

**Impressions of Youth
in The Light of
Empirical Data**

REFRACTION

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Impressions of Youth in The Light of Empirical Data



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FOREWORD

More and more of our daily activities take place in the digital space, transforming the way we live our lives. At the same time, our optimism and faith in technology have been shaken, certainly not independently of the fact that the various crises of our times are reinforcing each other in our visions of the future. In the past, the prevailing zeitgeist made it unthinkable that a pandemic such as COVID-19 would cause the devastation we have experienced. It was believed that given our advancements in medical science, Europeans would never have to experience an epidemic of such dire consequences. We were also convinced that through our highly developed political systems we would always be able to resolve our conflicts through diplomacy and prevent destructive wars. But as we can see, black swan events still occur, and we can count on the future to bring more surprises.

Our techno-optimistic view of the world has been challenged, and the doubters are gaining strength. Technological revolutions have typically been accompanied by negative, and in some cases even dystopian visions of the future, in which the new world order that could emerge from today's processes is described as worse than the present one. The last decade can be best described with the terms 'polycrisis' or 'permacrisis', which refer to a period of permanent crisis. In addition to the economic and security crises, concerns about artificial intelligence are also more frequent. Increasingly, technological optimism is being replaced by calls for regulation – but for social researchers it is important to take a technorealist stance and explore technology's impact on society.

Our 2024 research, focussing on young people and technology, was conducted in this spirit. We looked at the attitudes of young Hungarians aged 15-29 toward artificial intelligence; how influencers, our 'heroes' of the times, affect the way young people think; how their texting habits are changing; and to what extent has the search for relationships moved to online platforms. Two topics seem to stand out for being only indirectly related to technology: in chapter six, we look at the perception of intergenerational solidarity and self-funded retirement in this age group, starting from the premise that major societal changes, including the advancement of digital culture, have significantly altered the youth phase of life, and thus the system of relations between young and old has also changed. Discussing young people always involves thinking ahead into the future as well, and thus we conclude our study by looking at possible future scenarios for the younger generations.

Although our main target group remains young people, we recommend our report to everyone, as the changes that affect young people have a significant impact on our lives, too.

Georgina Kiss-Kozma and Levente Székely

1. ATTITUDES CONCERNING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Young people have a generally positive attitude toward technological innovation, but there are some who are sceptical about technological progress. Today though it is all about revolutionary changes in artificial intelligence: One in ten Hungarians aged 15-29 regularly use ChatGPT or similar applications.

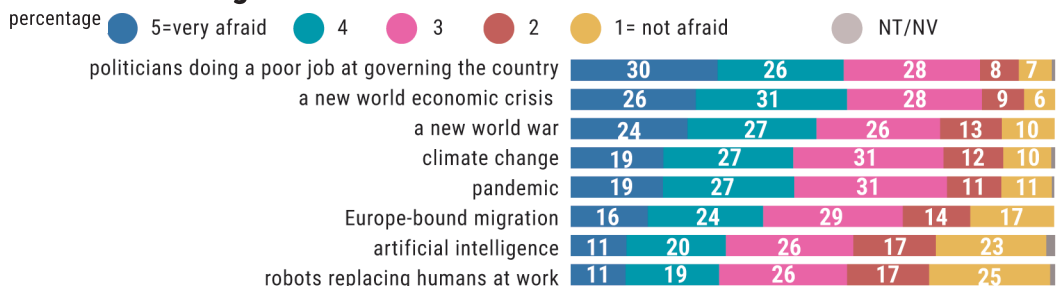
A large part of our leisure time is spent in a mediated environment, and this is particularly the case for young people. Research in recent years has shown that although screen-based activities have proliferated during the COVID-19 epidemic due to online teaching and working from home, the structure of leisure activity has shifted towards personal connections (Székely – Veszelszki, 2021). However, the renewed appreciation of personal connection and the resolution of the pandemic did not go hand in hand with the recovery of youth communities as recent research has shown, and the lack of friends and communities remains one of the most pressing generational problems for young people (Kiss-Kozma - Székely, 2023). Nevertheless, the young generation has a fundamentally positive attitude toward technology.

In a 2023 survey by the Youth Research Institute, we also looked at young people's perception of danger, including potential dangers common in dystopian future scenarios – or relevant even today. Although we have just left the COVID-19 epidemic behind us, the fear of another one is as alarming as climate change. Viewing from the shadow of a looming war, half of young people surveyed (51%) see the risk of a world war as a threat. The most significant fears for

The greatest fears for the future relate to a next economic crisis and bad governance.

the future centre around a next economic crisis and bad governance, which the majority of respondents (56-57%) fear. This compares with four-tenths (40%) who fear problems accompanying migration to Europe. Separate from these are fears stemming from technological advancements, such as artificial intelligence (AI) or the proliferation of robots, which are a concern for 1 in 3 respondents (31-32%) (Figure 1).

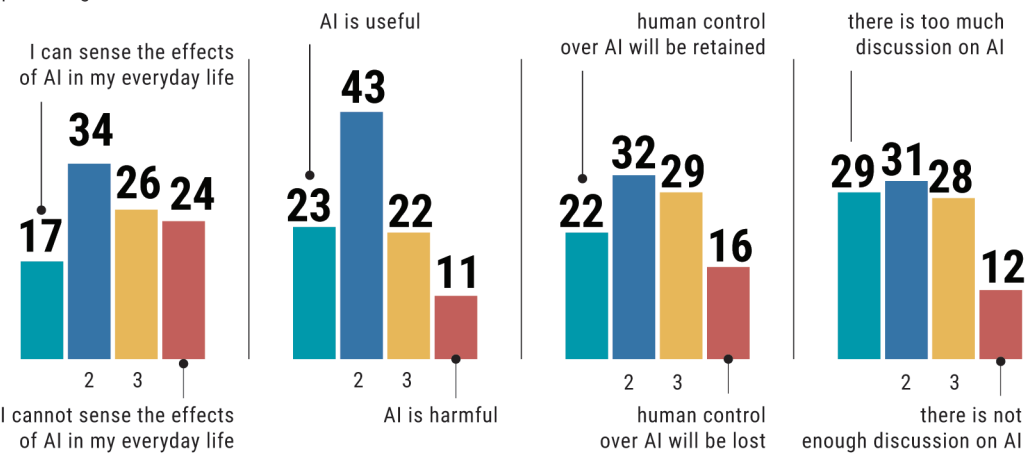
Fears surrounding various issues



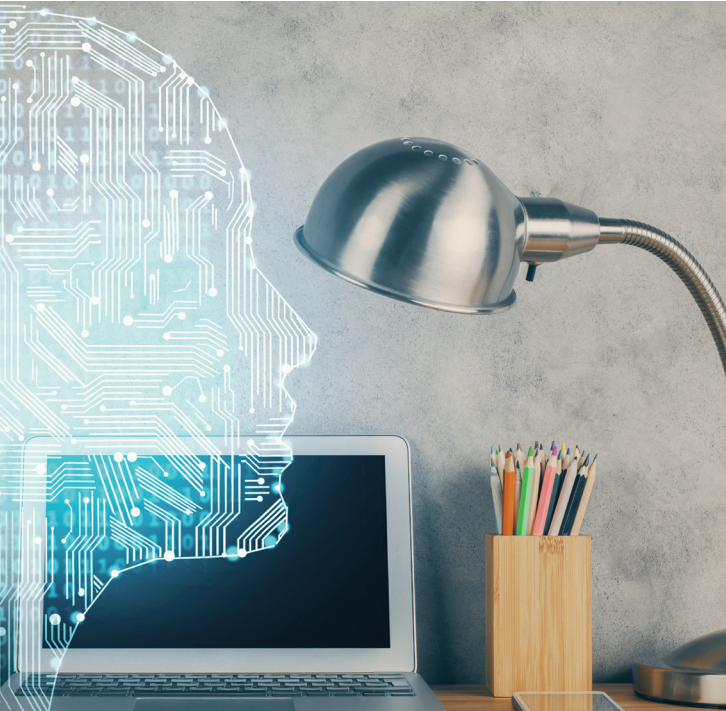
Q: How concerned are you about...? Please respond on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means you are not concerned at all, and 5 means that you are very concerned. Base: All respondents (N=1000); percentage distribution. Source: Youth Research Institute, 2023

Young people are a particularly important social group for AI development, as they are the main innovators and early adopters. Surveys by the Youth Research Institute in 2024 show that half of young Hungarians aged 15-29 feel the impact of AI in their daily lives. The majority of respondents consider AI to be useful, but there are significant gender differences, with more males finding AI useful. More frequent use is also associated with a more positive attitude: a higher proportion of those who have only tried ChatGPT or a similar application once are sceptical about its usefulness. The rise of concerns among young people is also reflected in the fact that 15-29-year-olds are divided on whether or not human control over AI can be maintained. A slim majority is confident that humans can retain control over AI. There is also a significant gender divide, with the majority of females fearing that control over it could be lost (Figure 2).

Perception of Artificial Intelligence (AI)



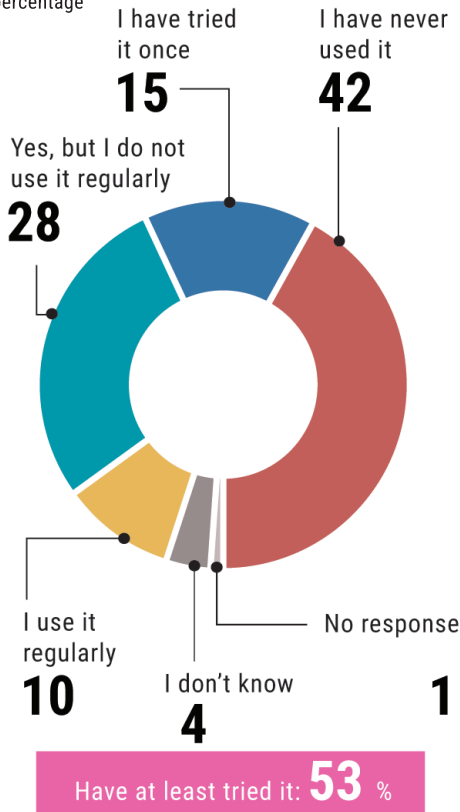
Base: All respondents (N=1000); percentage distribution. Source: Youth Research Institute, 2023



The research also shows that half of the young age group have used ChatGPT or similar AI-powered tools, and 1 in 10 uses them regularly. Furthermore, there is significant information noise associated with AI: The majority of 15-29-year-olds surveyed believe that there is too much discussion on AI, which reflects not only the ethical and regulatory concerns of developers, but also the responsibility of all those speaking out on the subject, and indicates the presence of a moral panic (Figure 3).

Use of ChatGPT

percentage



Q: Have you used ChatGPT or similar LLMs yet?
Base: All respondents (N=1000); percentage distribution.
Source: Youth Research Institute, 2024



Concern for the loss of mankind's intellectual status in the academic discourse as soon as the efficiency of generative language models had become apparent: Why would we need to think or acquire lexical knowledge, if artificial intelligence thinks for us and its knowledge base is much richer than ours? It may be worth recalling the times when the first books appeared, and that they, too, stored more information than humans could memorise. However, the question that still needs to be answered is this: How can students' knowledge be assessed once the new AI tool is apparently sufficient to complete schoolwork easily and accurately? AI generated content, available in unlimited quantities, creates a new situation that goes beyond the tasks assigned in school. This new kind of digital literacy is increasingly important for young people, too, and it enables them

to make the right choices when it comes to selecting from such an abundance of content.

