THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MEDIA MULTITASKING AND EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING IN ADOLESCENTS

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In the context of mixed data in the domain of digital media behaviour and cognitive functioning, but also considering the increase in media multitasking behaviour among adolescents, the present study aims to replicate the methodology used by Baumgartner, Weeda, van der Heijden and Huizinga (2014) to study the relationship between adolescent media multitasking and executive functioning.

Early adolescents (11-15 years old) from two middle schools in Cluj-Napoca are participating. Three major executive functioning processes (inhibition, shifting and working memory) are assessed by using two kinds of measurements: a self-report inventory regarding day to day challenges that result from difficulties in executive functioning (Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function - BRIEF) and three computerised tasks (Eriksen Flanker Task, the Dots-Triangles Task and Digit Span). Along with these, children also complete a measure of daily media use and media multitasking behaviour (Media Use Questionnaire).

Questionnaire data were collected so far from 219 participants aged 10.11 – 14.9 years old. Data from computerised tasks will follow. We expect that media multitasking behaviour will be positively related to self-reported executive function difficulties in the three aspects that are evaluated in the present sample. Media multitasking is not expected to be related to working memory and shifting as assessed by the computerised tasks, but it is expected to be positively associated with the ability to inhibit irrelevant information in the environment.

Methodological implications for the study of adolescent media use will be discussed, as well as practical implications for academic achievement.