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e-ADDICTION – A THREAT TO THE VIRTUAL WORLD AMONG POLISH YOUTH

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Abstract: *The text concerns the issue of e-addictions among youth. The description of the phenomenon in the Polish perspective was made on the basis of the results of national and international research. The considerations are based on the theory of social constructionism and are related to whether the problem of differently treated e-addictions is a real problem in Poland or is it just a phenomenon created by researchers and specialists dealing behavioral disorders. The results leave no illusions - the scale of the phenomenon in the Polish reality is similar to that presented in other European countries, which draws attention to the need to take preventive measures and monitor the situation, especially as a consequence of changes in the patterns of Internet use by young people in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic.*

Keywords: *e-addiction; problematic internet use in Poland; youth studies; social constructionism*

Introduction

The Internet has fundamentally changed many areas of human functioning. In recent decades, there has been an intensive development of the Internet, which has contributed to ever-increasing social changes. From the tool that served primarily for exchanging messages, it has become a place where many activities have been transferred to facilitate access to information, the possibility of more effective operation and simplification of activities of daily living. However, in addition to the positive results of using the Internet also we can face negative consequences of its use. The concept of addiction, though traditionally used to describe a physical dependence on a varied chemical substance (Holden, 2001), has been applied to excessive use of the Internet. Internet addiction, also known as e-addiction, is characterized by excessive urges about computer use and internet access, ultimately leading to distress or impairment, notably social and occupational functioning. Internet addiction in

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adolescence is a growing problem in recent years. The development of new media caused by rapid technological progress, allows, among other things, to meet many needs of youth and young adults. These are mainly the needs of "identity, information about the outside world, patterns of behaviour, compensation, entertainment, acceptance and social interaction" (Sowińska, 2010). For most young people, the Internet is a tool for education, entertainment and communication, but for some groups of young people can be a trap.

There are more and more studies and analyses dealing with the topic of e-addiction as a subject of scientific research (Suris et al., 2014, Cabral, 2011). Prevention programs are being implemented in schools and other educational institutions and counselling centres.

The main goal of this paper is to characterize models of internet use among Polish youth. Presenting the result of international research projects conducted in Poland I want to find an answer to the question of whether is e-addiction among young people a significant social problem in Poland or whether we should treat internet use as a potential threat only. I place my considerations in the perspective of social constructivism. In my concerns, I wonder whether the problem of e-addiction is a phenomenon generated and developed by researchers and specialists dealing with solving social problems, or whether its scale allows us to treat this phenomenon as a burning problem that requires massive intervention.

Theoretical Framework

The key problem of the considerations of this study is the problem of social production of phenomena with an indication of their basic mechanisms and their character understood as social constructionism. Social constructionism is a concept popular in sociology developed by Berger and Luckmann in The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge (1966). The basic foundation of social constructionism is that the way we understand and even perceive the processes, objects and events do not necessarily reflect their real nature, but rather is a product of how the world is represented as cultural products of this world constituting a kind of referents mark to reality. Constructionism has a philosophical provenance, however, it finds its prominent place in sociological analyses. The general meaning of constructionism automatically determines the ontological nature of social phenomena and the possibility of getting to know them.

There are several constitutive features of social constructionism (Gubrium, Holstein, 2008). From the constructionists' perspective, the world does not consist of objects, but the meanings given to them. It is assumed that individuals strive to understand the world around them. They make their experiences subjective meaning when interpreting reality. Coming into contact with the world, an individual gives it meaning from his or her own cultural and historical perspective (Crotty, 1998). Social constructionism is therefore any phenomenon, regardless of the intensity of its occurrence, it can, under certain circumstances, reach the rank of a social problem. The creators of social problems tend to be institutions appointed to solve them. Paradoxically successful in a significant reduction in the prevalence of the problem contrary to their interests.

The Semantic Scope of the Concept of e-Addiction

An important element of consideration in e-addictions is to determine the scope of their semantic understanding.