A few years ago, we interviewed Hungarian adults to see whether they think of something rather ordinary or abstract, near in the future or distant when they hear the term "artificial intelligence". The survey results were not surprising, with the majority of respondents associating artificial intelligence with something more abstract and in the distant future. Without going into detail about the different technologies utilising artificial intelligence (AI), we will just mention the basic distinction that there are two ways of understanding AI. On the one hand, it can be understood as general machine intelligence similar to human intelligence, and on the other, it can be understood as narrow solutions that



are available for everyday use, such as in search engines, recommendation algorithms, image stabilisers, and various chat programs. AI solutions have invaded the digital communication space in a spectacular fashion, disrupting it with innovations such as generative language models and deepfake content. New developments based on AI are announced almost daily – many of them specifically for the world of media and communication. In Amsterdam, for example, the world’s first AI gallery has opened recently, showcasing works created by algorithms. Services such as Boomy and BandLab’s SongStarter are being launched, allowing one to write music without any musical training, by following text instructions only. At the University of Osaka and Budapest University of Technology, AI-based solutions are being developed for thought visualisation and screening for depression using speech analysis, respectively.

Thanks to the accumulation of data, AI developments are generating extremely rapid and high-impact changes. Mass deployment allows for continuous testing, setting the stage for exponential progress. One of the best-known and arguably most spectacular solutions, ChatGPT was launched in autumn 2022, reached an audience of 1.5 billion a year later, and is now in its fourth version. Appreciation for the benefits such progress has produced is matched by the concerns it has raised: Concerns about exposure to technology in general and about AI specifically – partly as a result of bad experiences, partly from the speed of development – and the fact that we may not really know what is happening “in the box”. We understand the questions, the prompts, and recognise the output produced by AI, but do not know how it is generated. Media content created with the help of AI is fascinating but also points out our vulnerability. We are less and less able to tell whether an image, video or audio content is authentic or was created by artificial intelligence.



Will this technological revolution lead to further loneliness or will we, humans, turn to each other again? In the future, smart machines may become our chat partners, friends and companions, and by simulating human communication with ease they may even take the place of human relationships. We are already seeing examples of this today, with chatbots being increasingly used for more impersonal communication and AI-based assistants for simpler tasks. But to what extent will we want this? Will we fear that communication and content through digital intermediaries is merely images and sounds manipulated by AI? Will we be able to regulate AI in a reassuring way? In some respects, tools like ChatGPT are already more efficient, more accurate and perhaps even more creative than humans. Today's young people will have to cope in a world where there is an endless supply of AI-generated content, and they will have to be able to select the few that are interesting and useful. This will certainly require a new level of digital literacy.

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AI

II. INFLUENCERS AND THEIR IMPACT ON YOUNG MINDS



II. Influencers and Their Effect Levente Székely on The Way Young People Think

The most important arena for political socialisation is the family. Whereas decades ago the most significant challenger to family socialisation came from school or peer groups, today its primary source is the new media. Influencers with a direct voice have moved into our living rooms, our kids' rooms, they sit with us at the Sunday table, even accompany us [to the bathroom] or lull us to sleep at night they lull us to sleep. But could they be also influencing our political values?

Many remember the story of Zente, a young Hungarian boy with spinal muscular atrophy (SMA1) from five years ago, who raised funds for his life-saving medical treatment through public donations. But few recall that the much-needed HUF 700m was raised in record time, thanks in large part to the support of influencers, YouTubers and internet celebrities. Zente's story has taught us that there is a huge potential in Hungary for [influencers] to also support civic causes (as well).

For the February 16, 2024, child protection rally, influencers were able to bring hundreds of thousands of people onto the streets of Budapest, [a feat] the anti-government political community had previously failed to achieve despite many attempts. The event, unprecedented both in media history and public life, is a testament to influencers' ability to stimulate activity, and has led many to ask whether they can also shape the political views of young people, who are avid consumers of their content, and if they are able to convert online engagement into real life action.

Recently, there has been considerable media attention on influencers' comments regarding public issues, particularly their role in shaping political opinion. Political actors in Hungary also pay close attention to social media, but upon seeing influencers' ability to stimulate activity, many may have wondered to what extent they are able to shape the political views of young people.

The role of the family is indisputable in political socialisation. The family is the primary medium for the transmission of values and norms, a medium which has been present from time immemorial, and is the basic building block of society. All of the

various approaches to socialisation see the family as a fundamental medium that is complemented by the school or later the workplace, and by the physical

Considerable media attention has been surrounding influencers' stance on public issues and their role in shaping political opinion in particular.

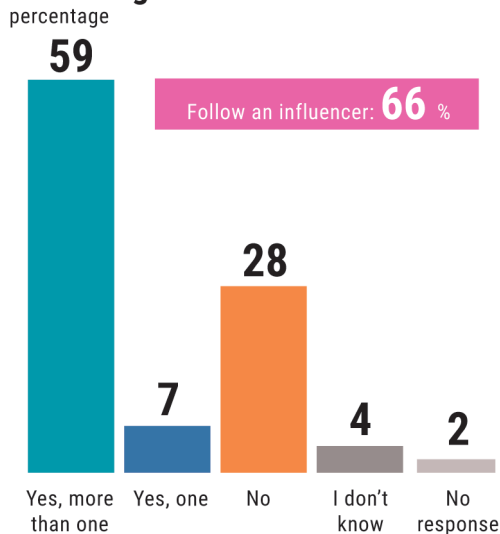
or mediated spaces of leisure. In the process of socialisation, any one of these agents can play a reinforcing role but can create conflict as well. This conflict between socialisation agents may arise from the fact that the values and norms emphasised by one agent may contradict those emphasised by another, or from the fact that each agent is present simultaneously in time and space. Social media use during family dinners, online messaging during class is a daily occurrence¹ that is often a source of conflict. The potential for conflict between social media can exacerbate the differences that naturally exist between generations. However, young Hungarians are not typically opposed to their parents' values (Székely, 2020).

Our large sample survey looked at what sources of information are considered important by 15-29-year-olds. The role of the media, including the new media, is shown by the fact that television and internet news portals come second after family and friends. The difference is significant, with three-quarters of the respondents considering family and friends to be an important source of information, compared to 1 in 2 respondents considering the most popular forms of media to be important. Just behind in terms of popularity are television and internet news portals, followed by social media platforms. Typically, while the importance of interpersonal family/friend relationships is marginally dismissed by young people (7%-7%), 1 in 5 of those surveyed said that television, online news portals and social media were not considered to be an important source of information. The next items in the ranking remain well behind in terms of importance. Only 4 in 10 (42%) stress the importance of books, while a third (32%) think the same of radio. Their own followers are also considered an important source of information by almost a third (31%), while influencers are cited by 1 in 4 in the 15-29 age group. Their role is typically reduced with increasing age. This is similar to what happens in relation to education, where the proportion of those who feel that information from influencers is important decreases as the level of educational attainment gets higher (Székely – Veszelszki, 2021) (Figure 1).



A Youth Research Institute survey on influencer content shows that the majority of young people do follow influencers/YouTubers. Most of them follow more than one (59%), but two-thirds (66%) follow at least one. There is a difference among genders, with a higher proportion of females following influencers and typically more than one. The most engaged age group is that of 18-24-year-olds, where nearly three-quarters (71%) follow influencers. (Figure 2)

Following influencers



Q: Do you follow people of influence aka influencers/YouTubers on social media? Base: All respondents (N=1000); percentage distribution. Source: Youth Research Institute, 2024

It happens less often that influencers selflessly support a cause, as they more often produce sponsored content that is generally well tolerated by their audience. Research data from the Youth Research Institute suggest that while the impact of influencers is not negligible, the majority of young people continue to seek out such content for entertainment purposes. Previous research has also shown that followers approve of content creators generating advertising revenue through their content. More than half of 15-29-year-olds (54%) surveyed consider it more or less acceptable for an influencer/YouTuber they follow to promote products and services.

One might think that standing up for civic causes does not involve financial gains while increasing credibility, but the matter is not as clearcut. Almost a third of 15-29-year-olds (30%) surveyed believe that influencers who support civic causes are more

credible, but almost the same proportion (28%) disagrees with this statement. Young people are thus divided on the opinion-shaping behaviour of influencers on social issues. A higher proportion of those who follow more than one content creator (38%) and a lesser number those who do not consume influencer content (17%) said that such influencers are more credible. The gender divide is also significant, with over a third of females (35%) and a quarter of males (25%) believing that content creators who take a stand on social issues are more credible.

For young people, however, social issues and politics do not mean the same thing. Previous research has shown that a good number of those open to social issues regard politics as something different from the dictionary definition of the word. For them, politics is more about political party mudslinging than discussing societal problems, therefore, politics is the business of politicians, and influencers should not get involved. It is a remarkable finding that there are more followers who believe that it is not right for the content producer they follow to take a stand on political issues (36% vs. 23%), and it seems that there is no difference of opinion between the different social groups, and socio-economic characteristics show no difference in the matter, either.

Extending the question beyond followers, it can be observed that nearly two-thirds of young Hungarians aged 15-29 (63%) do not consider it important to find out the political views of an influencer. Those who follow several content creators typically feel this to be less important (10%) than those who only follow one influencer (25%), but even among them there are almost twice as many who do not consider it important to be aware of an influencer's political views.

Through conveying certain values and norms, influencer-generated content may incorporate ideological elements even in the absence of direct political messages. Even communication, the very use of language may serve as a model for young people. International research shows that the values and norms conveyed by content creators do not always match those of the family or school in the traditional spaces of socialisation. Do influencers' words carry more weight than those of the parents? Could YouTubers become role models?

A fifth of 15-29-year-olds (20%) surveyed said that the opinions of influencers or YouTubers are more important to young people than those of their parents. Half of all respondents (50%) disagree with this statement, formulating the majority opinion. Looking at the question by age group, the proportion of respondents in agreement with the statement decreases as the ages increase: 25 percent of 15-17-year-olds, 20 percent of 18-24-year-olds, and 14 percent of 25-29-year-olds agree that influencers'

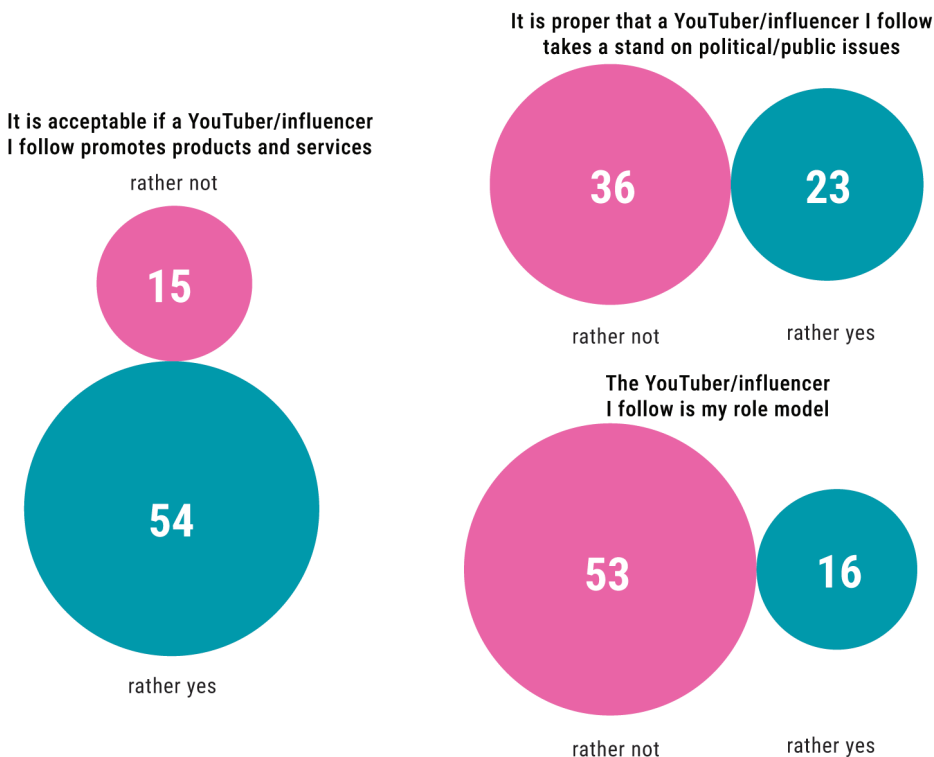
opinions carry more importance than those of parents.

