

## **OPINION**

by prof. Dora Levterova - Gadjalova

of the materials submitted for participation in the competition

for the academic position of "Associate Professor"

of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski"

by: field of higher education 3. Social, economic, and legal sciences

professional field 3.2. Psychology (Clinical Psychology)

In the competition for "Associate Professor", announced in the State Gazette, issue 94 of 12.11.2021 and on the website of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" for the needs of the Department of Psychology at the Faculty of Pedagogy, as a candidate participates Zlatomira Georgieva Kostova from PU "Paisii Hilendarski"

### **1. General presentation of the procedure and the applicant**

By order № RD-21-35 of 10.01.2022 of the Rector of the University of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski" (PU) I was appointed a member of the scientific jury of the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in PU in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic, and legal sciences, professional field Psychology (Clinical Psychology), announced for the needs of the Department of Psychology at the Faculty of Pedagogy.

For participation in the announced competition have submitted documents only candidate Chief Assistant Professor Zlatomira Georgieva Kostova, Ph.D. Presented by Chef Assistant Professor Zlatomira Kostova Ph.D., a set of materials on paper is in accordance with the Regulations for the development of the academic staff of the University of Plovdiv.

The candidate Chief Assistant Professor Zlatomira Kostova Ph.D. has submitted a total of 36 scientific papers, of which 1 habilitation thesis, 1 monograph; 3 articles in referenced and indexed in the scientific database; 22 articles published in unrefereed journals with scientifically peer-reviewed or published in edited collective volumes; 3 studies, published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information; 2

studies published in non-peer-reviewed journals with scientifically peer-reviewed or published in edited collective volumes; 4 textbooks and teaching aids co-authored.

## **2. General characteristics of the candidate's activity**

The candidate Chief Assistant Professor Zlatomira Kostova Ph.D. has the necessary educational and pedagogical activities under the announced competition. According to the information provided for academic work, it is evident that there is classroom and extracurricular employment of 585 study hours according to the curriculum, 205 hours of lectures according to the curriculum, of which 185 hours in the professional field. For the educational activity, chief Assistant Professor Zlatomira Kostova Ph.D. has published two electronic resources for lecture courses, 1 monograph and 7 articles for training courses, as well as 16 author's topics in 2 textbooks for students. 11 teaching lecture courses in the professional field have been developed, and tests and case studies for students have been developed for each lecture course. She has led 12 students to participate in the Student Scientific Forum and has graduated with 20 bachelor's and master's degrees.

### *Evaluation of the scientific and scientific-applied activity of the candidate*

Chief Assistant Professor Zlatomira Kostova Ph.D. has one independent monograph, which she presents as a habilitation thesis, and one monograph, published on the basis of a defended dissertation for the ONS "Ph.D.". In the presented habilitation work, Chief Assistant Professor Zlatomira Kostova Ph.D. presents basic aspects of trauma and post-traumatic stress in the individual experience of parents of children with disorders of neuro-psychological development. It links trauma to psychotherapeutic application and impaired parental capacity due to post-traumatic stress and high levels of anxiety. She places special emphasis on trauma as a mental state. Derives data and interpretations from his own research related to the description of the symptomatic profile of mothers raising children with neuropsychiatric disorders. He shares his own experience in counseling and cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy with families with children with mental disorders. He also presents several stories in chronological dynamics of mothers giving birth to children with autism spectrum disorders.

Of the three articles refereed and indexed in the scientific database, two are co-authored and one is independent. One of the co-authored articles focuses on the relationship between brain function and therapeutic approaches to various diseases of the nervous system and brain dysfunction, while the other co-authored article focuses on current trends in the development of neuroscience related to mental disorders and psychotherapy. The independent article is

dedicated to the quality of the parental capacity of a family raising a child from the autistic spectrum in terms of recognition and differentiation of the mental states of the nonverbal child by the parents and especially the mother. Parameters of reflexive parenting and necessary psychological support are derived.

