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Analysis of the Reason for Postponement of the Departure of the Hungarian Young Generation from Home

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Abstract: Based on the data shared by KSH, in Hungary, young people leave their parental home at an average age of 27, and 62% of the young generation between the ages of 18 and 34 still live at home. The aim of the research is to reveal the facts and reasons that lead young people to stay at home, within the framework of a literature review. In the course of qualitative semi-structured, in-depth interview research, students currently studying in Hungarian higher education are asked about the benefits of staying at home and the factors hindering moving out. The research concludes with an analysis of the results based on the in-depth interviews and a systematic summary of the factors that help and hinder the decision to move.

Keywords: Moving out; Living at home; Young generation; Studying

1 Introduction

The Central Statistics Office published a study in 2021 about young adults leaving the parental house at a more and more old age. The headline of the research highlighted that in Hungary the young generation lives in the parental household until the age of 27, and considering the age group of 18 to 34, 62% of young adults are still living with their parents. The aim of the research was to explore the influencing factors that may facilitate or hinder young adult's commitment in moving out from home. However, it was important to not only present the factors previously explored in the literature review, but to interview Hungarian university students and to explore their view, mindset on the subject, and those factors that may not appear in the literature research, while they may be present, affecting their everyday life and the motivation behind leaving the parental house.



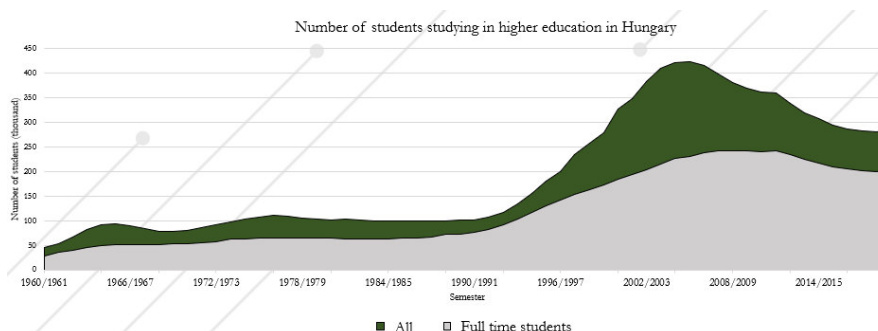
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The methodology of the research consists of an extensive Hungarian and international literature review which highlights the most common influencing aspects of the researched topic both in Hungary and in neighboring European countries, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The primary research was conducted in the framework of an in-depth, semi-structured interview in which Hungarian University students were interviewed. The goal of the interview was to allow students to freely express their mindset and thoughts about the researched subject. This may not have been possible in a form of a quantitative research. The aim was to discover new, earlier in the literature review unseen influencing aspects of moving out.

2 Literature review

The literature highlighted that for young adults in higher education, employment can be delayed until their mid-twenties. The first graph also shows that the number of university students fluctuated and significantly did not change between 1960 and 1990, but the number of students in higher education more than quadrupled between 1990 and 2006. The significant increase in the student's number in higher education can be traced back to the change in the Hungarian government after the 1990s. Older generations who could not enter higher education before, also appeared mostly in universities correspondence training. However, after graduating, the number of participants in correspondence training started to decrease again. There has been no significant decline in full-time training in recent years. Looking back to 2020, 75.230 students continued their studies at universities. (KSH, 2019) Based on this phenomenon, the average study time has risen from 13,8 years to 17,8 years in the country. The average student who starts their studies at the age of 7, completes higher education at the age of 24. (Kozma, 2010, OECD, 2000; OECD, 2010)



