

OPINION

by assoc. prof. Daniela Hristova Tasevska, PhD,

University of Veliko Turnovo St Cyril and St. Methodius

of the materials submitted for participation in the competition

to occupy the academic position "professor"

at University of Plovdiv Paisii Hilendarski

by: field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences

professional direction 3.2. Psychology (Social Psychology)

The competition for "professor", announced in National Journal No. 96 of November 17, 2023 and on the website University of Plovdiv Paisii Hilendarski is for the needs of the Department of Psychology at the Faculty of Education, the candidate is Assoc. prof. Youri Pavlov Ianakiev, PhD, from the University of Plovdiv Paisii Hilendarski.

1. General presentation of the received materials

The scientific production submitted for evaluation presents the research and teaching work of assoc. prof. Youri Ianakiev, PhD, in the period 2015 - 2024, for the time after occupying the academic position of "associate professor". The candidate has completed all the necessary documents for participation in the competition by submitting:

- *a complete list of publications with annotations and separation protocols;*
- *documentation and texts of scientific publications;*
- *list of citations;*
- *documents certifying his research achievements;*
- *statement of contributions.*

By order No. RD-21-72 dated 16/01/24 of the Rector of University of Plovdiv Paisii Hilendarski, I am included as a member of the scientific jury of a competition for the academic position of "professor" in the University of Plovdiv in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional direction 3.2. Psychology (Social Psychology), announced for the needs of the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Education.

According to the procedure, all the criteria and formal requirements for the competition have been met. The scientometric report on compliance with the minimum requirements for the 6 groups of indicators for the candidate's participation in the announced competition exceeds the guidelines for this academic position limit of 660 points and equals 1660 points.

In terms of volume, the scientific output of assoc. prof Ianakiev, amounts to 31 scientific works, corresponding to the profile of the competition. Scientific publications such as monographs, textbooks, aids, articles and reports from participation in national and international scientific conferences are present in the Reference for noticed citations. It testifies to the recognizability of the candidate in the research field of socio-psychological knowledge. The quantity and quality of the full-text scientific works submitted for review reveals an enviable level of expertise and professional erudition on the part of assoc. prof. Ianakiev.

The information from the working activities identifies the wide range of activities in scientific and applied forums and is a testimony to the professional potential and aspiration to upgrade skills in various areas of psychological theory and practice.

2. Brief biographical data

Assoc. prof. Ianakiev scientific interests are mainly in four subject areas of psychological science, namely social, medical, educational and developmental psychology. They fully cover the research and professional activities of assoc. prof. Youri Ianakiev, PhD, and correspond to the thematic focus direction of the announced competition.

Assoc. prof. Youri Ianakiev, PhD, holds a master's degree from the University of Pau and the Adour region - Academie Bordeaux, France. At the same university, he defended and defended his dissertation and obtained a doctorate in psychology. At the beginning of his professional career, he worked as a court expert at the Ministry of Justice and was a part-time teacher at the University of Plovdiv and New Bulgarian University. Since 2009, he has been a full-time university teacher at the University of Plovdiv, and in 2015 he acquired the academic position of "associated professor" in social psychology.

Associate professor Ianakiev teaches subjects in bachelor's and master's programs. He holds lecture courses in the bachelor's program: Social Psychology Part I and Part II, Psycholinguistics, Stress and coping strategies. In the master's programs, he teaches Social Knowledge and Behavior, Stress and Mental Health, Motivation and Behavior, Psychology of Optimal Experience, etc.

The candidate for professor is a member of international and national organizations and associations such as the American Psychological Association, the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria, the Society of Psychologists in Bulgaria (UIC: BG RP 100957), in which he is the secretary of section "Social, Political and Ethnopsychology". He is a member of: Management Board of the Public Council for Culture and Cultural Heritage; The Scientific Committee of the Rhine and Danube University Publishing House, etc.