In 22 articles published in unrefereed journals with scientifically peer-reviewed or published in edited collective volumes, the following problems of Kostova's research interests emerge:

- parenting, parenting styles, symptomatic profile, and emotional processes in parenting children with autism spectrum and with emotional and behavioral disorders, as well as cognitive functioning patterns and coping strategies;
- emotionally focused therapy, video modeling as a therapeutic technique, intensive interactions in the parental context;
- functional assessment, executive functions in children with mental disorders;
- parental competencies and mental capacity to increase parental competence.

The candidate Chief Assistant Professor Kostova, Ph.D. has participated in 7 qualification pieces of training, 10 participations in scientific forums, 14 participations in international scientific forums, participation in editorial boards of two journals published in Bulgaria. It has implemented Erasmus + mobility.

The contributions to the scientific production of Chief Assistant Dr. Zlatomira Kostova can be summarized in the following spaces:

**scientific and theoretical contributions:**

- the concept of the importance of trauma and post-traumatic stress in the individual experience of parents with children with neuropsychiatric disorders and its impact on psychotherapy has been developed;
- an explanatory model of the parent's functioning during the trauma of losing the child's health has been made;
- established psycho-therapies for parents and families are systematized;
- an author's questionnaire for family functioning of a child from the autistic spectrum has been created;

- a precise and up-to-date modification of an interview for adult attachment was made by including a dictionary of feelings in Bulgarian for analysis of the adult's linguistic production;
- the functioning of a child with Generalized Developmental Disorder is interpreted through the prism of parenthood.

#### **practical and practical contributions:**

- scientific and practical application of the empirical study "Symptomatic profile" of mothers with trauma from loss of health through the bio-psycho-social model in clinical psychology;
- specified application of group cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy to support mothers with trauma from the loss of health;
- the empirical case study is differentiated through individual and in-depth analysis of each case;
- an individual profile for emotional-affective functioning and development in ASD with a practical orientation towards interaction, training, support, and counseling has been developed and tested;

Undoubtedly, the contributions in the field of clinical psychology related to integrative models of psychotherapy through the prism of the development of marital and parental capacity: emotional-based and mental-based therapy.

### **3. Critical remarks and recommendations**

I have no critical remarks. I recommend to Chief Assistant Zlatomira Kostova, Ph.D. to continue with her previous enthusiasm and conviction in her professional commitments in the field of psychological support and therapeutic models for families and parents of children with neuropsychological disorders.

### **CONCLUSION**

The documents and materials presented by Ch. Zlatomira Kostova, Ph.D. meet all the requirements of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB), the Regulations for the implementation of the ZRASRB, and the relevant Regulations of PU "Paisii Hilendarski".

The candidate in the competition has submitted a sufficient number of scientific papers published after the materials used in the defense of ONS "Ph.D.". In the works of the candidate,

there are original scientific and applied contributions, which have received international recognition as a representative part of them published in journals and scientific journals published by international academic publishers. His theoretical developments have practical applicability, and some of them are directly oriented to the educational work. The scientific and teaching qualification of Chief Assistant Professor Zlatomira Kostova, Ph.D. is undoubted.

Achieved by Chief Assistant Professor Zlatomira Kostova, Ph.D. results in teaching and research activities fully comply with the minimum national and additional requirements of the Faculty of Education, adopted in connection with the Regulations of the University of Plovdiv for the implementation of ZRASRB.

After getting acquainted with the materials and scientific papers presented in the competition, analysis of their importance, and the scientific, scientific-applied, and applied contributions contained in them, I find it reasonable to give my **positive assessment** and recommend the Scientific Jury to prepare a report proposal to the Faculty. Council of the Faculty of Pedagogy for the election of Chief Assistant Professor Zlatomira Kostova, Ph.D. for the academic position of "Associate Professor" at the University of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski" in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic, and legal sciences, professional field of Psychology (Clinical Psychology).

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Prepared the opinion: .....

*(prof. Dora Levterova-Gadjalova, DSc)*