

## HABILITATION BOARD DECISION ON THE NOMINATION FOR APPOINTMENT TO ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

|                                           |                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Masaryk University</b>                 |                                                                                                          |
| <b>Faculty</b>                            | Faculty of Social Studies                                                                                |
| <b>Procedure field</b>                    | Psychology                                                                                               |
| <b>Applicant</b>                          | Mgr. David Lacko, Ph.D.                                                                                  |
| <b>Applicant's home unit, institution</b> | Interdisciplinary Research Team on Internet and Society, Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University   |
| <b>Habilitation thesis</b>                | Adolescents and Information and Communication Technologies: Effects on Digital Engagement and Well-Being |

### Board members

**Chair**

**Members**

**prof. Mgr. Tomáš Řiháček, Ph.D.** (FSS MU)  
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**doc. PhDr. Bc. Iva Poláčková Šolcová, Ph.D.** (Institute of Psychology, Czech Academy of Sciences)  
**Univ.-Prof. Dr. Birgit U. Stetina** (Sigmund Freud Privat University, Wien, Austria)

### Evaluation of the applicant's scholarly/artistic qualifications

Dr. Lacko is a scholar with an impressive portfolio and scientific performance. He graduated from psychology in 2018 (summa cum laude) and his doctoral degree in general psychology in 2022 with a dissertation thesis entitled *How to meaningfully compare cultures? Voyage towards valid and sound measurement instruments*. Since then, he worked as a scientist in several institutions, including Masaryk University and the Czech Academy of Sciences.

The topics he has studied are spread across many areas including, for instance, intercultural psychology, cognitive styles, and digital technologies. Many of his publications are methodological in nature, demonstrating Dr. Lacko's scientific rigor and dedication to establishing a solid empirical foundation for his field. Furthermore, Dr. Lacko's wide methodological skills allowed him to participate in research in other fields, such as law and cartography, which adds an interdisciplinary flavor to his portfolio.

His list of publications includes almost 60 scientific works, most of them listed on the Web of Science and many of them in the first and second quartiles. The list contains both those where he is the main author, and those with co-authorship, demonstrating his leadership skills on the one hand, and the ability to work as a team member on the other. With almost 400 citations and an h-index of 11, he without any doubt belongs to the group of the most promising researchers of his generation.



The publication profile also demonstrates that Dr. Lacko is an internationally recognized researcher and a thought-after collaborator. Although he was a principal investigator in only one external grant, he was a team member in many, including several large-scale international projects. He has benefited from two substantial international research experiences (Warsaw and Vienna), broadening both his expertise and his collaborative network.

Dr. Lacko has been active in the popularization of science, with almost two dozens of popularization texts, a large number of conference talks, and several scientific reports. He also participated in the organization of conferences. He also received several internal and external awards including, for instance, Josef Hlávka Award for young talented researchers.

**Conclusion:** The applicant's scholarly/artistic capabilities **meet** the requirements expected of applicants participating in a habilitation procedure in the field of Psychology.

### **Evaluation of the applicant's pedagogical experience**

Dr. Lacko has been participating in teaching activities since 2019. His main teaching activity includes two mandatory courses that he developed himself and has been fully responsible for teaching from 2019 until now. These courses are methodological in nature and reflect dr. Lacko's methodological expertise. Besides that, he participated to various degrees in teaching several other courses that were either methodological or were focused on various social psychological topics.

Dr. Lacko is also an experienced supervisor, with 11 supervised Bachelor's and Master's theses in his portfolio, all of them successfully defended, and another nine theses in progress. Currently, he also supervises a doctoral student.

**Conclusion:** The applicant's pedagogical capabilities **meet** the requirements expected of applicants participating in a habilitation procedure in the field of Psychology.

### **Habilitation thesis evaluation**

The habilitation thesis is composed of eight studies, accompanied by an introduction and a synthesizing general discussion. Dr. Lacko was either the first author (four times) or the second author (four times) of all the included studies. The thesis was evaluated by three internationally recognized experts in the field, namely Kevin Koban, Jessica Rassy, and Alena Slezáčková. All three reviewers expressed favorable assessments of the thesis. Based on their reviews, the thesis can be evaluated as a comprehensive and methodologically rigorous body of research examining the complex relationships between adolescents' engagement with information and communication technologies and their well-being.

Notably, the thesis represents a systematic and cumulative research program that shifts away from reductionist, screen-time-based approaches towards a context-sensitive, conditional, and bidirectional understanding of digital effects. Furthermore, the methods employed in the studies attest to Dr. Lacko's strong command of complex analytical approaches. Throughout the thesis, Dr. Lacko also demonstrated a strong commitment to research transparency and open science, including open datasets, open R scripts, and preregistration of experimental studies. Dr. Lacko had already explicitly recognized and thoughtfully discussed most of the limitations subsequently identified by the reviewers. Overall, this habilitation thesis represents a rigorous, well-substantiated body of work that fully demonstrates the candidate's competence, independence, and academic maturity.

**Conclusion:** The applicant's habilitation thesis **meets** the requirements expected of habilitation theses in the field of Psychology.

#### **Secret ballot results**

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|--------------------------|---|
| Number of board members  | 5 |
| Number of votes cast     | 5 |
| Number of votes in favor | 5 |

#### **Board decision**

Based on the outcome of the secret vote and following an evaluation of the applicant's scholarly or artistic qualifications, pedagogical experience and habilitation thesis, the board hereby submits a proposal to the scientific board of the Faculty of Social Studies of Masaryk University to

☒ appoint the applicant associate professor of Psychology.

☐ terminate the procedure.

Date April 16, 2026

prof. Mgr. Tomáš Řiháček, Ph.D.



