

REVIEW

by Associate Professor Irena Ivanova Levkova, PhD

lecturer at Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski"

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 the Department of Psychology at 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

By order № P-21-69 from 18.01.2023 by the Rector of Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski", I was appointed a member of the scientific jury in the competition for conferral of the academic title "professor" in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic, and legal sciences, professional field 3.2. Psychology (Pedagogical and developmental psychology – Child psychology), announced for the needs of the Department of Psychology at the Faculty of Pedagogy at Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski".

Documents for participation in the announced competition were submitted by a single candidate: Associate Professor Kirilka Simeonova Tagareva, PhD from the Department of Psychology at the Faculty of Pedagogy at Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski".

The bundle of materials submitted by Associate Professor Kirilka Tagareva, PhD both in a digital and paper copy comply with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of PU.

The candidate Associate Professor Tagareva, PhD has submitted a total of 62 scientific papers, 48 of which to be reviewed as part of the competition process, including 1 monograph, 1 chapter of a collective monograph in co-ownership, 3 studies, 42 articles and 1 textbook.

The distribution of scientific works in Bulgaria and abroad is as follows: 39 in Bulgaria and 9 abroad.

The protocols for 9 collective publications were also submitted.

The candidate presents the following as well: Information on compliance with both the minimal national and additional facultative regulations and requirements, annotations of scientific papers – both in Bulgarian and English; self- evaluation of contributions – in Bulgarian and in English; papers, verifying teaching and research work experience, including supervision of PhD and Master's degree candidates, project participations and others.

Papers on compliance with the additional requirements of the Faculty of Pedagogy at Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" were also submitted.

The papers and materials presented by Associate Professor Kirilka Tagareva, PhD comply with all of the requirements of Development of academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (DASRBA), The Implementing Regulations of DASRBA and the relevant Regulations of PU "Paisii Hilendarski".

Judging by the presented information, it is to be stated that the candidate does fully fulfil the quantitative requirements in all types of forms. It is noteworthy that their total amount of points is three times higher than the required sum, set by both the national requirements and those of the faculty.

2. Brief biographical information (of the candidate)

Associate Professor Kirilka Tagareva, PhD was born on 18th December 1962. Throughout the time period between 1980 and 1984 the candidate obtained their Master's degree in Pedagogy from The Southwestern University "Neofit Rilski" in Blagoevgrad.

From 1989 until 1993 Kirilka Tagareva was a regular PhD candidate in Pedagogical and Developmental Psychology and the Psychology Institute of the Russian Academy of Education, Moscow. She did her studies at the laboratory for child psychology of the same institute, at Maya Lisina's science school. She successfully acquired her PhD by defending her thesis "Psychological Analysis of the Subject-Manipulative Activity of Children in Infancy", supervised by Sofiya Meshcheryakova.

In 1993 she acquired the scientific degree "Doctor of Psychology" in the scientific field 05.06.05 Pedagogical and Developmental psychology.

The academic career of Associate Professor Tagareva, PhD began at the Shumen University "Bishop Konstantin of Preslav", where she was a teaching assistant throughout the period from 1985 until 1989.

Between 1996 and 2006 she occupied the position of Head Assistant Professor at the College of Pedagogy of PU "Paisii Hilendarski" in Pazardzhik. Since then, She went through the relevant assistant professor levels successively, and in 2010, after a scientific competition, she was habilitated and received the academic position "Associate Professor". In 2018 she was elected Head of the Department of Psychology which she presently heads.

3. General Characteristics of the Candidate's Activity

The applicant's lecturing activity is first and foremost focused on scientific subjects outlining the main ideas and patterns in child development, as well as courses discussing the specificities of development and the related theories – mainly attachment theory, personality development, communication and other. All courses taught by the candidate comply with the profile requirements in the competition.

