

HABILITATION THESIS REVIEWER'S REPORT

Masaryk University	Faculty of Social Studies
Faculty	Social Psychology
Procedure field	Lukas Blinka
Applicant	Masaryk University
Applicant's home unit, institution	
Habilitation thesis	Excessive Internet Use and Internet Gaming Addiction
Reviewer	Dr. Daria J. Kuss, BA, MA, MSc, PhD
Reviewer's home unit, institution	Nottingham Trent University, UK

Summary:

Dr. Blinka's habilitation thesis represents an important piece of work in the areas of cyberpsychology and behavioural addictions in European youth. The presented body of work integrates relevant theory and frameworks, including the Differential Susceptibility to Media Effects Model (Valkenburg & Peter, 2013), the Problem Behavior Theory (Jessor, 1987) and the Social Development Model (Catalano et al., 1996), and the addiction components model (Griffiths, 2005).

He has compiled a thesis which consists of nine pieces of work published in nine peer-reviewed journals. The journals include important journals in the field, including the *Journal of Behavioral Addictions* (Q1 journal in Clinical Psychology; IF = 5.14), *Computers in Human Behavior* (Q1 journal in Arts and Humanities; IF = 5.00), and *BMC Public Health* (Q1 journal in public health; IF = 2.52), indicating Dr. Blinka's research is featured in high quality journals and recognised by experts in the fields of behavioural addictions, public health and cyberpsychology.

Dr. Blinka's data have derived from large scale European projects, which include the following: EU Kids Online 2 [with a sample of size of 18,709 adolescents], Net Children Go Mobile, Health Behaviour in School-aged Children in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, and a Czech Science Foundation supported project on gaming addiction. Blinka's individual contribution to the respective collaborative papers ranged between 15% to 70% with an average contribution of 37.22%. With regards to the collaborative nature of this body of work, it must be considered that most of the respective studies were conducted across different countries, EU Kids Online

2 incorporated 25 European countries, Net children Go Mobile included seven European countries, and Health Behaviour in School Aged Children included two European countries, requiring a solid network of good research collaborators in the respective countries. Of the respective published papers presented, Dr. Blinka is first author on three. This indicates a significant contribution considering the number of authors ranged between three to six across all the published papers included.

The data gathered are impressive as they are representative of various European youth populations, and the epidemiological insights are of high relevance for the field with regards to questions of prevalence, comorbidity, and health impacts, as well as cross-cultural comparisons.

Dr. Blinka provides compelling scientific evidence for his arguments in favour of the existence of generalised internet addiction, which incorporates specific problematic behaviours, such as gaming and social networking, and its associated factors, mainly in adolescent populations.

Limitations include the following. Dr. Blinka recognises that “the focus of the articles was not ground-breaking, per se, and the collective works did not introduce new theories or models for behavioural addiction”, which is an important consideration and acknowledgement of the limitations of the work. At the same time, it is understood that the presented body of work used rigorous research methods across large representative European samples, supporting the strength of the presented work.

Moreover, a lack of a full validation of the Excessive Internet Use Scale is indicated, although it has been partially validated in Study 2 and Dr. Blinka explicitly states that the full psychometric assessment is in process.

Reviewer's questions for the habilitation thesis defence (number of questions up to the reviewer)

- Please provide details in terms of individual contribution to the respective published work. What were your individual responsibilities/roles across the published papers?
- Please provide an update on the psychometric properties of the Excessive Internet Use Scale.

- Based on the presented body of work, please outline plans for follow-on research which uses the insights from the included studies.

Conclusion

The habilitation thesis entitled “Excessive Internet Use and Internet Gaming Addiction” by Dr. Lukas Blinka **fulfils** the requirements expected of a habilitation thesis in the field of Social Psychology. Its main strengths are its solid epidemiological foundation across samples of European youth, together with validated and robust measurement instruments and statistical methods. Dr Blinka’s thesis represents an important body of work in the fields of behavioural addictions, cyberpsychology and public health, as evidenced by the high-quality publications in Q1 journals within the respective fields.

Date: 26/1/2021

Signature:

