

REVIEW

by Full Prof. Vanya Matanova, Ph.D., DSc, Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski", Institute for Mental Health and Development

of the materials submitted for participation in the competition

for the academic position "Associate Professor"

Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski"

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

professional field .3.2. Psychology-Clinical psychology

General presentation of the received materials

By order № P33-RD 21 35 of 10.01.2022. of the Rector of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" (PU) I have been appointed a member of the scientific jury of the competition for the academic position "Associate Professor" in PU in higher education Social, economic, legal sciences, professional field 3.2. Psychology-Clinical Psychology, announced for the needs of the Department of Psychology at the Faculty of Education. All requirements for the procedure for the competition are met and comply with regulations-The Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, Regulations for the development of the academic staff at the University of Plovdiv.

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 Dr. Zlatomira Kostova.

The only candidate for participation in the announced competition has submitted documents. Dr. Zlatomira Kostova, who has submitted a total of 36 scientific papers on the topic of the competition, of which 3 studies published in refereed publications and indexed in world-famous databases of scientific information; 2 studies published in unrefereed journals with scientific review or in edited collective volumes, 2 monographs, 4 textbooks and teaching aids. 3 articles published in refereed publications and indexed in world-famous databases of scientific information; 22 articles published in unrefereed scientific peer-reviewed journals or in edited collective volumes. In co-authorship / with separation protocols / are: 3 studies, published in refereed editions and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information; 2 articles published in refereed publications and

indexed in world-famous databases of scientific information; 4 articles published in unreferred journals with scientific review or in edited collective volumes; 4 textbooks and manuals.

The candidate Dr. Kostova has presented the relevant documents certifying the educational and scientific degree Doctor of Psychology /PhD/ since 2013. Dr. Kostova has consistently held consulting, therapeutic, training and organizational positions in various educational institutions.

The research interests of Dr. Zlatomira Kostova are related to several current and important areas of clinical psychology. The main interest of Dr. Kostova is child psychopathology and in particular disorders of their development and influence on the family structure, with its subsystems - marital and parental (1,2,5,7,15,21,23,24,26, 31,32,35).

Dr. Kostova's diverse interests show high opportunities for critical analysis of observed phenomena, creativity both in the selection of topics and in their development. Dr. Kostova's theoretical and therapeutic interests are focused on various nosologies - autism spectrum disorders, mental retardation, dyslexia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and others. (16,17,18,19,20,31,34).

Excellent theoretical knowledge in the field of child psychopathology finds a way out in the search for therapeutic approaches to overcome them. In addition to well-known therapeutic approaches, Dr. Kostova is part of a team who formulated and justified a new approach - so. Brain-based therapy, which enjoys significant international interest (3,4,22,28,29,30,33,36).

Particularly significant are the publications presented by Dr. Kostova, which concern the protective behavior of children with autism spectrum disorders, as well as the unconscious resistance and protection of the mothers of these children. The applied mentalization-based therapy and emotional-focused therapy open a new page of children's therapy. (6,8,9,11,12,13,14,25,27).

The high level of Dr. Kostova's scientific output is evidenced by the fact that her publications have 25 citations-3 in publications, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases and 11 in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review.

Brief biographical data of the candidate

Dr. Kostova has a Master's degree in Clinical and Counseling Psychology, and since 2013 is a doctor of psychology- PhD. Since October 2001 she is an assistant professor at Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski", Department of Psychology, and since June 2019. - Senior Assistant in the Department of Psychology.

From June 2014 until now, Dr. Zlatomira Kostova works at the Institute of Mental Health and Development as a regional director at the Plovdiv branch.

He is a member of the Bulgarian Association of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. Member of the Society of Psychologists, Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy Section. Member of the Bulgarian Association of Clinical and Counseling Psychology.

General characteristics of the candidate's activity

Project activity

Dr. Kostova realizes her scientific and scientific-applied interests by participating in numerous projects - 17 in number, of which 14 international and 3 national.

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

To the Association "Parallel World" in Plovdiv she is involved in 6 projects aimed at practical support in solving the problems of children with disabilities and their parents.

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

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

Teaching activity.

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

1. Clinical psychology,
2. Clinical evaluations and interventions,
3. Psychology of personal adjustment,

For the master's programs at the University of Plovdiv:

1. Parental competence - assessments and development strategies,
2. Positive parenting,
3. Emotionally sensitive training,
4. Evaluations and interventions in clinical practice,

For Bachelor's degree, specialty "Social activities", she offers courses:

1. Fundamentals of clinical psychology in social work,
2. Psychological foundations of crisis intervention.

In addition to the master's program "Clinical Psychology" at Sofia University "Kliment Ohridski", she is developing a course on "Therapeutic approaches to the of autistic spectrum disorders and their families."

Dr. Kostova is the scientific supervisor of 20 graduates, as well as the leader of students and student teams in the preparation of 9 reports for the Student Scientific Forum.

Dr. Kostova is constantly improving her competencies and qualifications, as evidenced by the fact that after acquiring PhD participates in 7 qualification trainings, in 10 national and 14 international scientific forums and in the program "Erasmus +".

The teaching activity of Dr. Kostova is based on extensive information, analytical skills and the ability to synthesize knowledge from various scientific fields, which materializes in the development of curricula related to current issues of psychology, special education and social work. In terms of content, these curricula reflect the current state of scientific knowledge and ensure a very good quality of education. Her teaching skills are highly appreciated by both the students and the Academic Management of the University of Plovdiv.

Her teaching activity is in the field of this competition.

The scientific and scientific-applied activity of the candidate

The scientific and teaching activity of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kostova is a logical consequence of her professional path, the path of a committed and dedicated specialist.

