

POPDEMIC



**HOW COVID-19
IS IMPACTING
UK POPULAR
CULTURE**

**ISSUE 3:
RETURN OF THE KIDS -
LOCKDOWN BACK HOME**



**Human
Theory**

COVID-19 HAS FORCED MANY YOUNG PEOPLE BACK HOME

When Boris Johnson announced the UK would be going into lockdown on 23rd March, a mass upheaval of millennials started to take place, as many upped sticks from independent, inner-city flatshares to join family in the parental home.

BUT, WHAT'S BEEN THE IMPACT OF THIS CROSS-GENERATIONAL INTERACTION?

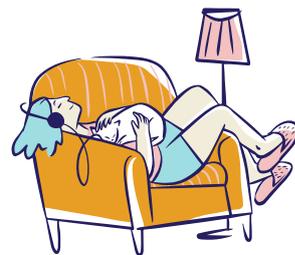
Spurred on by employment (and financial) insecurity, lack of space, and fear of loneliness, huge swathes of young adults returned to a Covid-induced childhood. And that's not even mentioning those who were on the cusp of starting a fresh phase of adulthood at uni in September, but must now stay put.

How did this re-blurring of generations play out emotionally and behaviourally? And will there be any lasting consequences?

HOW HAS LOCKDOWNING WITH PARENTS IMPACTED YOUNGER PEOPLE'S EMOTIONS, OUTLOOKS, AND BEHAVIOURS?

By using AI to create *Qual at Quant scale*, and combining it with expert human translation, we analysed mass conversational data from young people who moved back home, to understand the nuance behind their thoughts and emotions around the implications of living at home during lockdown.

We used predictive modelling to separate the topics and emotions of conversation, and analysed the recurrence of specific word types to understand the leading feelings and behaviours.





“The toughest part about living with my parents during lockdown has been pretending to laugh at every single shitty unfunny Facebook video my mum shows me every 5 seconds.”



“As much as being in the countryside with my parents during lockdown has its benefits relative to city life, I think I'm just about ready to leave my spider neighbours behind soon...”

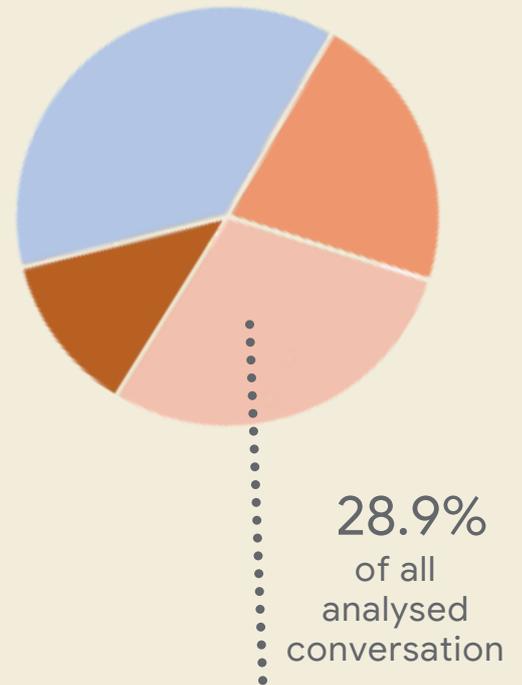


TIKTOK #FAMILYCHALLENGE CONTENT SHOWS THE FUN TO BE HAD WITH MUM AND DAD - AS LONG AS THERE IS AN END IN SIGHT

If TikTok is anything to go by, spending time with parents, siblings and pets is the perfect concoction for laughs, pranks, and group dances (#blindedbythelights anyone?), as videos featuring an out-of-time dancing dad and an easily irritated mum continue to fill the app's feed.

Even families that aren't so inclined to TikTok are experiencing joyful and fun quality time together - something which many young people are revelling in.

Crucially, while nearly 30% of conversation centres around the positive experience of living with family, it is aligned with the recurrence of the use of "currently living", suggesting a future where they aren't stuck with mum and dad.



