

## ASSESSMENT OF THE RESIDENCE SATISFACTION RELATED TO INVESTMENTS IN TÓTKOMLÓS (2014-2017)

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***Abstract:** We asked the population of Tótkomlós, a small town in the South-East of the Great Plain, how much they are satisfied with the investments implemented in their town (2014-2017). These investments were the following: building energetic development of Jankó János Elementary School and Secondary Grammar School, development of the Slovak Country House, developments to increase public safety implemented by the local government, construction of the ambulance station. We applied a questionnaire survey which we then assessed with the SPSS program. It turned out of the repliers' opinion that basically, they are satisfied with these investments but they added as a criticism, for example, that beautifying and developing the city should be started from the basics, such as asphaltting the roads. The modernization of the roads would be a basic necessity then the direction could be taken towards the more funded projects, of course, not postponing the application possibilities.*

***Keywords:** Tótkomlós, investments, satisfaction, population, questionnaire survey, local government*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

We carried out our research in Tótkomlós, situated in the region of South-East Great Plain (Nagy, G. D., 2005). We assessed the residence satisfaction with the investments implemented recently (2014-2017). We have written a study with a similar subject which examined the residence satisfaction related to investments in several towns (Zsótér B. et. al., 2014) (Zsótér B. et. al., 2016). The important elements of urban life have been improved in the settlements (Csapó T., Kocsis Zs., 2008). We examined that in view of the population, how much the investments of the local government improved their living conditions in Tótkomlós, and how much they are satisfied with them. Several studies have been carried out on the economic situation of this area (Southern Great Plain) (Abonyiné Palotás J., Komarek L., 2007). It is a well-known fact that a lot of EU-supports come

to Békés county. Investments of such kind are: building energetic development of Jankó János Elementary School and Secondary Grammar School, development of the Slovak Country House, developments of the local government to improve public safety, construction of the ambulance station in Tótkomlós. Of course, these investments have been made according to the prevailing tax rules (Lenghel R. D., Miculescu M., 2016) and their budget has been carefully prepared in advance (Miculescu C, Miculescu M., 2012).

We think that the result of this research would be an important feedback, whether those investments were carried out that the population really needed.

We tried to show what proportion of the population is satisfied with the investments. In our research we applied the questionnaire survey and we examined the following hypotheses:

1. We assumed that the respondents' satisfaction with the investments made since 2014 has increased in connection with health care, education, cityscape, public safety and cultural opportunities, but has deteriorated in terms of leisure time and entertainment.
2. We think that according to the majority of respondents the level of education and public safety have increased in the town.
3. We assumed that from the investments made in the past few years the ambulance station and the development of the school had a positive effect on the life of the population, the country house and the surveillance system a neutral one, while there has been no change in the living standards of the youth and the middle-aged living here, the ones of the older generation have improved.
4. We think that according to most of the answerers these investments remain sustainable in the long term, and the youth, the middle-aged and the elderly are all similarly satisfied with the town developing work of the local government.

We would like to prove or reject the above-mentioned assumptions with the study.

## **2. MATERIAL AND METHOD**

We conducted a questionnaire survey. Of course, after the compilation of the questions we carried out a test questioning. We also used protocol analysis during the trial, which means that we asked the respondents to "think aloud" and to give their opinion on the questionnaire, so we got a lot of constructional criticism. After that, we finalized the

questionnaire and then we can start to get completed them. We used the personal (verbal) method of questioning forms that are distinguished by the literature. We visited the respondents in their home asking them to fill in the questionnaire, which took place in March, 2017.

The questionnaire contains 19 questions, most of them refer to the investments and how much the population is satisfied with them, also what effects they have on their life, and finally, we asked some demographic questions. The questionnaire includes open and closed questions, and some mixed questions, also questions with one or more options and ones with scales, too.

By means of the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) program we assessed the answers and conducted interrelation researches (Hampel Gy., 2018).

### 3. RESULTS OF OUR OWN RESEARCH

1. *We assumed that the respondents' satisfaction with the investments made since 2014 has increased in connection with health care, education, cityscape, public safety and cultural opportunities, but has deteriorated in terms of leisure time and entertainment.*

The first part of our hypothesis *proved to be true only partially*, because the residence satisfaction with health care, education, cityscape, public safety and cultural opportunities has increased only to a small extent. The statement that satisfaction with leisure time and entertainment has deteriorated has *to be rejected*, as according to the opinion of the population, satisfaction with them has increased a little.

2. *We think that according to the majority of respondents the level of education and public safety have increased in the town.*

The first part of the hypothesis has been *proved*, since most of the respondents (58%) think that the education standards have increased in the town.