Influencers are not perceived as role models by the majority of young people (53%), with only 16 percent saying that they agree or strongly agree with the statement that the influencer they follow (also) acts as a role model for them. Influencers are perceived as role models by young males and females in equal proportion, but with significant differences in age. Typically, younger people are more likely to think of the influencer they follow as a role model, with one-fifth (22%) of 15-17-year-olds, 17 percent of 18-24-year-olds and 13 percent of 25-29-year-olds considering an influencer they follow as a role model.

Overall, 7 percent of 15-29 year-olds in Hungary say that the opinions of influencers carry more weight for their generation than those of their parents, and that they consider a content creator they follow as a role model, which also reinforces the importance of personal relationships, and especially of the family, among young people. (Figure 3, 4)

Young Hungarians' perception of influencers

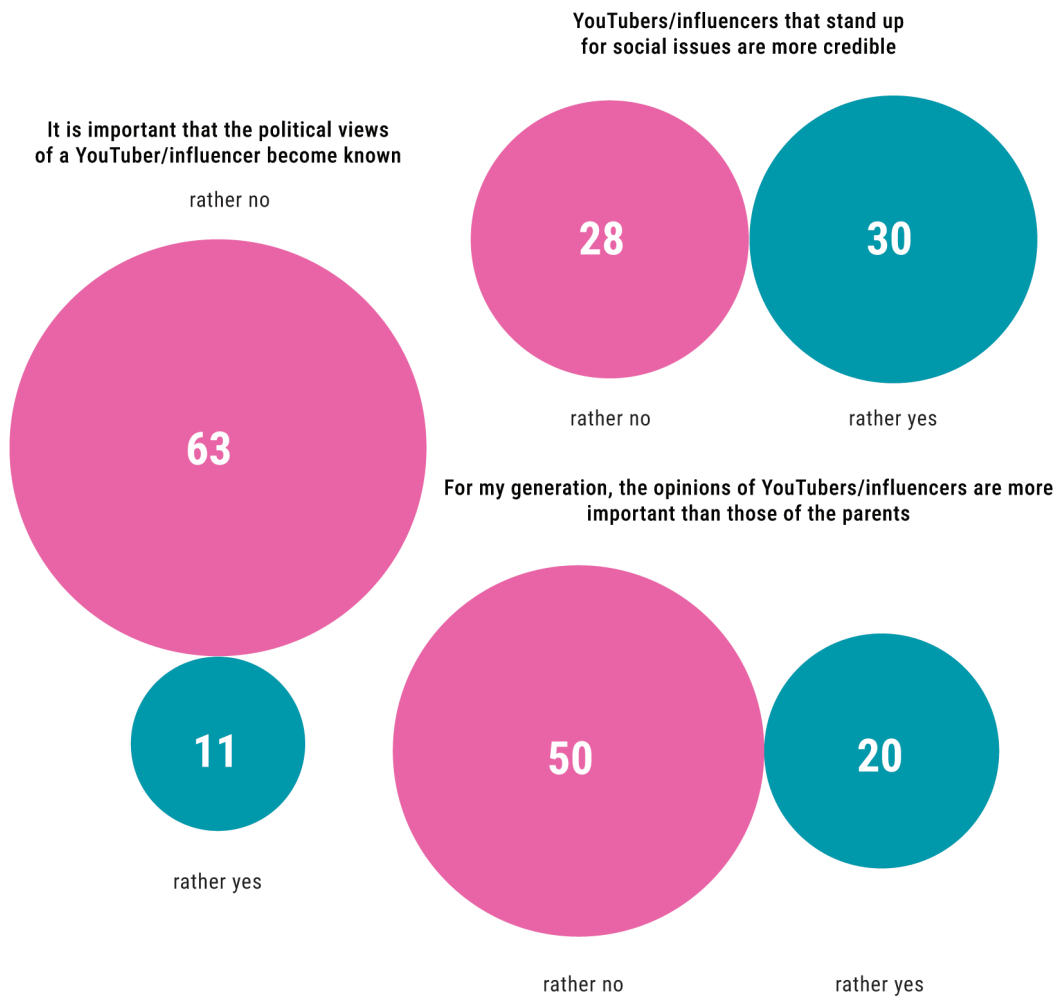
percentage



Q: To what extent do you agree...? Base: All who follow influencers (N=700); percentage distribution. Source: Youth Research Institute, 2024

Perception of influencers' role in political and public matters

percentage



Q: To what extent do you agree that...? Base: All who follow influencers (N=700); percentage distribution. Source: Youth Research Institute, 2024

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III. DO EMOJIS SAY
MORE THAN WORDS?
- YOUNG HUNGARIANS'
TEXTING HABITS

III. Do Emojis Say More Than Words? – Young Hungarians’ Texting Habits

Georgina Kiss-Kozma

The overwhelming majority of young Hungarians are regular users of social media platforms, which also means that their texting habits are strongly influenced by them. In digital communication the preference for visual elements has been boosted by the launch of social networking sites, bringing about a fundamental change in the way we relate to images.

Digital language use, as well as behaviour patterns used in the online space, are socially determined and form through socialisation. Given that young people are affected differently by socialisation than previous generations, it can be assumed that their digital language use patterns are also generationally specific. As a result, the issue can be examined in social science terms. In 2024, the Youth Research Institute examined the online communication habits of 15-29-year-old Hungarians and found that emoji use is not only culture-specific, but also generation-specific.

The latest data collection of the most significant Hungarian youth sociological research series took place in 2020: 8,000 young Hungarians aged 15 to 29 were asked about their culture and content consumption habits, among other things. The results show a steady decline in the utilisation of cultural spaces in the lives of young Hungarians, with a parallel rise in the utilisation of virtual spaces and digital content consumption. The lifestyles of today’s young people are thus becoming unintelligible without the context of digital culture. In the two decades since the turn of the millennium, computers and internet access have become essential infrastructure (9% of young people surveyed had access to the internet in 2000, rising to 93% in 2020). Smartphone penetration in this age group is growing even faster: while in 2012, just under a third of 15-29-year-olds owned a smartphone, by 2020 this figure had risen to 97 percent. Over the same period, the share of mobile internet access for smartphones increased at a similar pace, with only 1 in 2 mobile phones having an internet subscription in 2012, compared to 88 percent of the devices less than a decade later. The rise of ICT devices has not

Results show that the use of real-life cultural spaces is steadily decreasing among young Hungarians, while the popularity of virtual spaces and digital content is on the increase.

only had an impact on visits to physical spaces but has also strongly influenced traditional forms of content consumption. 8 out of 10 internet users are members of a social networking site (the most popular platforms being Facebook, YouTube and Instagram), whose role has become indispensable for both information and entertainment (Székely - Veszelszki 2021). As a result, social media platforms have a strong influence on the digital language use habits of young people in Hungary.

The Youth Research Institute’s 2024 survey results show that young people aged between 15-29 follow different strategies when using emojis, depending on the situation, the relationship between the communicating parties (also socially defined) and the context of the communication. Asking about the prevalence of emoji use with people close to each other and with people from different age groups, we examined the relationship between

the communicating parties. The situation was examined when we studied work-related online communication, and the context of communication was brought into focus when we examined young Hungarians' perceptions of the role of emojis in online communication.

The dominant role of socialisation settings is indicated by the fact that the young people included in the study use emojis most often in online communication with friends, then followed by colleagues and fellow students; they use these pictorial signs least often in online communication with older family members and relatives (75% with friends, 65% with colleagues and fellow students, 44% with older family members and relatives). In all three types of relationships studied, females are more likely to use emoticons to help interpret typed text.

Not only was emoji use examined in close relationships, also in more formal, distant ones as well. Six-tenths of 15-29-year-olds (59%) said they preferred not to use emojis when communicating with their senior supervisors or teachers in online spaces. With supervisors their age or younger, and with younger teachers, 38 percent of respondents said they tended not to use emojis, and 30 percent said they tended to use emojis. We see a difference in this respect between age groups: the younger they are, the less likely to use emojis to reinforce their message in such situations.

The communicative situation is also a determining factor in the development of a language use strategy for online communication. In the workplace intergenerational cooperation is needed and, as the generation of people who grew up with digital and smart devices has entered the labour market, there has been a growing interest in intergenerational communication: Just think of the increased demand

for books, articles and presentations that have made it their flagship to help bridge the intergenerational „communication gap” in the workplace. As a result, it has become clear to the older generation that if they are to find common ground with today's youth, digital language use habits characteristic of young people needs to be incorporated into workplace communication practices. The shift of workplace communication practices into the digital space has been further reinforced by the COVID-19 epidemic. Despite this, a third of young people (33%) tend to agree that the use of emojis in the work environment is unprofessional, and only a fifth (25%) think that this is not always the case. However, when they do use these symbols in online communication at work, nearly every second respondent (43%) said it tends to have a positive impact on the relationship with their colleagues, and only 17 percent felt that there was not necessarily a correlation.



An interesting finding, and one that is thought-provoking for the future, is that the youngest age group (15-17), who are about to enter the labour market, are the most likely to think that the use of emojis in workplace situations is unprofessional (Figure 1).

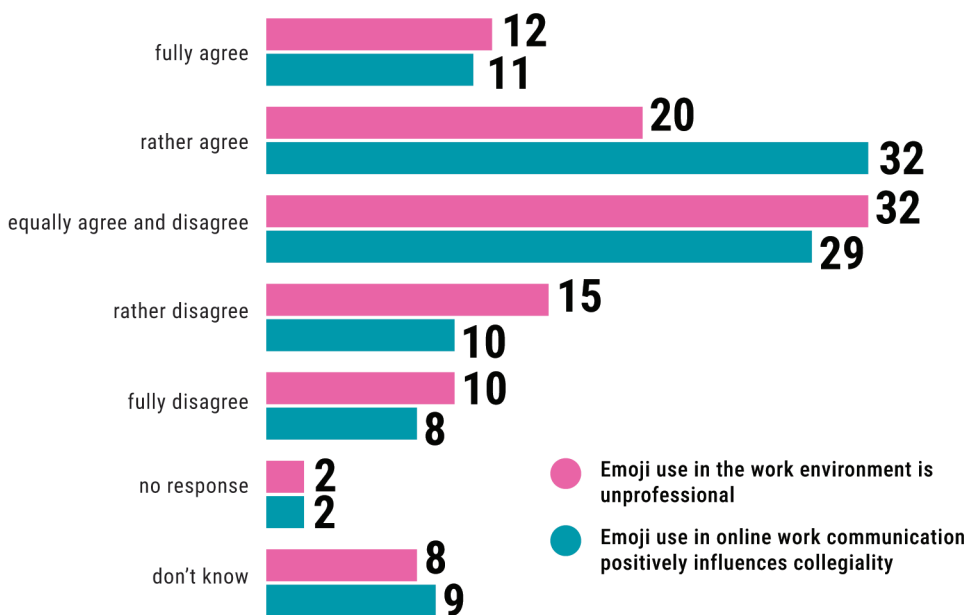
An important prerequisite for successful communication is that both sender and recipient have a common code for interpreting the message. As indicated above, emojis can be categorised as pictorial signs, for which connotation is of paramount importance in the decoding process. The second level of meaning-making is culturally encoded, i.e. culture-dependent. However, if we consider digital language use as a “digilect”, it can be assumed that the acquisition of this particular way of using language is a socialisation process,

and thus may have different meanings for different generations, making the “digilect” not only culturally determined but also generation-specific.