4. Figure: Number of students studying in higher education in Hungary

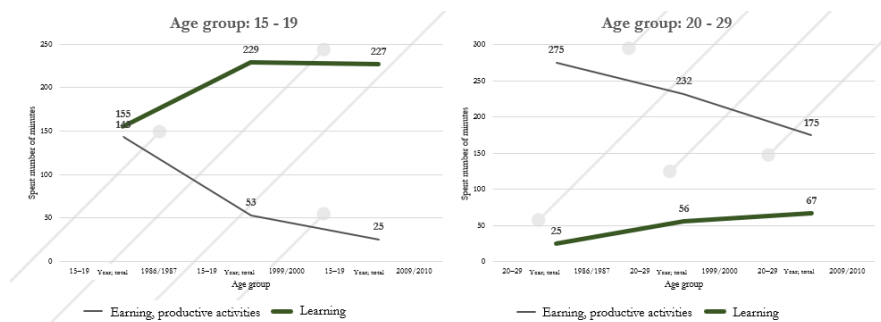
Source: KSH, 2021; Own editing



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Due to the prolongation of studies, young adults are working less and less at full time jobs. Bad experiences in the labor market for young people can be even more demotivating. For many, the idea that they will have to work 40 years after the completion of their studies can be very daunting. (Wolbers, 2007) The first graph shows a significant increase in learning and self-education, as well as a drastic decrease in earning and productive activities among 15- and 19-year-olds. The second diagram shows the age group between 20 and 29 in the same respect. We can see that earning and productive activities has declined in the case of the younger generations, and more and more people want to continue learning from this age group. (Takács-Murinkó, 2013)



5. Figure: Time spent on learning and working by different age groups

Source: KSH, 2021; Own editing

Other important aspect of young adults not leaving the parental house is the significant changes in the Hungarian real estate market. Market prices have risen significantly and steadily since 2013. Based on the year 2015, an increase of 66.4% can be found for new apartments and 57.2% for second-hand houses. (KSH, c, 2020) The development of rents before the pandemic period shows a similarly stable increase, reaching 45% based on 2016. Examining the same period, the average gross wages available in Hungary increased by 48.3%, while the minimum wages increased by 50.8%. (KSH, d, 2020) Unfortunately, it can be stated that if someone decides to rent an apartment alone and pays all the costs of the apartment on their own, they may not be able to set aside money from which they can later buy their own house or apartment. That is why a lot of young adults do not leave the parental house even after finishing their studies. Living at home allows them the build savings for their future. (Spéder, 2013)



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6. Figure: Changes in real estate prices, renting prices, average income

Source: KSH, 2021; Own editing

Based on previous surveys, the postponement of leaving the parental home may be influenced by the entry into the adulthood later as well. This new phenomenon called postadolescence is becoming more and more common among young adults. The transition of the modern generation from the young into the adult age can already be considered as a separate stage of life. This is the period in which a young person has already reached the age of majority and has the legal rights as an adult, but in contrast he or she does not and does not have to make responsible decisions. (Gábor, 2000) Thanks to rising living standards, more and more parents are able to provide their child with preferred living conditions that lead to adherence to childhood and the postponement of the need for moving out. Young adults in most cases would not be able to provide themselves the same quality of life that they can live in at home. (De Jong Gierveld, 1991)

Inspecting more soft factors, within the family, it is not only the financial background and the mentality behind education that can affect the independence of young adults. Bad relationships within the family, or the number of siblings, can be factors influencing the move out as well. (Murinkó, 2009) If more than one person lives in a household, it is difficult or even impossible to maintain private space. In the case of young adults who may have to grow up without biological parents or in a foster home, independence, and the need to develop their own private area tends to appear even earlier. Children of divorced parents and single children are much more attached to their caretakers, making them less likely to move out at young ages. (Murinkó, 2009)

More and more young adults are getting married only after setting up an independent household. The pursuit of the first home is significantly related to family building and having a first child. Young people are now increasingly living in independent households when their first child arrives. In contrast, the connection between the early stages of relationships and moving in together is becoming increasingly weakened today. By advancing their careers, more and more people are gaining the opportunity to become independent first, rather than establishing a



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stable relationship. Overall, based on the literature and earlier research on the field, moving together with loved ones, due to careers, and the mentality of the young adults towards relationships, are postponed as well to the late twenties or early thirties. (Murinkó 2009, 2010b)

It was important to examine the situation in the countries surrounding Hungary, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. Overall, it is visible that the number of years spent at home by young people is increasing as we move south - east from north - western Europe. Hungary is in the middle of the results for the 18-34 age group with a home living rate of 62%. The earliest appearance of independence is most significant in the Nordic countries, led by Sweden. Only 20-30% of the surveyed population lives with their parents. Hungary is ahead of the neighboring countries in this area, with the average number of years spent at home in Croatia reaching 33 years. 70% of the society between the ages of 18 and 34 does not live in their own household. (Gyimesi, 2019)

Thanks to rising student loans, rents and stagnant salaries, an unprecedented proportion of members of the younger generation are still living at home in the United States and the UK as well. American society is currently facing an earlier unexperienced phenomenon, with an increasing number of young people leaving home to complete their studies. 22% of young adults with a degree are forced to return to their parental house finishing their studies. Overall, in many cases, young people are still unable to start their independent life in the United States. (Min, 2019; Beresin, 2014)

