The Impact of the Current Technologies on the Youth`s Personalities Creation

Constantin CUCOŞ*
*Teacher Training Department
„Al. I. Cuza" University Iasi, Romania
E-mail Address: cucos@uaic.ro

Abstract‡

Current technology has become a must for young persons nowadays, many of their activities being generated and accompanied by today's technological structures. From learning, to keeping informed, from work to entertainment and recreation activities, all these elements with pragmatic or aesthetic focus, in a collective perspective or an intimately individual one, are built upon or mediated through the new technologies. Rejecting technology, in the name of a number of so-called absolute theoretical values would mean not paying attention to reality and rejecting it. The best thing to do would be to subdue technology, to humanise and spiritualise it, assigning it practices where the complementarity of values should be present.

Recognising the conduct that youth have adopted towards the new technologies makes us think that they are not considerably negative and blamable, the way they might be described at first glance. Most young people use technology very carefully and within reasonable limits, the excesses not being greater than the ones peculiar to other psycho-behavioural contexts. Nevertheless, the delay and the creation of certain habits – and also the awareness regarding their existence! – causes us not to lose from sight the possible lapses which we can prevent at the level of our educational activities. Especially when the people under considerationare still flexible and sensitive to the different educogen stimuli.

‡ *The abstract was written by the editor using fragments from the study*

I. Technology – an Existential Dimension of the Present-Day Young Generation

The technological universe is bound to reconfigure the spiritual profile of the present-day young generation. It is possible that, from the very beginning, the developing being has gradually became more responsive to everything new and acquainted more easily and more profoundly to what science and technology have had to offer. Nevertheless, just as the latter evolved unpredictably, their impact over the young has been equally uneven.

The novelty of the different gadgets, some of which - admittedly – "fitted" an expectancy long ago created, being the offsprings of an older or of a younger fictional imaginary (the mobile phone, the computer, the Internet, the whole range of media-digital combinations etc.). In addition to that they impose new representations or internal rythms, new ways of referring to knowledge, to oneself and to the others. The degree of acceptance of the former among the young is considerably higher than that of the other population categories. The explanation lays, on the one hand, in the highly permissive and receptive spirit of youth to novelty and, on the other hand, to the imaginative co-extensivity and to the strong connection that is established between the young person and the „power" (real or imagined) of the „machine".

I.1. The Technical Product – Psychological, Deontological, Anthropological Reverberations

Any new invention affects, to a certain extent, the inner psychological equilibrium, the range of skills and behaviors developed around the very features of the object in question. For instance, handling an ordinary photo camera used to require from its user the acquiring of a number of handling, calculation, focusing, framing, temporization skills etc, according to certain technical data. Not to mention the laboratory chemistry skills afterwards (knowing the time the photo needs to be exposed or the time to keep it in a certain substance). Anyhow, such skills were much more "natural", closer to the human behavior,

resembling very much to extensions of some similar motive and mental abilities. The digital photo "ignores" a series of human skills (duplicated, meanwhile, by the camera) and develops new ones that are discontinuous or opposite to the original ones (reframing, adding special effects, inserting into flashes or pps). Usually, every technical product re-organizes the aptitudinal-behavioural tissue of a person, establishes a requirements hierarchy at the psychological level, imposing a certain equilibrium until a new product appears, with new requirements.

If the consistency of the appearance of new technical landmarks is too important, the person is induced into a state of adaptive stress, with negative reverberations also on other levels of a person's behavior. From a particular perspective, the new technical product needs to be built on as many procedural algorithms of earlier corresponding products as possible, since it should not lead to behavioral "breaches", i.e. reversed movements that would contradict one's acquired skills (for instance inventing reverse gears whose handle would move forward, not backwards, as usual).

It is possible that the greatest quality of a new technical product is to maintain or even enhance our own human nature, not to alter our spirits and weaken our bodies. To be an extension of the natural and spiritualise it. Not to mechanize and alienate. Not to be an involution, but an evolution. The technical progress will force the individual to learn in a consistent manner, to add, in as natural a way as possible, new values to the already existing ones, what is unknown to what is known. Moreover, what needs to be understood once and for all is the fact that it is not the intrinsic quality of the technology that matters the most, but its efficiency. From an axiological point of view, technology is, to a certain extent, ambivalent and even neutral, since its usefulness depends on the way it is put into practice. Not the mobile phones engineers are the ones to blame for the bomb attacks and the bank account frauds

managed through phones, but the persons actually using the latter for such purposes.

Technology does not have only a palpable dimension, but it also has a highly anthropological one, having repercussions at the social, the human and the spiritual levels. Every new artefact of this sort is "foreseen" by a certain "prophecy", producing, through its effects, a real "mythology", even an "eschatology". It is greeted with anxiety and thrill, but also with worries. Its integration practically leads to re-balancing the representations system, to recalibrating the bond existing between the human beings and the universe, to re-defining a person in opposition to a new range of demands and values. Moreover, for the young, a similar product has a symbolic value, that of liaising the very users to a world that seems to hierarchically upgrade them. Owning the highly performing mobile phone is a sign of belonging to a privileged category, of best positioning oneself on a material and social scale. The owners of such products do not own only an object, but also the socially bestowed attributes - and the value! – of the object in question. In other words, the owner thinks of himself/herself that he/she is no longer a common person, but a "somebody " due to the object in his/her possession. Or, who knows, one could achieve a dream or hide a certain weakness!

I.2. The Technical Innovation – between Virtues and Servitudes

The technical dimension has a notable influence over the learning mechanisms and also over the formation structures. The decantation of a digital culture produces restructurings, as far as the learning mechanisms are concerned (for instance, the memory drawback) and also the reorientations, regarding the learning motivation and its objectives. Judging the situation from this perspective, we should be more tolerant with the decline of the book culture in favour of the digital one – at least from the point of view of the way in which the young are relating to the two types of cultural expression. What we should focus on

first is guiding young people towards a critical and responsible approach to the cultural products, an axiological autonomy from the latter, no matter whether they are delivered under a classical form or under an electronical one. On the other hand, the extensions of the formation structures between the curricular level and the extra-curricular one also need to be taken into consideration and re-evaluated from an educational point of view. The ruling principle should be that the extra-curricular dimension has to stand for an educational context, both for the initial preparation and for the lifelong formation.

The influence of a new device on us is not only direct, through the requirements of its presence and its usage, but also indirect, through the change of our relationship with the world around us and to our fellow human beings. Meanwhile, the device is a mediator, a third party between our body or our mind and the things around us. The world seen or used through similar devices looks different from the one perceived directly through our ears, eyes, skin. It can receive a different value, consistency, depth, light. Cohabiting with the technology yields our mental and sensory apparatus in much of its essential information background. It makes it perceive to a lesser or to a greater extent, it renders it slower or more active. The world of a person that usually walks is different from the one of a person who travels by car. The world of a person who lives in the countryside differs from the one of a person who lives in town - and that is also because the technological proximity is different. The world perceived and imagined by a young person passionate about technology looks different from that of an experienced adult person, who is no longer interested in the technological novelties. We do not wish to say that this world is better or worse, but that it is different. The temporality, the multitude and the duration of the contacts, the other persons` expectations, the projections of the future, the decisions and the inner experiences etc. are all “filtered” through the technologies

employed and will certainly be different in the cases mentioned above.

