

STANDPOINT

by Dr. Irena Ivanova Levkova, Associate Professor at Paisii Hilendarski University,

member of the scientific jury, order RD-21-35 of 10.01.2022.

Competition for the academic position of Associate Professor

Field of higher education. Social, economic and legal sciences

Professional field 3.2. 3.3 Psychology (Clinical Psychology)

Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski"

The competition was announced in the State Gazette, no. 94 of 12.11.2021.

1. Procedure

The procedure for the competition has been followed and complies with the legal provisions. The materials submitted by the candidate for participation in the competition have been prepared accurately, in accordance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for the Implementation of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff at PU.

2. Details of the applicant

The only candidate in the competition is head asst. Dr. Zlatomira Kostova. According to the Article 29 of the Law on Academic Research and Development, she is eligible to participate in the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor, as she has been a PhD candidate in Psychology since 2013.

Since June 2014 and until now Dr. Zlatomira Kostova works at the Institute for Mental Health and Development as Regional Director.

Since October 2001, she has been a Senior Assistant Professor at Plovdiv Paisii Hilendarski University, Department of Psychology and Pedagogy, and since June 2019 - a Senior Assistant Professor at the Department of Psychology.

She is a member of the Bulgarian Association of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy.

3. Description of scientific works

Dr. Zlatomira Kostova participated in the competition for associate professor with 36 publications on the topic of the competition. Eight of the submitted publications on the topic of the competition are in English.

Among the submitted publications there are: 2 monographs, one of which was published on the basis of a defended dissertation; 4 are teaching aids and textbooks; 3 studies published in refereed journals and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information; 2 studies published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or edited collective volumes; 3 articles published in refereed journals and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information; 22 articles published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or edited collective volumes.

Co-authored, as specified by separation protocols, are: 3 studies published in refereed journals and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information; 2 articles published in refereed journals and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information; 4 articles published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or in edited collective volumes; 4 textbooks and manuals.

These publications are of equal scientific contribution of the co-authors.

All other publications represent independent work of Dr. Zlatomira Kostova. Dr Kostova's publishing activity is sufficient for the position of Associate Professor.

4. Thematic areas of scientific interests

Dr Zlatomira Kostova's research interests can be divided into several areas:

The main issues analysed in Dr. Kostova's works are related to the study of neuropsychiatric disorders in children and the impact of this phenomenon on parenting - cognitive patterns of functioning of mothers raising children with neurodevelopmental disorders, symptomatic tendencies of mothers in distress, the influence of the father figure, the study of the spousal subsystem and the parent-child subsystem. (1,2,5,7,15,21,23,24,26,31,32,35)

Theoretically, Dr. Kostova's interests focus on a variety of topics related to various nosologies in child clinical psychology, autism spectrum disorders, intellectual disabilities, disorders such as dyslexia, hyperactivity, attention deficit, and some somatic disorders. (16,17,18,19,20,31,34)

Naturally related to these topics is the field of psychotherapy. Here, the author turns to the presentation and analysis of contemporary psychotherapeutic approaches based on new evidence about brain functioning that significantly enrich modern clinical psychology. (3,4,22,28,29,30,33,36).

In a number of her publications, Dr. Kostova has focused in particular on the processes of children on the autism spectrum and the mother/child relationship-analysing children's protective behaviors, the defense mechanisms observed in mothers, and basic techniques for dealing with unconscious resistances during therapy; working with children on the severe autism spectrum and their parents through emotion-focused and mentalization-based therapy. (6,8,9,11,12,13,14,25,27)

5. Scientific contributions

As important theoretical contributions of Dr. Kostova can be mentioned:

I. Analysis of the significance of trauma and post-traumatic stress in the individual experience of parents of children with neuro-psychiatric developmental disorders (1).