Similar to Hungary, the proportion of young adults living at home in the United Kingdom has started to increase significantly considering the age group of 15- and 34-year-olds. The number of young people still living at home increased by 17% in higher-than-average-income households. Research from the ONS shows that men stay in the parental home on average longer than women. Even in the 20-34 age group, 28% of young adults still live at home. Referring to the results of 2020 estimates, approximately 289.000 men and 97.000 women live with their parents even after the age of 30. (ONS, UK, 2020)

Research by the Pew Research Center in the United States shows that young people between the ages of 25 and 35, whether living with their parents or on their own, move significantly less than members of previous generations. While in 1964, 83% of the surveyed age group answered that they had lived at the same address in the previous year, in 2000 this percentage increased to 86, and in 2016 to 91. The growth illustrates that young adults are facing a much more difficult circumstances than members of previous generations, not only when they move out, but even when they try to move to a new location or living area. Thanks to soaring real estate prices and credit facilities in the United States, opportunities for young people are now much more limited. (Fry, 2017)



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3 Primary research

In the second phase of the research, the factors motivating and hindering moving out from home were explored within the framework of a semi-structured, focus group in-depth interview research. The in-depth interview survey included 16 students who graduated from the University of Óbuda or are still pursuing a master's degree. Considering the grouping examined, 8 of the respondents no longer live in the parental home, while 8 still did not embark on the path of full independence. The research is not representative, its aim was to discover from firsthand, the mind set of young adults and their thoughts on leaving the parental house. The goal was to highlight motivating or demotivating aspects that did not appear in the literature before.

The results show that a significant proportion of respondents do not connect an ideal age to moving away from home at all. The condition of leaving the parental house can be mostly determined by achieving a university degree and a stable financial background. Respondents who also determined a specific age for moving out, had very divisive responses, with the optimal age for relocation ranging from 18 to 30 years. After finishing the studies in higher education, most respondents agreed that it is definitely time for the young generation to start becoming independent. The age of 30 revealed in the secondary research returned again as an absolutely acceptable final limit for moving out from home.

It was clear from the respondents' feedback that overall, they have a good relationship with their parents. According to their own statements, the possible divorce of the parents and the involvement of a new partner in their everyday life did not affect the moving out from home. In several cases, the responses indicated a level of such good relationship with their family that could lead to an extension of years spent at home. In these cases, the young adults interviewed feel comfortable in their home atmosphere. They share the same lifestyle and views as their parents. They do not necessarily feel the need to move out of the home.

All respondents leaving the parental house at an early stage of their lives, did this because they started their studies or work far from their original living place. However, for these subjects, it can be stated that they did not move back to their parents' home after finishing their studies. During their higher education, they learnt and enjoyed independence and they did not want to give up its perks after completing the university. Based on the respondents, it can be stated that living in dormitories can speed up the process of moving away from home at a younger age. In addition, the answers included the factors of pursuit of independence and solitude, the need to break out of the system of parental rules.

Among the respondents, it can be stated that the majority of the respondents received financial support from their parents to help them move out. In several cases, the ownership of the apartment if self in question was financed completely



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by the caretakers. Interviewees who did not receive support reported having the same good relationship with their parents, so this factor did not affect the issue of financial contribution.

It can be stated that in some cases where the parents have financed the property for their child, the young adult prefers to spend the holidays and the summer period in the parental house. The online education caused by the pandemic and reasons like returning from abroad appear as additional reasons for the issue of returning home temporarily. Overall, although moving home after completing the studies illustrated in the literature review does not appear significantly, high proportion of young people interviewed who have moved away from home in the past have made the decision at least once to return to their parental house temporarily for some reason.

The interviewed students still choose to stay at home due to various reasons. Cheapness, the simplicity of staying at home, and the lack of necessary income to move out appear to be significant reasons. However, in the case of one respondent, the need to postpone adolescence emerges from the literature review. In the case of the interviewed student, it can indeed be said that, according to his own confession, he still wants to enjoy his “childhood”, he does not want to enter the adult life so early and embark on the path of independence. According to the student, the motivation of moving out is hampered by the idea that beyond his studies, only 40 hours of work a week awaits him. He still wants to fully enjoy his remaining university years.

