

Sense of Place and Emotional Healing: Exploring Students' Perceptions of Spaces for Emotional Recovery at Silpakorn University

ความผูกพันต่อสถานที่กับการเยียวยาทางอารมณ์: การรับรู้ของนักศึกษาต่อพื้นที่สำหรับการฟื้นฟูทางอารมณ์ในมหาวิทยาลัยศิลปากร

Supharerk O-in

ศุภฤกษ์ โออินทร์

Faculty of Arts, Silpakorn University, Thailand

Corresponding author

e-mail: oin_s@su.ac.th

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คำสำคัญ: ความรู้สึกผูกพันต่อสถานที่, พื้นที่เพื่อการเยียวยา, จิตวิทยาสิ่งแวดล้อม, การฟื้นฟูทางอารมณ์

Abstract

Background and Objectives: When individuals experience emotional distress arising from their daily lives or surrounding environment, they often seek places that provide comfort and emotional relief. Similarly, university students may encounter feelings of anxiety, stress, or distress, particularly those associated with adolescent romantic relationships. When these feelings occur, students need a place that helps them feel better and recover from such distress. This research aimed to study the characteristics of the places that university students use as places to manage heartbreak through the concept of Sense of Place and Environmental Psychology theory, and to analyze the factors that affect the formation of mental attachment and the meaning of those places related to memories and psychological healing processes.

Methods: The research used quantitative research methodology by collecting data from questionnaires with 1,200 students from Silpakorn University, Sanam Chandra Palace Campus. Stratified random sampling was used. The questionnaire was designed based on the concepts of Sense of Place and Environmental Psychology with an appropriate reliability value (Cronbach's alpha = 0.80). The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and interpretations based on the four conceptual frameworks of Sense of Place and Environmental Psychology.

Results: The results of the study found that the primary places that students selected for emotional recovery were the sea/river (33.17 percent), followed by their homes/dormitories (21.33 percent), and parks/fitness centers (12.08 percent), respectively. The main reasons students chose the places were the tranquility, relaxing atmosphere, and nature, which helped calm their minds. When considering the important factors of Sense of Place, which had the most impact on the choice of places, it was the environment, especially the atmosphere that helped them feel relaxed ($\bar{X} = 4.68$). The least important factors were participation in activities in that place and historical or cultural values. The overall research results found that places can significantly promote the emotional recovery process, especially when the place creates a sense of peace and relaxation.

Application of this study: The results of this research can be used to design spaces within the university to respond to the emotional and mental health needs of students. It can be used as a guideline for developing public spaces or green spaces in the university to promote the mental health of youths and encourage university administrators or educational policy makers to be aware of the role of places in the process of mental healing and to integrate this knowledge into planning services or activities to sustainably develop the mental health of students.

Conclusions: This study reflects that a place plays an important role in the process of healing and restoring the emotional state of the students who experience romantic disappointment. The students tend to choose peaceful, relaxing, and nature-oriented spaces as places for emotional refuge, as these environments help reduce stress and promote psychological balance. The findings confirm that environmental elements, particularly an atmosphere that creates a sense of calm, are the most important factors in fostering place attachment and supporting emotional restoration. These findings indicate that physical spaces are not merely the backdrop of life experiences, but also important resources that influence psychological well-being. Therefore, the design and development of university spaces should take emotional dimensions and environmental psychology into consideration in order to create the environments that sustainably support students' well-being and quality of life.

บทคัดย่อ

ที่มาและวัตถุประสงค์: เมื่อเกิดสภาวะความไม่สบายใจหรือมีเรื่องทุกข์ใจจากการดำเนินชีวิตหรือสภาพแวดล้อมที่เป็นอยู่ ผู้คนมักจะแสวงหาสถานที่พักใจ เช่นเดียวกับนักศึกษาในมหาวิทยาลัยที่ต้องเผชิญกับความไม่สบายใจ กังวลใจ หรือทุกข์ใจจากปัญหาความรักในวัยรุ่นเมื่อเกิดความรู้สึกนี้ นักศึกษาต้องการสถานที่ที่ทำให้รู้สึกดีขึ้นจากความทุกข์นั้น การวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาลักษณะของสถานที่ที่นักศึกษามหาวิทยาลัยใช้เป็นพื้นที่พักใจหลังจากเผชิญกับความผิดหวังในความรัก (heartbreak) ผ่านแนวคิดเรื่อง Sense of Place และทฤษฎี Environmental Psychology และวิเคราะห์ปัจจัยที่ส่งผลต่อการเกิดความผูกพันทางจิตใจและความหมายของสถานที่ที่เชื่อมโยงกับความทรงจำและกระบวนการเยียวยาทางจิตใจ

วิธีการศึกษา: ใช้ระเบียบวิธีวิจัยเชิงปริมาณ ด้วยการเก็บข้อมูลจากแบบสอบถามกับนักศึกษาจำนวน 1,200 คน จากมหาวิทยาลัยศิลปากร วิทยาเขตพระราชวังสนามจันทร์ ใช้วิธีการสุ่มตัวอย่างแบบแบ่งชั้น (stratified random sampling) โดยแบบสอบถามถูกออกแบบตามแนวคิด Sense of Place และ Environmental Psychology มีความเชื่อมั่นของเครื่องมือที่เหมาะสม (Cronbach's alpha = 0.80) และวิเคราะห์ข้อมูลด้วยสถิติเชิงพรรณนาและการตีความตามกรอบแนวคิดทั้ง 4 ด้านของ Sense of Place และแนวคิด Environment Psychology