The new communication means, based on e-mailing and instant messaging, and not on the traditional mailing, entail new dimensions and representations regarding space, time, the value of things and that of people. If the classical telegram involved an informational transfer within a particular time interval through a tangible device (everyday more convenient from a social and technological point of view), the new communication means liaise almost instantly somewhat "voided" creatures, sometimes with no face or appearance, with no relation to a tangible support (the colour and the smell of the sheet of paper, the calligraphic peculiarities, the format and the style of the stamp etc.). The tangibility of the communicational device together with a whole plethora of meanings the latter bears disappear forever. The personalisation of the message is done only at the content level, and if it is done otherwise, it remains somewhat pre-established, suggested, the user having the liberty of choosing an alternative out of many already existing ones. Communication based on the new devices imposes itself with a series of drawbacks, but it can also be an opening due to the technological skills that it supposes.

The communicational technological novelties create new opportunities, but also new servitudes related to our role on the social scene. The new space facilitates a virtual extension, a multiplication of our presence, an unrepeatable and fantastic ubiquity (within the same time interval, somebody can read one of my articles published in an online magazine, somebody else can view my Curriculum Vitae on my personal website, while someone else can contact me by e-mail or instant messaging). On the other hand, my own privacy can hardly be protected, since, wherever I am, I can be reached on my mobile phone or, why not, “tracked down” on the messenger program – when I am at the office, I take a break or speak to somebody. Even if I have the freedom to decide what to let the others see, eventually the new digital technicalities

make me the victim of other persons' indiscretions and "voyeurist" temptations. Consequently, I may sometimes be forced to opt for other "masks" and "faces", according to the technological alternatives provided by the place I am in.

As a general rule, the technical domain supposes standardization, repetitiveness, activation of certain human dimensions that resonate, to a certain extent, with the algorithmicity peculiar to the external artefact. It awakens and enhances the very "mechanical" predispositions from within ourselves. Sometimes, it "summons" man to become a robot, through a bizarre mechanism, transforming him into an extension or into a simple "tool" of the artefact. Technology abuse develops a certain addiction (like any other excessive consumption) and a spiritual laziness, which can alienate us from our own existential essence and logic.

It is important that the interaction between man and machines should not degenerate into an overlapping and that each entity should stick to what it actually is. God forbid that we reach the day when men would become machines and machines would replace men!

In order to make a diagnosis of young people's representations and options concerning the present-day technologies, we have undertaken a survey, based on questioning several youth groups – pupils and students – from the educational system in Iasi. This will allow us to draw a series of conclusions at the end of the survey that would fuse the general theses developed above with the empirical observations backed-up by the field research.

II. Research on the Influence of the New Technologies on Young People

The Research Hypotheses

As regards young people's position towards the Media universe and the digital culture:

1. There are differences, according to the education level and the gender criteria, regarding the questionees` opinions on the cultural valencies of the Internet.
2. There are differences, according to the education level and the gender criteria, regarding the Internet usage frequency.
3. There are differences, according to the education level and the gender criteria, regarding the activity types undertaken on the Internet.
4. There are differences, according to the education level and the gender criteria, regarding the activated mobile phone functions.
5. There are differences, according to the education level and the gender criteria, regarding Internet usage for academic purposes.
6. There are differences, according to the education level and the gender criteria, regarding Internet addiction.
7. Internet usage frequency is to be associated, to a greater extent, to Internet addiction, rather than to Internet usage for academic purposes.
8. The pupils and the students are able to identify both the advantages and the risks to which they expose themselves through accessing the Internet and the Media.

The Method

The undertaken research was based on the questionnaire-based survey method.

The Respondents Group

The survey focused on a total of 224 respondents, high school pupils from Iasi and students from the „Al. I. Cuza" University in Iasi. 115 of the total number of the respondents were second year students, while 109 were tenth grade pupils. According to the gender variable, the respondents group included 81 male subjects and 141 female subjects, two respondents refusing to specify their gender.

The following graph illustrates the respondents group, according to the *Gender* and *Education Level* variables (High School, University). **(Graph No. 1.** and **Graph No. 2.)**

Variables

Independent Variables:

- Education Level, two categories: High School and University
- Gender, two categories: Male, Female

Dedependent Variables:

- The cultural valencies of the Internet
- The Internet usage
- The mobile phone accessed functions
- The Internet usage for academic purposes
- The Internet addiction
- Advantages and risks to which the young expose themselves through accessing the Internet and the Mass media.

Instruments

The cultural valencies of the Internet. The respondents were assigned a list of six questions and asked to give *Yes/No* answers to each of them, according to their own opinions. The six questions were: 1. Do you think that the classical culture can be replaced with the digital one, i.e books replaced with the Internet? 2. Did watching certain movies determine you to read the books that inspired them? 3. Does the Internet represent an occasion for us to become more sensitive to the spokespersons of other cultures? 4. Did/Does the Internet encourage the inter-religious tolerance? 5. Is there a direct relationship between the manifestation of the Islamic fundamentalism and restricting/forbidding access to the new Media technologies (Internet, Mass media, mobile telephony) to the peoples referred to above? 6. Are you a member of an

Internet chat group? If so, what is the specific of the group in question?

Internet usage. The respondents were asked to indicate the Internet usage frequency (occasionally, twice a week, weekly and daily), the time that they usually spend on an Internet session (less than one hour, 1-2 hours, 2-4 hours, more than four hours) and the extent to which they frequently undertake different activities on the Internet (using the E-mail, searching for useful information, reading/watching the news, accessing games, instant messaging, listening to Mp3s and downloading movies , downloading software and documents, listening to particular radio stations or watching TV shows, accessing porno websites). The same Internet usage measurement method was also used by Hong, Y., Li, X., Mao, R. & Stanton, B. (2007) on the occasion of a survey undertaken on Chinese students.

Internet usage for academic purposes was measured through adapting the questionnaire made by Joiner et al (2006). The questionnaire contains 10 items and the answer variants are rated on a Likert scale of 5 steps (1 = never, 2 = once a week, 3 = several times a week, 4 = once a day and 5 = several times a day). The Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient presented by the author in the above mentioned survey was α =.93, while the stability test-retest coefficient was Spearman Rho = .88. In our survey, the obtained Cronbach alpha fidelity coefficient was α = .75.

Internet addiction was measured through adjusting the Internet addiction scale (Hur, M. H., 2006). The scale has six items and the answer variants are rated on a Lickert scale of 4 steps (1 = never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often, 4 = always). The Cronbach alpha internal consistency coefficient presented by the author in the survey referred to above was α =.87. In our survey, the obtained Cronbach alpha fidelity coefficient was α = .76.

The accessed mobile phone functions . The respondents were asked to indicate the mobile phone functions that they use in their everyday lives (games, information,

written communication through SMSs and orientation through GPS).

The Procedure (the undertaking of the survey)

The survey was conducted in October 2007. The educational institutions where it was made were the „Costache Negruzzi" College, the „V. Alecsandri" High School and the „Al. I Cuza" University. The students who participated in the survey were from the Faculty of History and from the Faculty of Geography. The respondents were guaranteed the confidentiality of their answers.

The Results Analysis

For the results analysis, the SPSS for Windows Version 10.0 was used. The results partly confirmed the launched hypotheses. The used statistical methods were the frequencies analysis, the Chi Square tests and the Mann-Whitney U tests.