This is supported by empirical evidence, with 7 out of 10 young people rather or completely agreeing with the statement that there are emojis and emoticons that are interpreted differently by younger and older people. This may also have the consequence of creating misunderstandings between communicating parties when interpreting emojis. The increasing use of emojis in a cliché-like way makes it even more difficult to interpret them, and they lose their original meaning. According to 1 in 2 young people, misunderstandings often arise because different generations interpret emojis differently (Figure 2).

Emoji use at work

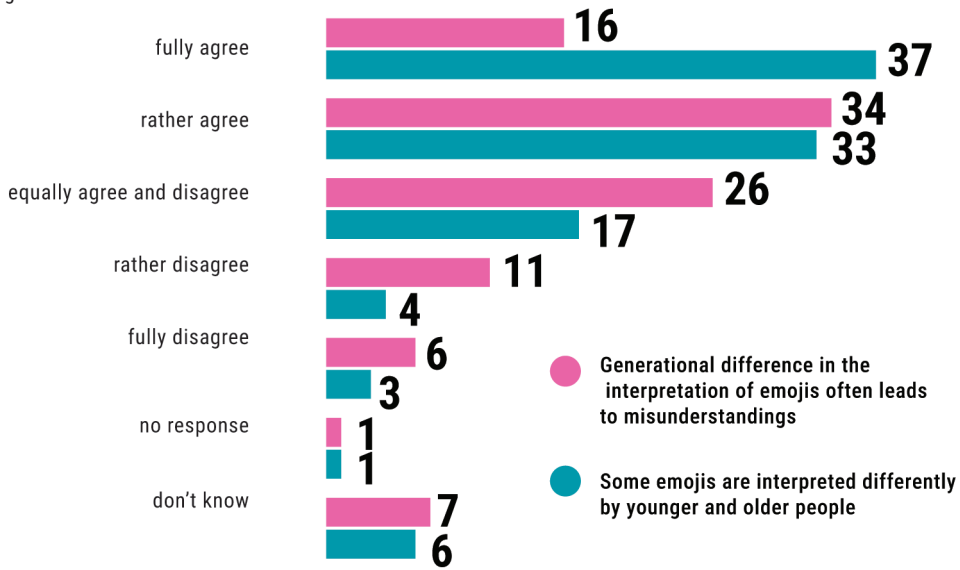
percentage



Q. To what extent do you agree...? Base: N=1000, 15-29 yo Hungarians. Source: Youth Research Institute, 2024

Interpreting emojis in various age groups

percentage

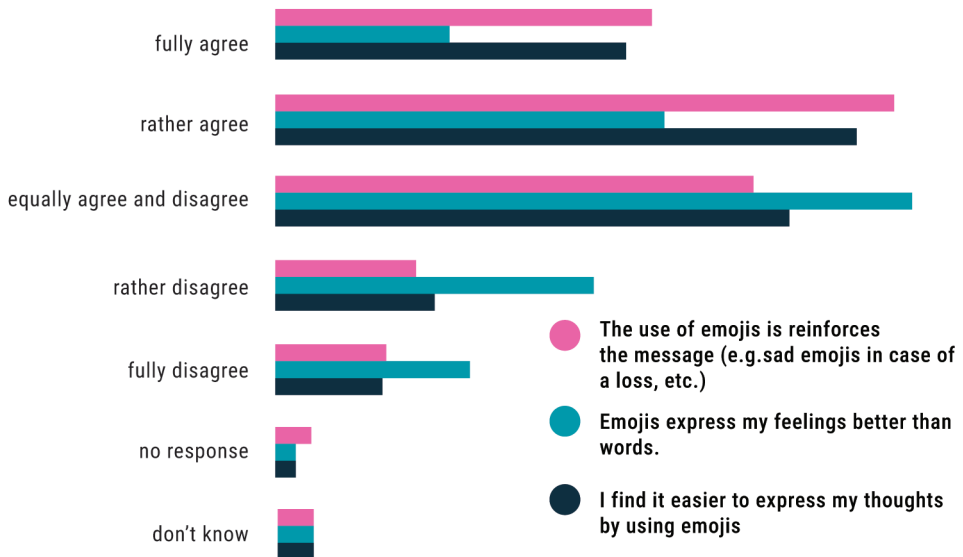


Q: To what extent do you agree...? Base: N=1000, 15-29 yo Hungarians. Source: Youth Research Institute, 2024

Young Hungarians aged 15-29 still consider it valid to use emojis for their original functions, with 53 percent agreeing that emojis help them express their thoughts, and 56 percent agree that they reinforce a given message (e.g. use a sad emoji in case of loss, etc.). However, opinions seem to be divided on the extent to which they are able to express their emotions better than words: 29 percent say they are not, while 32 percent say they are. There are no significant differences along socio-demographic characteristics (Figure 3).

The role of emojis in online communication

percentage



Q: To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Base: N=1000; 15-29 yo Hungarians. Source: Youth Research Institute, 2024

Another important function of emojis worth noting is their ability to influence the emotional relationship between sender and recipient. Two thirds (63%) of young Hungarians surveyed said that emojis can positively influence their feelings towards the sender. In other words, this form of pictorial signalling can, at least in part, manage the signalling process of metacommunication. However, assessing the impact of emojis on themselves is not so clear-cut, with a nearly equal split between young people on whether or not emoticons can improve their overall mood (33% in favour, 32% against).

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IV. SMARTPHONE USE IN THE CLASSROOM

IV. Smartphone Use in The Classroom

Kiss-Kozma Georgina

We live in an information society, which also means which also means - thanks to an unprecedented expansion of information resources - that the forms and opportunities for autonomous knowledge building offer almost unimaginable possibilities for the development of personal knowledge. New, customisable forms of support and organisation for learning can lead to the development of even more effective processes, making the acquisition of knowledge, competences, behaviours and attitudes even more effective. The rise of artificial intelligence will also lead to new forms of human-machine collaboration, opening up new horizons yet to be seen.

For centuries, learning focused mainly on the teacher, the curriculum, and the school, but today the learning process cannot be understood without the influence of the whole environment (Komenczi - Lengyel, 2009). Therefore, the understanding of the learning environment today requires a holistic approach. It is widely accepted that the environment as a whole influences the effectiveness of learning. Marshall McLuhan calls the period of the last five hundred years 'Gutenberg Galaxy', a historical period of information management dominated by letters, reading, and book culture. He was also credited with the assertion – later proved to be correct – that the then nascent new information technology, the electronic media, which he called the Marconi and Edison constellations, would rewrite the traditional information space based on books, with implications for society as a whole (McLuhan, 1962). The hegemony of the electronic information world based on computing is now undisputed.

This naturally meant that educational theory and practical pedagogy also had to respond to the changes. Previously, both theory and practice had defined the concept of the learning environment in a narrow sense, focusing on active, purposeful teaching and learning. The understanding of the learning environment is determined by the fact that the effectiveness of the learning process is based on a number of environmental factors. While social and cultural conditions are seen as slower-changing elements of learning, teaching methods, technical equipment, programmes, classroom equipment, teaching aids, group size and composition and media

Through rapid advancements in information technology a new learning paradigm is emerging.

are among the factors that can be moulded and selected. With the rapid development of information technology, a new paradigm in the concept of learning is taking shape. In addition to the former traditional learning environment, the organisation of the learning environment with a constructivist, epistemologically-oriented approach is becoming increasingly important, and in the best-case scenario, these two processes – knowledge transfer in the traditional sense and personal knowledge construction with a constructivist orientation – complement each other. In the information society, however, it has become a fundamental requirement that the curriculum should not be presented as an isolated unit, out of context and removed from real-life situations; there is an increasing need for a problem-focused learning environment with a

multifaceted pedagogical approach at its core. The rise of the modern media society has brought with it changes in the function of the school and the role of teachers. The role of the school is no longer limited to transmitting information about the world, nor is it the primary role of teachers to be mere conduits of information value data or knowledge. Young people live in a constant stream of media information, and there is an increasing need to find their way in it and develop critical thinking skills and media competence (Komenczi-Lengyel, 2009).

However, unexpected events such as the restriction of movement – as was one of the tools employed in the management of the COVID-19 epidemic – have accelerated and amplified the technology-intensive nature of the educational and workplace

environments. The dominance of digital culture content and trends point towards further acceleration, which could lead to further fragmentation of attention. The former techno-optimistic, permissive approach has been increasingly replaced by demand for regulation, as reflected in the fact that while a few years ago the focus was on the digitalisation of the learning environment, today it is on regulatory issues of technology, partly due to the global decline in learning skills (see e.g. PISA results) and partly due to the importance of mental health and well-being. The European Union has addressed this issue by adopting the AI Act, while Hungary has addressed it by regulating the use of smartphones in the school environment. The Institute's Youth '23: Report on Youth Affairs also draws attention to the importance of this issue (Székely - Kiss-Kozma, 2023).





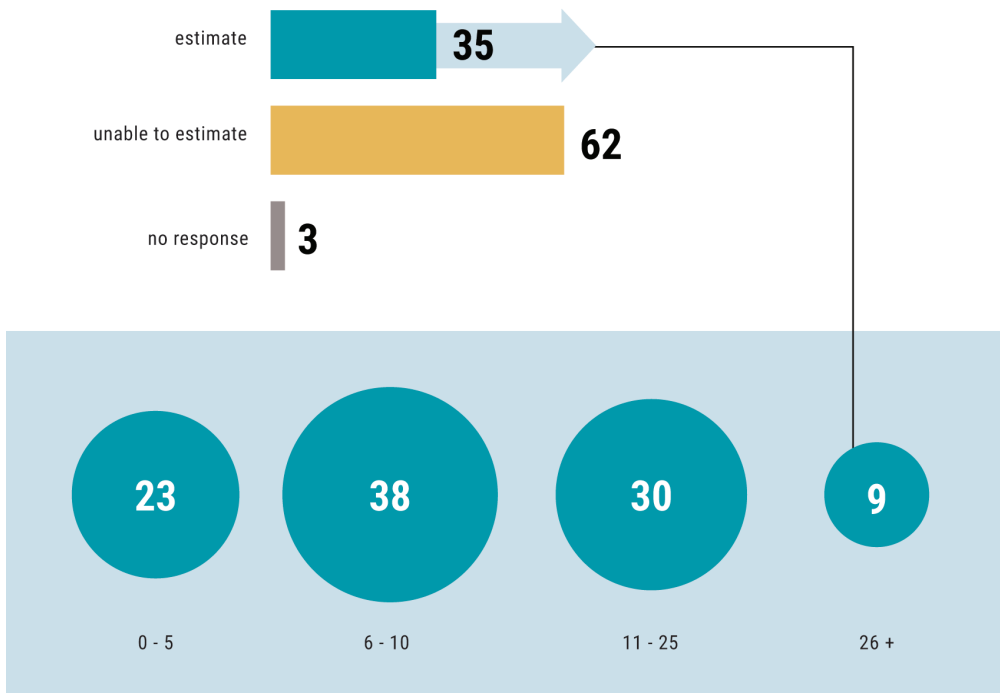
As the Youth Research Institute's survey was conducted prior to the rollout of the national legislation, some figures may vary.