ผลการศึกษา: พบว่า สถานที่หลักที่นักศึกษาเลือกมากที่สุดเพื่อฟื้นฟูอารมณ์คือ ทะเล/แม่น้ำ (ร้อยละ 33.17) รองลงมาคือ บ้าน/หอพัก (ร้อยละ 21.33) และสวนสาธารณะ/ศูนย์ออกกำลังกาย (ร้อยละ 12.08) ตามลำดับ ส่วนเหตุผลหลักที่นักศึกษาเลือกสถานที่นั้น คือ ความเงียบสงบ บรรยากาศที่ผ่อนคลาย และความเป็นธรรมชาติ ซึ่งช่วยให้จิตใจสงบลง เมื่อพิจารณาปัจจัยสำคัญของ Sense of Place ที่ส่งผลต่อการเลือกสถานที่มากที่สุด คือ ด้านสิ่งแวดล้อม โดยเฉพาะบรรยากาศที่ช่วยให้รู้สึกผ่อนคลาย (ค่าเฉลี่ย 4.68) ส่วนปัจจัยที่มีความสำคัญน้อยที่สุด คือ การมีส่วนร่วมในกิจกรรมในสถานที่นั้น และคุณค่าทางประวัติศาสตร์หรือวัฒนธรรม ผลวิจัยโดยรวม พบว่า สถานที่ที่สามารถส่งเสริมกระบวนการฟื้นฟูทางอารมณ์ได้อย่างมีนัยสำคัญโดยเฉพาะเมื่อสถานที่นั้นสร้างความรู้สึกลงและผ่อนคลาย

การประยุกต์ใช้: ผลการวิจัยนี้สามารถนำไปใช้ในการออกแบบพื้นที่ภายในมหาวิทยาลัย ให้ตอบสนองต่อความต้องการด้านอารมณ์และสุขภาพจิตของนักศึกษา สามารถใช้เป็นแนวทางในการพัฒนาพื้นที่สาธารณะหรือพื้นที่สีเขียวในมหาวิทยาลัยเพื่อส่งเสริมสุขภาพจิตของเยาวชน และส่งเสริมให้ผู้บริหารมหาวิทยาลัยหรือผู้กำหนดนโยบายทางการศึกษาตระหนักถึงบทบาทของสถานที่ในกระบวนการเยียวยาทางจิตใจ และสามารถบูรณาการองค์ความรู้ในการวางแผนบริการหรือกิจกรรมเพื่อพัฒนาสภาวะทางใจของนักศึกษาได้อย่างยั่งยืน

บทสรุป: การศึกษานี้สะท้อนให้เห็นว่าสถานที่ที่มีบทบาทสำคัญในกระบวนการเยียวยาและฟื้นฟูสภาวะทางอารมณ์ของนักศึกษาที่เผชิญกับความผิดหวังในความรัก โดยนักศึกษามักเลือกพื้นที่ที่มีความสงบ ผ่อนคลาย และใกล้ชิดธรรมชาติเป็นพื้นที่ที่พักใจ เนื่องจากเอื้อต่อการลดความตึงเครียดและสร้างความสมดุลทางจิตใจ ผลการวิจัยยืนยันว่าองค์ประกอบด้านสิ่งแวดล้อม โดยเฉพาะบรรยากาศที่ก่อให้เกิดความรู้สึกสงบ เป็นปัจจัยสำคัญที่สุดในการสร้างความผูกพันต่อสถานที่และสนับสนุนการฟื้นฟูทางอารมณ์ ข้อค้นพบดังกล่าวชี้ให้เห็นว่าพื้นที่ทางกายภาพไม่ได้เป็นเพียงฉากหลังของประสบการณ์ชีวิต แต่เป็นทรัพยากรสำคัญที่ส่งผลต่อสภาวะทางจิตใจ การออกแบบและพัฒนาพื้นที่ภายในมหาวิทยาลัยจึงควรคำนึงถึงมิติทางอารมณ์และจิตวิทยาสังคม เพื่อสร้างสภาพแวดล้อมที่เอื้อต่อการดูแลสุขภาพและคุณภาพชีวิตของนักศึกษาอย่างยั่งยืน

Introduction

Romantic relationship dissolution and experiences of heartbreak are common life events that can substantially affect psychological well-being, emotional regulation, and social functioning. Among university students, romantic disappointment often occurs during a critical developmental stage characterized by increasing emotional independence, identity formation, and social adjustment. Previous studies have demonstrated that experiences of romantic breakup may result in emotional distress, including sadness, anxiety, loneliness, depressive symptoms, and reduced psychological well-being (Barajas, Castillo, & Balderrama, 2018; Fisher et al., 2010; Fisher, 2016). Although most individuals eventually recover from these experiences, the emotional recovery process varies considerably depending on personal, social, and environmental factors (Kongprapun, 2020; Sanguanwong et al., 2025).