The Cultural Valencies of the Internet

As the Table No. 1 shows, a considerable majority of the respondents consider that the classical culture cannot be replaced with the digital one, i.e. books by the Internet (70%), the percentages being similar both for pupils and students. For a change, although both girls and boys are in favour of the classical culture, girls are considerably more determined than boys regarding the fact that Internet cannot replace books, that the digital culture is unable to replace the classical one, χ^2 (1) = 13.096.

As for the fact that watching movies could lead to reading the books that inspired them is regarded, the respondents` opinion is favourable, 69.2% of the latter considering that watching certain movies motivated them to read the books that inspired those movies, the percentages being similar in girls` case and in boys`. Nevertheless, although the influence is greatly noticeable

for both girls and boys, it is significantly more obvious in girls` case, χ^2 (1) = 6.135.

As regards the Internet positive influence on making people become more sensitive to the spokespersons of other cultures, most of the respondents were in favour of the hypothesis (57.7%), the percentages being similar both in the case of pupils and in that of students, equally for boys and girls.

As far as the contribution of the Internet to spreading religious tolerance is concerned, only 41.4% of the respondents agree with this hypothesis, the opinions ressembling , whether pupils` or students`, boys` or girls`.

At the same time, the great majority of the respondents (60%) consider that there is a direct relationship between the manifestation of the Islamic fundamentalism and restricting/forbidding access to the new Media technologies, whether Internet, mobile telephony, uncensored television or written press) to the peoples referred to above. Opinions are similar both in pupils` case and in students`. For a change, girls consider that the relationship is far stronger χ^2 (1) = 3.985, the explanation lying in the fact that they are naturally more sensitive than boys or that the Islamic culture censors women's rights and gender equality does not exist.

Lastly, only a small part of the respondents are members of Internet chat groups (31.5%), the same holding true for both pupils and students. There is, however, an important discrepancy between boys and girls, the percentage of boys being registered in Internet chat groups being considerably greater than that of girls, χ^2 (1) = 3.948. The results for the entire respondents group are presented in Graph No. 1. (See **Table No. 1 and Graph No. 1).**

Internet Usage

As far as Internet usage frequency is concerned, 59% of the respondents declared that they access the Internet every day, 17% every week, 2,7% once in two weeks and 21% occasionally (See Table No. 2 and Graph No. 2).

At the same time, 15.2% of the respondents declared that they spend more than four hours on an Internet session, 33% 2-4 hours, 37.1% 1-2 hours and 14.7% less than one hour (See Table No. 3 and Graph No. 3).

Our purpose was to check if there are significant differences regarding Internet usage frequency and the time spent on an Internet session, according to the education level and gender variables. In order to do this, we have applied the unparametric Mann-Whitney U. test. The results show that boys access a lot more often the Internet ($z = 4.056$, $p < .001$) and spend more time on an Internet session ($z = 2.654$, $p < .01$) than girls.

Likewise, pupils access a lot more often the Internet ($z = 5.873$, $p < .001$) and spend more time on an Internet session ($z = 4.278$, $p < .001$) than students.

Activities Undertaken on the Internet

The respondents reported that the activities most frequently undertaken on the internet were, in order of ranking: searching for useful information (91.1%), followed by listening to and downloading Mp3s and movies (76.8%), then by E-mail usage (69.6%), instant messaging (65.2%), downloading software and documents (43.8%), reading or watching news (33%), accessing games (31.3%), listening to particular radio stations or watching TV shows (28.6%), and to a rather small extent, the accessing porno websites (5.4%) (Table 4, Graph 4). The hierarchy is approximately identical for pupils and students, for boys and girls.

Likewise, there are considerable differences regarding the activities undertaken on the Internet by the responders, according to the education level and gender variables. Thus, compared to students, pupils undertake more frequently activities such as listening to and downloading Mp3s and movies [χ^2 (1) = 6.912], instant messaging [χ^2 (1) = 15.334], accessing games [χ^2 (1) = 6.644]. On the other hand, students considerably engage themselves more than pupils on such Internet activities as

radio listening or watching TV shows [χ^2 (1) = 10.872] and accessing porno websites [χ^2 (1) = 12.018].

At the same time, boys engage themselves considerably more often than girls in activities such as downloading software and documents [χ^2 (1) = 24.496], accessing games [χ^2 (1) = 30.266] and accessing porno websites [χ^2 (1) = 8.120]. (See **Table No. 4** and **Graph no. 4**)

The Functions Accessed on the Mobile Phone

Among the functions accessed on the mobile phone, the most used one is the SMS messaging option, followed by documentation, games, and, with a rather low percentage, the GPS orientation (Table No. 5, Graph No. 5). The hierarchy remains approximately the same, no matter the respondents' gender or their education level.

Likewise, there are significant differences, according to the respondents` education level and gender, regarding the three most frequently used mobile phone functions. Thus, pupils access the mobile phone games function considerably more often than students [χ^2 (1) = 9.331]. On the other hand, students use the information mobile phone function to a significantly greater extent than pupils [χ^2 (1) = 12.316]. At the same time, boys are using the games mobile phone option much more often than girls [χ^2 (1) = 9.589], whereas the latter use the SMS option of the mobile phones greatly more often than boys do [χ^2 (1) = 6.378]. (See **Tabel No. 5** and **Graph No. 5**)

Advantages and Risks the Young Submit Themselves to by Accessing the Internet and Mass Media

Both pupils and students identified a series of advantages that the new media technologies (the Internet and the Mass media) provide (See **Table No. 6** and **Graph No. 6**). We have opted for those which were most frequently referred to, noticing that most of the percentages are similar, as far as pupils and students are concerned.

Other advantages the respondents suggested were: the alternative of becoming involved in a series of volunteer

activities and projects, receiving guidance regarding the educational and the professional orientation, acquiring new hobbies, shopping, making online payments, freedom of speech, participating in different interactive activities (forums etc.), being exposed to diversity and gaining new perspectives and, in the pupils' case, being able to get second opinions from the classmates, regarding homework.

Furthermore, the pupils and the students have identified a series of risks to which the new media technologies (the Internet and the Mass media) could submit them (See **Table No. 7**). What is to be noted is the fact that, in most of the situations, the percentages are similar in the case of the two respondents groups.

Other risks suggested by the respondents included: neglecting oneself, setting bounds to one's imagination and critical spirit, a tendency towards monotony ("being a vegetable on a chair or on a couch"), the fraud, the possibility of encountering dangerous persons and also the exposure to a whole range of viruses.

Internet Usage for Academic Purposes

Our purpose was to check if there are significant differences regarding the Internet usage for academic purposes, according to the gender and education level variables. Since the *Internet usage for academic purposes* variable was not normally distributed (the scores to this variable are significantly different from a common curve, being deviated to the left), we have applied the unparametric Mann-Whitney U. test. The results show that there are no significant differences between pupils and students, nor between the male and female respondents, as far as Internet usage for academic purposes is concerned.

Internet Addiction

We have equally tried to evaluate the possible significant differences, regarding Internet addiction,

according to gender and the education level variables. Since the *Internet addiction* variable was also not normally distributed, we applied again the unparametric Mann-Whitney U. test. The results show that, compared to students, pupils manifest a far greater Internet addiction ($z = 3.861$, $p < .001$). At the same time, boys are more addicted to the Internet than girls ($z = 3.623$, $p < .001$).