The so-called internet addiction disorder is a fairly new phenomenon and a growing problem in the world (Ko et al., 2012). Although the disorder may affect approximately 5%–10% of the population, and problem use may affect another 10%, the remaining 80% of users around the world do not lose control over the way they use the Internet. However, the number of people who spend more and more free time is increasing on the Internet, which, taking into account certain risk factors, may have negative effect effects on their functioning (mental, emotional, and professional).

In the DSM-5 classification (the latest revision of the DSM) next to the category of disorders related to psychoactive substances, a new category was created, yes addictions/disorders not related to psychoactive substances (non-substance addictions), in which gambling games were placed (gambling disorder). That is, a person suffering from an addiction to a substance abuser and a person suffering from gambling will be diagnosed under the same category of disorder. The term "addiction" indicates common ground and mechanisms for both addiction/behavioural disorder and substance dependence.

A variety of terms have been used to describe this behaviour, including "Internet addiction" (Bai et al., 2001; Saphira et al., 2000), "pathological Internet use" (Davis, 2001), and "problematic Internet use" (Davis et al., 2002). Researchers have described a syndrome of intense preoccupation with using the Internet (Chou et al., 2005), excessive amounts of time spent online, compulsive use of the Internet, difficulty in managing the time spent on the Internet, feeling that the world outside of the Internet is boring, becoming irritated if disturbed while online, decreased social interaction with "real" people, and increased loneliness and depression (Nalwa & Anand, 2003).

The decision to amend the DSM-5 was the result of years of research that increasingly pointed to similarities between the resulting disorder from the problem of internet use and psychoactive substance use.

Within the broad spectrum of Internet-related disorders, researchers also distinguish (in addition to computer/online gaming disorder):

- disorder related to the use of the Internet itself, but not a specific purpose;
- disorder related to the use of social networks (e.g., Facebook);
- a disorder related to the use of smartphones.

To put it simply, I assume for this study that it is the type of experience mediated by instruments offered by new media. It can take the form of unhealthy passion or classically defined addictions. The range of addictions itself is as wide as the range of media instruments (games, cybersex, social media, shopping, etc.) The behaviour connected with the e-addiction can be rewarding or negative, it can reveal the obsessive and compulsive need to perform addictive behaviours, ignoring the losses caused by

excessive indulgence in addiction, withdrawal syndrome, and increasing frequency of addictive behaviours.

The diagnosis of this type of disorder requires the occurrence of 5 of the 8 listed behaviours (Young, 1998). The criteria proposed by Young are relatively easy to operationalize (identification of their manifestations).

1. Preoccupation with the Internet (manifested among others experiencing past online activities, and planning subsequent online sessions).
2. The need to increase the time intended for the use internet to get the appropriate level of satisfaction.
3. Repeated take-up unsuccessful efforts aimed at limiting or stopping using the internet.
4. Irritability, aggravation mood or irritability when trying to limit or stop using the internet.
5. Staying online longer than you planned.
6. Loss or Compromise, because of using the internet, important emotional relationships educational opportunities, professional etc.
7. Lying to family members therapists or others for concealment is its true size involvement in the use internet.
8. Treating the Internet as a way to escape from problems or on improving bad mood (feeling of helplessness, guilt, anxiety, depression).

According to Mark Griffiths (1996), I assume that using the Internet becomes a priority of everyday functioning (dominant function). It can also cause a mood change - using the Internet to improve well-being and increased tolerance - increased need to use the network. The withdrawal syndrome revealed the appearance of irritability, anxiety, and irritability at the moment of internet access restrictions and it may cause some conflicts - between the user and family, friends or school duties.

