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**USING THE INTERNET VERSUS ENHANCING THE SIGNS  
OF PERSONALITY DISORGANISATION IN THE ARTWORK  
OF EARLY-SCHOOL CHILDREN**

**Introduction**

The studies conducted by Gemius in 2008 indicate that pre-school children belong to a group with the highest percentage of children starting to use the Internet (as illustrated in table 1). That is why it seems necessary to undertake exploratory actions on groups of children who to a different degree use various media transmissions (especially those who seem to overuse them).

*Table 1*

**Statistical age of children' start using the Internet**

<b>Age (in years)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>4 and less</b>	16
<b>5 - 9</b>	58
<b>10 - 12</b>	23
<b>13 - 15</b>	2

*source: Dzieci on-line w oczach rodziców, Gemius, 2008, available on WWW: [https://www.gemius.pl/pl/archiwum\\_prasowe/2008-03-19/01](https://www.gemius.pl/pl/archiwum_prasowe/2008-03-19/01) [access: 14.02.2013]*

The results obtained from the research to date indicate that in the case of a child, especially a younger one, so a pre-school and early-school child, some specific traits, attitudes and behaviours may occur as a result of media overuse. This will include a specific personality profile, sometimes called „*media awareness*”, which comprises magical thinking/ an illusion of the world, a pseudorealistic image of the world, interpretation stereotypes, specific socialisation mechanisms, the desensitisation effect, the habituation effect or the routinisation of life organisation [24].

A phenomenon arousing considerable anxiety is also the so-called „*restless agitation*” which emerges in the case of persons that are under the influence of media transmissions. Watching violence or other extreme content is thought to cause considerable agitation in the viewer. The rise in muscle tonus, intensity of associations, images and the stimulation of endocrine glands that regulate the hormone metabolism are characteristics of this state, hence its name – „*restless*” agitation. It constitutes the basis of all emotional reactions, so also other emotions that accompany aggression can be stimulated [3].

Another phenomenon that has recently fallen into the field of interest of researchers is the „*addiction effect*” produced by the media, which

manifests itself on the most direct level (but also impacts on the secondary level) of the child's interpersonal relations. At first the addiction is imperceptible. However, with time, when it develops, it leads to irreparable damage. The child starts to live in progressing isolation, and he or she does not strive for relationships with other people – this need is quickly met by a machine. Finally, the child starts developing an emotional relationship towards it. He or she does not know how to communicate with other people, losing any emotional relations and living far away from the real world. Such children, for example, can move on the path of games, visit computer flea markets to buy them, then exchange them, play them at home and talk about them online. Children addicted to computers experience anxiety in contacts with other people, sometimes carefully concealing this state and manifesting their ostensible superiority. The long-lasting use of computers connected to the Internet makes the pupil relieve all their stress through a machine. The next step on the way to addiction is the feeling of safety only when sitting in front of computer or TV.

„*Transferring aggression*” is also a phenomenon formulated as a result of research on media effects. Hence it is considered that:

- watching violence and aggression in films evokes aggressive responses in the viewers;
- pictures of the pain, blood and suffering of victims provoked aggression as effectively as scenes of aggressive behaviour;
- the study participants who watched a film with strong aggression scenes imposed heavier punishment for errors in the control group than persons who watched a peaceful sports game;
- pupils who were not subject to verbal aggression (their personal dignity was not violated), but who watched emotional scenes of physical aggression, imposed heavier punishments than the pupils who were offended, laughed at but who did not watch the aggression scenes.

Children learn by mimicry. Observing aggression in a film they often re-play it in their relationships with peers. When children strongly identify themselves with a character who is aggressive, their aggression increases. A child learns about the possible ways of killing someone, which punch is the most effective, etc. The characters in films for young viewers are often the personification of different forces in the fight of good with evil. Physical violence, ruthlessness or reaction speed and efficiency are often means on the way to victory. According to research, the more violent scenes one watches, the higher the probability of aggression [9, 3].

All the described phenomena suggest that media overuse may increase, especially among young recipients, the so-called personality disorganisation which seems to be a predictor of the dysfunctional phenomena mentioned above.

#### **The model of own research**

All the designed research was based on the assumption that children who spend considerable time in the “virtual world” (the Internet) will exhibit

in their art works an increased number of indicators of personality and social relationship disorganisation, when compared with children who reduce time spent in this way.

The extent of the phenomenon (the influence of TV on children) allows us to assume that it is social in character, for which reason it merits scientific interest. Consequently, it seems justified to offer the answers to the following research questions:

1. Does using the Internet modify one's self-perception and does it reduce contact with others – if so, to what extent?

2. What personality disorganisation indicators are characteristic of the art works of children who spend considerable time using the Internet, in comparison with children from the control group?