In recent years, increasing attention has been paid to the role of physical environments in supporting psychological restoration and emotional recovery. Beyond conventional psychological interventions, everyday environments such as parks, waterfronts, libraries, cafés, and green spaces have been recognized as potentially restorative settings that

contribute positively to mental health and emotional well-being (Cao & Huang, 2023; Liu et al., 2018; Troughton et al., 2024). Research in environmental psychology suggests that exposure to natural and restorative environments can reduce stress, improve emotional regulation, and facilitate psychological recovery following adverse life experiences. Such environments provide opportunities for reflection, emotional regulation, temporary withdrawal from stressful situations, and the restoration of psychological balance. The relationship between people and places has long been a central concern in human geography, environmental psychology, and related disciplines. One of the most influential conceptual frameworks for understanding this relationship is the concept of Sense of Place, which refers to the emotional, cognitive, and experiential meanings that individuals attach to particular environments (Relph, 1976; Seamon & Sowers, 2008). Sense of Place encompasses feelings of attachment, identity, belonging, and personal meaning that emerge through interactions between individuals and their physical and social environments. Previous studies have demonstrated that emotional attachment to places may significantly influence human behavior, psychological well-being, and coping strategies during periods of emotional stress (Foote & Azaryahu, 2009; Williams & Stewart, 1998). From the perspective of environmental psychology, physical environments influence human emotions, perceptions, and behaviors through multiple mechanisms, including environmental perception, place attachment, restorative experiences, and emotional regulation (Gifford, 2013; Fang, Hassan, & Lepage, 2023). Environmental characteristics such as natural scenery, aesthetic quality, tranquility, safety, accessibility, and social atmosphere have been identified as important factors affecting individuals' emotional experiences and psychological restoration. In particular, natural environments and restorative landscapes have been found to promote emotional recovery by reducing cognitive fatigue and psychological distress while enhancing positive affect and emotional resilience (Kühn & Bobeth, 2022; Zhang, Zhang, & Rhodes, 2021). Although previous research has extensively examined the therapeutic effects of restorative environments and the psychological consequences of romantic relationship dissolution, relatively limited attention has been paid to the spatial dimensions of emotional recovery following heartbreak, particularly among university students. Existing studies have primarily focused on clinical interventions, coping behaviors, or psychological outcomes, while the role of everyday places and environmental experiences in facilitating emotional healing remains insufficiently understood. Furthermore, few studies have integrated the theoretical perspectives of Sense of Place and Environmental Psychology to investigate how physical environments contribute to emotional recovery processes after romantic disappointment.

Therefore, this study aims to investigate how university students select and experience places that support emotional recovery following experiences of heartbreak. Specifically, this study applies the concepts of Sense of Place and Environmental Psychology to examine the characteristics of places used for emotional recovery, analyze the factors influencing emotional attachment and place selection, and explore how environmental characteristics contribute to psychological restoration among university students. The findings are expected to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on emotional geography, environmental psychology, and therapeutic landscapes, while also providing practical implications for designing healing spaces and mental health-supportive environments within university campuses.

Research Objectives

This study aims to 1) examine the perceived characteristics of places selected by university students for emotional recovery through the perspectives of Sense of Place and Environmental Psychology; and 2) identify the environmental and place-related factors that students perceive as important for emotional recovery and place selection.

Literature Review

This research has used three related concepts or theories.

1. The Concept of Sense of Place

Sense of Place refers to the emotional attachment and feelings that people experience toward various locations and environments, ranging from small areas to entire countries (Foote & Azaryahu, 2009). Additionally, the term Sense of Place is also used to describe the unique characteristics or distinctiveness of a location (Williams & Stewart, 1998). The attachment to a location can be both positive feelings, such as comfort, safety, and well-being, while at the same time it can be negative feelings, such as fear, discomfort, or a sense of alienation from the place, which reflects the meaning of attachment, ownership, and a relationship that can recognize the identity of a place that is created and developed in the long term. It is absorbed through people's conscious experiences (Steele, 1981). Sense of Place consists of three stages according to the concept of Shamai (1991): the initial stage is feeling like a part of a place (Belonging to a Place), the middle stage is attachment to a place (Attachment to a Place) and the highest stage is commitment to a place (Commitment to a Place), which can be divided into seven levels: not having any sense of place, knowledge of being located in a place, belonging to a place, attachment to a place, identifying with the place goals, involvement in a place and sacrifice for a place. From these levels of Sense of Place mentioned above, it can be observed that it can reflect the developmental process of Sense of Place, meaning a person's sense of attachment to a place can develop from "no sense of place" to "sacrifice for a place". However, these levels can also indicate that each person may experience varying degrees of Sense of Place at different times and places.

2. Environmental Psychology Theory

Environmental Psychology is the scientific study of the interactions and relationships between people and their physical environment, including man-made and natural environments, the use and destruction of natural resources, and sustainability-related behaviors. It employs psychological principles related to perception, cognition, human responses to the environment, behavior modification, and design principles (Gifford, 2013; Fang, Hassan, & Lepage, 2023). The main concepts of environmental psychology include environmental perception and cognition, a concept developed from Gestalt psychology or gestaltism (Humphrey, 1924), which focuses more on perception and cognition than external behavior. It describes how people feel and interpret their environment, which is consistent with the concept of Cognitive Maps (Lynch, 1960). The Image of the City, which explained that people create a cognitive image of places that appear in the city through landmarks such as streets, landmarks, and boundaries of areas. Appears as a mental map. The image that is imprinted in the process eventually becomes an image in the concept of each person. The elements that help humans remember the city well are paths, edges, landmarks, nodes and districts, which create a bond with the place (Place attachment) and form a sense of place, such as the concept of Tuan's (1974) on Topophilia, which highlight that love and sense of ownership of a place arise from personal experiences and memories. This results in behavioral design and environmental management in the form of architectural design, cities and built environments, which can affect human well-being, such as the Prospect-Refuge Theory (Appleton, 1975; Dosen & Ostwald, 2013), which explain that people tend to prefer areas that feel safe while still allowing them to view the surrounding environment. Until now, environmental psychology has been studied from a variety of perspectives, such as focusing on place attachment studies, landscape therapy (Kühn & Bobeth, 2022), and a greater emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration (Nielsen et al., 2024), etc. These works have begun to emphasize methodologically diverse and problem-solving research to address the complexity of environmentally sensitive behaviors.

