



To:

prof. PhDr. Petr Macek, CSc.
předseda habilitační komise
Fakulta sociálních studií MU
Brno

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Habilitation Thesis Review

Autor: Mgr. Lukas Blinka, Ph.D.

Title: Excessive Internet Use and Internet Gaming Addiction

Technical details:

- a thesis as a collection of articles
- 99 pages
- nine papers published in peer-reviewed journals; all in English
- includes the introductions section, aims, methods overview, general discussion
- 9 pages of references as part of the commentary section

The Habilitation Thesis introduces an important and topical phenomenon of excessive Internet use and excessive online gaming in (mainly) adolescents. The issues related to risks associated with the excessive use of screens (connected with the devices) and media (connected with the content consumed by the users) represent a growing problem in children and adolescents. The problematic use of screens and consumption of media becomes even more pressing with the current epidemiological situation related to covid-19 and the distant schooling.

I am familiar with the invaluable work of Lukas Blinka in this field of research. However, it was both impressive and interesting to oversee all key papers in one place – together with comments and remarks of the author. With the published work, Dr. Lukas Blinka has clearly demonstrated his ability to pursue the issue of his interest in a systematic and rigorous way; we see papers of international relevance that present, for example:

- data on the extent of the problem in the population (prevalence) in Czechia and other European countries,
- validated tools for data collection: a five-item Excessive Internet Use (EIU) scale; an instrument to provide a broad assessment of Internet overuse in at-risk individuals (I have used EIU myself in my research),
- behaviors related to smartphone use,



- screen-related behaviors:
 - o in vulnerable children (comorbidity linked to asthma, learning disabilities) or
 - o associated with the quality of sleep in children or
 - o substance use,
- examination of the relationship between excessive Internet use and nuclear (family) and micro-level environments (family, peers, neighbourhood).

I have made this overview to illustrate the breadth of issues that must be taken into consideration when working with such complex phenomenon.

My job – to review the thesis - was rather easy as the published papers are of high quality and were already reviewed by others.

However, after reading the compilation part, I have a couple of comments:

- Across the Habilitation Thesis, the author used the common terms of ‚pathological and non-pathological‘ use and users. I, personally, do not like this term for various reasons and therefore propose to use the terms ‚problematic‘, ‚harmful‘, ‚excessive‘ or ‚high-risk/at-risk‘ instead. But this is my own preference.
- In the General Discussion, 1st paragraph, the author questions the importance of his scientific contributions (by saying: *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...*). I do not share his view and consider all presented works as very important and if nothing else I value the importance in perspective of the Czech Republic.

The author has all necessary expertise, is thorough, persistent and diligent, and has adequate scientific and practical skills, experience and masters appropriate analytical methods. There is no doubt that the author can delve into his field of interest. He asks meaningful research questions and is scientifically competent to find answers to them.

After reading the Habilitation Thesis, I would like to ask doctor Blinka several questions:

- 1) Many of the studies sampled from populations from many countries. Is there something truly specific for the Czech children/adolescent/family populations when compared to other European countries? If so, what explanations does the author have?
- 2) In one of your studies you found that *‘...adolescents with long-term illness or chronic condition do not differ from their peers in screen-based behaviour, with exception of asthmatic children playing computer games more often and children with learning disabilities being more prone to excessive Internet use‘*. I very much welcome such studies focused on vulnerable sub-populations of children. Would you mind expanding a little bit on what might be the other vulnerable / comorbid subpopulation that need more attention / to be studied?



- 3) In the Future research directions section (page 21), the author presents some thoughts on where to go next. I wonder about the interventions for children and their parents that are desperately needed and about studies that would assess its efficacy. What the author thinks about these issues?

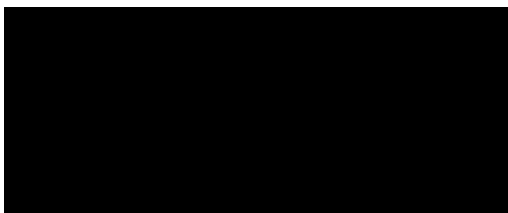
Conclusion of the Reviewer's Report:

The presented Habilitation Thesis clearly demonstrates the author's creative ability, excellent analytical-synthetic processing of reference literature and mastery of demanding verification studies.

The findings significantly enrich our knowledge in the given area and are fully scientifically beneficial.

The Habilitation Thesis under review meets the highest requirements for the Habilitation also from the international (Western Universities) perspective.

I recommend the Habilitation Thesis of doctor Lukas Blinka to be accepted.



Assoc Prof / doc. Roman Gabrhelík, Ph.D.

Head of Research and Development / Zástupce přednosty pro vědu a výzkum
Department of Addictology (Addiction Medicine) / Klinika adiktologie

First Faculty of Medicine / 1. lékařská fakulta
Charles University / Univerzita Karlova
and / a
General University Hospital / Všeobecná fakultní nemocnice
Apolinarska 4 / Apolinářská 4
120 00 Prague / 120 00 Praha 2
Czech Republic
Tel.: +420 224 968 278 / Fax: +420 224 965 035
e-mail: roman.gabrhelik@lf1.cuni.cz