Performs the following administrative functions:

- *Head of the Department "Psychology and Education" at the DKPRPS (from 2021);*
- *Director of the Laboratory of Experimental Psychology and Neurosciences (from 2022);*
- *Director of the University Center for Volunteers (since 2011);*
- *Head of master's programs "Management Psychology" and "School Psychology" (since 2019), deputy dean (2015-2019);*
- *Scientific secretary (2012-2015) and faculty coordinator under the Erasmus+ program (2011-2019) of the Faculty of Education;*
- *Editor-in-Chief of the journal Developmental Psychology (since 2020), etc.*

The procedure documentation contains information on numerous participations of the candidate in national and international conferences, scientific forums, seminars and trainings. He carried out academic mobility under the Erasmus program in a number of foreign universities and worked on various research projects in the field of higher education.

3. General characteristics of the applicant's activity

As a teacher, Associate professor Youri Ianakiev ensures the conduct of lectures and seminars, which he leads with useful teaching aids. His scientific research activity includes supervision of doctoral students and graduate students.

Evaluation of the candidate's scientific and scientific-applied activity

Associate Professor Yanakiev participated in the competition for professorship with:

- *1 monograph;*
- *1 published book based on a protected dissertation work for awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor";*
- *2 studies;*
- *22 articles;*
- *2 university textbooks;*
- *3 handbooks.*

Four of the scientific works were published abroad, and twenty-seven in Bulgaria.

In this aspect, I determine that the scientific production proposed for review is a relevant theoretical basis of the public, administrative and practical-applied activities in the candidate's previous professional realization. The bibliographic data are fully described in the scientometric reference for the procedure are completed with original copies of the indicated monographs and aids and with copies of the studies, articles and reports published in the indicated sources.

In addition to these, the list of publications includes scientific titles outside the competitive procedure, but they are reliable information about his deep professional interest in the problem areas of social psychology.

The comprehensive review of assoc. prof. Ianakiev's scientific output allows the identification of six priority semantic areas, as follows:

1. Development and implementation of cross-cultural studies related to stress, burnout and resilience among educational specialists and specialists from the helping professions. Algorithms for dealing with chronic stress are generated based on empirical studies with risk groups.

2. Operational definition and testing of effective strategies for dealing with workplace stressors and prevention of burnout syndrome to strengthen the mental health and well-being of professionals from the field of helping professions. Scientific substantiation of psychological practices with a set of interventions to build competences for stress management on the part of educational staff.

3. Identification and analysis of bio- and neurofeedback methods and methods of non-invasive brain stimulation for unfolding the potential of neurotechnologies as tools for personal development and stimulation of creativity in people with disabilities.

4. Expanding the theory and enriching the practices related to psychological resilience through traditional and innovative methods in terms of clarifying their essence, specificity and determination.

5. In-depth clarification and problematization of the modern functionality of the ethical constructs "hope", "attachment", "communication", "creativity", as phenomena of individual and community identity.

6. Systematization of psychological knowledge and bringing out discourses significant for biographical theory from the work of Umberto Eco, Salvador Dali, Rembrandt, clarifying the correlation between their creative orientation, personal development, maturation and aging.

The scientific and applied contributions of the candidate highlighted so far allow me to move on to a specific analysis of the works under the competition procedure.

The habilitation monographic work "Diagnosis of burnout syndrome among educational specialists. Strategies for coping with chronic stress in the workplace. Plovdiv: "Paisii Hilendarski" University Publishing House, 193 pages. ISBN 978-619-202-836-7 is based on applications by assoc. prof. Ianakiev, a systematic approach for diagnosis, prevention and management of the psychosocial risks of burnout syndrome for the development of psychological resilience in pedagogical specialists. It contains a multi-faceted analysis of two long-term studies.

The first study is related to diagnosing the level of burnout syndrome among pedagogical specialists and analyzing the weight of factors: demographics, professional, family and social environment, with the aim of developing algorithms to deal with chronic stress. The survey involved 1 000 teachers of all age groups practicing in small and large towns and villages. The research methodology includes: a certified method for assessing work stress (Burnout-Q) and an author's questionnaire on the influence of the factors of the professional, family and social environment on the occurrence of burnout syndrome among pedagogical specialists.

The second study is cross-cultural, and provides a diagnosis and analysis of psychosocial risks and workplace stress among teachers from Austria, Bulgaria, Greece and Italy. The goal is to develop an algorithm for building competencies for stress management by

pedagogical specialists, based on psychological resilience and strengthening their mental health and well-being.