3. Concept of Broken Heart or Emotional Heartbreak

A Broken Heart or the emotion stemming from a broken heart is a concept related to the emotional and mental reactions that arise from the pain of relationships, especially in cases of losing a loved one, breaking up or rejection (Piver, 2009). This concept is based on both psychological and physiological perspectives, as a broken heart can affect the body and mind, leading to sadness, anxiety, depression or even physical symptoms such as chest pain, arrhythmia, which in some cases can be severe enough to cause Takotsubo Cardiomyopathy or "broken heart syndrome" (Fisher, 2016; Fisher et al., 2010).

Research Methods

This study employed a quantitative research methodology, collecting data through questionnaires administered to 1,200 undergraduate students at Silpakorn University, Sanam Chandra Palace Campus. The sample was determined using the stratified random sampling method to ensure balanced and representative participation from students across all faculties, thereby reflecting the characteristics of the entire undergraduate population at the Sanam Chandra Palace Campus. The sample size of 1,200 respondents was calculated based on the formula of Krejcie & Morgan (1970) for large populations (over 10,000 individuals), which recommends a minimum sample size of approximately 384. However, to enhance the accuracy of results and minimize sampling error, the researcher increased the sample size to 1,200 participants to better represent diversity in terms of gender, age, and academic disciplines, thereby strengthening the reliability of the statistical analysis. Consequently, the sample of 1,200 students was deemed appropriate to represent the undergraduate population of Silpakorn University, Sanam Chandra Palace Campus.

The research instrument was a questionnaire developed and adapted from the Sense of Place framework (comprising four dimensions) and Environmental Psychology theories. The instrument's content validity was examined by three experts, and its index of item-objective congruence (IOC) values exceeded the acceptable threshold of 0.50. The questionnaire was then pilot-tested with 30 respondents, yielding a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.80, indicating an acceptable level of reliability. The questionnaire was designed to measure both positive and negative perceptions toward places selected by students as sites for emotional recovery. It examined the reasons behind these choices based on the four dimensions of Sense of Place and concepts from Environmental Psychology. The instrument used a five-point Likert-type rating scale, with response options ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree."

The interpretation criteria for mean scores were as follows:

4.21 – 5.00 = Strongly Agree

3.41 – 4.20 = Agree

2.61 – 3.40 = Moderate

1.81 – 2.60 = Disagree

1.00 – 1.80 = Strongly Disagree

The collected data were statistically analyzed to examine correlations between variables. The results were summarized and presented using tables and charts to illustrate patterns and relationships. The conceptual framework of this research can therefore be summarized as follows.

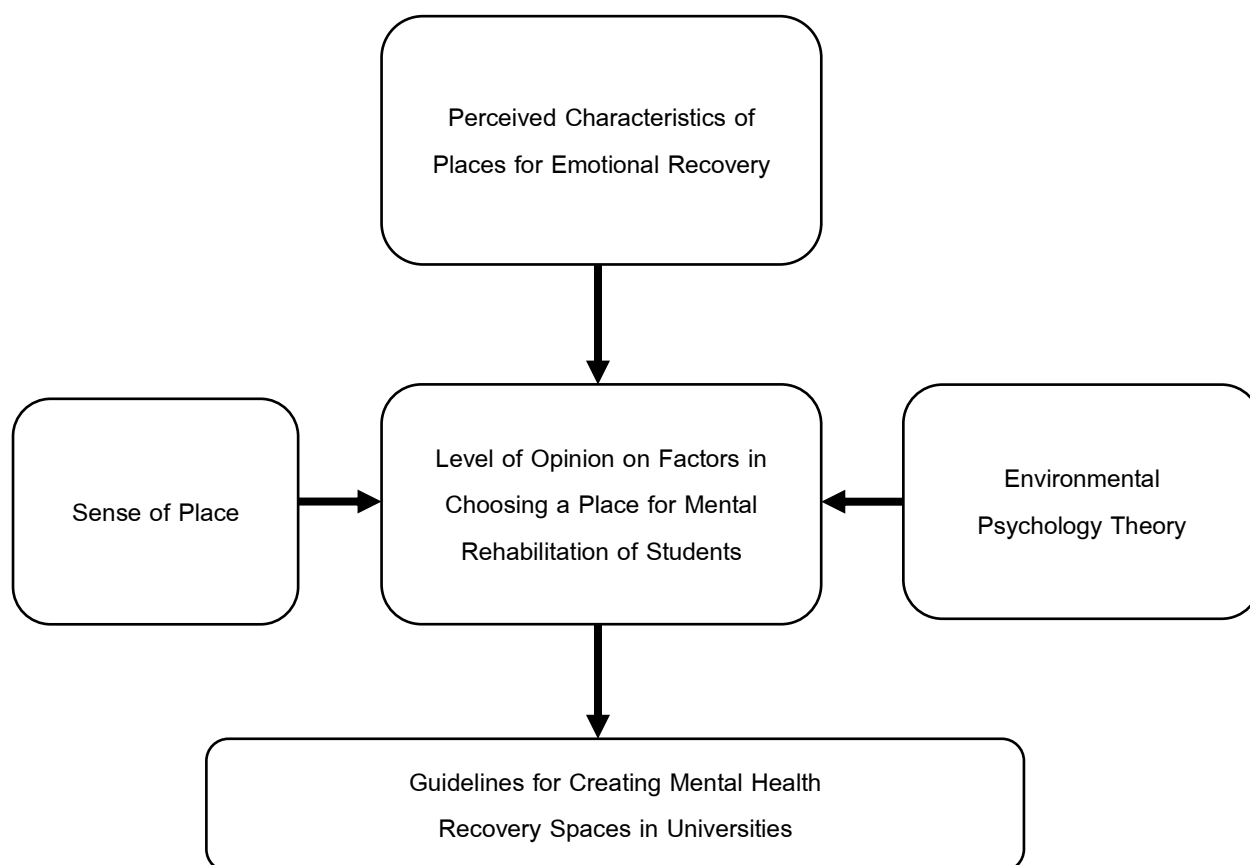


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

(Source: O-in, 2025)

Research Results

From the questionnaire collection, the researcher gathered data from 1,200 undergraduate students across five faculties at Silpakorn University, Sanam Chandra Palace Campus. The data in Table 1 shows that the majority of respondents were female students (58.75%), followed by male students (36.42%) and a smaller proportion identifying as LGBTQIA+ (4.83%). This indicates that female participants were nearly 1.6 times more represented than males. The presence of LGBTQIA+ respondents, although relatively low in percentage, reflects an inclusive sampling that acknowledges gender diversity within the student population. The gender distribution suggests that female students were more actively engaged in the study or were more available during data collection, which is consistent with gender ratios often observed in social science and humanities disciplines at Silpakorn University. In terms of age, most respondents were between 20 and 20.9 years old (first-year and second-year students) (29.33%), followed closely by those aged below 20 years (29.00%). Students aged 21–21.9 years accounted for 23.67%, while those aged 22 and above represented the smallest group at 18.00%. Regarding faculty distribution, the Faculty of Arts had the largest number of participants (29.67%), followed by the Faculty of Science (22.83%) and the Faculty of Education (20.67%). The Faculty of Engineering and Industrial Technology accounted for 15.50% of respondents, while the Faculty of Pharmacy had the smallest representation at 11.33%. This can be summarized as shown in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Factor	Categories	Number	%
Gender	Male	437	36.42
	Female	705	58.75
	LGBTQIA+	58	4.83
Age	< 20 years	348	29.00
	20 – 20.9 years	352	29.33
	21 – 21.9 years	284	23.67
	≥ 22 years	216	18.00
Faculty	Faculty of Arts	356	29.67
	Faculty of Science	274	22.83
	Faculty of Engineering and Industrial Technology	186	15.50
	Faculty of Education	248	20.67
	Faculty of Pharmacy	136	11.33

The data reveal a wide range of off-campus places that students identified as primary locations for emotional recovery. Respondents were asked to select only one location as their primary or most preferred place for emotional recovery. The most frequently selected location was the sea, river, or lake (33.17%), followed by home or dormitory (21.33%). These findings suggest that students predominantly associated natural, familiar, and relatively private environments with emotional recovery. Together, these two categories account for more than half of all responses (54.50%), indicating that students tend to seek tranquility and familiarity during periods of emotional distress. The popularity of sea, river or lake settings suggests a strong emotional connection between nature and healing. Water-based environments are often associated with calmness, reflection, and psychological restoration, aligning with the concept of restorative environments in environmental psychology. Similarly, homes and dormitories represent safe, private spaces where individuals can withdraw from social interactions and process their emotions in solitude. Next, moderate preferences were observed for public parks or fitness areas (12.08%) and entertainment venues such as pubs or bars (11.50%). These choices highlight two contrasting coping styles: 1) Active coping through physical activities and exposure to green spaces (parks, fitness areas) and 2) Social or escapist coping through entertainment and nightlife environments, where distraction and social interaction may help alleviate sadness. These settings reflect an effort to regain emotional balance either through physical engagement or temporary emotional release. Other natural settings like forests or mountains (6.75%) and religious places (4.33%) were also reported. These environments share a reflective or spiritual dimension, suggesting that some students prefer quiet, contemplative spaces or spiritual practices for emotional healing. On the other hand, the choice of cafés or coffee shops (3.75%) and close friends' houses (3.00%) represents interpersonal or semi-social recovery spaces, where comfort, conversation, and familiarity may play key roles in emotional recovery. The least chosen locations included travel to other provinces or countries (2.33%), theater/cinema (1.33%), and workplace/study place (0.42%). The low percentage of travel may be due to time and financial constraints among students. Cinemas and workplaces/study spaces are likely perceived as routine or non-therapeutic environments, offering little emotional refuge. These findings suggest that students value accessibility and emotional safety over novelty when seeking recovery spaces. This can be summarized in Table 2.

Table 2 Primary Locations Selected by Students as Places for Emotional Recovery

Place	Number	%
Sea/River/Lake	398	33.17
Home/Dormitory	256	21.33
Public Park/Fitness	145	12.08
Entertainment Venues/Pub/Bar	138	11.50
Forest/Mountain	81	6.75
Religious Place	52	4.33
Café/Coffee shop	45	3.75
Close friends' houses	36	3.00
Travel to other provinces or other countries	28	2.33
Theater/Cinema	16	1.33
Workplace/Study place	5	0.42
Total	1,200	100.00

Note: Respondents were asked to select one primary location that they considered most preferred or appropriate for emotional recovery following romantic disappointment.

