

REVIEW

by **prof. Velislava Atanasova Chavdarova, PhD**

University of Veliko Tarnovo "St. Cyril and St. Methodius"

on the materials presented for participation in the competition

for the academic position of "**professor**"

at Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski"

in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic, and legal sciences professional direction
3.2. "Psychology" (**Pedagogical and developmental psychology - Child psychology**)

The candidate **Associate Professor Kirilka Simeonova Tagareva, PhD** from PU "Paisii Hilendarski" participates in the competition for "professor", announced in the State Newspaper, issue 92 of 18.11.2022 and on the website of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" for the needs of the "Psychology" department at the Pedagogical Faculty.

1. Overall presentation of the received materials

The candidate correctly submitted all necessary documents for participation in the competition, including a complete list of publications with annotations and separation protocols, a list of citations, documents certifying scientific and research achievements, a report on contributions, etc.

I state that all criteria and formal requirements for conducting this competition have been met, including the submitted sufficient documentation and scientific publication texts that exceed the bibliometric requirements for this position.

By Order No. RD-21-69 of January 18, 2023, from the Rector of the Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" (PU), I am designated as a member of the scientific jury of the competition for the academic position of "**professor**" **at PU** in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic, and legal sciences, professional direction 3.2. Psychology / Pedagogical and age psychology - Child psychology /, **announced for the needs of the "Psychology" department, Pedagogical faculty.**

For participation in the announced competition, Associate Professor Kirilka Simeonova Tagareva, PhD from PU "Paisii Hilendarski", Plovdiv, submitted documents.

The materials submitted by Associate Professor Kirilka Tagareva, PhD on a paper carrier comply with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of PU, and include the following documents: a request to the Rector; autobiography, a list of publications with full text, including separating protocols; bibliometric report, abstracts of works in Bulgarian and English; self-evaluation of contributions in Bulgarian and English; list of citations; documents confirming educational and research activities, including work with doctoral and diploma students, participation in projects, etc.

Associate Professor Tagareva, PhD has submitted a total of 48 scientific works for review under the procedure, including 1 monograph, 3 studies, 42 articles, 1 chapter of a collective monograph in co-authorship, and 1 instructional manual. The distribution of scientific works in the country and abroad is as follows: 39 in the country and 9 abroad.

I can confidently state that the quantity and quality of full-text scientific works submitted for review demonstrate a high level of expertise and professional erudition and consistently exceed the requirements for the academic position of "professor".

2. Brief biographical information (of the candidate)

The professional and creative path of Associate Professor Kirilka Tagareva, PhD is marked by consistency and perseverance. After obtaining a master's degree in education, she was a regular PhD candidate in Pedagogical and Age Psychology at the Psychological Institute of the Russian Academy of Education. She successfully defended her PhD thesis on the topic: "Psychological Analysis of the Subject-Manipulative Activity of Children in Infancy".

The problematics oriented towards the infant age and early childhood becomes one of the main focuses in the candidate's scientific activity. After joining PU "Paisii Hilendarski", Associate Professor Kirilka Simeonova Tagareva, PhD holds the academic positions of "head assistant" and "assistant professor" in pedagogical and age psychology. Since 2018 she has and continues to dedicatedly lead the "Psychology" department at the Pedagogical Faculty.

3. General Characteristics of the Candidate's Activity

The teaching activity of Assistant Professor Kirilka Tagareva, PhD is characterised by creativity, precision, professionalism, and correctness. She is described by her students as "inspiring", "demanding" and "competent". Regarded by her students as an "inspirational" figure, she not only excels at teaching with her pedagogical mastery, but professionally facilitates the lectures and seminar classes she leads with useful educational materials.

Her scientific activity is also connected with the supervision of several doctoral students and tens of diploma students.

Evaluation of the candidate's scientific and applied scientific activity

In the competition for the position of Professor, **Associate Professor Kirilka Tagareva, PhD** participates with scientific works, including 1 monograph, 3 studies, 42 articles, 1 chapter from a collective monograph as a co-author, and 1 educational aid. The series of articles and reports have been published in prestigious Bulgarian and international editions. The list of publications not presented for review testifies to a rich publication activity, primarily in the field of educational and developmental psychology.

In the monograph "**Communication, attachment, and parent-child relationship in childhood**", Kirilka Tagareva presents a simultaneous analytical and empirically verified analysis of childhood in the context of trends in modern society, while posing questions and giving argumentative answers. The author's subjective practical experience is objectively analysed through a precise, comprehensive, and systematic analysis of key concepts in psychological theory. Kirilka Tagareva has put her scientific research efforts in the broad discussion field of contemporary psychology, focusing on some of the most relevant issues related to developmental psychology. Reading the theoretical part of the monographic work provides a basis for evaluating the author's excellent analytical preparation.