Conclusions

The results of the present research confirm the fact that the young are able to understand the cultural valencies of the new media technologies, and also the advantages and risks that such technologies can present for their personality and behaviour. According to their opinion, the classical culture cannot be replaced with the digital one (despite the easiness of accessing the information electronically). Young people also admit the important role that the new media technologies play in making us aware of the spokespersons of other cultures and equally of the inter-religious tolerance, the access to information being a way towards diversity and the acceptance of the otherness.

Among the most accessed Internet activities by young people are both the ones regarding formation and documentation and those based on communication and entertainment. As far as the mobile phone is concerned, the most accessed of its functions by young people is the SMS messaging documentation and games being used less often.

Among the advantages of the new media technologies accessing, young people mention documentation and the access to information from all domains (for their studies) and communication and entertainment. As regards the risk of the exposure to the new media technologies, the respondents suggested addiction, the possible health affections that can develop (the eyes fatigue, spine problems etc.), the sometimes erroneous information, but also neglecting friends, families and educational activities or any other drawback.

It is equally important to mention the fact that Internet usage for academic purposes is evenly undertaken by

pupils and students, by both boys and girls. On the other hand, Internet addiction seems more considerable in the pupils` and boys` case, a plausible explanation being the fact that students are more focused on their professional formation (compared to pupils), whereas girls tend to put a greater price on their social life (compared to boys).

Research Limits and Future Analysis Directions

Given that the present survey is of an observatory nature, the long term effects of the new media technologies exposure upon the personalities of young people have not been thoroughly analysed, but simply mentioned. Further studies could shed light on the connection between certain advantages and risks peculiar to the new media technologies and the different personality types, together with the way through which certain advantages and risks peculiar to the new media technologies could influence the development of the personality of young people. Certainly, risks should be neutralised. Education must aim at maximising the advantages and minimising the risks to which the youth could be submitted, through different educational programmes.

III General Conclusions and Open Issues

The results of the survey allow us to conclude that the current technology has become a prerequisite for a young person, many of the latter`s activities being generated and accompanied by today`s technological structures. Starting from the activity of learning, that of getting informed, that of working up to the entertainment and recreation activity, having a pragmatic or an esthetic character, in a collective perspective or an intimately individual one, all these elements are built upon the new technologies or are mediated through them. Rejecting technology, in the name of a number of so-called absolute theoretical values would mean not paying attention to reality and rejecting it. The best thing to do would be to subdue technology, to

humanize and spiritualise it, assigning it practices where the values complementarity should be present.

Recognising the conduct that the youth have adopted towards the new technologies makes us think that they are not considerably negative and blamable, the way they may be described at a first glance. Most of the youth use technology very carefully and within reasonable limits, the excesses not being greater than the ones peculiar to other psycho-behavioural contexts. Nevertheless, the delay and the creation of certain habits – and also the awareness regarding their existence! – makes us not loose from our sight the possible slippings, that we can prevent at the level of our educational activities. Especially when the people had in view are still flexible and sensitive to the different educogen stimuli.

As for the importance of the knowledge mediated through these technologies, the respondents admit the fact that technology is the main source of connecting to certain values, but that, sometimes, it is an interface related to the classical culture, enhancing, for some of them, the need to go directly to such sources. Taking into account the fact that the very classical culture got "digitalised", through the access to everyday more online libraries or through virtual tours of some great museum, we consider that not even this aspect is to be considered a fundamental danger. What matters the most is the relation established with a particular value, and not necessarily the path (medium) to reach to it.

The youth treat the new connections as opportunities of a mutual acquaintance with other spiritual forms, with the spokespersons of different cultures. They know that the feelings of tolerance and respect towards other persons can be formed and enhanced through the digital technologies. What I didn`t have in mind to check on this occasion, but it would be very interesting to do that, would be to see if the youth are aware of the situation and, at the same time, of the possible dangers of the spiritual dispersion and of the loss of identity.

An important conduct associated with these technologies is the communication of an instrumental, informational and affective nature. Besides the knowledge transfer, the youth "transfer" themselves, with their interests, mind states, feelings and projections. This would mean that this part of the communication process complements or compensates for some losses undertaken at the level of the alive, natural communication. Developing some habits of remaining connected longer than needed betrays the fact that, for some youth, this affection need is met mostly in this manner, which is not appropriate.

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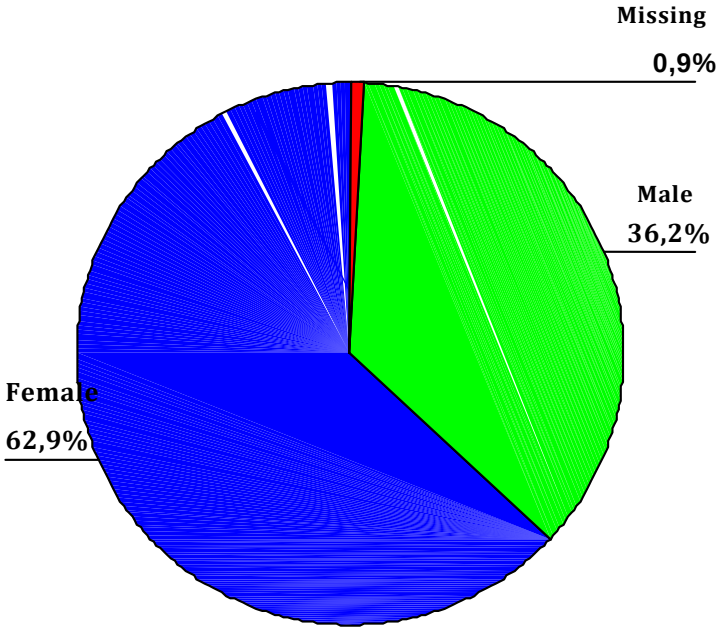
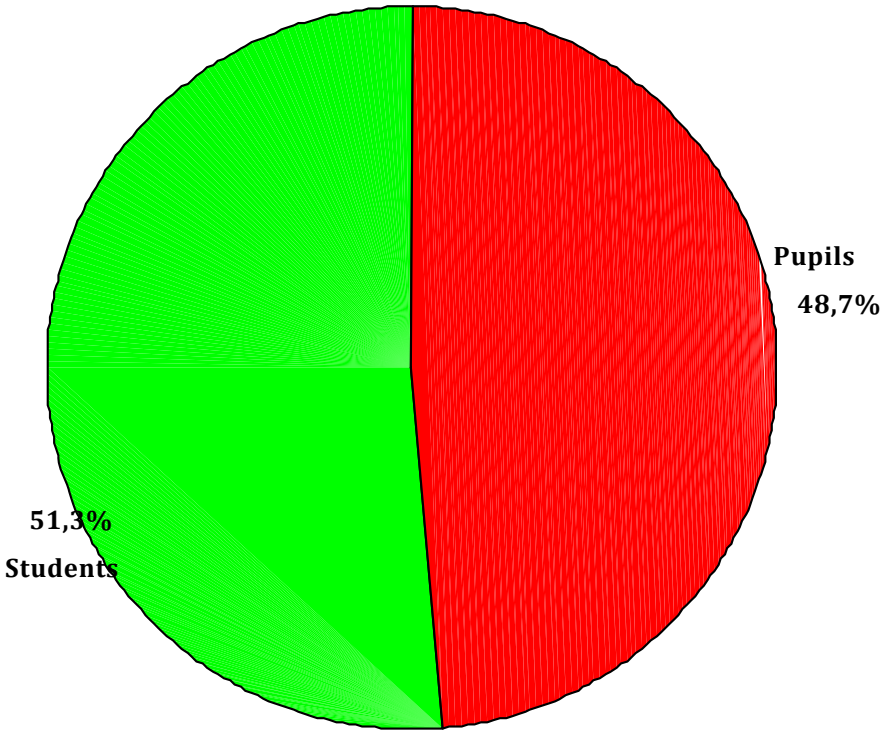
Captions for Figures

Graph No. 1. The Graphical Illustration of the Responders Group, according to the *Gender* Variable



Graph No. 2. The Graphical Illustration of the Respondents Group, according to the *Education Level* variable



Tabel No. 1 The percentage results on the items regarding the cultural valencies of the Internet, on the whole, and also differentiated according to the education level and *gender* variables and the χ^2 tests results.