The data show that more than four-tenths of the young people (43%) surveyed used smartphones only in secondary school, while more than one-fifth (22%) used them both in primary and secondary school. However, nearly a third (30%) were not allowed to use these devices at all during their studies. The younger the age group, the more likely they were to have used their smart devices in primary school (15-17-year-olds: 35%, 18-24-year-olds: 21%, 25-29-year-olds: 16%), while almost twice as many of the oldest age group said they had not used the latest technology devices in either primary or secondary school (15-17-year-olds: 24%, 18-24-year-olds: 21%, 25-29-year-olds: 44%).

Nearly two-thirds of young people (62%) surveyed could not estimate the average number of messages or notifications they receive on their smartphone on a typical school day. There could be two reasons for this: on the one hand, we can see that three-tenths of young people may not have used their smartphone at school, and on the other hand, the more apps someone uses, the more notifications or messages they can expect to receive, making it really difficult to estimate and average the number of notifications or messages. However, 35 percent of young people surveyed estimated the number of messages and notifications they receive: nearly a quarter (23%) receive 5 or less, nearly four-tenths (38%) receive between 6 to 10, 30 percent receive between 11 to 25, and nearly a tenth (9%) receive over 26 messages or notifications on an average day at school. 18-24-year-olds receive more than 26 messages and notifications in the highest proportion (15-17-year-olds: 1%, 18-24-year-olds: 15%, 25-29-year-olds: 5%) (Figure 1).

SMS/notification frequency at school

percentage



Q: Please estimate the average number of SMS/notifications you receive on your phone on a normal day at school! Base: 15-29 yo Hungarians who could estimate the average number of sms/notifications; percentage distribution. Source: Youth Research Institute, 2024

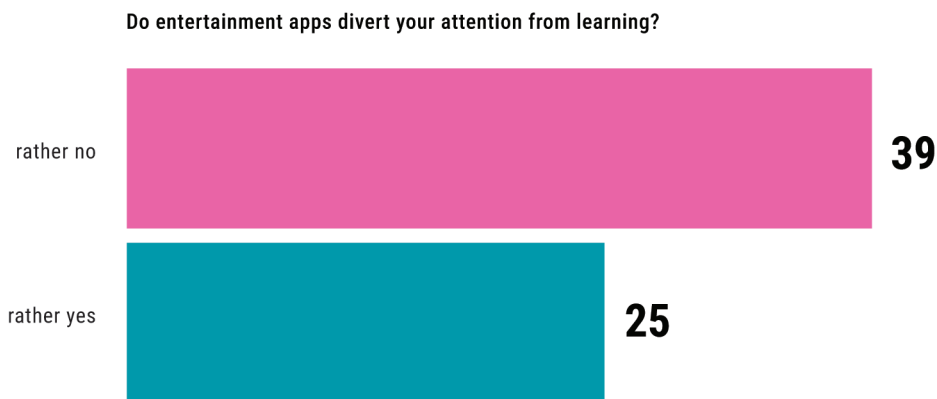


When using personal screens, i.e. a smartphone, tablet or laptop in class, 18 percent of young people surveyed tended to be distracted from learning by the use of entertainment apps such as social media, while 7 percent were very prone to be distracted by games or chat apps. In other words, a quarter of young people find it challenging to use these tools in class, while nearly three-tenths are unsure and nearly four-tenths (39%) prefer not to be distracted by entertainment content. Overall, young people feel that it is rather uncommon for them to be distracted by this content in class (they scored 2.72 on a 1-5

environment tended to hinder or help learning. 1 means that it definitely hinders, while 5 means that it definitely helps learning. Asked about the use of three devices, the results show that while laptops or tablets for personal use are seen as useful (3.06 and 3.36 respectively on a 1-5 Likert scale, i.e. a higher average than the middle of the scale), the use of smartphones is seen as a hindrance to learning (2.64 on the Likert scale). The perception of the use of different devices was most divided among young people surveyed in the case of the smartphone, with

Use of personal screens in the classroom

percentage



Q: When using personal screens in the classroom (smartphone, tablet, laptop), do entertainment apps (social media, games, chat, etc) take your attention away from learning? Base: All respondents (N=1000); percentage distribution. Source: Youth Research Institute, 2024

Likert scale, where 1 means not at all common and 5 means very common). We see variation by age group and gender, with the youngest and males tending to find personal screen use less likely to affect their concentration in class, while older and women find it more challenging (tending not to: 15-17-year-olds: 57%, 18-24-year-olds: 36%, 25-29-year-olds: 33%, males: 48%, females: 29%) (Figure 2).

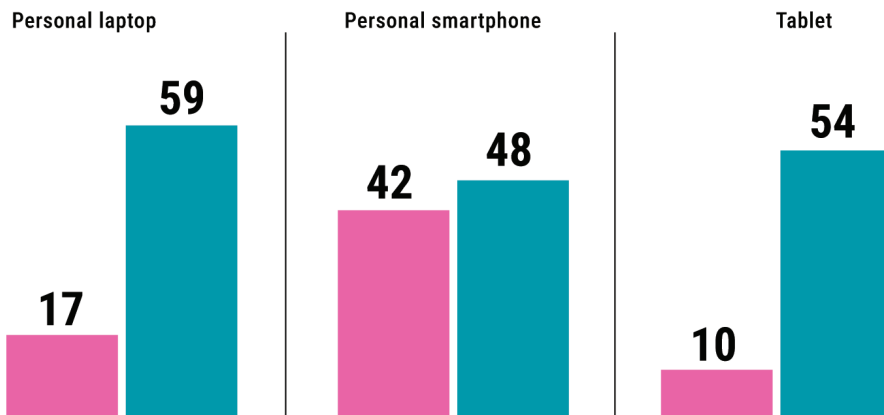
The survey also included a question on young people's views on the potential of smart devices for learning. Here again, respondents were asked to rate their opinion on a 1-5 scale on whether the presence of different electronic devices in the school

48 percent of them considering it to be more of a help to learning and 42 percent considering it to be more of a hindrance (Figure 3).

The results show that older people tend to be more sceptical about the use of digital devices in schools. The youngest respondents have higher average values on all three questions than older ones, which also means that they are more permissive than their older peers about using their own laptop (15-17-year olds: 3.36; 25-29-year-olds: 3.06), tablet (15-17-year-olds: 3.44, 25-29-year-olds: 3.26) and smartphone (15-17-year-olds: 2.85; 25-29-year-olds: 2.44) at school.

Personal screens at school – friend or foe percentage

rather yes rather no



Q: In your opinion, does the availability of the following devices at school help or hinder learning? Base: All respondents (N=1000); percentage distribution.
Source: Youth Research Institute, 2024

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V. TINDER
GENERATION?
YOUNG HUNGARIANS'
PERCEPTION OF
ONLINE DATING

V. Tinder Generation? - Young Hungarians' Perception of Online Dating

Georgina Kiss-Kozma

Hungary's population has been declining at a variable but steady pace since its 1981 peak of 10,713,000 persons. One of the main reasons for this is that over the last forty years, the number of deaths has exceeded the number of births. According to preliminary data, on 1 January 2024, the country's population stood at 9 584 000. In addition to the declining birth rate, life expectancy has increased, and the age structure of the population has undergone a significant change, with the number of elderly people steadily increasing and the number of children decreasing.

The number and proportion of people over the age of 64 exceeded the number of children for the first time in 2005, and since then the gap has been steadily widening in favour of older people. In terms of demographic trends, the year 2011 marked the first low point, with 88,000 newborns, which was followed by a slow but steady increase. In 2023, however, a new low point was registered with 85,200 children born, 3,300 or 3.7 percent less than a year earlier. A key factor in the drop is the long-standing decline in the number of females aged 15-49, i.e. those of childbearing age. Their number fell by 19,000 last year. However, it is worth pointing out that while the total fertility rate in 2011 was 1.23, it stood at 1.51 in 2023, meaning that although the number of births in 2023 was slightly lower than in 2011, fertility was still 22 percent higher than in 2011. If the 2011 fertility rate had been maintained, 69,200 children would have been born in 2023, 16,000 less than the actual number.

Another key factor in demographic trends is that the average age of females at the birth of their first child has risen from 23 to 29.2 years, meaning that nowadays women have their first child at the age when they finished having children three decades earlier. Similar trends can be seen in the number of marriages: while the low point of 2010 saw only 35,500 couples get married, the trend turned positive, with the number of marriages rising to 72,000 in 2021, the highest value in four decades. Since then, there has been a decline in the number of marriages, with 50,200 couples getting married in 2023. The

A key factor in demographic trends is the change in the average age of women at the birth of their first child from 23 to 29+

increase in the previous years was mainly due to an increase in the number of first-time marriages, and the decrease in 2023 is also mainly among those (KSH: Hungary, 2023).

The study of young Hungarians' family formation and relationship strategies is, therefore, a high priority. However, because family formation is delayed, it is often the case that studies, which traditionally define youth as between 15 and 29 years of age, primarily only get to survey young people's plans for the future in this topic. Results from the latest data collection of Hungary's most significant sociological research series show that young people do want to start a family and plan to do so. In 2020, 8 000 young Hungarians aged between 15 and 29 were asked, among

other things, how important it is for them to have children. The overwhelming majority of young people said (82%) that it is rather or very important to have children, with a further 55 percent agreeing that it is impossible to live a truly happy and fulfilling life without children. In 2023, the Youth Research Institute also looked at young people's perceptions of the future, asking them how they think their lives will be in 2050. The vast majority of respondents are confident that they will have children, be married, and own their home (Kiss-Kozma - Székely, 2023.).

This indicates that young people in Hungary do want to start a family and have children, but we can also see that the birth of the first child is being delayed, and Hungary's population is in decline, meaning that not all children that are planned for get to be born. Results from the 2020 Youth Survey cited above also show that the main factors young people perceive as conducive to having children are a good financial situation, home ownership, a stable relationship,

a supportive work environment, psychological maturity for parenthood, and being married (Engler and Pári, 2021). The third most frequently cited factor is, therefore, a good relationship. Matchmaking strategies have multiplied with the rise of digital media, and there are ever more opportunities to meet people online. It is, therefore, not surprising that, when young people were asked in the 2020 survey about what external help they would need to find a suitable partner, a quarter of them suggested well-functioning online dating sites (a third suggested accessible community spaces and a fifth mentioned well-organised dating venues).

Building on previous research, the Youth Research Institute also looked at relationships and online dating in early 2024. In particular, the survey included questions on young people's perception of relationships and online dating. Half of the young people aged between 15 and 29 surveyed (52%) were single or unmarried, one-tenth (11%) married, nearly







a quarter (23%) were living with their partner, while the same proportion (24%) were in a relationship but not living with their partner. Young people's attitudes to starting a family remain unchanged, with 7 in 10 young people surveyed (71%) wanting to get married, and the same proportion (69%) thinking that having children is important to them.

The data also shows, however, that young people are not having it easy nowadays, with nearly 1 in 2 of those surveyed (43%) saying that it is difficult to find suitable and accessible community spaces to meet people, while 61% say that using online dating sites is not the best way to start a relationship. In light of this, it is no surprise that 6 out of 10 young people (58%) say finding a partner these days is not easy.