The system in presentation leaves the impression of skills in composing knowledge and presenting it correctly. In the monograph, several semantic accents can be distinguished. Firstly, a comprehensive analytical-interpretive overview of traditional and modern theoretical concepts for communication with the elderly is made. The critical analysis is relevant to the weight of habituation work, simultaneously posing questions, seeking answers, and giving solutions. Another semantic and conceptual accent is placed on communication with peers, communication, and attachment, reasonably considered as basic variables in the empirical studies carried out.

The analytical-interpretive research perspective proposed by Tagareva presents emotional attachment as the first affective-personal connection between the child and the mother, arising in the process of situational-personal communication. The conditions for the transformation of various forms of communication and their reflection on the attachment process have been analysed. Precisely formulated goals, tasks, and hypotheses of the empirical studies presented in the monograph are interdependent. They presuppose an existential-phenomenological and practical-applied approach that has been successfully implemented. The author convincingly argues that based on situational-personal communication with the elderly, affective-personal relationships are built between the elderly and the child, based on situational-business communication - practical relationships, and based on situational-extracurricular communication - informative-knowledge relationships. The ideas about maternal relations to children from birth to one-year-old age are generalised.

The author has the ability to summarise and interpret empirical data. She manages to go beyond quantitative data and reach the depth and essence of the phenomena studied. The precision of the text reflects the excellent psychological literacy and competence of Kirilka Tagareva. The author has done the utmost to outline the complex picture of communication and attachment in childhood, to explain, study and analyse key concepts, to outline the problems, and convincingly reveal the role and mobilization of communication resources.

The tabular and graphical representation of the results correspond with the text of the analysis, which is appropriate for better understanding by the reader. *I believe that the habituation study is a convincing verification of Kirilka Tagareva's emotionally charged viewpoint on children and can be used as a timely and necessary source of objective information and a tool for psychological work with children and their families.*

The educational manual "*Child Development Psychology. Diagnostics*" is another work by Associate Professor Kirilka Tagareva, PhD, which I consider to be a valuable practical tool with two main objectives: to confirm and clarify already learned material on child development psychology and to offer students in Psychology and Pedagogy methods and ways of diagnosing children. At the end of each chapter, questions and tasks are set. Their solution requires in-depth understanding and awareness of the knowledge from the lecture course, the ability to transfer and flexible application of theoretical positions. Thus, students have the opportunity to apply the knowledge acquired during lectures and exercises to practical work and form a basic diagnostic experience with children. *The author*

successfully provides content that is both useful as a tool and simultaneously fills the need for expert and accessible reading that analyzes the process of upbringing and early diagnosis of children in Bulgaria.

Among the most valuable elements in the scientific work of Associate Professor Kirilka Tagareva, PhD, represented in the series of studies, articles and reports, are her inclination and ability for theoretical research; the analysis and generalization of various ideational directions and methodological approaches in developmental psychology; the combining of empirical data and theoretical constructions in a comprehensive picture of the studied processes; a systematic description of the manifestations of the psyche in development, as well as an interest in significant current problems of social practice. *Associate Professor Tagareva, PhD is not afraid to tackle the big themes of psychological science such as motivation, mental well-being, attachment, communication, and many others, providing her own original contribution to their conceptualization, and not adhering to established assumptions and problematizing popular understandings. The broad perspective, reflection on the relevance of current issues and the transformation of existing knowledge into a comprehensive understanding of the studied phenomena make her work an original and creative contribution.*

In the attachments to the documentation, the list of all publications, including those outside the scope of this competition, the candidate has presented a complete bibliographic description of her overall publishing activity of a total of 62 scientific works: 1 monograph, 55 articles, 3 studies, 1 chapter from a collective monograph in co-authorship, 1 textbook in co-authorship and 1 educational aid with articles and reports included in Bulgarian and international scientific publications. The issues addressed in them are adequate to the profile of the announced competition and clearly correspond to the field of developmental psychology in relation to the discussed issues of working with children.

The unambiguous conclusion regarding Kirilka Tagareva's scientific output is that it stands out with depth, research precision, creative approach, and undeniable practical applicability.

Contributions (scientific, scientific applied, applied) and citations

I cannot help but express my respect for the ability of Associate Professor Tagareva, PhD to synthesise scientific knowledge in a correct operationalization and heuristic erudition

in the construction of her original research models, and on the other hand, to skilfully verify her theoretical discoveries through a series of studies.