The analysis of Internet addiction, similarly to the analysis of other types of disorders, covers several areas within which both the factors protecting against risky behaviours and those that favour engaging in risky behaviours develop. Particularly significant risk factors include (Jessor and Jessor, 1977): conflicts in family/dissatisfaction with parental care, turbulent relationship between parents, punishing, demanding, uninvolved in the everyday life of a child, overprotectiveness, the lack of control over the time a child spends online, lower level of school competences, poor bond with school, having peers drinking alcohol in one's environment (bad contact with teachers, lack of social support, hostility towards others), social phobia, cyberbullying, risky behaviours. The basic risk factors include personality traits (impulsiveness, and low self-esteem (Fioravanti, Dèttore, & Casale, 2012), and it is hypothesized that these may be genetic factors. Researchers indicate that neuroticism is a risk factor in the dimension of personality (the higher the neuroticism, the greater the risk of addictions/disorders behavioural, including new technologies), but also conscientiousness (the lower conscientiousness, the greater the risk of addiction) (Andreassen, Torsheim, Brunborg and Pallesen, 2012). That is, people with low-stress resistance, and anxiety are more prone to addiction and behavioural disorders. frequently indicated risk factors for addictions

are impulsivity (Kim and Grant, 2001) and compulsivity (understood as two independent dimensions, which means that the unit can be the high intensity of each of them).

Young (1998) created a classification of types of e-addictions. These include cybersex (chat rooms, cyber porn, etc.); online friendships; e-gambling, internet auctions; information overload (compulsive web surfing); addiction to a computer (games).

The Empirical Basis of the Problem

In Poland, the problem of Internet addiction is addressed by many researchers. For this study, two international projects were taken into account - EU-KIDS-ONLINE - 2009/2010 (Pyżalski, Zdrodowska, Tomczyk, Abramczuk, 2019, Smahel, Machackova, Mascheroni, Dedkova, Staksrud, Ólafsson, Livingstone, Hasebrink, 2020) and 2018/19 and Problematic use of the Internet by young people 2019.

EU Kids Online aimed to deepen knowledge about the experiences and practices of European children and parents in terms of risky and safer use of the Internet and new online technologies. The aim of the research under the 4th edition of the project was to provide key information defining patterns of technology use and to present positive and negative experiences of children aged 9-16. To achieve this goal, between autumn 2017 and summer 2019, a survey of children in 19 European countries was carried out with the cooperation of teams from the EU Kids Online network. In Poland, the research was conducted from May to June 2018 in 90 schools. The selection scheme used was constructed in such a way as to obtain a representative sample of primary, lower and upper secondary school students, corresponding to the structure of the population of students aged 9-17 in Poland. The survey questionnaires were completed by a total of 1,433 Polish students. In Poland, the research was carried out by a team led by prof. UAM dr hab.Jacek Pyżalski from the Faculty of Educational Studies of the University of Adam Mickiewicz in Poznań. The study uses a research model that takes into account both opportunities (potentials) and threats (risks) resulting from the use of the Internet and two key environments - family and school, which are the source of risk factors influencing involvement in risky behaviour online, and factors protecting against such involvement and at the same time supporting the constructive use of the network (pro-social and pro-development). In addition, the model took into account selected aspects of offline functioning and an extensive list of socio-demographic factors.

The aim of the study "Problematic use of the Internet by young people 2019" was to deepen and update knowledge about PUI by schoolchildren. In particular, the study aims at determining the scale of PUI, determining the activities undertaken by schoolchildren and the electronic devices they most often use, determining the relationship between PUI and other variables, such as socio-demographic variables whether related to the family and school environment and identifying risk factors and protective factors related to PUI by children and youth. This study there was used the Polish adaptation of the Internet Addiction Test (IAT; Young, 1998). The number of respondents who took place in this study was 1,077. The survey was conducted among students of gradesVI–VIII of primary schools and grades III of lower secondary schools, representatives of the teaching staff of the schools attended by the surveyed

students and representatives of the parents' council of these schools. The study was carried out by the Empowering Children Foundation from March to June 2019. Participation in the study was anonymous.

Young People as Internet Users

The research project EU-KIDS ONLNE covers to some extent the issues of access devices and the time of use internet. Data indicate a growing prevalence of the use of the Internet by young people. It was found that only 0.7% of respondents never use the Internet at home, and as many as 80% do it many times a day or almost all the time. Most frequent use of the Internet has lower values when connecting to the Internet at school (approx. 39%) or with friends (approx. 42%).

