

HABILITATION THESIS REVIEWER'S REPORT

Masaryk University

Faculty

Applicant

Habilitation thesis

Reviewer

Reviewer's home unit, institution

Faculty of Social Studies

Mgr. David Lacko, Ph.D.

Adolescents and Information and Communication
Technologies: Effects on Digital Engagement and Well-Being

Prof. Jessica Rassy, Ph.D.

Université de Sherbrooke, Canada

Thank you for the opportunity to evaluate this habilitation thesis, which addresses a topic that is both highly compelling and particularly relevant in the current societal and scientific context.

Adolescents and Digital Technologies: Uses, Susceptibilities, and Well-Being

This habilitation thesis presents a substantial and methodologically robust body of empirical research focused on adolescents' digital media use and its conditional effects on psychological, social, and physiological well-being. The work spans core domains of adolescent development in digital environments—including information credibility, online advertising, video gaming, sleep, mental health, and socio-emotional competencies—and contributes meaningfully to contemporary debates in the field.

One of the major strengths of this thesis lies in its ability to move beyond simplistic or alarmist narratives surrounding digital technologies. The findings consistently demonstrate that the effects of digital media are fundamentally contextual and differentiated, depending on adolescents' individual characteristics, patterns of use, and underlying motivations. This nuanced, empirically grounded approach provides a sophisticated understanding of the complex role digital environments play in young people's lives.

From a scientific standpoint, the thesis stands out for the rigor of its methodological design and the use of advanced research paradigms, including experimental, longitudinal, and intensive designs, as well as RI-CLPM models. These methodological choices attest to the candidate's strong command of complex analytical approaches. Taken as a whole, the corpus clearly demonstrates the candidate's scientific maturity, autonomy, and ability to conduct research that meets international standards of excellence.

At the conceptual level, the richness of the theoretical frameworks mobilized—including models of differential susceptibility, the iMEW model, self-determination theory, and theories of aggression and information credibility—constitutes a significant strength of the thesis. That said, the work would benefit from a stronger articulation among these frameworks within a more explicitly unified research program. In particular, a clearer specification of the theoretical status of *susceptibility*, as well as its relationship to information credibility and motivational mechanisms, would enhance the overall conceptual coherence of the thesis.

While each study is solid and relevant when considered individually, a more systematic articulation of the specific contribution of each one to the overarching objectives of the habilitation would further strengthen the programmatic dimension of the work. Similarly, a clearer distinction between analytic levels (objects of study, mechanisms, and well-being outcomes), along with a concluding section that more explicitly revisits the initial objectives, would help to close the conceptual loop.

Overall, this habilitation thesis represents a rigorous, well-substantiated body of work that fully demonstrates the candidate's competence, independence, and academic maturity. The areas for improvement identified primarily concern the explicit formulation of objectives and conceptual integration; they do not call into question the scientific merit of the dossier nor the candidate's eligibility for habilitation.

Reviewer's questions for the habilitation thesis defence

1. How could the integration of the theoretical frameworks mobilized in this thesis be strengthened within a unified model of digital susceptibility and adolescent well-being?
2. How would the candidate now more precisely define the theoretical status of the concept of *susceptibility*, particularly in relation to information credibility and usage contexts?
3. In retrospect, which concepts or mechanisms does the candidate now view as central for ensuring greater coherence and continuity in their research program in the coming years?

Conclusion

The habilitation thesis entitled "Adolescents and Information and Communication Technologies: Effects on Digital Engagement and Well-Being" by Mgr. David Lacko, Ph.D., **fulfils** requirements expected of a habilitation thesis in the field of Psychology.

Date: 2026-04-11

Signature