When the selected locations were subsequently grouped into broader environmental categories, nature-based environments (sea, river, lake, forest, and mountain) accounted for 39.92% of the respondents. This finding suggests that natural environments were the most commonly selected type of setting for emotional recovery. Next, private and personal spaces (home, dormitory, friends' houses) made up around 24%, highlighting the importance of familiarity and privacy. And the last, social or entertainment-related spaces (pubs, cafés, cinemas) together contributed 16–17%, indicating that social interaction is a secondary coping mechanism rather than the primary choice. These findings suggest that students tended to associate natural and relatively private environments with emotional recovery, particularly in contexts involving emotional distress or romantic disappointment. However, this pattern should be interpreted as a reported preference rather than evidence of actual behavior among students with confirmed experiences of heartbreak.

When considering factors of sense of place concept, including characteristics of the place, environment of the place, social interaction and time, it was found that the environment of the place was the main factor affecting the perception of “sense of place” and the choice to travel to that place of the sample group, especially factors “The atmosphere of the place helps me feel relaxed.” ($\bar{X}$ = 4.68, SD = 0.43) and “I feel the natural environment of this place is good.” ($\bar{X}$ = 4.58, SD = 0.68) factors had the highest agreement, which was strongly agree, followed by the factor “I appreciate the aesthetic beauty of this place.” ($\bar{X}$ = 4.56, SD = 0.64), the factor “I spend sufficient time at this place.” ($\bar{X}$ = 4.52, SD = 0.62), and the factor “I am likely to revisit this place.” ($\bar{X}$ = 4.38, SD = 0.54), respectively. The factors with the least importance were the factor “I am interested in participating in activities organized at this place.” ($\bar{X}$ = 3.21, SD = 0.64) and the factor “I feel that this place has historical or cultural value.” ($\bar{X}$ = 3.35, SD = 0.98), which had a moderate level of agreement because it may indicate unwillingness to participate in activities at this place or lack of interest in the historical or cultural value of that place because of wanting to spend time alone to relax. Other factors can be summarized as shown in Table 3.

Table 3 Levels of Agreement on the Selection of Places in Relation to Sense of Place Factors

Factor	Item	Mean $\bar{X}$	SD	Level of Agreement
Characteristics	This place has a unique identity that makes it memorable. (Identity)	4.35	0.45	Strongly Agree
	I appreciate the aesthetic beauty of this place. (Aesthetic Appeal)	4.56	0.64	Strongly Agree
	I feel that this place has historical or cultural value. (History & Culture)	3.35	0.98	Neutral
	I can use this place to engage in activities I desire. (Functionality)	4.32	0.53	Strongly Agree
	Total	4.15	0.65	Agree
Environment	I feel the natural environment of this place is good. (Natural Environment)	4.58	0.68	Strongly Agree
	Environmental quality (e.g., cleanliness, noise level) is appropriate. (Environmental Quality)	4.24	0.72	Strongly Agree
	This place is easily accessible. (Accessibility & Connectivity)	4.12	0.83	Agree
	The atmosphere of the place helps me feel relaxed. (Atmosphere)	4.68	0.43	Strongly Agree
	Total	4.41	0.43	Strongly Agree
Social Interaction	I can easily meet and communicate with others at this place. (Interpersonal Relationships)	4.23	0.72	Strongly Agree
	I feel a sense of belonging to the community associated with this place. (Community Attachment)	3.98	0.76	Agree
	I am interested in participating in activities organized at this place. (Social Activities)	3.21	0.64	Neutral
	I feel safe and welcomed by people in this place. (Safety & Friendliness)	3.96	0.62	Agree
	Total	3.85	0.69	Agree
Time	I have positive memories associated with this place. (Experience & Memory)	4.25	0.64	Strongly Agree
	I am likely to revisit this place. (Continuity of Use)	4.38	0.54	Strongly Agree
	I spend sufficient time at this place. (Duration of Stay)	4.52	0.62	Strongly Agree
	Activities at this place align with times that are convenient for me. (Rhythm of Activities)	4.12	0.72	Agree
	Total	4.32	0.63	Strongly Agree

All four factors demonstrated relatively high mean scores (ranging from 3.85 to 4.41), indicating overall positive emotional attachment and satisfaction with the selected places. The environmental dimension received the highest mean score, indicating that natural surroundings, atmosphere, and environmental quality play a crucial role in emotional recovery. The highest-rated item, "The atmosphere of the place helps me feel relaxed" ($\bar{X} = 4.68$), reflects the importance of calm and soothing environments in restoring emotional balance. High scores in "Natural Environment" (4.58) and "Environmental Quality" (4.24) further support that students value clean, tranquil, and nature-connected settings. Although accessibility (4.12) received a slightly lower score, it still remained above the "agree" threshold, showing that convenient locations enhance emotional comfort. These findings align with environmental psychology theories, emphasizing how nature-based environments reduce stress and promote psychological well-being. The time-related dimension ranks second, highlighting the role of personal experiences, familiarity, and repeated engagement with the place. Students strongly agreed that they have positive memories (4.25), are likely to revisit (4.38), and spend sufficient time there (4.52).