Definitely in the first place among devices used for connecting a mobile phone/smartphone is available. It was using him daily or more often 82.5% of respondents. The percentage of respondents using to of connecting to the Internet via a TV was almost 57%, and via a laptop and desktop computer was almost 40%. Devices such as tablets (12.5%) or game consoles (11.8%) were used much less frequently. Only a few used wearable devices, such as watches (6.6%) and toys connected to the Internet (2%). It should be noted that boys more often than girls used fixed-line Internet access - 51.5% of the boys used a desktop or laptop computer every day or almost every day. Only 28.7% of girls did it ($p<0.001$).

Having a profile on a social networking site is a very common way of using the Internet, which can bring several benefits (e.g. help build social relations, exchange information), such as a lot of threats (e.g. exposure to cyberbullying, violate privacy) (Spies Shapiro, Margolin, 2014). In the whole sample, 72.6% had a profile and there were no significant ones in this respect differences between boys and girls. They less often had a profile of younger children (less than half) compared to adolescents (almost 80%). A significant statistical difference ($p<0.001$) was observed in the younger group – boys more often had a profile compared to girls, and the difference was in this almost 10 percentage points.

In general, almost half of the young people use the Internet for up to 2 hours on working days and up to 3 hours on weekends. People who don't use it are not at all or hardly at all, respectively 7% on working days and almost 5% on weekends. Nearly 19% of young people use the Internet on weekends for 6 hours and more. Only one in ten uses it for so long during a working day.

Most often, the Internet is used by young people for entertainment purposes (e.g. watching movies, or using social networking sites). The dominance of humanity used by young people was noticed not only within EU KIDS Online but also in other studies showing the styles of Internet use among young people (Tanaś et al., 2017). Equally often, digital media are used for information search (more than 40% of teenagers search for information from the world at least once a week or more). Also, every third teenager compares information regarding prices at least once a week. More than half of the respondents draw their knowledge from online health topics. Internet services are by far the most frequently used to communicate with loved ones and family, only

slightly more than 8% do not use digital media for this purpose. In terms of communication, the Internet is the least used for expressing objections - e.g. signing online petitions or discussing social and political topics. Almost half of the young people communicated with Internet users from other countries in the last month. Systematically, every tenth teenager shares music or movies.

Intensive use of new media, and thus performing certain activities at least once a week or more often, usually concerns: using mobile applications, sending and receiving information (approx. 60%), and sharing information found on the web with loved ones (more than half of the respondents). Over 16% of teenagers comment daily on materials posted online by relatives. Every fourth regularly plays online games at least once a week or more often also one in four helps other people who have problems using digital media. Three out of ten people use the Internet at least once a week to help another person (problematic matters do not have to be related to digital media).

Young people are the least likely to use the web to upload other people's films and audio materials (more than 2/3 of young people have not done so), selling products (over 71% had no such experience). More than half of the respondents did not create anything using the mobile application and did not share photos or artwork of their own in the past month. Almost every second young Internet user has never made a purchase online and he did not search for information about his neighbourhood, nor did he play online.

Based on the collected data, it should be emphasized that the surveyed youth uses the Internet primarily to meet communication, information and entertainment needs.

Few young people rate their competencies related to searching high and assessing the credibility of information.

In the study, young people were asked about their beliefs about being online – how they feel and how they communicate with others. Such subjective beliefs are an important indicator of the role of the Internet in young people's lives, as they show how young users see the role of this medium in the context of their offline functioning. Young respondents who often or always felt separate and the specifics of the internet (in favour of being offline) are in the minority. Less than 16% felt (often or always) that it was easier for them to be themselves online. Slightly less than 17% talked on the Internet about other things than when meeting in "real life" face to face, and 7% about personal matters that they did not raise offline. The proportions of young people responding to each are very high of these issues "never".