The study involved two groups of 9-12 year-old children (50 in each group) from the Lubelskie Voivodeship. The average time they spend on the Internet was calculated on the basis of an interview. It was about 21 hours a week, which gives us an arithmetic average of 3 hours a day. This average corresponds with the results obtained by Braun-Gałkowska [4], Miecugow [14] Sikorski [23] and Napora [16] and relating to the time devoted to watching television, where it was about 4 hours a day. The difference between the groups of „Internet children” (the primary group) and "non-Internet children" (the control group) was statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ), as regards the time spent on-line (measured using the t-Student test) – per week, the former group devoted about 20-22 hours, while the latter about 7 – 10 hours of their time to the Internet.

Human figure drawings (HFDs) are particularly useful assessment tools. Drawing is used as a method of communication and represents an individual's self-concept, anxiety, attitude, or conflict [11] and many other psychological phenomena as developmental level, evidence of emotional indicators [21] or stress level [30].

In order to test self-perception and contacts with others the thematic psycho-drawing method entitled „Me and my friends” was used, and the selected indicators were analysed (Table 2). They were defined on the basis of the research conducted earlier [25; 26; 27].

*Table 2*

**An analysis of the selected indicators in a psycho-drawing, analysed with the Pearson's chi-squared test \***

<b>Analysed indices in a psycho-drawing</b>	
<b>Realisation:</b>	
• realistic type	-
• abstract type	
<b>Realisation:</b>	
• extender type	0.05 * ↓

• <b>simplified type</b>		
<b>Author:</b>		
• <b>in others company</b>		
• <b>lonely/alone</b>	-	
• <b>absent</b>		
<b>Self valuation:</b>		
• <b>valorisation</b>	-	
• <b>devalorisation</b>		
<b>Relations:</b>		
• <b>closeness</b>	-	
• <b>distance</b>		
<b>Komunikation:</b>		
• <b>present on the drawing</b>	0.01	↓
• <b>absent</b>		
<b>Cooperation:</b>		
• <b>present on the drawing</b>	0.01	↓
• <b>absent</b>		
<b>Emotionality:</b>		
• <b>present on the drawing</b>	0.05	↓
• <b>absent</b>		
<b>Agression:</b>		
• <b>present on the drawing</b>	0.05	↑
• <b>absent</b>		
<b>Depression:</b>		
• <b>present on the drawing</b>	-	
• <b>absent</b>		
<b>Anxiety:</b>		
• <b>present on the drawing</b>	0.01	↑
• <b>absent</b>		
<b>Schizothymia:</b>		
• <b>present on the drawing</b>	-	
• <b>absent</b>		

\* *the arrow defines the rise or fall tendency in the case of the "Internet children"*

The analysis proved that between the selected self-perception indices and the social relationships indices of children who use the Internet in different ways, certain statistically significant differences can be observed.

The first analysed area is the manner of producing the works. And so, visibly more „Internet children” produced their works in a schematic way, deprived of many details both relating to the natural environment (elements of

nature, weather, etc.) and the inanimate surroundings (additional objects) in comparison with the „non-Internet children”.

The second explored area is related to social relationships. It turned out that there was no statistically significant difference between the presentation of oneself among the others – the analysed groups are the same with regard to picturing oneself as lonely, accompanied by others or censuring oneself out of a drawing. Similarly, the analysed groups do not differ when it comes to relationships they have with other people - closeness or remaining at a distance. Also the differences in treating oneself, so in tendencies towards valorisation or devalorisation were not observed.

Cooperation and communication were an important element of social relationships that made the works in two different groups significantly statistically different. Their indices were not so common in the works by the „Internet children” in comparison with the works of the „non-Internet children”.

The third area concerned personality-disorganisation indices. As the study revealed, the works of the „Internet children” were different from the works of the „non-Internet children” in many important elements: live emotionalism – considerably less common in the „Internet children”; aggression – considerably more common in the works of the „Internet children”; and anxiety – more often displayed by the „Internet children”. No statistically significant differences in terms of the number of depression and schizothymia indices were observed.

#### **Conclusion and discussion**

On the basis of this research it can be concluded that:

1) using the Internet modifies certain areas of self-perception and picturing relationships with others in the case of early-school children who were analysed by way of the thematic psycho-drawing titled „Me and the others”, and relating to communication and entering into relationships with peers;

2) art works of children who spend a lot of time using the Internet, in comparison with the children from the control group, are characterised by a higher number of personality disorganisation indices in terms of aggression or anxiety.

Thus it appeared that children who use the Internet for about 20 – 22 hours a week (sometimes even more) in their works place themselves in cooperation and communication relationships less often and their works indicate higher levels of aggression (the themes) and anxiety (empty, white spaces, the position of the drawing on the sheet of paper, poorer colours and no additional elements, etc.) and also a lower level of emotionalism (poor colours, lack of „action”, additional elements, etc.).

This suggests that the higher *tendency (readiness?) to aggression*, indicated in numerous studies [4; 3; 1; 29; 16] can be confirmed.

In a sense this also corresponds with the *addiction effect* suggested in numerous papers which, in its first stage may take the form of passive social

interactions - hence the phenomenon of the lack of communication and cooperation, which was visible in the analysed art works of the „Internet children”.