We were interested in whether there is a difference between the opinion of people of different sexes in this question. We found that there is a significant difference between the opinion of different sexes (significance= 0,001<0,05). While most women said 'yes' to this question, most men think that the education standards did not grow in the town. After that, we examined whether on the basis of both the educational level and the age, there is a significant difference in the opinions, however, we found

that there is no significant difference in this sense (educational level: significance =  $0,246 > 0,05$ ; generations: significance =  $0,36 > 0,05$ ).

Also, the second part of the hypothesis has been *proved*, as most of the respondents (64%) think that the public safety has increased as a result of the investments in the town.

We were interested in whether there is a correlation between the educational level, sex, age groups and this question. As a result, we could not see any significant difference. (educational level: significance =  $0,182 > 0,05$ ; sexes: significance =  $0,174 > 0,05$ ; age groups:  $0,818 > 0,05$ ). Consequently, judgement of this issue does not depend on the educational level, sex or the age of the respondent.

3. *We assumed that from the investments made in the past few years the ambulance station and the development of the school had a positive effect on the life of the population, the country house and the surveillance system a neutral one, while there has been no change in the living standards of the youth and the middle-aged living here, the ones of the older generation have improved.*

The first part of the hypothesis has been *proven*, as it is absolutely clear that the ambulance station and the development in the school had a very positive or a positive effect on the life of people living in this town. However, the surveillance system and renovation of the country house had a neutral effect on their life.

In the significance study we can see that there is a significant difference between the changes in the standard of living and the opinion of the age groups (significance =  $0,00 < 0,05$ ). The living standards of the middle-aged have changed positively much more than the ones of the younger or the older generations. While the standards of living of the young and the elderly did not change at all, though it did not change for most of the middle-aged either, there are a lot of positive answers in this age group. It is interesting that the living standards of the young did not change at all into a negative direction. That is why we *rejected* the hypothesis since there was no change in the standards of living of the elderly and the young, while there was a positive one in case of the middle-aged.

4. *We think that according to most of the answerers these investments remain sustainable in the long term, and the youth, the middle-aged and the elderly are all similarly satisfied with the town developing work of the local government.*

The first part of the hypothesis *has not been proved*, as only 41% of the respondents think that the investments can be maintained in the long term, while the majority (59%) think that the local government will not be able to sustain the investments.

We conducted significance studies for the second half of the hypothesis in order to see whether there is a correlation between the judgment of the town developing work of the local government and the opinion of different age groups. As a result, we could see that there is no correlation, they do not differ significantly (significance = 0,650 > 0,05). This means that there is no difference between the opinions of the different age groups about the town developing work of the local government. The average satisfaction of the young has a value of 3,12 (on a scale of five grades), that of the middle-aged is 3,15 and finally, that of the elderly is 3,04, so it can be said that each age group evaluates the town developing work of the local government as „medium”. It is interesting that the young did not choose the option „very good”, while the middle-aged and the elderly opted for each possibility. All in all, the hypothesis has been *proved*.

#### 4. SUMMARY

At the end of our research, we would make suggestions based on the opinions of the respondents to create a better and livable city. First and foremost, it should be noted that the urban development policy of Tótkomlós (as well as many other settlements) is heavily dependent on grants received from applications, especially from the European Union. This means that instead of developing what would be necessary, they implement investments for which they obtained grants through applications. We think that the local government of the town of Tótkomlós should have regard for what people need, how they could make the town livable, more developed, using applications, of course. Also, it would contribute to stop the population decline and migration from the settlement observed in recent decades.

All in all, as it turned out from the opinion of the respondents, development of the town should be started from the basis, like asphaltting the roads. The modernization of the roads would be a basic necessity then the direction could be taken towards the more funded projects, of course, not postponing the application possibilities.

Besides, people living here consider important to develop their existing resources, like reconstruction of the culture centre, where different cultural and entertainment programs, performances, balls could be organized, even the brass band of Tótkomlós could perform there. Now, that the ambulance station has been built, it can be seen that even the town fire

station needs to be upgraded as well. It would be important to have a car wash in the town, since there is no service like this. Development of tourism should also be reconsidered in the settlement (Sava C., 2015), as the thermal bath attracts a lot of tourists (Sava C., 2012). What is more, even the elderly likes going to the Rose Bath (Illés S., 2005). However, as the respondents see, the most important task is to invite investments of production which would create workplaces in the town enhancing income for the town. An idea like this was the construction of a restaurant which would be needed and which would create jobs, so I see it as a good starting step.

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