Regulating access to technology and new media, shaping behaviours and attitudes towards them, and mediating between media messages and the child is an important parts of the socialization process in the modern reality dominated by technology. The most frequently used methods of active support that parents seek of the respondents reach at least sometimes advice on the safe use of the Internet. Almost half (48.3%) of the respondents receive the students. Similarly, parents often help children when it is difficult for them to do or find something (46.8%) or when something upsets or annoys them. The entire sample includes children and adolescents aged 9 to 17, N = 1249, with the proviso that the exact base count for specific questions differs from the base count due to deficiencies in answers. In the descriptions, the percentage ranges of defects for a given set are given

each time questions, including non-diagnostic answers, such as "I prefer not to answer." Interestingly, parents use it least often, according to children's so-called passive methods, i.e. staying next to or near the child when he is using it on the internet.

Characteristics of e-Addiction

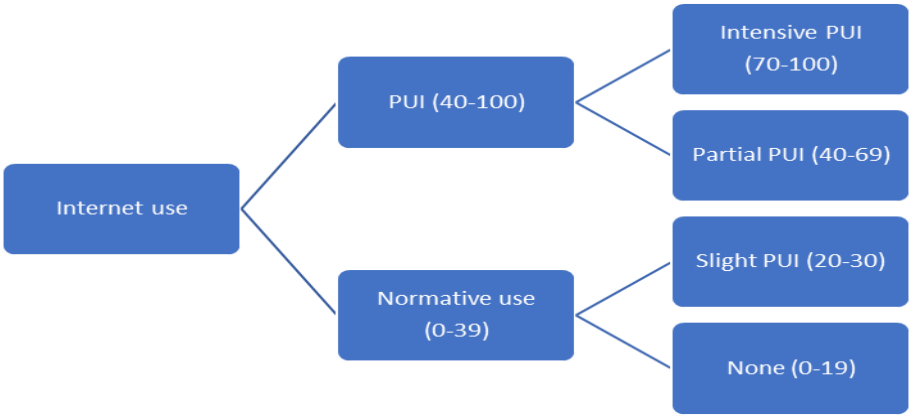
For this study, the phenomenon of e-addiction to the Internet in the cited research results is treated in terms of Problematic Internet Use (PUI). Problematic Internet Use will be defined as the excessive and/or improper use of the Internet, which may cause psychological, social, academic, and/or professional problems (Laconi et al., 2017, Laconi et al.2019).

To assess what percentage of the respondents showed symptoms of PUI, the aforementioned used the Internet Addiction Test by Young (1998). The test consists of a description of 20 PUI symptoms. Respondents were asked to specify how often they observe their behaviour. In the test, respondents achieve a total score of 0-100 points. Depending on the number of points obtained in the IAT, four types of Internet users can be distinguished:

- PUI symptoms (0-19 points),
- minor people showing PUI symptoms (20-39 points),
- people with partial PUI symptoms (40–69 points)
- people with severe PUI symptoms (70–100 points).

The first two categories are people who use the Internet normally, and the other two next - are problematic.

Figure 1. Characteristic of PUI. Types of Internet users according to the IAT score



Source: own study, own conceptualization

Problematic Internet users accounted for 11.9% of respondents (11.4% of people with partial PUI symptoms, and 0.5% with severe PUI symptoms). Problematic users are more often girls than boys (13.9 vs 9.3, $p < 0.05$) and older (15–17 years old) than younger (12–14 years old) teenagers (15.0% vs 9.5%, $p < 0.05$).

However, there are statistically significant differences in everyday activities undertaken by problematic Internet users in comparison to normative users. Teenagers using the Internet with problems significantly more often use portals and social networks ($p < 0.01$) and share photos on them ($p < 0.01$), watch videos ($p < 0.05$) and funny pictures ($p < 0.01$). They also listen to music online significantly more often ($p < 0.05$), download files ($p < 0.05$) and watch movies and series ($p < 0.05$). teenagers using the Internet with problems significantly more often shop online ($p < 0.01$).

