

# Chapter 17

## Learning Difficulties and Children's Drawing

**Christos Charmpatsis**

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-8122-766X>

*University of Ioannina, Greece*


**Dimitrios Sarris**

*University of Ioannina, Greece*

**Panagoula Papadimitropoulou**

*University of Patras, Greece*

**Dimitra V. Katsarou**

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8690-0314>

*University of the Aegean, Greece*

### ABSTRACT

*The major purpose of this research study was to detect the significant differences in human figure drawing between the students with learning difficulties and the students without learning difficulties. Moreover, this scientific research aimed to detect the differences between students of different genders with and without learning difficulties. The sample of this study consisted of 80 students who attended elementary school. The 40 were students with learning disabilities and the other 40 were students without learning disabilities. The main research tool used was the Goodenough-Harris drawing test (GH), which was assessed in 20 points. The results showed that the children without learning disabilities outperform children with learning disabilities. The drawing of students without learning difficulties is more detailed and they display more often in their drawing both proportions and symmetries in comparison with students with learning difficulties. Similar results are also observed in the drawings between the two sexes, as girls outperform boys of the same chronological age.*

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The child's drawings are one of the most essential factors that the teacher considers when evaluating the student's mental, emotional, and social development (Brooks, 2009). The human form is a frequent point of reference, particularly in children's drawing and in "human figure drawing," because the subject needs both a living body (Anzieu, 1993) and an unconscious body (Piaget, 1965) in order to stand in the environment around him. We consider the human's drawing as a test of a mental type since the other drawings, such those for the family or the house, refer to the child's emotional surroundings. Like all assessments, the "human figure drawing" test captures the symbolic personality that children exhibit through their expressiveness (Luquet, 1927-1967). According to Piaget (1950, 1964), every element of a child's expressive world is a mental image and a symbolic language. By dividing the symbol into a signifier and a signified through imitation and drawing, drawing, in accordance with his theory, acts as a bridge between the earliest form of representation and representational thought (Vygotsky, 1978). According to Piaget, symbolic play is a prerequisite for the transition to representational thinking since it enables both typically developing and non-typically developing children to mentally reproduce reality (Winnicott, 1975). Progressively, children's drawing tends to be delineated between play and mental imagery (Giannouli, Sarris, & Bannou, 2019; Satrazemi, Mpakagianni, Sarris, Vergou, & Zakopoulou, 2017).

## **2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1. Objectives, Research Questions, and Research Hypotheses**

The main objective of this research study is to detect the differences in human figure drawing between students with and without learning disabilities, as well as the differences between students of different sexes with and without learning disabilities.

Based on the objectives of our research, the following research questions are formulated:

- (a) Is there a significant difference in human figure drawing between students with and without learning disabilities?
- (b) Is there a significant difference in human figure drawing between students of different genders with and without learning disabilities?

The findings of the relevant literature reviews grant us the possibility to hypothesize that students with learning disabilities will be at a disadvantage in the human figure drawing compared to students without learning disabilities. Last but not least, the recent literature review shows that there are differences between boys and girls in human figure design.

### **2.2. Procedure and Participants**

The main objective of this research is to detect how students with and without learning difficulties differ in terms of their basic drawing, as well as how students of different genders differ from each other. 80 students participated in the study. The 40 were students with special educational needs attending the

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