II. An analysis of the parent's functioning through the trauma of the child's health loss. (1)

III. A theoretical study and description of autism spectrum disorders, intellectual disabilities, disorders such as dyslexia, hyperactivity, attention deficit and some somatic disorders. (16,17,18,19,20,31,34)

IV. Analysis of cognitive functioning patterns of mothers raising children with neurodevelopmental disorders (7,26,32)

Contributions of a mainly theoretical-empirical nature are in the following directions:

I. A "symptom profile" of mothers raising children with neuropsychiatric developmental disorders has been created by analyzing the leading personality tendencies, thoughts, and emotions. (1)

II. An exploration of the symptomatic tendencies of mothers in distress, the affective bonding patterns of mothers of children on the autism spectrum, the influence of the father figure, the marital subsystem, and the parent-child subsystem. (5,15,21,23,24,31,35)

III. Analysis of children's protective behaviors, the defense mechanisms observed in mothers, and basic techniques for dealing with unconscious resistances during therapy. (6,8,9,11,25)

IV. Development of the theme of working with children on the autism spectrum in its severe form and with their parents and, in particular, of emotion-focused therapy and mentalisation-based therapy. (12,13,14,27)

Contributions of an empirical and applied nature:

I. The possibilities of applying group psychotherapeutic methods have been investigated (7,26,32).

II. A variant of group cognitive-behavioral psychotherapy for mothers of children with neuropsychiatric developmental disorders is presented. (1)

6. Reflection of the candidate's results in the works of other authors

A list of 25 noted citations is presented, including 3 in scientific journals, refereed and indexed in world-renowned databases and 11 in monographs and collective volumes with scientific peer review.

The number of citations meets the requirements for the position of Associate Professor at the Plovdiv University.

7. Project activity

Dr. Kostova realizes her scientific and applied interests through participation in numerous projects - 17 in number, 14 international and 3 national.

Six of the projects are at Plovdiv University and are related to issues of education - inclusive education, alternatives in education, innovative educational environment, e-learning, etc.

To the association "Parallel World" in the town of. She is involved in 6 projects aimed at practical support in solving the problems of children with neuropsychiatric disorders and their parents.

She also participates in 2 projects of the Institute for Public Health and Development.

Dr. Kostova is also an active participant in the projects of "Student Practices" - in 3 projects.

8. Teaching.

Dr. Kostova has developed the following courses for the specialty "Psychology", Bachelor's degree:

1. Clinical Psychology

2. Clinical assessments and interventions

3. Psychology of personal adjustment

For the Master's programmes at PU:

1. Parenting Competence - Developmental Assessments and Strategies

2. Positive parenting

3. Emotional-Sensitive Training

4. Assessments and interventions in clinical practice

In addition, for the B.A. in Social Work, she offers courses in:

1. Foundations of Clinical Psychology in Social Work

2. Psychological foundations of crisis intervention

To the Clinical and Counseling Psychology Master's Program at the Clement Ohridski Sofia University, she is developing a course on Therapeutic Approaches to Autism Spectrum Disorders and their Families.

To ensure a high contemporary level of training in these courses, students have textbooks and teaching aids, in which Dr. Kostova's participation is significant, as well as 8 original articles and two electronic resources created by her. The level of the courses developed shows that her teaching and research experience is fully sufficient for the position of Associate Professor.

In her work with students, Dr. Kostova has supervised 20 graduate students and served as a research advisor to students and student teams in the preparation of 9 papers for the Student Research Forum.

Since obtaining her PhD, she has continued to enhance her knowledge and skills as a scientist and educator by participating in 7 qualifying trainings, 10 national scientific forums, 14 international forums and the Erasmus+ program.

9. Conclusion

The scientific works and documents of Dr. Zlatomira Kostova submitted in the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor fully meet the mandatory conditions under the Law on Academic Staff Development at Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, the Regulations for its implementation, the Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff at Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv. The high level in the multifaceted scientific and teaching development, research experiences and results in the field of clinical psychology, give me grounds to give a positive assessment and to recommend the Scientific Jury to vote and propose the election of the Senior Assistant Professor Dr. Zlatomira Kostova to the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.2. "Psychology" (Clinical Psychology).

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Plovdiv

Prepared by:

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