We also asked them about their experiences and opinions of online dating sites: Nearly half of the respondents (44%) tended to agree that dating sites are more dangerous than they are helpful when it comes to dating. This may be linked to the fact that 37 percent have had a negative experience on online dating platforms. Furthermore, the majority (55%) are also aware that profiles registered on online

dating platforms typically do not reflect reality. However, opinions are divided on whether or not the person they meet on an online dating platform is typically only in it for a short-term relationship (25% Yes; 22% No).

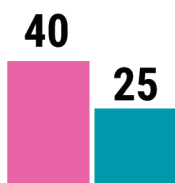
The survey also included questions to explore young Hungarians' perceptions of relationships. In particular, we wanted to know how broadly young people think about partnerships. We examined how important the frequency and depth of encounters are for them. The results show that more than half of young people (54%) think that a proper relationship is when they involve each other in their lives, for example by introducing each other to family and friends, or if they communicate regularly, at least daily, in person, via phone or online (42%). However, four-tenths disagree that something can be considered a relationship only when they meet regularly, at least monthly, in person, or if it has been at least a few (2-3 months) since they first met. This may suggest that long-distance relationships have become more acceptable in this age group (Figure 1)

Frequency and depth of encounters

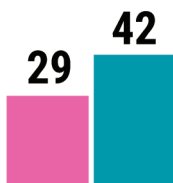
percentage

A relationship is considered a relationship, when...

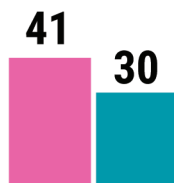
at least 2-3 months have gone by since the first meeting



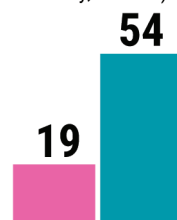
there is regular (at least daily) contact between the partners (in person, phone, online)



the partners meet in person regularly (at least monthly)



when partners are involved in each others' lives (ie. introduced to family, friends)



● Rather no ● Rather yes

Q: To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Base: All respondents (N=1000); percentage distribution. Source: Youth Resarch Institute, 2024



We tried to explore the so-called „situationship” phenomenon with our questions addressed at the importance of intimacy in relationships. For those surveyed, monogamous relationships are the most natural, with the vast majority (71%) agreeing with the statement that it is important in a relationship not to have sex with someone else. There is no longer consensus among respondents on the importance of telling the other person that you love them (31% Yes, 31% No). An acceptance of long-distance relationships also emerges when young people tend to disagree with the statement that a relationship counts from the moment, they have sex regularly (35% tend to disagree; 28% tend to agree). Two-thirds of young people (67%) also disagree that a relationship proper counts as such from the first sexual encounter (Figure 2).

Intimacy

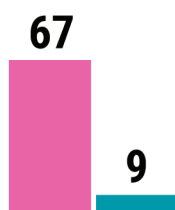
percentage

● Rather no ● Rather yes

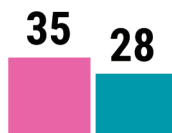
It counts as a relationship from the time partners declare their love for one another



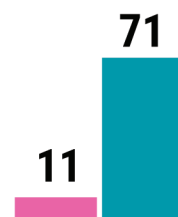
It counts as a relationship from the first sexual contact



It counts as a relationship when partners regularly have sex



It counts as a relationship when partners regularly have sex exclusively



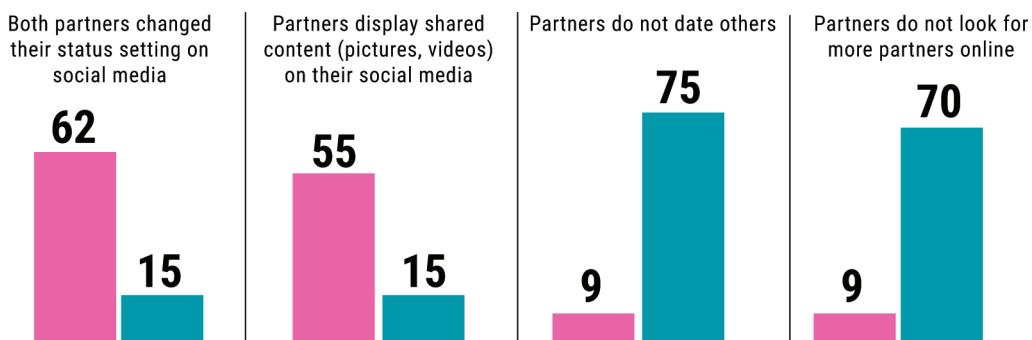
Q: To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Base: All respondents (N=1000); percentage distribution. Source: Youth Research Institute, 2024

We also wanted to find out how much the idea of relationships at this stage of life is influenced by social media presence. Two things emerge from the data: on the one hand, young Hungarians tend to believe in monogamous relationships, with the vast majority agreeing that they do not date other people when in a relationship (75%) and that they do not look for partners online (70%). Another finding is that social media presence is not important for their relationships, with the large majority disagreeing that a relationship is official when both parties change their relationship status on social media platforms (62%), nor if they share common content (pictures, videos) on their social media sites (55%) (Fig. 3).

Social media presence

percentage

● Rather no ● Rather yes



Q: To what extent do you agree with the following statements? Base: All respondents (N=1000); percentage distribution.
Source: Youth Research Institute, 2024

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VI.
INTERGENERATIONAL
SOLIDARITY AND
ECONOMIC SELF-
SUFFICIENCY

VI. Intergenerational Solidarity and Personal Retirement Plans

Levente Székely

Over the past few years, we have experienced a number of crises of significant economic impact. A pandemic that burst into an essentially prosperous economic environment, followed by war, has fundamentally redefined economic conditions and continues to do so, leaving the new generation, currently trying to establish their livelihood, particularly vulnerable.

After the turn of the millennium, the prosperous period following the global financial-turned-economic crisis that unfolded in 2008 was halted by the economic impact of the COVID-19 epidemic and then the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Youth satisfaction surveys reflect both the positive environment of the past decades and the imprint of the last few years. In the 2010s, satisfaction related to the possession of a variety of material goods steadily improved, and the proportion of people in dire financial circumstances also decreased steadily and significantly. The steady increase in satisfaction was particularly striking in financial areas, and the proportion of people considered middle class also increased. This was seen as the continuation of the rise of the middle class that started following the end of communism (Székely, 2021).

In terms of subjective financial situation, the economic impact of the Russia-Ukraine conflict is already reflected in the Institute's 2023 data. Among 15-29-year-olds, the proportion of those just getting by on their income has increased (27% to 37%) and both the proportion living without financial problems and the proportion doing well on their income have decreased. Remarkably, however, the proportion of those struggling from pay check to pay check, and those experiencing financial hardship has not changed, which may be partly due to the fact that the prosperous economic processes of 2010 replenished families' financial reserves, and partly to the change in attitudes that emerged in the wake of the global financial crisis a decade earlier. Despite

Despite a decline in subjective financial status, young Hungarians still look to the future and their financial prospects with optimism.

the decline in subjective financial well-being, young people in Hungary are still fundamentally optimistic about the future in terms of their financial situation (Kiss-Kozma - Székely, 2023).

Our 2024 research focused on three particular stages in young people's lives: the delayed start in life as an independent adult, their ability to care for their elderly parents, and preparation for their own old age.

Young people today face a new set of difficulties in trying to start living independently and find housing. We often hear that young people delay becoming independent, having children, getting engaged, and moving away from home. These processes in turn change the relationship trends of previous decades between parents and their adult children.

The Youth Research Institute also conducted an international survey in 2024, asking Europeans until what age they think parents should have to financially support their children, specifically in the terms of housing and their children's transition to independence. In terms of twelve countries surveyed (Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Hungary, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia), the average age until which young people felt they needed financial support was 24. In Hungary, a lower-than-average proportion of respondents felt that parents should be expected to provide for their adult children's housing (65%). A slightly higher proportion of respondents felt that financial support for young adults was more needed than housing support. On the issue of financial support, Hungarians' views are broadly in line with the average in the other countries surveyed. On average, 75 percent think that parents should financially support their adult children until they become independent.

How long young people actually stay in the parental home, and how long the population itself considers this acceptable, varies widely across Europe.

According to a 2023 Eurostat survey, the average age at which young people in the EU leave the parental home is around 26. The highest average is in Croatia (31.8 yrs) and the lowest in Finland (21.4 yrs). Typically, the average age at which young people move out of their parents' home is 30 or over in southern countries such as Greece, Spain, Italy, but also in Croatia and Bulgaria. The earliest age of independence is found in the Nordic countries, with Sweden, Denmark and Estonia, as well as Finland, having young people move away from their parents at an average age of 21-23. In Hungary, the average was 27.1 years, which has not changed significantly over recent years. Young people in Hungary thus leave home one year later than the EU average as a whole. Hungarian males (as in other European countries) leave the parental home a few years later (on average at the age of 28), while females leave earlier (at the age of 26).

In addition to the average age of moving out of home, the Youth Research Institute's international survey also looked at how long Europeans think parents should provide housing for their children. In the above-mentioned twelve countries, adults aged 18







and over responded with an average age of 24 years as the age until parents are expected to support their young adult children. Romanians (on average until the age of 26) and Southern Slavs (Croats, Slovenes and Montenegrins until the age of 23 on average) consider it important to support children to become independent for the longest and the shortest time periods, respectively. In Hungary, similar to the average of the participating countries, respondents draw the line at 24.

On average, 71 percent of those surveyed consider

parental involvement in the housing of young people necessary. More than 80 percent of Serbs, Croats and Austrians, 56 percent of Slovaks and 47 percent of Slovenes agree that parents should take care of their children's place of residence after separation. In Hungary, the proportion of those who think it is reasonable to expect the parent to provide a home for his or her adult offspring is also lower than average (65%). In Hungary, this is less and less of an expectation as the level of education increases. By type of settlement, this attitude tends not to be the case for those living in the capital compared to those



living in other cities.

A slightly higher proportion of respondents felt that young adults needed support more in terms of finances than housing. On financial support, the opinion of Hungarians is almost the same as the average in the other countries surveyed, with 76 percent of Hungarians saying that parents are expected to provide financial support until their young adult children become independent. At the two extremes are the Serbs and the North Macedonians: in Serbia, 90 percent think that parents should provide financial help, while only 58 percent in North Macedonia think the same.

After young people move out and become independent, their adult life takes centre stage – but then the time comes to provide help and support for their parents as they enter old age. The ageing of Western societies raises the question of how to care for the growing elderly population and whose

responsibility it is. In our current research, we ask young Hungarians whether they feel capable of caring for their elderly parents when needed. This is an important question, especially as caring for the elderly is not just about meeting everyday needs, it can also involve specialised services which come at considerable cost and financial burden. 56 percent of Hungarians aged 15-29 say that if their parents needed financial support in the future, they would find it difficult to provide (17% very difficult, 39% difficult). The proportion of those who feel that they would find it difficult to support their parents financially if they needed to increase with age, with 2 in 3 (68%) of 25-29-year-olds feeling this way. Given the perceived inadequacy of their own capabilities, it is not surprising that a higher proportion of young people surveyed see this as a responsibility of the state (49%) rather than one that should essentially be the responsibility of children (34%) (Fig. 1).

