

REVIEW

by Associate Professor Kirilka Simeonova Tagareva, PhD at Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski"

on the materials submitted for participation in the competition

for the academic position of Associate Professor

at Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski"

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, no. 94 of 12. 11. 2021 and on the Internet page of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" for the needs of the Department of Psychology at the Faculty of Education, as a candidate participated Assoc. Dr. Zlatomira Georgieva Kostova from Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski"

1. General presentation of the received materials

By order № RD-21-35 of 10. 01. 2022 of the Rector of Plovdiv Paisii Hilendarski University (PU) I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury of the competition for the academic position of 'Associate Professor' at PU in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.2. Psychology (Clinical Psychology), announced for the needs of the Department of Psychology at the Faculty of Education.

For participation in the announced competition documents were submitted by a single candidate:

Chief Assistant Professor Zlatomira Georgieva Kostova, PhD from Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski", Department of Psychology.

Presented by Chief Assistant Professor PhD Zlatomira Kostova's set of materials on paper is in accordance with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the University of Plovdiv, and includes the following documents:

1. Application to the Rector for admission to the competition.
2. Curriculum vitae in European format.
3. Diplomas for higher education and for the degree "Doctor".
4. List of scientific works.
5. Scientific production.
6. List of citations.
7. Information on compliance with the minimum national requirements.
8. Annotations and self-assessment of contributions of the materials under art. 65. From PRASPU, in English and Bulgarian.
9. Declaration of originality and authenticity of the attached documents.

10. Certificate of work experience.
11. Documents for educational work.
12. Other documents.

The set of paper materials is in accordance with the requirements. The dissertation has been published as a monograph, "Emotion Regulation in Autism Spectrum Disorders", which is not included in the evaluation of publications for this competition. The publications for the competition for the post of Associate Professor are not duplicates of the publications for the PhD and for the academic post of Chief Assistant Professor. These publications are not subject to peer review.

For the purposes of this competition, the Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Zlatomira Kostova has submitted a total of 36 scientific works, including 2 monographs, 30 scientific publications and 4 textbooks and teaching aids (co-authored).

2. Brief biographical details of the applicant

Zlatomira Kostova was born in 1971. She received her Bachelor's degree in Pedagogy from Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" in 1997 and her Master's degree in Clinical and Counseling Psychology from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in 2007. She completed her PhD at Plovdiv University in the field 3.2. Psychology, doctoral program "Special Psychology". She defended her dissertation thesis entitled: "Study of emotional-affective development in generalized developmental disorders" in 2013.

Zlatomira Kostova's professional career is connected with the Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski". She initially started working as a lecturer and in October 2001 she was appointed as a senior assistant professor in the Department of Pedagogy and Psychology. Concurrently, in 2014, she was appointed Regional Director at the Institute for Mental Health and Development. Currently, she works as a senior assistant professor in the Department of Psychology at PU and as the director of the Institute for Mental Health and Development - Plovdiv. Nine years after completing her dissertation Zlatomira Kostova gained academic experience, teaching and research experience, which corresponds to the professional field of the open procedure: 3.2. Psychology (Clinical Psychology).

3. General description of the applicant's activities

Evaluation of teaching and learning activities

The candidate is currently the only lecturer in Clinical Psychology in the Department of Psychology and is doing an excellent job in teaching and pedagogical activities. In addition, at the PU, the Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Zl. Kostova teaches courses on "Clinical Assessments and Interventions", "Psychology of Personal Adjustment", "Parental Competence - Assessments and Strategies for Development", etc. Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", she has developed a course on "Therapeutic Approaches to Autism Spectrum Disorders and their Families". The development of the teaching qualities of Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Zl. Kostova is complemented by the publication of four textbooks and teaching aids in co-authorship and two electronic resources for teaching purposes.

The candidate works actively with students: she has taught more than 20 graduates and has been a scientific advisor-teacher of 9 students participating with papers in the Student Scientific Forum at the Faculty of Education of PU.

As a senior lecturer, she has also participated in the Scientific Research Forum. Dr. Zlatomira Kostova is a guest lecturer within the Erasmus + Teaching Mobility Program at the University of Almeria, Spain in November, 2021.

Evaluation of the candidate's scientific and applied activity

The candidate is actively involved in research projects. She has participated in a total of 17 projects, of which 14 are international and 3 national. It should be emphasized that the participation of the Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Zl. Kostova's participation in scientific projects enrich her teaching activity and are the basis for her publication activity.

The publications can be classified by type (monographs - 2 issues; studies - 5 issues; articles - 25 issues), by importance (scientific publications in publications with impact factor - 6 issues), by place of publication (scientific publications in refereed publications and indexed in world-known databases of scientific information - 6 issues, scientific publications in non-refereed journals with scientific peer-review or in edited collective volumes - 24 issues); by language in which they were written (in English - 8 issues; in Bulgarian - 28 issues), by number of co-authors (independent - 21 issues; with one co-author - 6 issues; with two co-authors - 3 issues).

The publication and teaching activities of the candidate fully meet the quantitative criteria, the national requirements and those of Paisii Hilendarski University.

In the card for fulfilment of the national minimum requirements according to the Law on Research and Development and the Regulations for its application, the Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Zl. Kostova realized a total of 779,1 with the required 400 points. By sections they are distributed as follows:

- Section A - 50 points;
- Section C - 100 points;
- Section G - 414,1 points;
- Section D - 215 points.

On the additional faculty requirements for the teaching activity of the Faculty of Education, the Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Zl. Kostova formed another 164,95 points.

Evaluation of the quality of publication and teaching activities

I give a high evaluation to the presented main habilitation work - Kostova, Zl. "Trauma and Parenting". IK Steno, Varna, 2018, ISBN 978-954-449-958-7, which represents an independent scientific study and reaches results that differ from conventional knowledge about trauma as a psychological phenomenon and family functioning in children with disorders in neuropsychiatric development. The first part of the monograph is devoted to trauma, with special attention to mechanisms of stress, distress, child psychiatric traumatization, projective identification, and parenting, with identification of specific features in parents of children with autism spectrum disorder. The second part presents our own empirical study of a symptom

profile of mothers raising children with neuropsychiatric developmental disorders. The use of the SCL-90-R has been empirically shown to be an effective methodology for determining current psychological status in mothers of children with neuropsychiatric developmental disorders, which I believe to be important and valuable. Different degrees of symptom distress due to parenting children with neuropsychiatric developmental disorders were derived. The third part summarizes the author's personal experience in counselling and psychotherapy with families with children with developmental disorders. New possibilities for work in the context of cognitive-behavioral therapy, in the application of emotion-focused therapy are indicated. The fourth part presents three stories of mothers of children with autism spectrum disorders. The mothers' narratives are logically described through the attachment interview as an adult; the child's history through the mother's narrative; and an analysis of a temporal profile of the mother's functioning (past, present, future). The habilitation thesis demonstrates an excellent knowledge of the subject matter, skilful use of contemporary methodology and courage in seeking new approaches in paediatric clinical practice.

The topic of parenting in children with neuropsychiatric disorders is addressed in several of the candidate's works, both collective and individual, but I do not find any significant repetition that leads to a reduction of quantitative indicators. These have included cognitive functioning models of mothers in distress, research on the quality of parenting capacity in the family, research on parental representations of the child, and functions of the father in the child's mental development.

An important contribution to the scientific creativity of Zl. Kostova is the study of the mother-child dyad with autism spectrum; the linking of emotional-affective peculiarities and protective behavior of children with the attitudes and defense mechanisms of their mothers; the presentation of techniques for dealing with unconscious resistances of the mother in the treatment; the application of emotionally-focused and mentally-based therapy in severe forms of autism.

The major nosological entities in child clinical psychology are described in several publications. The specificity in functioning and development of children with intellectual disabilities, dyslexia, autism spectrum disorders, behavioral and emotional disorders is analysed.

Collective publications discuss topics in the field of counselling and psychotherapy: brain-based psychotherapy; the action of counselling and therapy through learning and through changes in gene expression; inferring basic mechanisms of brain activity in the practice of mindfulness. These publications are of equal scientific merit to the co-authors.

