

HABILITATION THESIS REVIEWER'S REPORT

Masaryk University

Faculty**Applicant****Habilitation thesis****Reviewer****Reviewer's home unit,
institution**

Faculty of Social Studies

Mgr. Lenka Dědková, Ph.D.

Parenting practices in digital era

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The habilitation thesis entitled “Parenting practices in digital era” by Lenka Dědková consists of 9 previously published academic articles in international peer-reviewed journals or edited volumes, and an introductory cover text that summarises and conceptualises the main findings presented in the compiled publications.

The publications selected for the thesis include several articles that have been published in high-ranking international journals of the relevant research fields (e.g., *Information, Communication & Society*, *New Media & Society*, *Computers in Human Behavior*). Lenka Dědková has contributed substantially to most of these papers, being the first author of 4 publications, the second author of 3 articles and the third author of 2 papers.

The publications are either explicitly focussed on the topic of the habilitation thesis – digital parenting / parental mediation – or address the concepts, issues and factors that are related to digital parenting and the complex mediatized socialisation context.

The published papers demonstrate sound empirical scholarship in the field of Social Psychology and the neighbouring (inter)disciplinary areas (e.g., cyberpsychology, media and communication studies, childhood and youth studies, family studies, and sociology) as well as Lenka Dědková’s high-level analytical skills and fluency in academic writing. Study 1, a book chapter published in *The Routledge International Handbook of Children, Adolescents, and Media*, furthermore, evidences her ability to develop and elaborate conceptual models and theoretical arguments.

The set of selected publications, thus, convincingly fulfils requirements expected of a habilitation thesis in the field of Social Psychology.

The habilitation thesis has, as postulated on p. 2, three main aims:

(1) to examine how parental mediation strategies and family environment relate to adolescents' engagement in risky online activities;

(2) to focus on whether parental mediation and support can help parents gain better knowledge of children's online activities;

(3) to explore which parental factors are linked to their engagement in specific mediation strategies.

It can be said, without any doubt, that the thesis achieves these objectives.

The thesis, furthermore, contributes to the field with its generalising conclusions, based on the compiled studies. These meta-level conclusions:

(1) demonstrate that parenting features and practices (including the quality of parent-child relationships, and parental mediation strategies) have the potential to shape adolescents' online behaviour and experiences; the effects, however, are nuanced and may depend on several specific factors such as parental intentions or children's characteristics;

(2) point out that parental mediation strategies have complex relationships with parents' knowledge: while active mediation and supportive parent-child relationships tend to facilitate information sharing between parents and children, some mediation strategies may provide parents a false sense of knowledge;

(3) highlight parental mediation as an outcome and show that choices of specific parental mediation strategies are related to individual characteristics and wider ICT-usage practices in the whole family system.

I can conclude that Lenka Dědková's habilitation thesis provides a good and comprehensive overview of the current state of research on the selected but relevant aspects of digital parenting and the related conceptual and empirical issues. The thesis also highlights the methodological and other limitations of the compiled studies and points at new avenues and challenges (e.g., the adoption and impact of generative AI, and how it should be addressed in digital parenting) as potential and promising aims for further research endeavours.

The only limitation of the thesis stems from the fact that the conceptual model developed in Study 1 focusses on ICT's effect on well-being. While the model embraces family (including parents) under the social level factors, it does not focus on, or disentangle parental mediation and other parenting characteristics from, other social factors. In being impressed by the richness and breath of the empirical findings and conclusions presented in the thesis, I was wondering whether the author was considering an elaboration of her own heuristic model, focussed specifically on digital parenting, to inspire and guide further research, and/or making a conceptual contribution to the field by complementing or upgrading an existing definition or typology of parental mediation. Such a bold attempt, regardless of its scope, would have further strengthened this exemplary habilitation thesis.

Reviewer's questions for the habilitation thesis defence

1. As you state on p. 25 (and elsewhere in the thesis), “we urgently need more longitudinal studies” to “disentangle possible bidirectional effects and enhance our knowledge about parenting effects on children’s online behavior and cognition”. If you had all financial, time and human resources needed, how would you design an ideal longitudinal study on parenting effects (in terms of participants and sampling, the number of waves, and the main variables)?
2. Would it be possible and justified, based on your empirical findings, critical review of the research literature, and foreseeable future technological developments (mainly related to the spread of generative AI) to suggest any improvement to the existing conceptions or typologies of parental mediation?
3. If you were offered an opportunity to write a ground-breaking theoretical book chapter (or even a book) on digital parenting, including proposing a new and improved conceptual model, how would you approach this task? Which new and/or modified elements, if any, would you include in such a model?

Conclusion

The habilitation thesis entitled “Parenting practices in digital era” by Mgr. Lenka Dědková, Ph.D., **fulfils** requirements expected of a habilitation thesis in the field of Social Psychology.

Date: January 16, 2026

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