Support for ageing parents

percentage

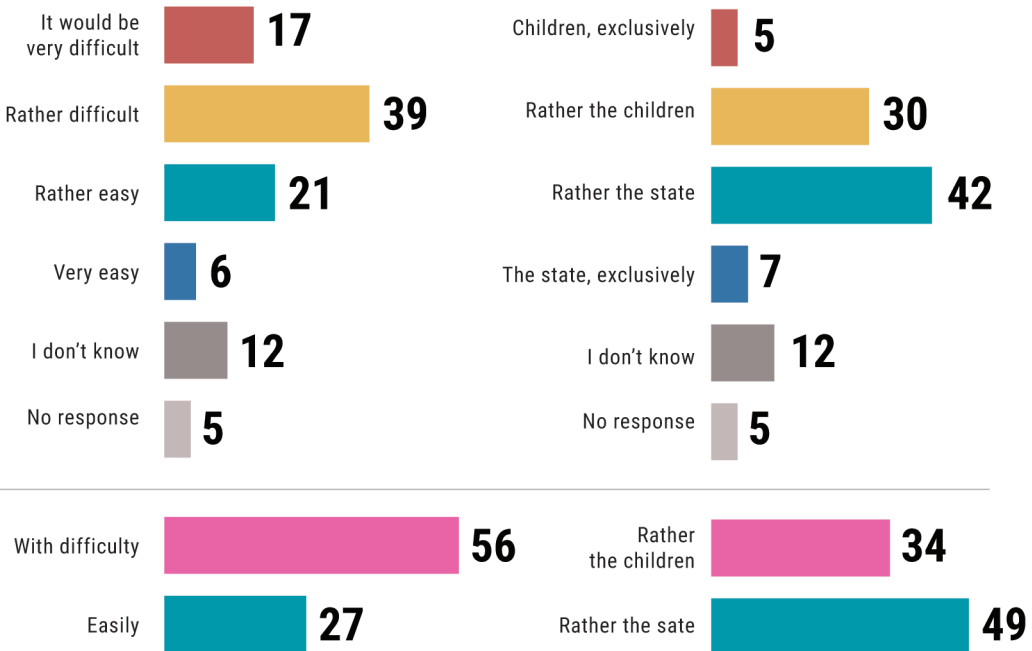


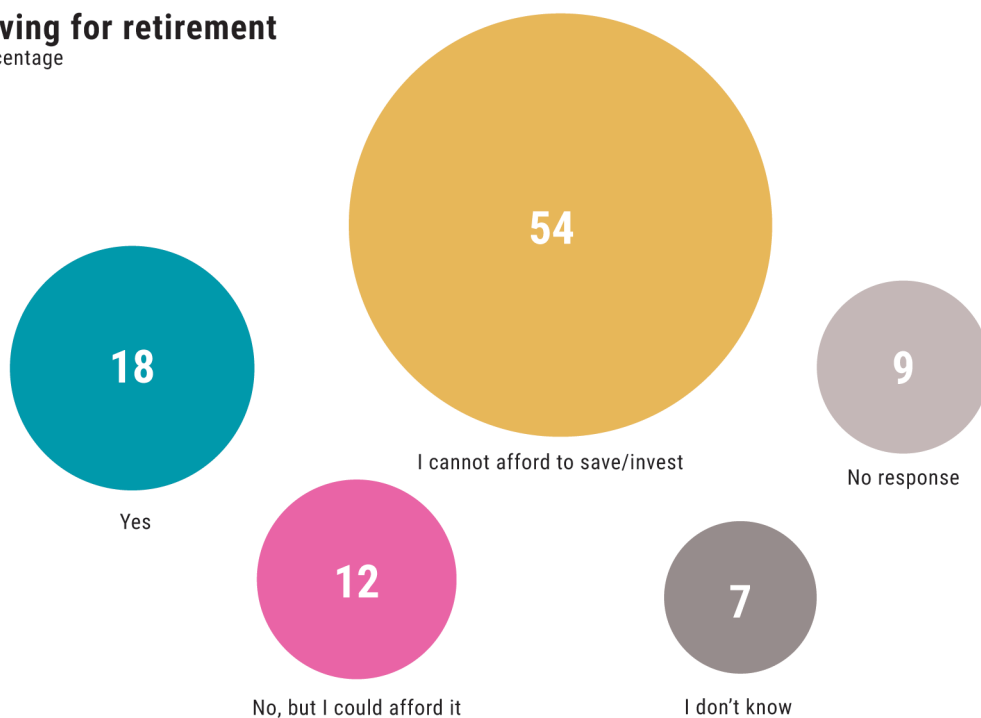
Fig. 1. Q: Can you see yourself being capable of assisting your parents financially in the future, should they need it? Do you think it is primarily the children or the state that should be required to look after the elderly? Base: All respondents (N=1000); percentage distribution. Source: Youth Research Institute, 2024

For young Hungarians, who tend to emphasise public responsibility in caring for the elderly, their approach towards their own lives is a particularly important question. As young people need to plan not only for assisting their elderly parents but also for the future, a key question is whether 15-29-year-olds have already started saving for their old age.

The majority of young people feel that having to start saving exclusively for retirement is still a long way off, with only 1 in 5 (18%) thinking about their future financial security. The majority of young people (66%) are not currently saving for retirement. It is mainly young people in rural areas, females and those without a highschool certificate who are currently unable to save for this purpose, compared to college graduates (38%) (Figure 2).

Saving for retirement

percentage



Q: Are you preparing already (by saving or investing) in order to be financially secure at your old age? Base: All respondents (N=1000); percentage distribution. Source: Youth Research Institute, 2024

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VII. FUTURE SCENARIOS

VII. Future Scenarios

A fundamentally optimistic outlook for the future mixed with frustration about its unpredictability – this sentiment is one of seven attributes of the younger generations, as indicated by the results of the large sample youth survey conducted in Hungary. International research also shows increased fears for an uncertain future, particularly among the young.

Urban legend has it that when Queen Elizabeth II asked scientists about the times ahead, Nobel Prize-winning Danish physicist Niels Bohr replied: “Prediction is very difficult, especially if it’s about the future”. Contrary to Bohr, we could argue that telling the future is not difficult, in fact, it can be rather easy. We have seen the unexpected being successfully predicted, such as world economic crises, epidemics and wars. If we look hard enough, we are sure to find experts who foresaw what was going to happen or were just lucky that the less likely scenario played out in the end. The Dodonian method of predicting the future is also a popular one, whereby the prediction is too complex and vague to prove in hindsight that it was not correct. It is also relatively risk-free to look to the distant future: The farther ahead we predict, the less it can be disproved from the present, and one need not fear being called out if one just looks ahead far enough (Székely, 2022). Many examples prove this, and all manner of production and financial planning methods as well as opinion polls predicting the outcome of elections are based on this and usually work quite well. However, there are cases when predictive methods fail badly, and the outcome of incorrectly predicted elections can be an unexpected result or even financial bankruptcy.

However, the future does not only exist at the level of economic or social processes but also applies to individual life plans. It is not only the business mindset that leads us to adapt our strategies to the most likely outcome. We anticipate the future and try to prepare for it, while increasingly finding that what happens is something we did not foresee at all. In the information society, people are frightened by the uncertainty of the future, and this is particularly true for young people. It may seem paradoxical that, while science has turned its attention to the future and the amount of information available has increased, we do not feel that our predictions about the future have become more valid. Moreover, it may seem as if sudden crises are becoming more frequent. The

Telling the future Dodona style is also popular: The prognosis is so complex and vague that it is difficult to prove it wrong later on.

2023 Institute for Economics and Peace Report for 118 countries shows that a third of people feel less secure than they did five years ago. In most countries surveyed, the proportion of people who could not name the cause of their frustration has risen. The proportion of unknown risks is higher among the youngest age group, with 1 in 5 of 15-19-year-olds feeling an unknown threat, according to the latest data (Székely, 2022).

Based on the data series on Hungarian teens and tweens over the last two decades, the growing significance of uncertainty and unpredictability can be clearly identified, its growth segmented. While at the turn of the millennium the share of 15-29-year-olds who considered an uncertain future to be the most pressing problem of youth was negligible, it grew to around 10 percent in the first decade, 10 to 20 percent in the second decade, and by the end of the second decade it had exceeded 20 percent, placing frustration with the future at the top of the problem map and, according to the latest data for 2023, it is there to stay. Research into the nature of this uncertainty is ongoing. The Youth Research Institute’s 2023 survey formulated questions that

can be used to outline personal perceptions of the future.

Around three-quarters of 15-29-year-olds say they are likely to have (more) children (76%), be married (74%), and own their house/apartment (72%) in 2050. Around two-thirds of respondents (70%) assume that they will be better off financially than they are now and that they will reside in Hungary (68%). Almost two-thirds of 15-29-year-olds (63%) are fairly confident that they will still be working in a job that is relevant to their current studies or skills in 2050, and the majority of respondents believe that they will communicate with colleagues mostly in Hungarian (48%). Less than a third of respondents (30%) expect to be retired in 2050 (Kiss-Kozma - Székely, 2023) (Figure 1).

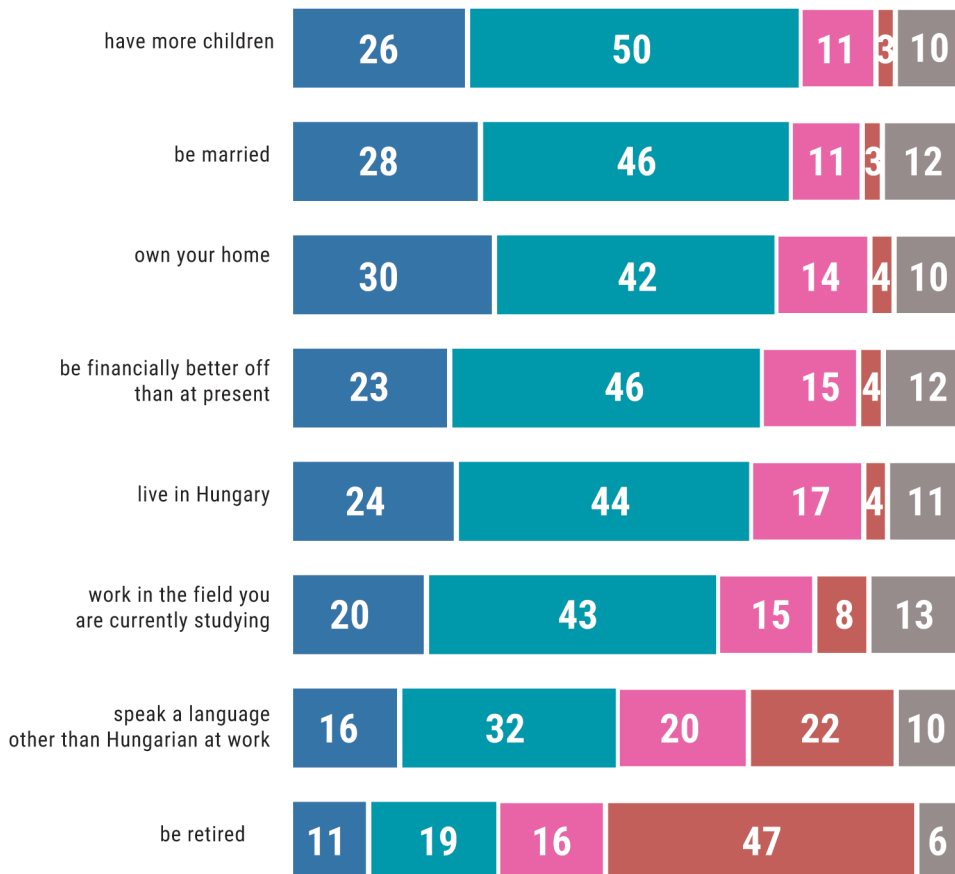
All of this gives rise to a fundamentally optimistic vision of the future, which at an individual level is different from what young people think of their generation as a whole. But this is only an apparent contradiction.