In many cases, therefore, it can be said that young people who move away from home because of their studies love the benefits of separation. When they already have the opportunity to try their independence, they value living at home differently. In contrast, to the in-depth interview research, the opposite of this factor can also be found, although in this case too, the interviewed roommate did not start a completely independent life but moved home because of a negative relationship with a roommate. Therefore, university studies can facilitate the process of self-reliance and lead to earlier relocation from home. However, it is clear that young adults may later be forced to move home because of financial reasons.

In the literature it was common that the relationship with the parents were only considered in a negative manner. Children with bad connection to their care takers tend to leave the household at an earlier stage in their lives. However, the interviews highlighted a more positive aspect of the situation. The questioned students told that because of the great relationship with their parents, they do not plan to leave the household. The primary research showcased that a good relationship with the caretakers can be a demotivational aspect of moving out. Parents were often considered as friends, and the asked student does not have any problem with living home with them.

The asked sample highlighted that being in a relationship is a less and less motivating factor for leaving the parental house. The interviewees often answered



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that they do not plan to move in with their partners together. They do not see the potential of long-term relationship and do not feel like taking this next step with their partners together, while they do enjoy their company overall, living separately. Based on the research it can be stated that relationships do not motivate the moving out as much as in the past.

Most of the literature on the research topic was created before the pandemic period, but the primary research highlighted a new aspect of influencing factors considering the topic. Asked students stated that under the pandemic period they moved back to their parental house. They had to leave their college, or it was just easier to maintain life and the lockdown from home. These students stated that they enjoyed returning to the parental house. They rediscovered the perks of living at home, and they got used to it again. Under the lockdown period they had to make less significant decisions and they did not have the opportunity to socialize as much as before. The answers showed that the interviewed persons must relearn independence again and they need to socialize after the pandemic period.

4 Results

Within the framework of the in-depth interview research, the factors that motivate and hinder moving away from home were surveyed among university students. The interview allowed the exploration of diverse responses and individual situations that did not necessarily appear in the literature review.

The responses revealed that young adults do not define a specific age they would find suitable for moving. Leaving the parental home is mostly associated with completing their university studies and finding a stable job. Young people who have already moved away from home at a younger age because of their studies find it more acceptable to leave the parental house at an early age and have no plan to move back again after completing their studies.

Respondents who had already moved away from home were often supported financially by the parents. Respondents have a good relationship with their caretakers. This positive connection often demotivated the asked population to move out. They would miss their parents and do not see any problem with living at home.

Based on the results of the survey, being in a relationship does not speed up the process of moving out for a significant proportion of respondents. However, the absence of a reliable partner can make it difficult to break away from the parental home as well. The interviews revealed that the pandemic period affected the living conditions of young people and the process of relocation in several cases. For the sake of simplicity and savings, some respondents moved home and continued their



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studies from home, and according to their own confession, they rediscovered the perks of living at home. After a pandemic period, they need to re-learn to become independent and take care of themselves. The student reported that during the viral situation, it was quite easy to get used to the benefits provided by the parental home again.

The results of the in-depth interviews undoubtedly show the extended age of leaving the parental home and can the changing mindset of young adults. The absolute final age was set by the respondents at the age of 30 to move out. Based on some responses, they are having difficulties in stepping into adulthood. The respondent is deterred from moving out by the fear of independent life and the decades of work that awaits him. Thus, the attitudes of respondents in the area are divided. A significant proportion of respondents who have already moved away from home do not plan to return after obtaining a qualification in higher education.

5 Conclusion

Concluding the research, it can be stated that the process of independence is becoming increasingly unique. There is no given age anymore where it can be stated that a young adult has to leave the parental house. The primary research showcased that the interviewees connect the leaving of the parental house with the end of their university studies and with achieving fix income. The final date for moving out based on the primary and secondary research is considered to be the year of 30 today.

It must be stated that those students who got the opportunity to leave the parental house early because of work or their studies, stated that they are glad that they learnt independence at an early stage of their lives, and after their studies they do not wish to return to the parental house.

Based on this result, our suggestion is that it would be beneficial for young adults to be able to try independence and living separately even for a short period of time. Where the financial circumstances allow, parents should support their children achieving the basic knowledge of leading a household and by providing the opportunity to try living separately. It was clear that young adults are often demotivated to move out based on fictional fears, and thoughts without real experience to build upon. Even if the experimental moving out is unsuccessful the young adult would have real knowledge of the ups and downs of leaving the parental house and may be more motivated in the future to leave.



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