However, the most normative and problematic Internet users differ in contact with dangerous content. For all tested types of dangerous content on the Internet, the difference is statistically significant at the level of $p < 0.01$, and as a percentage, problematic users are at least twice as likely to come into contact with content presenting ways of self-mutilation (56.1% vs. 22.5%), pornographic (47.7% vs 22.3%), promoting eating disorders (39.2% vs 22.05) and encouraging suicide (37.4% vs 13.0%) or drug use (17.8% vs 6.3%). Slightly smaller differences occur in the case of content containing violence (48.6% vs. 29.6%) or hate speech (39.3% vs. 22.0%), while still significant, more often problematic users contact them. It is also significant that among teenagers normatively using the Internet, almost every second person (48.8%) has never seen any of the listed dangerous content, and among young people using problematic content – only every sixth (17.8%).

People who use the Internet with problems significantly less often spend time offline active sports ($p < 0.05$), reading books ($p < 0.01$) and playing board games ($p < 0.01$).

Taking into account the selected IAT questions, six subscales can be distinguished regarding various aspects of PUI. Mean scores of the IAT test subscales for normatively and problematically people using the Internet.

- Internet dominance (0-20 points) 3,7 vs. 11,8
- Excessive time use (0-20 points) 5,2 vs. 12,9
- Neglect of duty (0-15 points) 2,9 vs. 7,4
- Loss of control (0-15 points) 3,3 vs 8,3
- Neglect of social life (0-10 points) 0,0 vs. 0,2
- General IAT (0,100) 20,1 vs. 50,4

People who use the Internet problematically not only significantly more often have contact with dangerous content, including about self-mutilation and ways of committing suicide, but also significantly more often ($p < 0.01$) engage in self-aggressive behaviour. More than every fourth (28.4%) problematic Internet user has injured himself, and every 11th (9.2%) – tried to commit suicide.

People who use the Internet in a normative way more often than problematic users say that their parents show interest in what they do on the Internet at least once a week ($p < 0.01$). Normative users also more often than others declare that parents talk to them about online safety ($p < 0.05$problematic users are at least twice as likely to come into contact with content presenting ways of self-mutilation (56.1% vs. 22.5%), pornographic (47.7% vs 22.3%), promoting eating disorders (39.2% vs 22.05); and encouraging suicide (37.4% vs 13.0%) or drug use (17.8% vs 6.3%).

The respondents were asked about the Internet rules functioning in their families on various prohibitions and restrictions. More than half (52.8%) of respondents declare rules that apply to their families. Boys said this more often than girls ($p < 0.01$), younger (12-14 years) than older (15-17 years) teenagers ($p < 0.01$) and users normative than problematic ($p < 0.05$).

The most popular rule is not to use the Internet during meals. it was valid at the home of every third (34.3%) of the surveyed person. Every fifth (20.5%) surveyed to take advantage of the Internet, must do his homework beforehand. Not much less, because 19.6%, of parents, do not allow you to enter certain sites and watch certain videos and photos. 17.6% of respondents can use the Internet only for a certain time during the day, and 9.7% are prohibited from using the internet right before bedtime. Although all the listed rules apply more often in normative families than in problematic Internet users, the difference is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) only in the case of limited time internet use.

The respondents' answers show that every fourth (25.1%) person was either ignored or ignored she was rejected by her peers. In addition, 19% of the respondents experienced physical violence, 16.8% were called names or insulted, and 8.9% were victims of cyberbullying. Persons, who use the Internet with problems more often than others experienced all of them studied forms of violence. Also, the percentage of people who have experienced at least one of the studied forms of violence was higher for problematic than normative users internet ($p < 0.01$). In addition, in the group of people who use the Internet problematically significantly higher were the percentages of those who experienced three or four subjects' forms of abuse ($p < 0.01$).

The strongest relationship with problematic use of the Internet is shown by questions concerning: experiencing school stress (averaged Decrease Gini impurity = 12.5%), family support (12.2%), time of access to the Internet by the parent (11.8%), support from peers (11.8%), conversations with a parent about online safety (11.6%), support from teachers (11.4%), number of forms of abuse (11.2%), parental interest in activity online (11.2%) and school satisfaction (11.0%).