The slightly lower mean for "Rhythm of Activities" (4.12) suggests that the convenience of timing may vary depending on students' schedules, but overall, the connection between time and emotional continuity is evident. This dimension reflects the long-term attachment process in the Sense of Place, in which students build emotional bonds through repeated visits and meaningful experiences over time. Then, the physical and functional characteristics of a place also contribute significantly to emotional recovery. High agreement on "Aesthetic Appeal" (4.56) and "Functionality" (4.32) reveals that beauty and usability enhance emotional comfort. "Unique Identity" (4.35) shows that students appreciate spaces with distinctive features or symbolic meaning. However, "History and Culture" received only a neutral response (3.35), suggesting that historical or cultural significance is not a major factor influencing emotional recovery for most students. Overall, this indicates that students prioritize personal and sensory experience over historical or cultural values when connecting emotionally to a place. Finally, the social dimension scored the lowest, though still within the "agree" level, suggesting that social connection is supportive but secondary in the recovery process. Students agreed on "Interpersonal Relationships" (4.23) and "Safety and Friendliness" (3.96), showing appreciation for positive social environments. However, "Community Attachment" (3.98) and "Social Activities" (3.21) indicate that students may prefer limited or selective social engagement after heartbreak. This reflects a tendency toward introspection and solitude, where social spaces are valued for emotional safety rather than for active participation. In summary, Silpakorn University students exhibit a strong sense of place rooted in environmental and experiential factors rather than in historical or social dimensions. Natural beauty, calming atmosphere, and meaningful time spent in the place are central to their emotional healing process after heartbreak. The findings highlight the therapeutic power of nature and familiarity, while suggesting that social involvement plays a secondary, supportive role in the overall sense of emotional recovery.

When surveying the characteristics of mental recovery places according to Environmental Psychology Factors from students, it was found that the overall mean score ($\bar{X} = 4.08$, $SD = 0.54$) indicates that students generally agree that the places they select contribute to their emotional recovery. Although the overall level falls within the "Agree" range rather than "Strongly Agree," the high mean values for certain items highlight specific environmental factors that are particularly effective in fostering mental and emotional well-being. First, "this place brings you a sense of calm and relaxation" ($\bar{X} = 4.26$, $SD = 0.48$) received the highest mean score, showing that a calm and tranquil atmosphere is the most crucial element of emotional recovery. Students perceive that being in serene, nature-rich, or aesthetically pleasant spaces helps alleviate emotional tension and stress. Next, "visiting this place helps you recover emotionally" ($\bar{X} = 4.24$, $SD = 0.42$) which closely follows the first, emphasizing that students recognize a direct therapeutic relationship between place and emotional healing. Such places serve as "restorative environments," helping students regulate emotions after heartbreak or stress. "This place makes you feel safe" ($\bar{X} = 3.98$, $SD = 0.78$) that shows safety is another important but slightly secondary factor. While most students feel safe in these places, the slightly lower score suggests variations depending on location type e.g., open public spaces (parks, riversides, lakes) may feel less secure than indoor or semi-private environments (cafés, libraries). "You feel emotionally attached to this place" ($\bar{X} = 3.36$, $SD = 0.63$) that students express moderate emotional attachment, implying that many selected spaces are temporary refuges rather than deeply meaningful places. Emotional connection may develop through repeated visits or shared memories, but at present, the relationship appears more situational than enduring. The last, "This place holds special meaning in your life" ($\bar{X} = 3.24$, $SD = 0.89$), which received the lowest mean score, reflecting that few students associate their chosen recovery places with deep personal or symbolic meaning. These locations may be chosen for their comfort and accessibility rather than emotional significance. The findings highlight that emotional recovery is primarily driven by environmental calmness and restorative atmosphere, not by long-term emotional symbolism or strong community attachment. Therefore, students seek safe, peaceful, and aesthetically soothing spaces that allow for solitude and reflection. This is summarized in Table 4.

Table 4 Levels of Agreement Regarding Emotional Recovery at Selected Places Based on Environmental Psychology Factors

Factor	Mean ($\bar{x}$)	SD	Level of Agreement
This place makes you feel safe.	3.98	0.78	Agree
This place brings you a sense of calm and relaxation.	4.26	0.48	Strongly Agree
You feel emotionally attached to this place.	3.36	0.63	Neutral
This place holds special meaning in your life.	3.24	0.89	Neutral
Visiting this place helps you recover emotionally.	4.24	0.42	Strongly Agree
Overall	4.08	0.54	Agree

Based on the above findings, universities including Silpakorn University should consider designing or enhancing campus environments that serve as “Healing Spaces.” which should integrate environmental psychology principles emphasizing relaxation, safety, and aesthetic comfort. This can be summarized as guidelines for designing and developing areas in universities to support important mental health rehabilitation, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Key Design and Development Guidelines

Factor	Design/Development Recommendation
Atmosphere & Calmness	Create quiet zones surrounded by greenery, water features, or shade; reduce visual clutter and noise.
Safety & Privacy	Provide semi-enclosed areas with seating, adequate lighting, and security while maintaining openness.
Nature Connection	Integrate trees, gardens, ponds, or small green courtyards to promote biophilic relaxation.
Comfort & Accessibility	Ensure easy access from main student routes; include benches, pavilions, or shaded walkways.
Emotional Symbolism	Encourage student art, quotes, or memory spaces (e.g., mural walls, emotional journals) to foster belonging.
Multi-function Use	Combine solitude zones with small social nooks for quiet group reflection or mindfulness activities.