Items		Total	Education Level			Gender		
			Pupils	Students	χ^2	Boys	Girls	χ^2
1. Do you think that the classical culture can be replaced with the digital one, i.e books replaced with the Internet?	Yes	29.3 %	30.3 %	28.3%	fn	43.8 %	20.7 %	p < .01
	No	70.7 %	69.7 %	71.7%		56.3 %	79.3 %	
2. Did watching certain movies determine you to read the books that inspired the m?	Yes	69.2 %	64.2 %	73.9%	fn	59.3 %	75.2 %	p < .05
	No	30.8 %	35.8 %	26.1%		40.7 %	24.8 %	
3. Does the Internet represent an occasion for us to become more sensitive to the spokespersons of other cultures?	Yes	57.7 %	61.1 %	54.4%	fn	59.5 %	57.4 %	fn
	No	42.3 %	38.9 %	45.6%		40.5 %	42.6 %	
4. Did/Does the Internet encourage the inter-religious tolerance?	Yes	41.4 %	37%	45.5%	fn	43.8 %	39.9 %	fn
	No	58.6 %	63%	54.5%		56.3 %	60.1 %	
5. Is there a direct relationship between the manifestation of the Islamic fundamentalism and restrictioning/forbidding the peoples referred to above the access to the new Media technologies (Internet, Mass media, mobile telephony)?	Yes	60%	55.8 %	64%	fn	51.3 %	65.2 %	p < .05
	No	40%	44.2 %	36%		48.7 %	34.8 %	
6. Are you a member of an Internet chat group?	Yes	31.5 %	30.6 %	32.5%	fn	39.5 %	26.6 %	p < .05

fn: the χ^2 test results are not to be taken into consideration

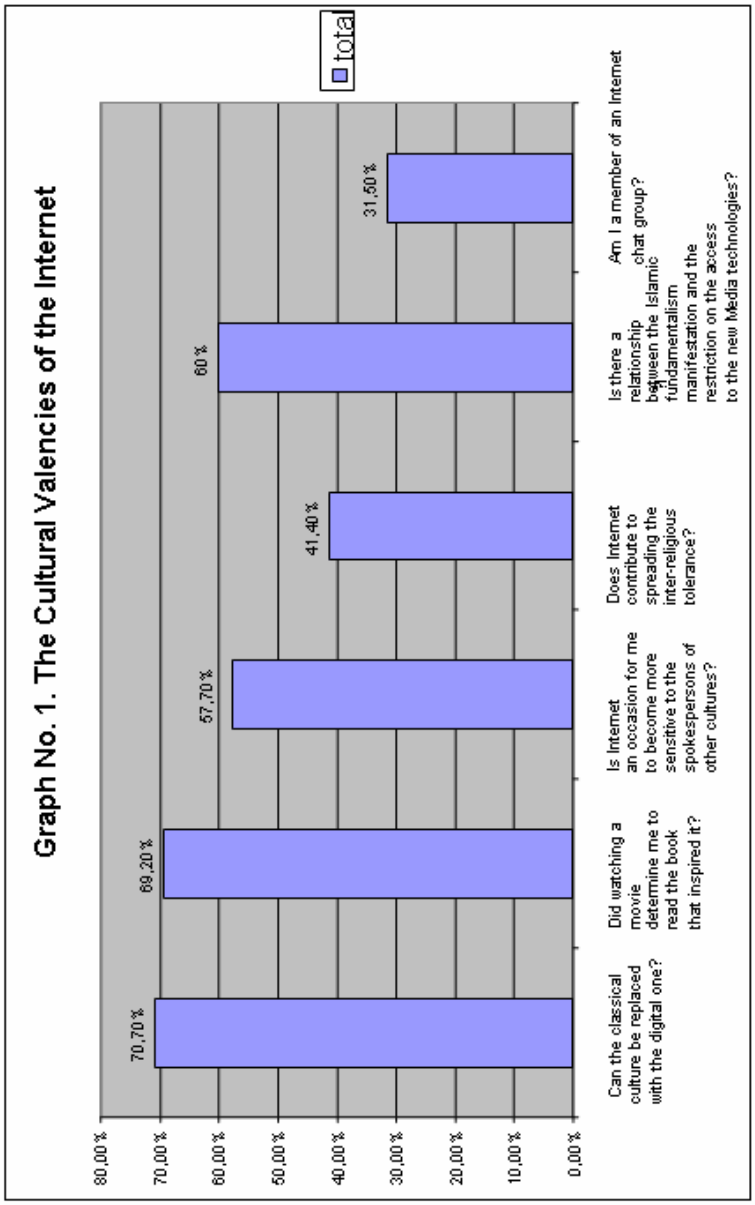

Graph No. 1. The Cultural Valencies of the Internet
total
80,00 %
70,00 %
60,00 %
50,00 %
40,00 %
30,00 %
20,00 %
10,00 %
0,00 %
70,70 %
69,20 %
57,70 %
41,40 %
60 %
31,50 %
Can the classical culture be replaced with the digital one?
Did watching a movie determine me to read the book that inspired it?
Is Internet an occasion for me to become more sensitive to the spokespersons of other cultures?
Does Internet contribute to spreading the inter-religious tolerance?
Is there a relationship between the Islamic fundamentalism manifestation and the restriction on the access to the new Media technologies?
Am I a member of an Internet chat group?

Table No. 2
The percentage results on the items regarding the Internet usage frequency, on the whole, and also differentiated according to the *education level* and *gender* variables.

	Occasionally	Once in two weeks	Weekly	Daily
The Internet Usage Frequency:				
Total	21%	2.7%	17%	59.3%
Pupils	5.5%	0.9%	16.5%	77.1%
Students	35.7%	4.3%	17.4%	42.6%
Boys	7.4%	1.2%	16%	75.3%
Girls	29.1%	3.5%	17%	50.4%

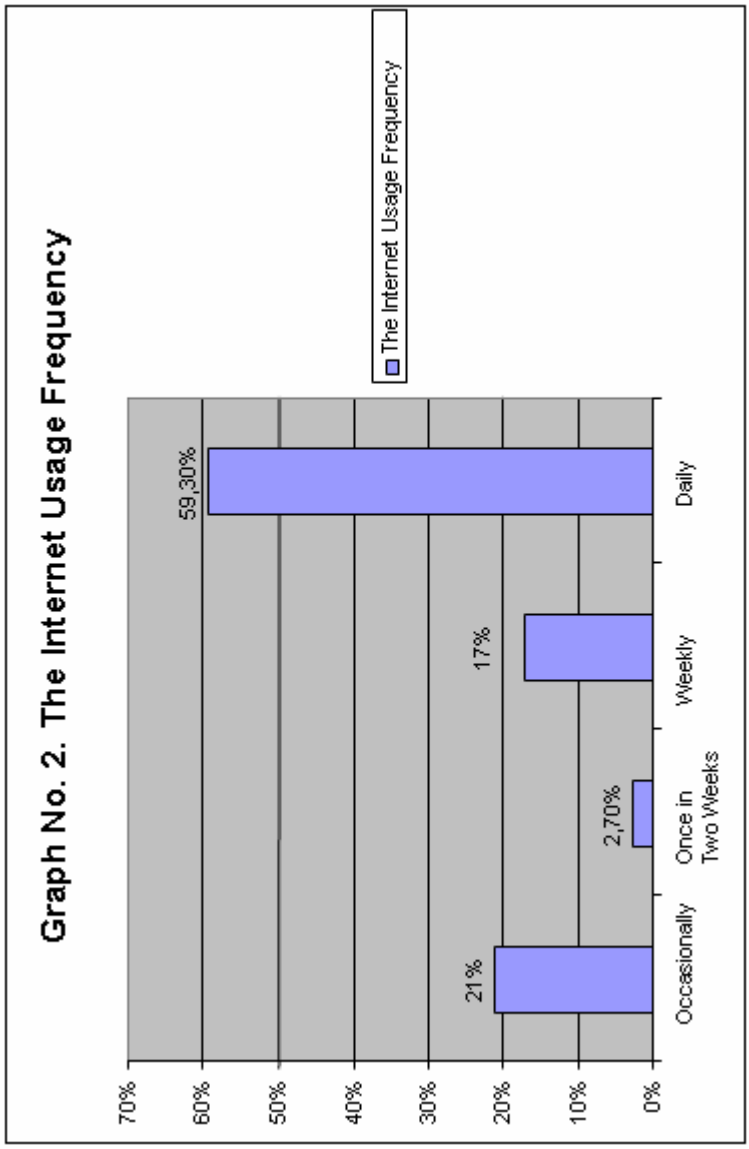

Graph No. 2. The Internet Usage Frequency
The Internet Usage Frequency
59,30%
17%
2,70%
21%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
Daily
Weekly
Once in Two Weeks
Occasionally

Table No. 3
The percentage results on the items regarding the time spent on an Internet session, on the whole, and also differentiated according to *education level* and *gender* variables the.

	Less than an Hour	1-2 Hours	2-4 Hours	More than 4 Hours
The Time Spent on an Internet Session:				
Total	14.7%	37.1%	33%	15.2%
Pupils	7.3%	30.3%	42.2%	20.2%
Students	21.7%	43.5%	24.3%	10.4%
Boys	12.3%	28.4%	35.8%	23.5%
Girls	16.3%	41.8%	31.2%	10.6%

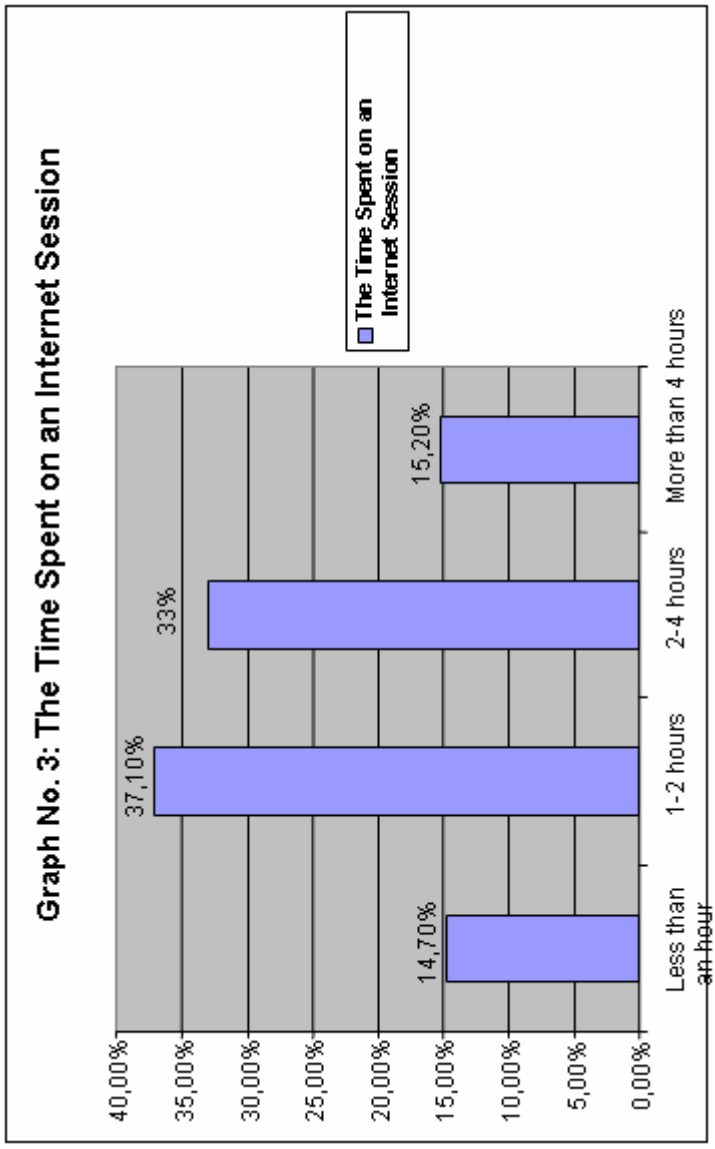

Graph No. 3: The Time Spent on an Internet Session
The Time Spent on an Internet Session
40,00%
35,00%
30,00%
25,00%
20,00%
15,00%
10,00%
5,00%
0,00%
37,10%
33%
15,20%
14,70%
Less than an hour
1-2 hours
2-4 hours
More than 4 hours

Table No. 4. The percentage results on the items regarding the Internet activities types, on the whole, and also differentiated according to the *education level* and *gender* variables, together with the χ^2 tests results.