The overall review of the monographic work reveals the in-depth psychological competencies of Youri Ianakiev, including synthesis of knowledge and adequate interpretation of empirical data, clarifying the functionality of the studied phenomena.

The textbook *Stress and mental health: textbook for students* Plovdiv: "Paisii Hilendarski" University Publishing House. ISBN 978-619-202-630-1, and the teaching aids: (1) "Ianakiev, Y.; Nikolov, N. and others. (2022) *Resilience for teachers: building resilience to stress and burnout*. Plovdiv: Publishing House University of Plovdiv "Paisii Hilendarski" (translated into English, Bulgarian, German, Italian, Greek languages), ISBN 978-619-202-746-9; (2) *Leadership and Group Behavior: A Handbook for Students*. Plovdiv: "Paisii Hilendarski" University Publishing House. ISBN ISBN 978-619-202-837-4; (3) *Stress and Mental Health: A University Textbook*. Paisii Hilendarski University Publishing House. ISBN: ISBN 978-8 619-202-634-9, are evidence of assoc. prof. Ianakiev's skills in developing, from the perspective of social psychology, educational resources with an applied orientation, with a view to the quality of students' academic training, in the context of their practical provision with diagnostic research methods and techniques.

The teaching aids are composed interactively, i.e. working on the topics implies active feedback both during the learning process and during the students' self-training. Thus, students have the opportunity to put into practice the knowledge acquired during lectures and exercises and form an initial diagnostic experience.

The presented studies, articles and reports also deserve a high rating. In terms of their thematic focus and organization, they are another proof of assoc. prof. Ianakiev's research ingenuity for the analysis of theoretical concepts and methodological approaches, with an orientation towards applied psychology for solving difficult problems in social practice. Last but not least, the candidate's tendency to study phenomena of an interdisciplinary nature, based on his own psychological interpretation skills, makes an impression. This reveals the unique scientific-research handwriting of associate professor Ianakiev, imbued with scientific-research precision, creative approach and practical applicability.

Contributions (scientific, scientific-applied, applied) and citations

I accept the contributions formulated by assoc. prof. Ianakiev in the scientific production presented by him under the competition procedure, adding the following:

1. An original integral approach has been developed and tested for researching, understanding and reducing stress by analyzing the essence, mechanisms, factors, diagnostics, coping and building psychological resilience.

2. Based on cross-cultural studies, a systematic approach for diagnosis, prevention and management of the psychosocial risks of burnout syndrome and for the development of psychological resilience among pedagogical specialists has been applied for the first time in Bulgaria.

3. A socio-psychological phenomenology of the genesis, structure and conditions for studying the levels of burnout and self-assessment of resilience among teachers is detailed.

4. Interdisciplinary studies were conducted in the country and the region, identifying the relationship of burnout syndrome in doctors with different medical specialties, with biomarkers of stress.

5. An applied technology was developed for the study of psychosocial distress, anxiety and depression in oncological patients in the operative stage of treatment, functionally based on a distress thermometer, adapted for work in a clinical environment in our country.

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4. Evaluation of the candidate's personal contribution

The presented scientific works are original scientific developments. The deposited documentation, including the noted citations, are relevant to all criteria in terms of the procedure for conducting the current competition. Her review found that the candidate for professorship possessed a deep knowledge of social psychology and a wide range of research skills.

5. Critical remarks and recommendations

I have no remarks or recommendations for assoc. prof. Ianakiev. His professional and responsible attitude towards teaching and research activities is visible.

6. Personal impressions

The scientific production submitted for review highlights the complex psychological expertise in the current realization of assoc. prof. Youri Ianakiev, which I define as the main contribution of his research and teaching realization.

CONCLUSION

The candidate in the competition has presented a significant number of scientific works, which are distinguished by their theoretical and applied orientation. The results achieved by assoc. prof. Youri Ianakiev, 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 University of Plovdiv for the application of the law. That is why I express my positive assessment with reason and recommend to the Scientific Jury to propose to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Education assoc. prof. Youri Pavlov Ianakiev to occupy the academic position of "Professor" at University of Plovdiv "Paisiy Hilendarski" in: area of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal, professional direction 3.2. Psychology (Social Psychology).

04/03/2024

Veliko Tarnovo

Member of the Scientific Jury:

/Prof. D. Tasevska, PhD/