I fully accept the contributions outlined, which I comment as follows:

In relation to the expert scientific analysis of the problems related to communication with the elderly:

1. A systematic investigation of contemporary psychology's solutions regarding the main approaches to communication has been carried out. An original model of the forms of communication (situational-personal; situational-business; non-situational-cognitive; non-situational-personal) for Bulgarian culture has been presented, tested, and verified - applicable and applied in Bulgaria.
2. An impressive, detailed synthesis of the theoretical approaches to communication and their practices in Europe and worldwide has been made.
3. Different age periods, a series of psychological constructs, their specific characteristics, and interactions have been creatively produced, based on which models, applicable in practice, have been described, commented on in a dynamic aspect and in an individual perspective.
4. A comprehensive psychodiagnostics toolkit for examining a child in early age with an emphasis on practical potential has been developed.

In relation to the expert scientific analysis of the problems related to communication of the child with peers.

1. The emotional-practical interaction in children up to two years of age and the main forms of communication with peers from two to seven years of age have been comprehensively and convincingly operationalised.
2. The design of the empirical studies has been creatively constructed with a high degree of applicability and implementation on one hand, and completeness and depth on the other.
3. The proven psychometric characteristics have been adapted to Bulgarian conditions, instruments for measuring children's relationships in pre-school age, consisting of a complex of 12 joint games that can be used by psychologists and teachers in nurseries to build good peer relationships.

4. New empirical evidence has been provided for the conditions under which communication with peers in childhood occurs through the gradual establishment of the need for communication and the revealing of the subject qualities of the partner.

In relation to parent-child relationships, attachment, child personality development, the role of the family and the role of institutions in raising and nurturing children:

1. The main concepts have been accurately, correctly, comprehensively, and analytically presented and commented.
2. The role of positive approach in psychology and the role of mental well-being as a predictor of mental health have been convincingly proven.
3. A reliable methodology for conducting research procedures and testing assumptions has been precisely selected.
4. The quantity and quality of the analysis is impressive, structured according to the sequence of the studied variables.
5. The conclusions and generalisations have been clearly formulated with high practical value.
6. The formulated recommendations have successfully verified both the results of the theoretical-practical research and the author's rich professional experience.

4. Assessment of the candidate's personal contribution

It is impossible not to express the position that Associate Professor Kirilka Tagareva, PhD is able to successfully achieve her research goals, shows excellent knowledge of the subject, personal and professional commitment to it, as well as impressive research abilities. I believe she will continue to realise her future ideas that were generated during the writing of her scientific works.

The presented scientific works are original scientific developments. The deposited documentation, including the noted citations, are adequate and meet all criteria according to the procedure for conducting the present competition. The information from Kirilka Tagareva's autobiography witnesses a step-by-step and deserving journey towards professional realization in the field of psychology.

5. Critical remarks and recommendations

I recommend that Associate Professor Kirilka Tagareva, PhD continues to develop her scientific research potential and publish in international editions included in the world databases.

6. Personal Impressions

It is more than obvious that Associate Professor Tagareva, PhD demonstrates a sustained interest primarily in the current and open to solutions problems in pedagogical and age psychology generated by work with children and psycho-social support and assistance to families. I state that the entire scientific production provided for review constitutes an adequate theoretical basis for the professional expressions and practical activities of Associate Professor Kirilka Tagareva, PhD. I believe that to a significant extent, she meets one of the most important criteria for contemporary quality teaching, namely, the achieved unity between theoretical constructs and empirical facts. I consider this achievement to be a significant contribution to her scientific-research and teaching implementation to date.

CONCLUSION

The documents and materials submitted by Kirilka Tagareva **meet all the requirements** of the Law on Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDSASRB), the Regulation for the Implementation of LDSASRB, and the relevant Regulation of PU "Paisii Hilendarski".

The candidate in the competition has submitted a **significant** number of scientific works published after the materials used for the academic position of "Associate Professor." In the scientific works of Associate Professor Kirilka Tagareva, PhD there are original scientific and applied contributions that have received international recognition.

Her theoretical developments have practical applicability, with some of them directly aimed at teaching. The scientific and teaching qualifications of Associate Professor Kirilka Tagareva, PhD are **undisputed**.

The results achieved by Associate Professor Kirilka Tagareva, PhD in both academic and research activities **fully comply** with the minimum national and additional requirements of the Faculty of Education, in accordance with the regulations of PU for the application of ZRASRB.

After examining the materials presented in the competition and the scientific papers and analyzing their significance and the scientific, scientific-applied, and applied contributions they contain, I find it fundamental to express my **positive** evaluation and **recommend** to the Scientific Jury to prepare a report-proposal to the Faculty Council of the Pedagogical Faculty for the appointment of **Associate Professor Kirilka Simeonova Tagareva, PhD** to the academic position of "professor" at PU "Paisii Hilendarski" in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal, professional direction 3.2. Psychology (Pedagogical and age psychology - Child psychology).

20.02.2023

.....

Reviewer:

(signature)

Prof. Velislava Chavdarova, PhD