Types of Activities Undertaken on the Internet		Total	Education Level			Gender		
			Pupils	Students	χ^2	Boys	Girls	χ^2
1. Searching for useful information	Yes	91.1%	89.9%	92.2%	fn	86.4%	93.6%	fn
	No	8.9%	10.1%	7.8%		13.6%	6.4%	
2. Mp3s and movies listening and downloading	Yes	76.8%	84.4%	69.6%	p < .01	82.7%	73%	fn
	No	23.2%	15.6%	30.4%		17.3%	27%	
3. E-mail usage	Yes	69.6%	70.6%	68.7%	fn	72.8%	67.4%	fn
	No	30.4%	29.4%	31.3%		27.2%	32.6%	
4. Instant messaging	Yes	65.2%	78%	53%	p < .01	69.1%	63.1%	fn
	No	34.8%	22%	47%		30.9%	36.9%	
5. Softs and documents downloading	Yes	43.8%	45%	42.6%	fn	65.4%	31.2%	p < .01
	No	56.2%	55%	57.4%		34.6%	68.8%	
6. News reading or watching	Yes	33%	31.2%	34.8%	fn	40.7%	29.1%	fn
	No	67%	68.8%	65.2%		59.3%	70.9%	
7. Games accessing	Yes	31.3%	30.4%	23.5%	p < .01	53.1%	17.7%	p < .01
	No	68.7%	60.6%	76.5%		46.9%	82.3%	
8. Listening to particular radio stations and watching TV shows	Yes	28.6%	18.3%	38.3%	p < .01	29.6%	27.7%	
	No	71.4%	81.7%	61.7%		70.4%	72.3%	
9. Porno websites accessing	Yes	5.4%	0%	10.4%	p < .01	11.1%	2.1%	p < .01
	No	94.6%	100%	89.6%		88.9%	97.9%	

fn: the χ^2 test results are not to be taken into consideration

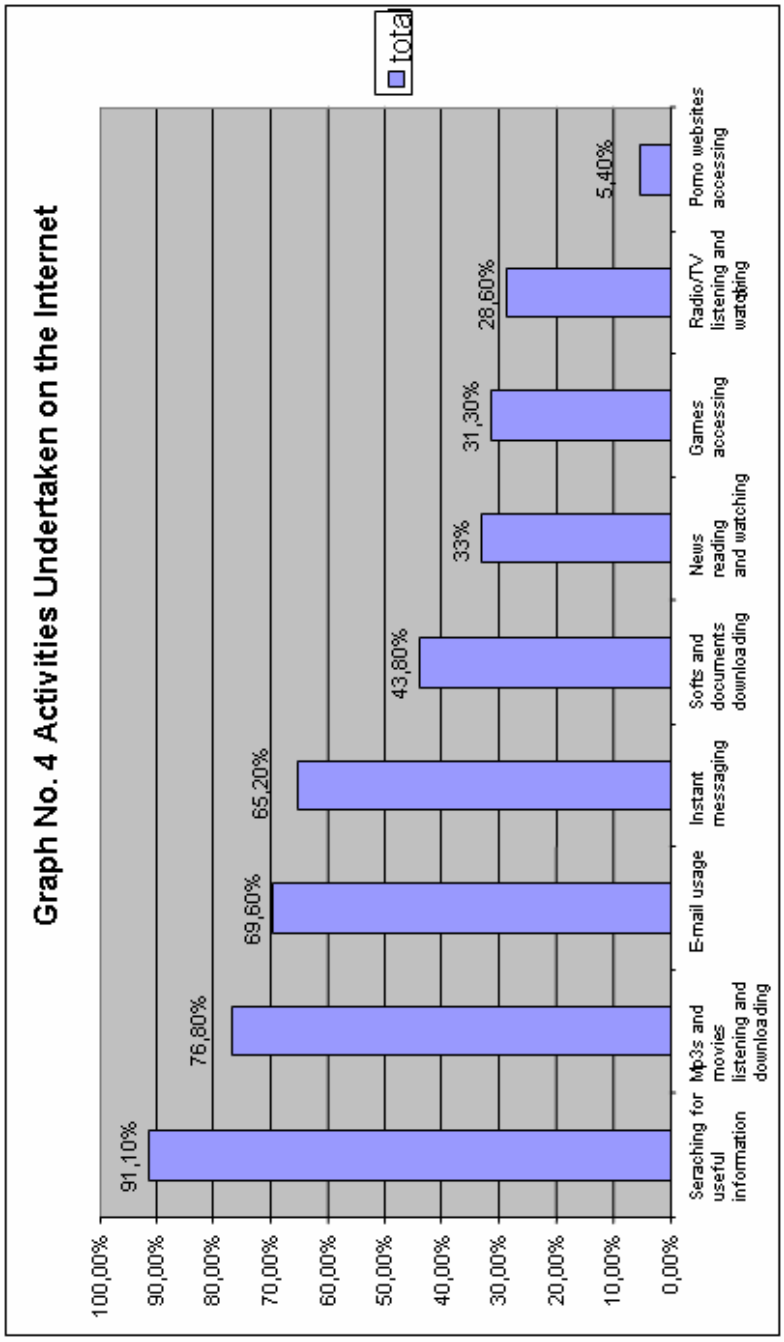

Graph No. 4 Activities Undertaken on the Internet
total
100,00%
90,00%
80,00%
70,00%
60,00%
50,00%
40,00%
30,00%
20,00%
10,00%
0,00%
91,10%
76,80%
69,60%
65,20%
43,80%
33%
31,30%
28,60%
5,40%
Seraching for useful information
Mp3s and movies listening and downloading
E-mail usage
Instant messaging
Softs and documents downloading
News reading and watching
Games accessing
Radio/TV listening and watching
Porno websites accessing

Table No. 5 The percentage results on the item regarding the mobile phone accessed functions, for the whole respondents group, and also differentiated according to the *education level* and *gender* variables, together with the χ^2 tests results.

The Usage of the Mobile Phone for:		Total	Education Level			Gender		
			Pupils	Students	χ^2	Boys	Girls	χ^2
1. Games	Yes	29%	38.5%	20%	p < .01	40.7%	21.3%	p < .01
	No	71%	61.5%	80%		59.3%	78.7%	
2. Information	Yes	34.4%	22.9%	45.2%	p < .01	35.8%	34%	fn
	No	65.6%	77.1%	54.8%		64.2%	66%	
3. Messaging (SMS)	Yes	91.5%	90.8%	92.2%	fn	85.2%	95%	p < .05
	No	8.5%	9.2%	7.8%		14.8%	5%	
4. Documentation, GPS Orientation	Yes	3.6%	3.7%	3.5%	fn	6.2%	2.1%	fn
	No	96.4%	96.3%	96.5%		93.8%	97.9%	

