, the PPT speech and display completed together by the English group, the division of labor and cooperation of four people in the dormitory for management homework and the accounting homework to be held are all studying with classmates or roommates in the class or dormitory. The results of cooperation."

Interviewee X: "The teacher of one course in our class is very resourceful. He often asks us to organize debate and competition in the dormitory as a unit in class. After careful preparation, each dormitory selects representatives to compete with other dormitories, which greatly enhances the cohesion of our dormitory. In addition, the teacher often arranges extracurricular homework in the dormitory as a unit, and the experimental class is also completed in cooperation

with the dormitory. I think it's a good way to learn."

## **5. Conclusion and Enlightenment**

Through the above interview, we found that the conflicts of Freshmen in dormitory life are mainly reflected in living habits, personality differences, communication barriers, interest disputes, interest concepts, growth background, etc. the reasons for these conflicts mainly come from your factors in this aspect: first, the inertia of learning and life in primary and secondary schools. In the primary and secondary school era, students take knowledge learning as the first priority, and the college entrance examination is a very important baton. The examination has obvious guidance, the students' learning objectives are clear, and the living environment is relatively single. When freshmen enter the University, the learning objectives and life objectives of the surrounding students gradually tend to be diversified, and the acceptance of diversification needs a process; Second, freshmen lack interpersonal experience. China's primary and secondary education generally lacks the guidance and training of teenagers' interpersonal knowledge. At the same time, families often pay too much attention to the improvement of children's academic performance and often ignore the exercise of children's social adaptability. The freshman stage is the first stop for students to move towards independent interpersonal communication, and conflicts among students are inevitable; Third, due to differences in growth environment, colleges and universities in China often recruit students across regions or even across the country. Students from different regions have great differences in cultural background, customs, eating habits and language communication. It takes a process for dormitory members to accept differences and integrate with each other. From the above analysis, it can be seen that the conflict between dormitory members itself is not irreconcilable. In dormitory management, it is necessary to minimize or dilute the factors that cause conflict among dormitory members, and strengthen or highlight the factors that promote the integration of dormitory members, such as collective activities, dormitory gatherings, chat and communication, food sharing, learning and cooperation, so as to finally realize the transformation from conflict to integration.

## **Acknowledgements**

The Project Supported by Key Research Topics Of Teaching Reform In Colleges And Universities In Jiangxi Province (Grant no. JXJG-19-17-2).

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