In her teaching activity, Associate Professor Tagareva, PhD proves her abilities to present the learning material, on one hand, in a clear and easy to understand manner, in accordance with the students' previous knowledge, and on the other hand, at an exceptional level. All ideas, standpoints and facts presented by her are always in compliance with the latest trends and research accomplishments of the field. In her teaching practice she also manages to successfully incorporate her personal experience and scientific research. In the communication with her students, she is always open, tolerant, comforting and at the same time focused on helping them achieve the highest possible academic results.

Associate Professor Tagareva, PhD created and published a textbook in collaboration, as well as a teaching aid. The information presented in them is scientifically accurate and properly adjusted for the teaching purposes.

Associate Professor Tagareva, PhD supervised 5 PhD students who successfully defended their theses and now continue to develop both their teaching and research abilities. Two of Associate Professor Tagareva, PhD students have acquired teaching positions at higher education institutions: Bilyana Ginina currently works as an assistant professor at the Plovdiv University (a copy of her contract has been submitted in the bundle of documents; all personal information has been removed). Irina Emelyanova teaches at the Moscow State Psycho-pedagogical University (information also submitted).

Following publications have been submitted for review: 62 scientific papers in total, of which one 1 monograph, 55 articles, 3 studies, 1 chapter of collective monograph in co-authorship, 1 textbook in co-authorship, 1 teaching aid, articles and reports included in Bulgarian and international scientific publications. All scientific problems discussed do comply with the profile requirements and outline the author's determination in her scientific and research activity focused on child development.

The articles and reports presented for review have been included in prestigious Bulgarian and international publications.

The list of publications which have not been submitted for review, mainly in the field of pedagogical and age psychology perfectly show the candidate's outstanding research and teaching abilities.

In the habilitation work of Associate Professor Tagareva, PhD titled "Communication, attachment, and parent-child relationship in childhood" contains her personal research, conducted in the basis of L. Vygotsky's culturally historical theory, A. Leontiev's activity theory, D. Elkonin's periodisation of mental development and M Lisina's concept of communication. The theoretical basis of the research chosen by the author corresponds to the historical traditions in studying the problematics but also gives the opportunity to adopt a modern approach. Assoc. prof. Tagareva successfully connects her current research interests to her fundamental knowledge base and the school which created it.

The monograph presents a clear synthesis of theories and ideas of both Russian and English scientists working in the field of child development and discusses J. Bowlby's and M. Ainsworth's views on attachment.

Four basic topics have been analysed – communication with adults, peer communication, attachment and parental attitude. Each topic has been discussed in a chapter of its own. The theory has been enriched by including personal empiric research in peer communication in adolescence, as well as the author's diagnostics of communication with adults and speech development patterns at 5-6 years of age, diagnostics of peer communication of children between the ages of 2 and 4, adapting the research method in studying parental attitudes. All represent a significant contribution to the research and diagnostics practices.

Associate Professor Tagareva, PhD also submitted two publications in co-authorship referred to and indexed in world-known scientific data bases – Tihomirova, T. N., **Tagareva, K. S.**, Kuzmina, Y. V. and Malyh, S.B. (2022); adaptation of the Russian version of the questionnaire "Study interest

and academic self-evaluation” in the "Siberian psychological journal" and **Tagareva, K.**, Gereva, M. (2022). Creative motivation and thriving: individual psychological aspects in the "Philosophy" journal. Results from the adaptation of the Russian version of the questionnaire “Study interest and academic self-evaluation” have been presented in the first one, focused on measuring two aspects of the student’s motivational field: willingness to study a certain subject and self-evaluation of personal achievements. Differences in study motivation of certain subjects depending on age throughout the school period have also been analysed.

The second publication has been devoted to creative motivation, discussed in the context of personality structure, and thriving as indicator for positive development. World-renowned research methodologies have been used: Meyers and Briggs’s Psychological type indicators, Paul Thoran’s Creative motivation scale and Ed Diener’s Thriving scale.

The submitted publications perfectly outline the candidate’s successful development by including contemporary topics into her basic research field.