The findings indicate that each location within the university reflects key environmental psychology factors that support emotional recovery and mental well-being. For instance, the Sa Kaeo Pond exemplifies the factor of Atmosphere & Calmness, as its calm water surface, natural shade, and quiet surroundings create a tranquil setting that allows students to reflect and find solitude. This space could be further enhanced by developing designated quiet zones surrounded by greenery and minimizing visual or auditory distractions. Similarly, the Thap Kaeo Library corresponds closely with the factor of Safety & Privacy. Its organized, quiet indoor environment offers a sense of security and emotional focus. To strengthen this, semi-enclosed seating areas with comfortable lighting and subtle privacy screens could be integrated, ensuring a balance between safety and openness. The Campus Gardens strongly relate to the Nature Connection factor. Their greenery and open spaces provide visual relaxation and contact with nature, promoting biophilic comfort. Additional features such as shaded pathways, small courtyards, or sensory gardens could further enhance students' emotional recovery. The Pavilion near the pond embodies Emotional Symbolism through its cultural ambiance and connection to natural elements like water and shade. This area could incorporate student-created art, inspirational quotes, or reflective installations to encourage belonging and self-expression.

Across all sites, the principles of Comfort & Accessibility and Multi-function Use can guide design improvements. Walkways and resting points should be easily accessible from main student routes, and spaces can be designed to support both solitary relaxation and quiet social interaction. Collectively, these design directions would transform existing

campus spaces into therapeutic environments that nurture students' emotional well-being and contribute to a more restorative university landscape. From the above it can be seen that on the current campus, many locations exhibit restorative environmental qualities consistent with the findings in Table 6.

Table 6 Potential Spaces for Emotional Recovery at Silpakorn University (Sanam Chandra Palace Campus)

Location	Design/Development Recommendation
 Sa Kaeo Pond	Calm water surface, natural shade, and quiet surroundings evoke peace and reflection, which is ideal for solitude and relaxation.
 Thap Kaeo Library	Quiet indoor atmosphere, safety, and a sense of order promote emotional focus and mental calm.
 Campus Gardens	Greenery and open space provide physical comfort and visual relaxation.
 Pavilion Near the Pond	A Blend of water, shade, and cultural setting enhances the reflective mood.

In conclusion, the findings suggest that environmental qualities, particularly calmness, natural beauty, and safety, play an important role in shaping students' perceptions of spaces for emotional recovery, whereas symbolic attachment to place appears to be less prominent. For university settings, the development of healing spaces, such as shaded ponds, green gardens, and quiet indoor study areas, may provide supportive environments for students' emotional well-being and recovery. These findings highlight the potential value of integrating environmental and place-based considerations into the planning and design of university spaces. However, personal experience of romantic heartbreak was not established as an inclusion criterion in this study. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted as reflecting students' reported preferences and perceptions of emotional recovery spaces rather than the behavioral responses of a population consisting exclusively of individuals who had experienced romantic heartbreak.

Discussion and Conclusion

From the analysis of factors influencing the selection of places for emotional recovery among students experiencing heartbreak at Silpakorn University, it was found that the causes of romantic disappointment are diverse and these factors influence the choice of places used for emotional healing. The locations that students commonly selected for recovery were typically quiet environments such as the sea, their homes or residences, and public parks. These settings help individuals feel relaxed and emotionally stable. This finding is consistent with the study by MacAllister, Bellanti, & Sakallasris (2016), which emphasized that a well-designed physical environment can have a positive impact on patients' healing and psychological recovery. However, the study by Steiner et al. (2015) discussed factors related to overall mental recovery but did not specifically focus on the role of "place" in that process.

When considering the Sense of Place factor, it was found that the environmental characteristics of a location play an important role in shaping individuals' emotional attachment and their choice to visit that place. In particular, the atmosphere that creates a sense of relaxation and connection with nature appears to be a key element. These findings are consistent with a study by Zhang, Zhang, & Rhodes (2021), which found that increasing walking connections and spending time in green spaces and peaceful natural environments can improve mood. At the same time, the Environmental Psychology perspective also reflects that participants often chose locations where they could feel calm and relaxed (Rahmania, 2024). Although the age groups in Rahmania's study differed from those in this research, the findings show a similar pattern. Moreover, Yim & Kwon (2025) suggested that changing one's surroundings or moving to a new environment can help alleviate depressive feelings and promote psychological recovery. The findings of this study indicate that places associated with emotional memories, especially those linked to romantic experiences, can function as "emotional therapy spaces" in certain contexts. Such spaces play an important role in the process of emotional healing and overcoming feelings of loss. This also highlights the potential for universities to take a more active role in creating "healing spaces" on campus. If the university environment supports tranquility and relaxation, students are likely to recover from emotional stress more effectively, which in turn may contribute positively to their overall well-being and academic performance.

Similarly, the development of green spaces within educational institutions has been shown to contribute to the improvement of students' mental health and psychological recovery (Hu et al., 2025; Troughton et al., 2024). This aligns with the findings of Li et al. (2026), who proposed key concepts for designing environments that promote psychological healing. These include incorporating natural light, increasing vegetation coverage, enhancing green space indices, improving accessibility to natural areas, and creating spaces that support mental restoration. Such design principles can

serve as valuable guidelines for developing university environments that effectively respond to students' emotional and psychological well-being.

Therefore, the design and development of campus spaces should focus on promoting mental well-being through features such as healing gardens, green areas, quiet walking paths, and nature-based relaxation corners (Khaidzir & Kamal, 2023; Yan et al., 2024). Moreover, these initiatives should be aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in particularly Goal 3 (Good Health and Well-being) and Goal 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), so that the physical environment of educational institutions can contribute not only to students' emotional recovery but also to the goals of social and environmental sustainability.

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