The candidate's academic activities, both teaching, research and publication, are concentrated in the field of clinical psychology. Early in her academic career, emphasis was placed on developmental disorders (including her dissertation), and in recent years on family functioning, counselling, and therapy. The list of publications also includes those in education and social work. Significant among the publications are those of a practical-applied nature, which are linked to the candidate's academic activity.

Evaluation of contributions

Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Zl. Kostova has attached an author's reference of the contributions in the works she has submitted for review. According to her assessment they are

in seven thematic areas. They are both theoretical and practical-applied. I fully agree with the defined contributions to the theory and practice of clinical psychology. The contributions of a theoretical nature are in the areas of: child clinical psychology (1,16,17,18,19,20,31,34); parenting through trauma (1,5,15,21,23,24,31,35); classical and integrative approaches to psychotherapy (1,3,4,28,29,30); psychodynamic approaches (1,6,8,9,11,25). Contributions to the practice of clinical psychology relate to: clinical assessments in childhood and adulthood (1,9,10,11,15,16,23); counselling and psychotherapy (1,7,26,32); integrative psychotherapy (1,12,13,14,27). Overall, the research contributions form and substantiate a new concept of trauma and parenting in children with neuropsychiatric developmental disorders and demonstrate its effective application in practice.

Citation

The citation reference shows that the candidate's publications have generated academic interest. A total of 25 citations are presented.

- In scientific journals, refereed and indexed in world-known databases - 3 citations;
- In monographs and collective volumes with scientific review - 12 citations.
- In unrefered peer-reviewed journals - 10 citations.

My quantitative assessment of the citations is that they exceed the minimum national requirements by a factor of four. In terms of content, I am impressed by the citations from foreign authors - English and Russian, as well as from Bulgarian authors, which speaks for the candidate's recognizability at home and abroad.

4. Evaluation of the personal contribution of the candidate

The submitted habilitation thesis and the author's publications are a personal contribution, which gives me grounds to confirm that the candidate meets the norms of scientific ethics in relation to the procedure regulated in the Law on the Development of Academic Staff of the Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski".

I find no plagiarism in the candidate's work.

5. Critical remarks and recommendations

I have no critical remarks. I recommend to Dr. Zl. Kostova to continue her research and teaching activity in the field of clinical psychology.

6. Personal impressions

I have known Zlatomira Kostova since 2006 as a colleague in the Department of Pedagogy and Psychology at PU. I was a member of the scientific jury as chair and reviewer of her competition for the degree of Doctor of Education and Science, where she successfully defended herself. Now, as the head of the Department of Psychology, I would like to emphasize that Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Zl. Kostova manages to successfully combine teaching and research work. She is a thorough scholar and a respected colleague.

CONCLUSION

The documents and materials presented by Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Zlatomira Georgieva Kostova comply with all the requirements of the Law for the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LADAPB), the Regulations for the Implementation of the LADAPB and the relevant Regulations of Paisii Hilendarski University.

The candidate in the competition has submitted a sufficient number of scientific works published after the materials used in the defence of the PhD and the Principal Assistant Professorship. The candidate's works contain original scientific and applied contributions which have received international recognition, some of them having been published in journals abroad. The theoretical developments have practical applicability, some of them are directly oriented to the teaching work. The scientific and teaching qualification of head as. Dr. Zlatomira Georgieva Kostova is undoubted.

The achievements of Dr. Zlatomira Georgieva Kostova's results in teaching and research activities fully comply with the minimum national and additional requirements of the Faculty of Education, adopted in conjunction with the Regulations of the PU for the implementation of the Law on Education.

After familiarizing myself with the materials and scientific works presented in the competition, analysing their significance and scientific, scientific-applied and applied contributions contained in them, I find it justified to give my **positive assessment** and to recommend the Scientific Jury to prepare a report-proposal to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Education for the selection of the Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Zlatomira Georgieva Kostova to the academic position of Associate Professor at the Pedagogical University "Paisii Hilendarski" in the following field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.2. Psychology (Clinical Psychology).

22.03.2022.

Plovdiv

Reviewer:

(Assoc. Prof. Kirilka Tagareva, PhD)