"love"

"family"

"time"

"hilarious"

"glad"

"currently living"

WITH QUALITY TIME COMES SAFETY, SPACE, AND SAVINGS TOO

"saving money"
"cheaper"
"no bills"

"safe"
"vulnerable"

"garden"
"outside"
"small flat"

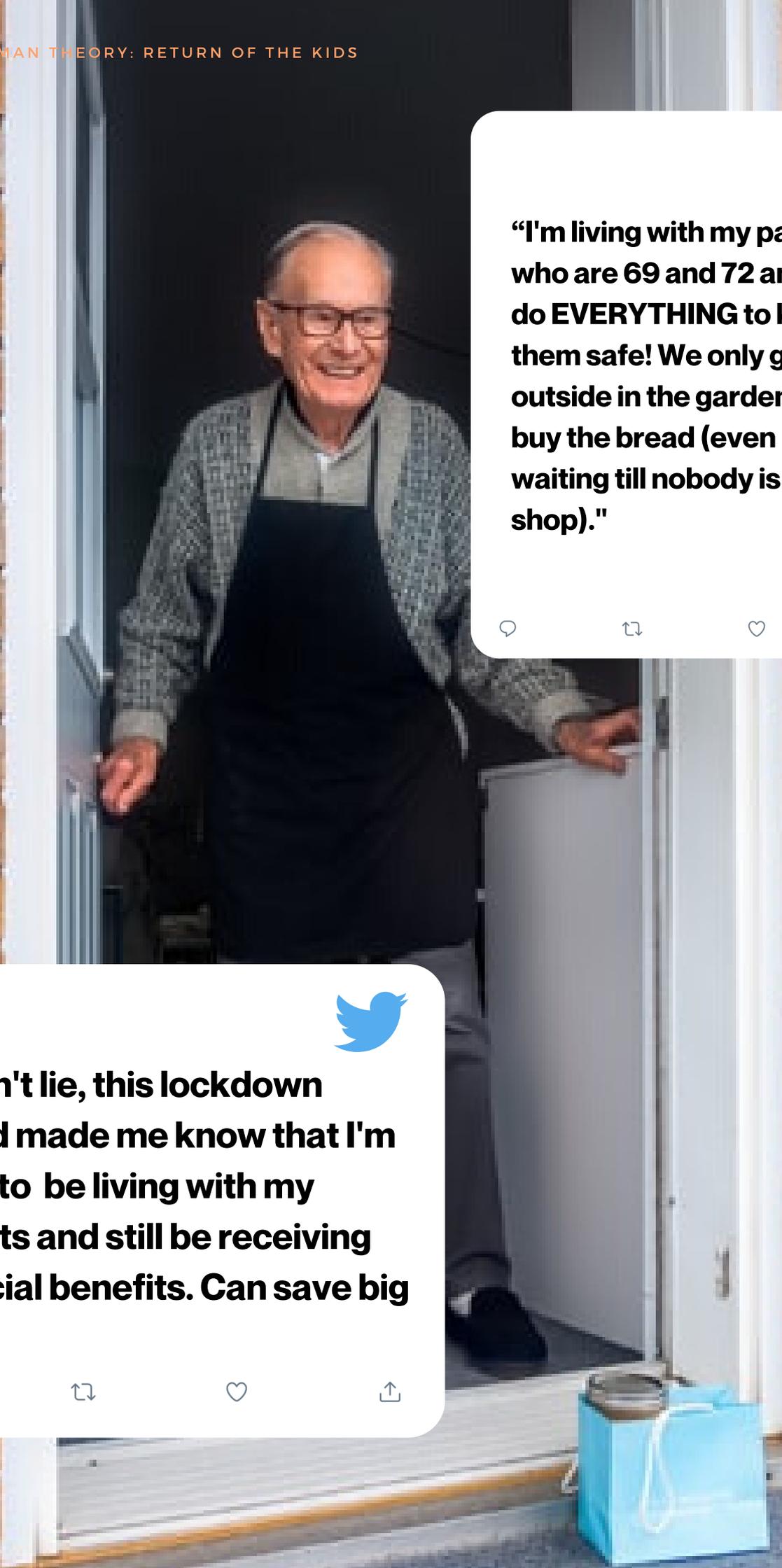
"grateful"
"lucky"

Source: Twitter. Word pairings are ranked according to how likely they are to be used by Liverpool fans, as opposed to fans of other clubs.

For some, the return was necessary - vulnerable parents needed extra support in a time where existing support structures vanished. Some were vulnerable themselves and didn't want to rely on housemates or mutual aid groups in areas they'd only recently moved to.

But, even when safety wasn't the driver to leaving, it was a pleasant consequence. Being away from the hustle and bustle of the city has also meant more space and less risk of contamination.

Couple this with savings on rent and bills (especially if tenancy agreements have ended on their own places), and young people - especially those from more affluent backgrounds - are self-confessing to feeling grateful, lucky and privileged.



"I'm living with my parents who are 69 and 72 and I will do EVERYTHING to keep them safe! We only go outside in the garden and I buy the bread (even waiting till nobody is in the shop)."



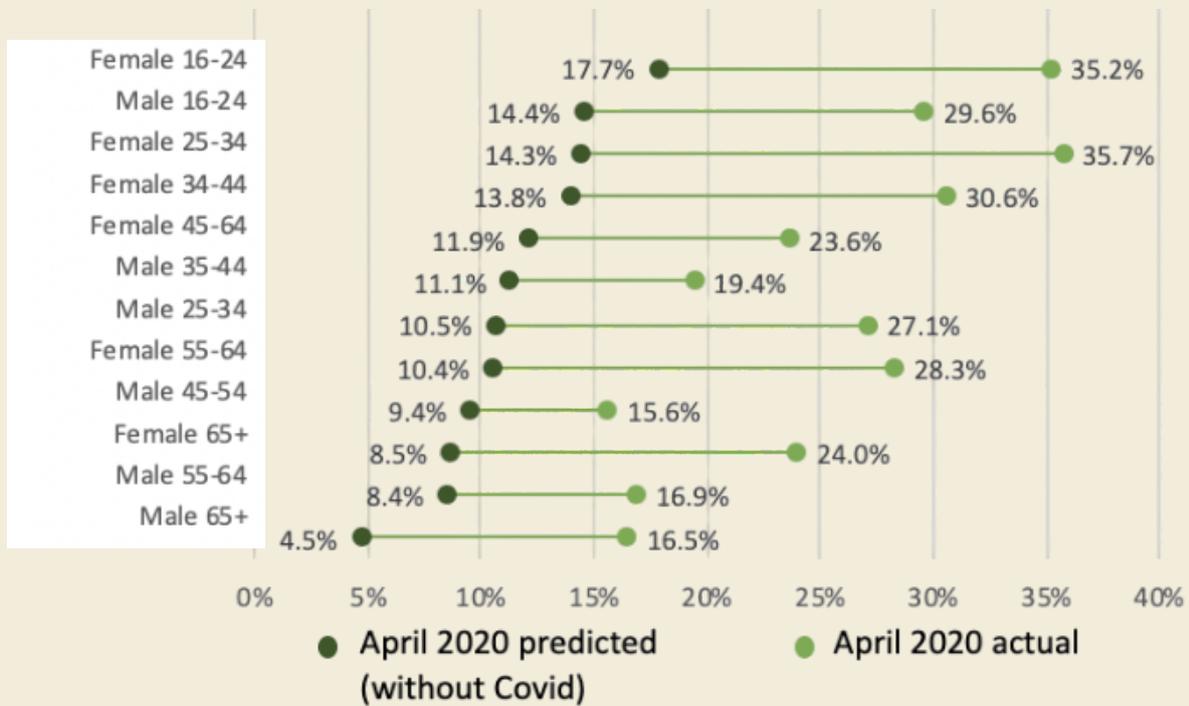
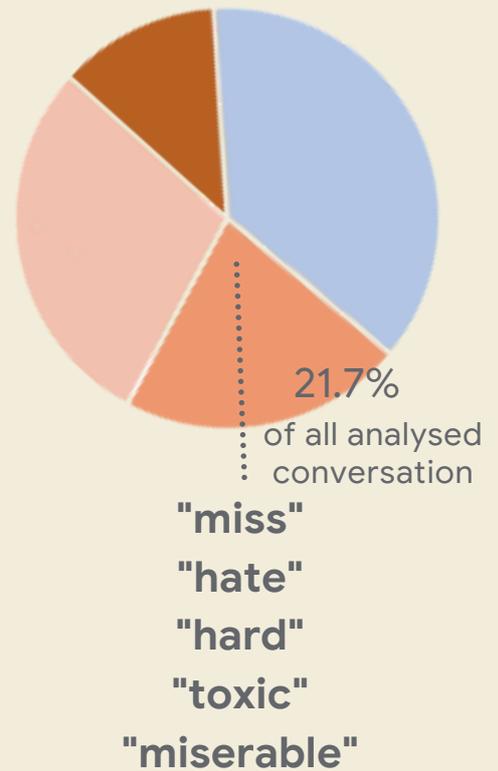
"I won't lie, this lockdown period made me know that I'm lucky to be living with my parents and still be receiving financial benefits. Can save big time"