The monograph Trauma and Parenthood / 2018 / discusses an extremely important and neglected topic in our specialized literature - that of trauma and post-traumatic stress disorders in mothers of children with developmental disorders who block parental capacity and have a negative impact on the therapeutic process. The symptomatic profile and personality tendencies of the mothers of children with developmental disorders are presented, which serves as a guide in the planning of therapeutic programs. This book reflects human empathy, the rich professional experience of Dr. Kostova, which is based on high professionalism and creativity, resulting in integrative models of therapeutic work.

The monograph Emotional Regulation in Autism Spectrum Disorders / 2020 / seeks alternative ways to influence autism spectrum disorders. The topic of the autism spectrum disorders is too exploited, which further increases the significance of this monograph, which is based entirely on Dr. Kostova's personal professional experience, her ability to critically evaluate existing theoretical and therapeutic postulates and use them creatively. The main belief, supported by her clinical experience, is that known diagnostic tools do not always give a complete and accurate picture of the disorders in individual children. It is extremely important to provide the mother / parents

with psychological help and support, to provide her with space to react to the emotions that accompany raising a child with disabilities.

The article *Brain-based Treatment / 2018 /* was published in the prestigious journal *Evaluation in clinical practice* and presents the idea that psychotherapy can be more effective if it is based on a neuropsychological approach using the achievements of neuroscience. This is a new approach, later developed in a collective monograph, which enjoys strong interest from the international psychotherapeutic community. Brain-based psychotherapy aims to change brain function, but not directly, but through experiences.

These ideas are expanded and deepened in the collective monograph *Brain-based Treatment / . / 2020 /*, published by the prestigious publishing by *Nova Science NY*. The neural basis of mental disorders and the specific psychotherapeutic consequences are discussed in detail. The development of technology and neuroimaging allow non-invasive monitoring of changes in brain function that are associated with psychotherapy.

Contributions-scientific-applied:

1. Trauma and post-traumatic stress disorders in mothers of children with autism spectrum disorders are presented and analyzed. A symptomatic profile has been compiled and personality trends have been outlined.
2. Parenting through trauma and loss of children's mental health is analyzed.
3. Analysis of therapeutic approaches when working with parents with blocked parental capacity during the trauma.
4. The father's figure and its role in the normative development of the child.
5. Dynamics, disorders and mechanisms of the psychosomatic process.

Contributions-Applied:

1. Author's questionnaire for family functioning in a child with autism spectrum disorders.
2. Modification of the Adult Attachment Interview - inclusion of a dictionary of emotions.
3. Approbation of a new approach in the analysis of the mother-child relationship.
4. Development of a model of psychotherapeutic work based on brain function and plasticity.

This issue requires and implies a very high general culture, flexible mind and critical thinking. Dr. Kostova undoubtedly owns. I appreciate the skill of. Dr. Kostova to talk about complex things simply and clearly. Her rich professional experience is combined with respect and admiration for the already known and scientific curiosity and enthusiasm for discovering unexplored areas.

The scientific output of Dr. Zlatomira Kostova shows very broad competencies in various fields of scientific knowledge, high analytical skills, ability to summarize data and thus outline unexplored areas.

The articles can trace the various stages of research and therapeutic activities of Dr. Kostova in the field of psychodiagnostics, psychotherapy, comorbidity and others. The individual nosological units are considered from the standpoint of the bio-psycho-social model. Both the general and the specific characteristics of the individual nosologies are considered, which would facilitate the differential diagnosis and the development of adequate and effective therapeutic strategies. In addition to deficits in the functioning of these children, the preserved abilities and strengths are also mentioned, which could serve as a basis for providing help and support for them and their families.

Personal impressions

Dr. Kostova is extremely loyal, helpful and understanding, professionally curious and creative. Communicative, socially adequate, well-meaning and very sustainable, it would be a source of pride for any self-respecting University and professional community. Her personal and professional qualities make her a preferred professional, trainer, therapist and friend.

Dr. Kostova's consulting and therapeutic activities make her one of the most recognizable people in the professional community and among those who seek this type of help and support.

CONCLUSION

The documents and materials submitted by Dr. Zlatomira Kostova meet all the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB), the Regulations for the implementation of the LDASRB and the relevant Rules of Paisii Hilendarski University.

The candidate in the competition has presented a significant number of scientific papers published after the defense of PhD. In the works of the candidate there are original scientific and applied contributions, which have received international recognition as a representative part of them are published in journals and scientific journals published by international academic publishers. His theoretical works have practical applicability, and some of them are directly oriented to her teaching work. The scientific and teaching qualification of Dr. Zlatomira Kostova is undoubted.

The results achieved by Dr. Zlatomira Kostova in teaching and research fully comply with the minimum national requirements. The analysis of the scientific, research and teaching activities, the scientometric data of the publications, as well as the personal characteristics of Dr. Kostova make her an undisputed candidate for the position of "Associate Professor".

The presented scientific works of Dr. Zlatomira Kostova are on current and important topics in the field of Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy. Dr. Kostova's scientific work is characterized

by creativity, both in terms of the choice of topics and in terms of evaluation and interpretation of the observed and studied constructs. In-depth analyzes presuppose a very broad general and professional culture and the ability to use knowledge from different scientific fields. Her high language culture makes her work readable and interesting, perfectly conveyed as a message to various professional communities and users.

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 Dr. Zlatomira Kostova to the academic position "Associate Professor" at the University of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski" in: field of higher education Social, economic, legal sciences, professional field .3.2. Psychology-Clinical psychology.

March 14, 2022

Reviewer:

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