fn: the χ^2 test results are not to be taken into consideration

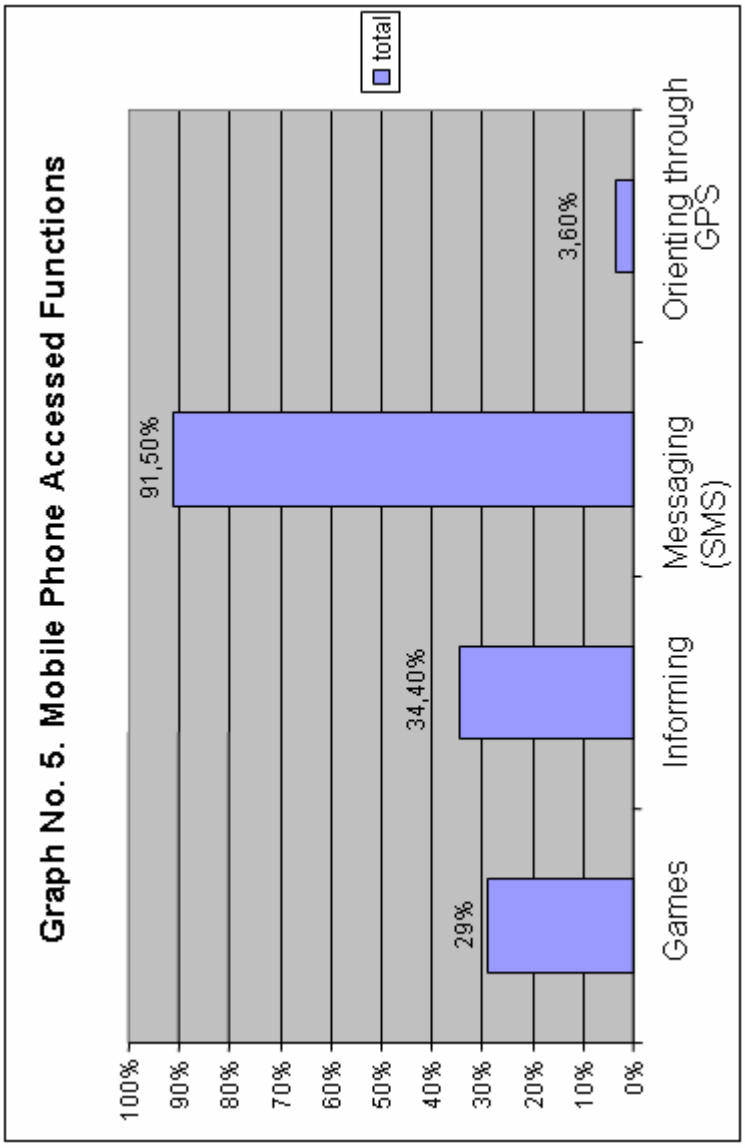

Graph No. 5. Mobile Phone Accessed Functions
total
100%
90%
80%
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
91,50%
34,40%
29%
3,60%
Games
Informing
Messaging (SMS)
Orienting through GPS

Table No. 6. The percentage results on the item regarding the advantages of accessing the Internet and of the exposal to Mass media, differentiated for pupils and students

Advantages	**Pupils**	**Students**
Access to diversified information in a simple and rapid manner	43.1%	81.7%
Communication (rapid and affordable everywhere in the world)	59.6%	51.3%
Information, data, news	48.6%	32.2%
Intellectual study, access to useful documentation sources	39.4%	41.7%
Entertainment, relaxing, spare time activities	27.5%	25.2%
Full access to films, music	21.1%	17.4%
Increasing the range of acquaintances (getting to know new persons)	15.6%	19.1%
Knowledge improvement, enhancing one`s all-round education	13.8%	12.2%
Learning and practicing English	4.6%	2.6%
Courses, homeworks, online tests	3.7%	1.7%

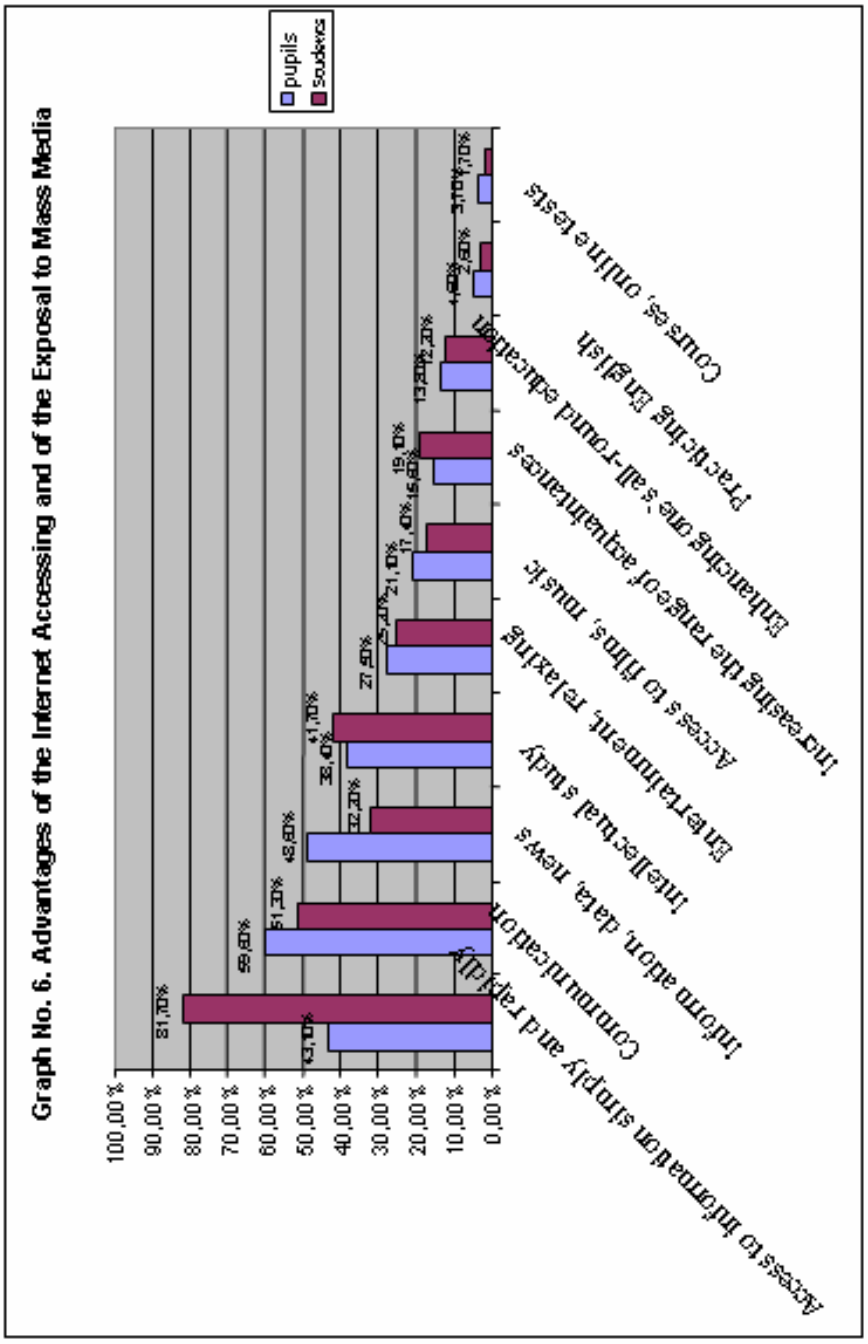

Graph No. 6. Advantages of the Internet Accessing and of the Exposal to Mass Media
pupils
students
100,00 %
90,00 %
80,00 %
70,00 %
60,00 %
50,00 %
40,00 %
30,00 %
20,00 %
10,00 %
0,00 %
Access to information simply and rapidly
Communication
Information, data, news
Intellectual study
Entertainment, relaxing
Access to films, music
Increasing the range of acquaintances
Enhancing one's all-round education
Practicing English
Courses, online tests

Table No. 7. The percentage results on the items regarding the risks of accessing the Internet and of the exposal to Mass media, differentiated for pupils and students.

Risks	**Pupils**	**Students**
Addiction	46.8%	60%
Health affections (sight conditions, backbone conditions etc.)	27.5%	30.4%
Erroneous information	14,7%	22.6%
Negative influence, manipulation	21.1%	21.7%
Neglecting friends, isolation	15.6%	23.5%
Wasting time	19.3%	15.3%
Neglecting homeworks and other activities	11%	11.3%
The diminishing of the intellectual capacity, shallowness, language mistakes, vulgar words	12.8%	6.1%
Becoming indifferent towards culture, books, libraries	7.3%	13%
Uncensored information and websites (rasist, erotical etc.)	8.3%	7.8%
Violent behaviour, violence instigation	6.4%	5.2%
Tiredness	5.5%	6.1%
Too little time spent in the open air or practising sport	4.6%	5.2%