The theoretical publications submitted cover these fields of scientific knowledge:

Infancy development – Certain topics have been discussed, related to the models for understanding developmental patterns based on activity approach towards communication; basic views in M. Lisina’s concept on the genesis of child communication.

Attachment and parental attitude is another field in which Associate Professor Tagareva, PhD is strongly interested. She has analysed the evaluation models for parental attitude; initial communication abilities in infancy; emotional attachment between child and adult in the context of the modern educational field; the mother’s attitude towards her child from birth until age 3. Two types of maternal attitude have been discussed: as a subject and as an object.

The types of emotional attachment and the child-caregiver connection were also described. The diagnosis and clinical assessment of attachment disorders is a current issue that attracts the applicant’s attention. The leading approaches and methods for diagnosing emotional attachment are reviewed. They are presented descriptively, within several classifications proposed by leading specialists in the field of emotional attachment.

The prevention of mental health of children from early childhood in Bulgaria. The topics discussed here are the communicative and mental well-being of children from specialised institutions and early intervention. Early intervention is a rapidly growing field of interdisciplinary care for infants and young children who are at social, medical, and genetic risk for developmental delay. Two

models of early intervention in child development are described: traditional and social. Emphasis is placed on the Early Childhood Intervention program as a type of the second model.

Studying the characteristics of adolescents. A comprehensive review of ideas, practices, and theories about character strengths in children and adolescents in three eras - ancient, classical and modern - has been made. The relationship between adolescent character strengths and other psychological constructs: well-being, moral competence, subjective happiness, and prosocial behaviour is described.

The topics and problems developed by Associate Professor Tagareva, PhD in the field of theoretical knowledge are not self-serving. They are closely related to the realisation of her research interests. The numerous publications of a research-applied nature are focused on several research directions:

Study of the peculiarities of development in childhood. Suggested for review are articles that reflect the results of a study of situational business communication with adults on the communicative development of children up to the age of three; of the peculiarities of attachment relationships in children from an early age; diagnosis of communication and play in children at an early age (from birth to three years of age) with suspected autism; the play activity of children at an early age; study of situational-personal communication with adults in hospital settings in infants. An adaptation of a Russian diagnostic toolkit for evaluating game development is presented, which is an alternative to game diagnostics traditionally known in our country. The interpersonal relations of preschool children were studied; the relationship between the development of children's moral and ethical ideas, manifested in the attitude to lying and the style of family education; the level of self-evaluation of eight-nine-year-old children with communication disorders in three specific areas of communication: family, school, friends.

The topic of *children deprived of parental care* appeals strongly to the candidate's research goals. An empirical study is presented, the purpose of which is to study the role of communication in the development of infants deprived of parental care; specific features in the development of communication and speech of two-three-year-old children raised in medical and social care homes were investigated. Empirically studied were the peculiarities of the psychological development of eight-nine-year-old children who live and are raised in social homes.

Research on topics related to *teaching staff who provide childcare*. The development of the above-mentioned research topics quite naturally leads Associate Professor Tagareva, PhD to the need and conduct of an empirical study of the motivation for work of teachers in kindergartens and the relations between the principal and employees, as well as a study of professional burnout among

children's teachers from Bulgaria and of their preferred coping strategies. The conducted empirical study of professional burnout among those working in the educational and social spheres is also situated in the same field.

Parental attitude. A test has been created for the diagnosis of the parental attitude according to the personal/normative beginning in the parental position for children up to 1 year; the empirical evaluation of the attitude of mothers towards children at an early age was carried out; the relationship between parent gender and attachment was explored; the parental attitude was studied as an important condition for the emotional well-being of three-four-year-old children; a study of psychological readiness for motherhood.

Adolescence studies. The results of an empirical study are presented, the purpose of which is to study the perception of the quality of attachment of teenagers aged 15 - 16 years in relation to their parents and friends; from an empirical study of the mental well-being of 18-19-year-old boys and girls.

The *age after adolescence* has not been ignored either. The attitude of students towards the use of new technologies in education and the attitudes of students towards the development of key competences in children through the means of information technologies were investigated.