In our 2024 research, we addressed the nature of uncertainty about the past, and similarly about perceptions of the future. Nearly three-quarters (72%) of 15-29-year-olds in Hungary feel that they had to face many unexpected situations in the past and a slightly higher proportion (77%) feel that they are likely to face many such situations in the future. The more detailed data show that as age increases, the incidence of unexpected situations does as

Predicting likely events for 2025

Percentage

● Fully likely
 ● rather likely
 ● rather unlikely
 ● fully unlikely
 ● no response
 ● don't know



Q: Is it likely or unlikely that in 2050, when you are ... years old, you will...? Base: All respondents (N=1000); percentage distribution.
Source: Youth Research Institute, 2023



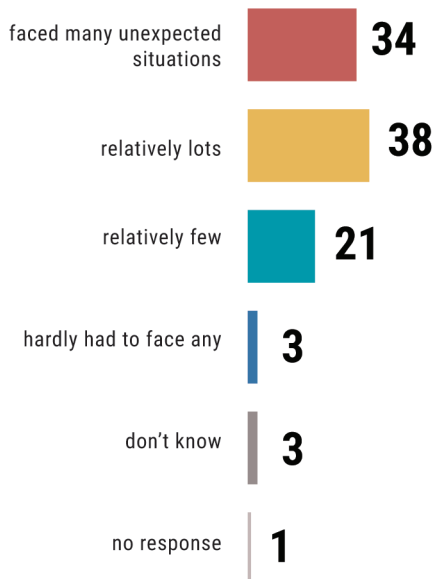
well, which is only natural. Half of 15-19-year-olds (54%) and eight-tenths (79%) of 25-29-year-olds in the oldest age group report a very high or relatively high number of unexpected situations. The gap in expectations for the future is strikingly smaller, with almost three-quarters of 15-19-year-olds (72%) expecting unexpected events, compared to eight-tenths (79%) of 25-29-year-olds in the oldest age group. Perceptions of the unexpected and expectations for the future also differ by gender. A striking difference emerges for the past, with eight-tenths of females (80%) and nearly two-thirds of males (64%) reporting unexpected situations, while for the future it is mainly males who report a striking increase in expectations. Nearly three-quarters of males (72%) and eight-tenths of females (82%) expect a lot or a relatively large number of unexpected situations in the future (Fig. 2).

In 2024, the Youth Research Institute decided on a less frequently used approach to explore the vision of 15-29-year-olds. We looked at depictions of the future, asking young Hungarians which images best describe their own ideas about the future. The images were shown to respondents in a random assortment and without labels. The distribution of responses shows that for young people the dominant vision of the future is not a solitary one, with a relative majority choosing the “family” image depicting more than one person. In second and third place, similar proportions chose images depicting roads, with the other images all at around 10 percent. It is typical that the most popular image was particularly popular with females, with almost 1 in 2 (45%) choosing this picture with several people on it. It is also generally true that the older the age group, the more likely a person is to choose the „family” picture, and the smaller the locality they live in, the more popular this choice

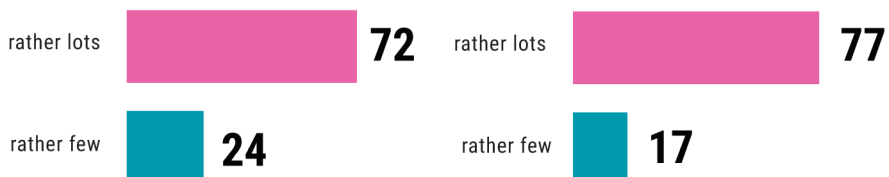
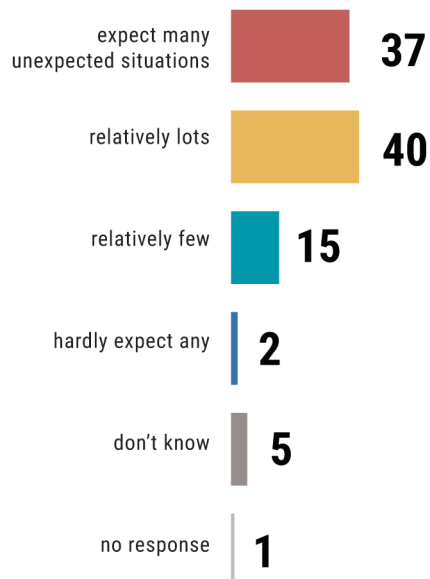
Unexpected scenarios – Past and future

percentage

Past: life-changing unexpected situations



Future: life-changing unexpected situations



Q: Please look back on the last ten years of your life. How many life-changing unexpected events did you have to face during these years? How do you think about the next ten years? How many life-changing unexpected events do you think you might have to face? Base: All respondents (N=1000); percentage distribution. Source: Youth Research Institute, 2024



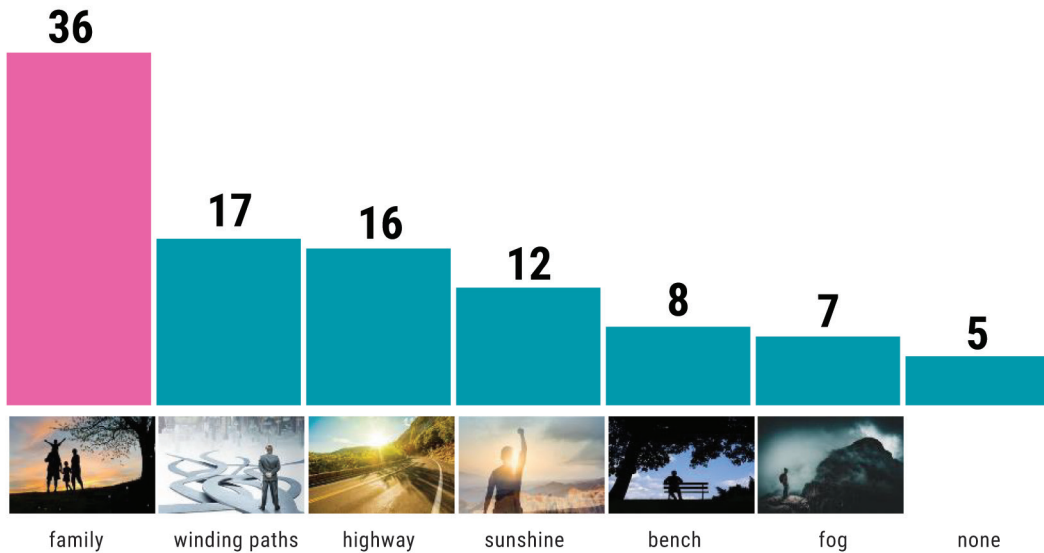
becomes. For the second most popular choice, the winding roads, respondents from Budapest are over-represented, while for the “highway” image there is no basic sociodemographic characteristic that explains the choice. The image of a figure with their hands raised was more popular among the youngest age group, while the image of a figure sitting on a bench was more popular than average among males (Figure 3).

This is significant in itself, however, the explanation attached to it is purely subjective, as we do not know the reason why one or another image was thought to best describe their feelings about the future. So we asked them. This showed that the meaning of

the first image is essentially a family-happiness-love triad. The second most popular “winding paths” and the least popular “fog” mostly represent uncertainty and doubt, although both may have a non-exclusively negative connotation, with “fog” seeming to have a significant proportion of people mentioning hope, but it must be noted that very few people chose this image in the first place. Both “highway” and “sunshine” also have essentially positive connotations according to young people’s responses, being perceived primarily as an expression of freedom. The “bench”, although predominantly associated with loneliness and solitude by the majority of young people who chose it, also had interpretations along the lines of peace and tranquillity at a close second (Figure 4).

Anticipating the future – Moodboard

Percentage



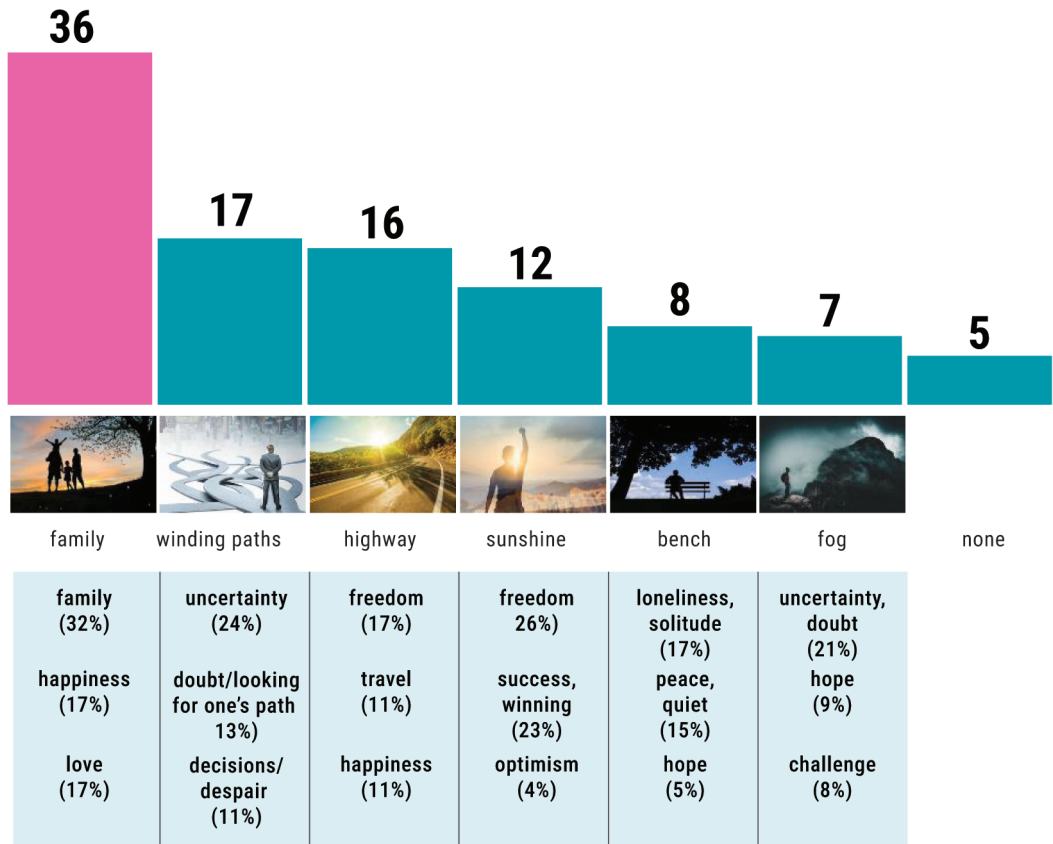
Q: Of the following images which one is the best representation of your feelings about the future? Base: All respondents (N=1000); percentage distribution. Source: Youth Research Institute, 2024

Based on all this, how should we interpret young people’s anticipation of the future? The most recent research clearly shows that young Hungarians’ visions of the future are centred around the family theme, which was reflected in both the explicit and the associative questioning. Young people associate family with positive feelings. In addition to the dominance of family life, frustration about the future is also strongly expressed, not only through the generational problem map, but also through the use of associative methodology. Overall, therefore, young people in Hungary expect family happiness, but also struggle with doubts about their future.



Anticipating the future - "In one word"

Percentage



Q: What word would best describe your feelings? (open) Basis: those who chose a given image; percentage distribution.
Source: Youth Research Institute, 2024

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Methodology

The Youth Research Institute's survey addressed young people and was conducted in January 2024. Responses were collected through online, self-completion interviews (CAWI) with a representative sample of 1 000 young Hungarians aged between 15-29.

The sample is considered representative of 15-29-year-olds in Hungary by gender, age (yrs), highest level of