Conclusions

Nowadays, in a digital society, the Internet has become one of the elementary tools for work and entertainment (Jora et al., 2022). The universality and saturation of everyday, professional, educational and entertainment activities change the users' perspective on

the styles of using digital media (Wright, Heiman, Olenik-Shemesh 2021). Internet addiction has become one of the civilization challenges associated with the intensive development of the information society, the ubiquity and convergence of the media, as well as the transfer of services from the offline world to the digital space. The analyzed phenomenon is a behavioural disorder related to the abuse of electronic devices (e.g. telephones, tablets, computers) to excessively use applications and websites. E-addiction impairs the constructive use of new media, contributing to changes in psychosocial functioning. This phenomenon has several elements in common with disorders officially classified as gaming or electronic gambling addiction (e.g. prolonged use of ICT, neglecting professional and home duties and interpersonal relationships in favour of ICT, lying to other people to use ICT, use, emotional and other problems). E-addiction is often treated as a synonym of PUI and a disease entity. Addictive behaviours represent young people as a source of psychosocial problems, such as withdrawal, anxiety and depression, somatic symptoms, thought and attention disorders, and aggressive behaviour related to maladjustment, with high levels of stress and anxiety.

Because the subject of e-addictions/disorders related to new technologies is relatively new, there is a lack of well-established knowledge, and thus theoretical models. At the same time, more and more children, young people and adults face problems resulting from excessive, out-of-control use of new technologies, including gaming playing games, and using the Internet or social networks. People and their families, complain of negative consequences both for health and for their functioning, but also in the family, society or at work/school. Very often it is accompanied by negative emotions. The changes in the use of new media caused by the COVID-19 pandemic play a very important role in the process of increasing Internet use.

Disorders related to the incorrect use of the Internet constitute a very limited research area. At present, research is mainly carried out in one of three specific ranges:

- attempts to estimate the prevalence of the problem in general populations and subpopulations;
- describe the risk factors empirically;
- developing tools for diagnosis or screening.

The risk group includes people who have certain psychosocial deficits and at the same time prefer offline interactions over online interactions, mainly because only then does their mood change In the case of behavioural addictions, including e-addictions, the goal of prevention is to reduce or weaken the factors that lead to inappropriate use of the Internet.

The problem around which the considerations in this text concern the characteristics of the phenomenon among Polish youth. In a note of social constructionism, an answer was sought to the question of whether the issue of e-addiction among Polish youth is a significant social problem, or whether this phenomenon has only been created in such a way and its scale remains negligible. The results of research carried out as large national and international projects reveal that the problem of e-addictions among Polish

teenagers aged 12–17 occurs in 11.9%, 11.4% are people with partial PUI symptoms, and 0.5% - are with severe symptoms of PUI. Problematic Internet users are more often girls than boys and older teenagers (aged 15–17) than younger ones (aged 12–14). People who use the Internet problematically are significantly more likely to come into contact with dangerous content, including self-mutilation and methods of committing suicide, and significantly more often engage in self-aggressive behaviour. Significantly less often while they spend their time offline – actively doing sports, reading books or playing board games. Teenagers with problematic Internet use significantly more often use social networking sites and share photos, watch videos and funny pictures. In addition, significantly more often listen to music online, download files, watch movies and TV series and do Internet shopping. The risk factors for PUI are: feeling strong school stress, experiencing violent peer pressure, in particular its many forms, negative attitude towards school and age. The results show that the scale of the e-addiction problem does exist. The percentage of addicted youth is worrying and confirms the statistics obtained in other countries in Europe. Implementation of research and analysis on the issues of e-addiction contributes to a better understanding of the phenomenon and points out new research areas to explore and understand the specifics of it as much as possible type of addiction.

Failure to stop the tendency to increase the risk of addictions, including e-addiction, will be had consequences both for individuals (psychological, social and economic) and for the state which will bear the costs of therapy, instead of basing its functioning on the power of human resources. Therefore, it is necessary to diagnose the level of addiction risk and act prophylactic, preventing the spread of addictions and their negative effects. Preventive actions aimed at learning functional use of the network should be to a greater extent targeted at a group of people. The phenomena described above are very disturbing because it is obvious that it is present youth and their condition will have a major impact on the state of the state and the situation of its citizens in the future.

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