The numerous empirical studies in the outlined areas are characterised by precision, availability of sufficient empirical evidence, use of modern statistical methods for data processing and adequate conclusions. A large part of them has serious practical application possibilities for diagnosis and can be used in the work of psychologists in their practice and by researchers.

Contributions (scientific, scientifically applicable, applicable) and citations

In the evidentiary material presented by the candidate, a self-assessment of contributions was made, which I fully accept. The contributions of Associate Professor Tagareva, PhD, to the scientific research fund of age psychology significantly enrich the knowledge of childhood and related issues. The created author's methods and the adapted ones are in a form that is fully applicable in practice and enable the deployment and verification of research hypotheses and the realisation of diagnostic and research work "in the field" by psychologists facing certain problems in their practice as such. They are especially valuable given the ever-increasing need to create and adapt research and diagnostic tools.

The significance of the results of the theoretical and research work of Associate Professor Tagareva, PhD is recognised not only at national, but also at international level, which can be seen from her works published abroad and from the presented citations. The citations presented are a total

of 98. Among them: citations in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information - 4 issues; citations in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review - 37 items; Citations or reviews in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals – 57 items.

The quantitative indicators of the criteria for occupying the academic position "professor" have been fully met.

4. Assessment of the candidate's personal contribution

The presented scientific papers are original scientific works. The predominant part of the conducted research was carried out independently, and those in which work was done in collaboration show teamwork skills, and in them the leadership function that Associate Professor Tagareva, PhD carried out both in planning and conducting the research and summarising its results.

The deposited documentation, including the noted citations, are in order and meet all the criteria in terms of the procedure for conducting the current competition.

5. Critical remarks and recommendations

I sincerely advice Associate Professor Tagareva, PhD to continue the development of her scientific and research potential and to keep publishing her works in international papers.

6. Personal impressions

As a person and a colleague, Associate Professor Tagareva, PhD is characterised by a calm and controlled character, collegiality, openness to her colleagues, patience, responsibility, striving for justice and skilful communication, especially in her capacity as the head of the Department of Psychology. She is someone you can count on to work with.

CONCLUSION

The materials and the research work, submitted by Associate Professor Kirilka Simeonova Tagareva, PhD, **meet all the requirements** of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (DASRBA), the Regulations on the implementation of the DASRBA, the relevant Regulations of the Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski" and the Additional faculty requirements of the Faculty of Pedagogy of PU, accepted at the faculty council with protocol №13/06.07.2021.

The applicant **has** submitted a **sufficient** number of scientific works published after the materials used in the defence of her doctoral dissertation and the competition for "associate professor".

The applicant's works contain original scientific and applied contributions that have received international recognition, a representative part of which has been published in journals and scientific collections issued by international academic publishing houses. Her theoretical developments have practical applicability, and some of them are directly oriented to academic work. The scientific and teaching qualifications of Associate Professor Kirilka Tagareva, PhD are unquestionable.

The results achieved by Associate Professor Kirilka Tagareva, PhD in the educational and research activities **fully correspond** to the minimum national and additional requirements of the Faculty of Pedagogy, adopted in connection with the Regulations of the PU for the application of DASRBA.

After a thorough acquaintance with the materials presented in the competition, and the analysis of their significance and the contained scientific, applied-scientific and applied practical contributions, I justifiably give my **positive assessment**. I recommend to the members of the Honourable Scientific Jury of Plovdiv University to prepare a report-proposal to the faculty council at the Faculty of Pedagogy of PU, for the purposes of the Department of Psychology of Plovdiv University, to confer the academic title "Professor" in the professional field of higher education 3. Social, economic, and legal sciences, professional field 3.2. Psychology (Pedagogical and Age Psychology - Child Psychology) to Associate Professor Kirilka Simeonova Tagareva, PhD.

01.03.2023

Reviewer:

(signature)

Associate Professor Irena Levkova, PhD