In the presented research the presence of the phenomenon of „*restless agitation*” connected to Internet activity was not confirmed – in the works of the „Internet children” there were less signs of so-called live emotionalism. It should be noted that this live emotionalism in the drawing is connected with colours, the number of added elements, and some specific atmosphere of the work, and it is rather a summary of the elements mentioned above than intended agitation. So it seems that this element of functioning should be taken into account in the next research attempts, by applying some other, more measurable physical indices.

The analysis of the number of *personality disorganisation indices* provided us with some important data. And so it resulted that the works of the „Internet children have some clear disorganisation signs in comparison with their peers who use the Internet in a more moderate way. This disorganisation comprises mainly aggression and anxiety tendencies; the indices of depression and schizothymia indices are not higher. This is consistent with the studies that have so far been conducted in this field” [13; 17].

The reservations over this project concern mainly the real-time measurement spent in virtual space and the research method. So it seems that in the tested group the picture of using the Internet could have been distorted - younger respondents seem to understate the actual time spent in virtual space. In the future, when conducting research of this type, it would be worth taking the opinion of the tested children’s parents into account (however this makes the research process complicated and considerably longer).

We also take into consideration some reservations concerning the method of the research and the analysis of the accessible data, where, as the leading method, the projection method was used. „*Drawings are not diagnostic, but provide strong cues for follow-up interviews with children and parents and referral to psychologists for further evaluation*” [22, p. 15]. However, it is clear that human figure drawings have been shown to serve as indicators of many psychological features, including: the drawer’s perception of him or herself [2; 11] an insight into a person’s representation of self and others [12; 15], anxiety [5] and aggression and acting out behaviour [10; 11]. Drawings also enable us to understand social relationships. Expressive techniques make implicit information more explicit by increasing awareness of the inner self [8; 19] and allow expression on both the conscious and unconscious levels [6]. So, despite a number of reviews questioning the reliability and validity of projective drawing techniques [7; 31], drawings are still among the most used tests by psychologists [20; 18; 28].

We would like to mention that the catalogue of the variables analysed in the drawing was developed on the basis of long-term research renewed in different research groups. It should also be noted that although drawings are not completely diagnostic, but provide strong cues for follow-up interviews

with children and parents and referral to psychologists for further evaluation. Therefore, this article will explain how knowledge of the normative developmental and dysfunctional indicators provides the basis for interpreting their psychological content.

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**Тушинська-Богущка В., Богущкі Я. Використання Інтернету у боротьбі з ознаками особистісної дисорганізації у творчій діяльності дітей молодшого шкільного віку**

Результати дослідження показують, що діти (вік: 9 – 12, n = 50), які використовують Інтернет протягом 20 – 22 годин на тиждень у своїх творах мистецтва, мають більш високий рівень агресії і тривожності, а також більш низький рівень емоційності, більш високу тенденцію агресії і ефекту залежності (у вигляді пасивних соціальних взаємодій). Наявність „неспокійної агітації”, пов’язаної з інтернет-активністю, не підтвердилася.

*Ключові слова:* Інтернет, дезорганізація особистості, молодший шкільний вік, проєкційна техніка.



**Тушинська-Богущка В., Богущки Я. Использование Интернета в борьбе с признаками личностной дисорганизации в творческой деятельности детей младшего школьного возраста**

Результаты исследования показывают, что дети (возраст: 9 – 12, n = 50), которые используют Интернет в течение 20 – 22 часов в неделю в своих произведениях искусства, имеют более высокий уровень агрессии и тревожности, а также более низкий уровень эмоциональности, более высокую тенденцию агрессии и эффекта зависимости (в виде пассивных социальных взаимодействий). Наличие „беспокойной агитации”, связанной с интернет-активностью, не подтвердилась.

*Ключевые слова:* Интернет, дезорганизация личности, младший школьный возраст, проекторы.

**Tushyn'ska-Bogutska W., Bogutski J. Using the Internet Versus Enhancing the Signs of Personality Disorganisation in the Artwork of Early-school Children**

Results of study show that children (age: 9– 12, n=50) who use the Internet for about 20-22 hours a week in their art works indicate higher levels of aggression and anxiety and also a lower level of emotionalism, higher *tendency to aggression* and *addiction effect* (in the form of passive social interactions), the presence of the of „*restless agitation*” connected to Internet activity was not confirmed.

*Key words:* Internet, personality disorganisation, early-school children, psycho-drawing.

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**ПРОБЛЕМА ФОРМУВАННЯ  
СОЦІАЛЬНОГО ДОСВІДУ ДОШКІЛЬНИКІВ  
ПІД ВПЛИВОМ МЕДІАПРОСТОРУ**

На сучасному етапі розвитку українського суспільства особливого значення набувають проблеми соціалізації підростаючого покоління, накопичення молодими особистостями первинного соціального досвіду. Потреби суспільства в самостійній, творчій, ініціативній особистості визначають нові параметри перебігу соціалізації, перегляду традиційних настанов виховання дітей. Більшою мірою це стосується наймолодшого покоління, в свідомості та поведінці якого ще не сформувалися та міцно