BUT FEELINGS OF REGRESSION OR FRUSTRATION AT NEVER GETTING STARTED ARE NEGATIVELY IMPACTING MENTAL HEALTH

Living at home when you weren't before, or were looking forward to getting away with the start of the (now virtual) uni year, has caused struggles in communication, clashes of political views, and feelings of failure amongst many.

A recent study by the ISF showed the biggest impact of COVID on mental health has been on women and the young. And, MeTwo, a charity that offers mental health support to those aged 11-25 saw a 50% increase in posts since the outbreak, and the return of so many young people to the family home.





"i hate living at home. i think that's why i'm so sad lately. but this virus is the reason i moved back home for a bit"



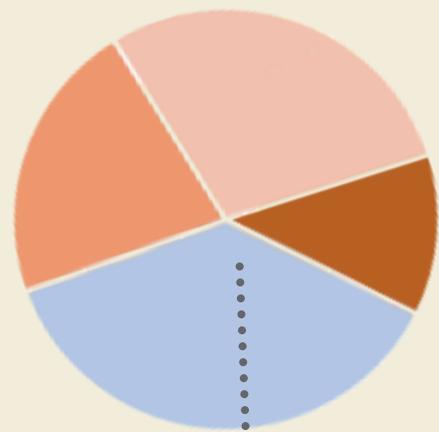
"... I wanna leave, I need to leave. Keep living with my parents is just too toxic, there isn't a single day when I don't want to fcking snap, burn my room and all those kind of sh*t, bc every DAY feels the same"



RELATIONSHIPS WITH RELATIVES MIGHT BE A STRUGGLE, BUT FOR SOME, THERE IS NO OTHER OPTION BUT TO STAY

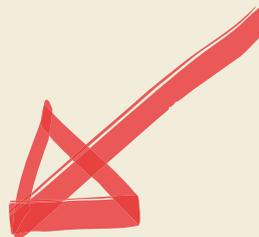
Unlike those who are only "currently living" in the parental home, young people who must stay, due to the impact of the virus on their routes out of the family home (jobs and uni places), are more likely to speak with an overpowering sense of dread and stress.

Feeling stuck with no end in sight is currently causing turmoil, but there are hints that it will spur younger people into action - using political activism or creative side hustles as necessary outlets.



37.9%
of all
analysed
conversation

"job"
"uni"
"lost
"furlough"
"year"
"months"



"upset"
"stuck"
"stressful"
"losing independence"

SO WHAT?

"I moved home in March with a suitcase of clothes, now moving back to Dundee with a car packed full of things i'm stealing from home"

Those who aren't trapped by circumstance are starting the journey back to their independent lives. But how much of the generational bonding and blurring are they taking with them? This once in a lifetime situation has opened our eyes to the value of family, and as a result, our philosophies and priorities are shifting to more meaningful things.

However, for those still nesting with their parents, it's not quite as rosy. Opportunities to improve their outlook and create feelings of hope and optimism should be crafted by brands and services that can do so - providing it's authentic and empathetic to their experience.

THANKS FOR READING



Human
Theory

