

OPINION

By Prof. Margarita Angelova Stefanova-Bakracheva, DSc, St. Kliment Ohridski
on the publications for participation in the competition for the academic position of Professor at
Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv
in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.2.
Psychology

Assoc. Prof. Manol Nikolov Manolov, DSc from Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv is
applicant in the competition for "professor" announced in the State Gazette 31 of 11 April 2025,
and on the website of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv for the needs of the Department of
Psychology at the Faculty of Pedagogy

1. General description of the procedure and the applicant

By order № ПД-22-1131 as of 10th June 2025 of the Rector of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury for the competition for the academic position of Professor at Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.2. Psychology, announced for the needs of the Department of Psychology at the Faculty of Pedagogy

One applicant has submitted documents to participate in the announced competition: Assoc. Prof. Manol Nikolov Manolov, DSc from the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv.

The set of materials, produced by Assoc. Prof. Manol Manolov, is in accordance with the Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff at PU and includes the following documents: Application, CV, diplomas for academic degrees and position, list of scientific publications, copy of the publications, certificate of compliance with the minimum requirements for the academic position of 'professor' and certificate of compliance with the additional requirements of the Faculty of Pedagogy of the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, declaration of originality, abstracts of the publications, submitted for the competition in Bulgarian and English, a list of selected citations and copy of the citing sources, self-assessment of scientific contributions, separation protocols for co-authored publications, a statement of teaching activity, a statement of project and expert activity.

The applicant Assoc. Prof. Manol Manolov has published a total of 29 scientific works: 9 monographs, 19 articles and 2 teaching aids. Twenty scientific publications are accepted for review, which are outside the scope of dissertations for the academic degrees of 'doctor' and 'doctor of science' and the procedure for appointment to the academic position of 'associate professor': 5 monographs, 14 articles, 1 teaching aid. Thirteen of the publications are published in Bulgaria and seven abroad. The publications are classified by type as follows: five monographs – one habilitation work, one individual monograph and three co-authored monographs; 2 co-authored articles published in scientific journals, refereed and indexed in world-renowned scientific information databases; 12 articles and reports published in non-referenced peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes, 7 independent and 5 co-authored, and 1 independent teaching aid. 10 of the publications are in Bulgarian and 10 are in English. In terms of the number of co-authors, 10 publications are own, 6 have one co-author and 4 have two co-authors. Separation protocols are presented for all co-authorships. Eleven scientific publications are not reviewed: four for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree of 'doctor', four for the acquisition of the academic position of 'associate professor' and three scientific for the acquisition of the scientific degree of 'doctor of science'.

Assoc. Prof. Manol Manolov was born in 1986. In 2011 he graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, where he completed his Master's degree in Counselling Psychology in 2012. In 2018 he completed his PhD studies at the St. St. Cyril and Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo and obtained the academic degree of Doctor in the professional field 3.2. Psychology, Social Psychology. In 2021 he completed a postgraduate course in Evolutionary and Cross-Cultural Psychology and Psychiatry at the Medical University of Plovdiv, and in 2023 he obtained the academic degree of Doctor of Science in the professional field 3.2. Psychology at the St. St. Cyril and Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo. He has completed a number of additional training courses in psychodrama, positive psychotherapy, behavioural therapy, support of adoptive parents, addiction prevention, crisis intervention, prevention of aggression and risky behaviour, child protection, and work with children and families.

From 2008 to 2011 he worked as a consultant to a legal department, from 2011 to 2014 as a counselor, from 2014 to 2017 as manager of a family-type accommodation centre for children and young people with disabilities. From 2014 to 2020 he performed administrative and organisational activities and project implementation; from 2012 to 2022 he was a social educator, and from 2017 to 2020 he also worked as a volunteer. Since 2017 he has been a court expert and prepares forensic psychological reports. From 2018 to 2019 he worked in the Municipal Commission for Combating Anti-Social Behaviour among Minors. From 2019 to 2020 he worked as a school psychologist. From 2017 to 2024, he held the positions of assistant, senior assistant and associate professor at St. St. Cyril and Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo, and from 2024 to the present, he holds the position of associate professor at the 'Paisii Hilendarski' University of Plovdiv, where he has been part-time lecturer since 2020. From 2023 to the present, he has also been participating as a scale evaluator. All this demonstrates a consistent interest in research and practical work in the field of psychology, continuous strive after improvement and development of his competences.

Assoc. Prof. Manol Manolov has submitted a report and supporting documentation to meet the minimum national requirements and additional faculty requirements. With a minimum requirement of 660 points (550 according to the Act on development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its application) and the additional 110 points according to the requirements of the Faculty of Pedagogy at Paisii Hilendarski University, Assoc. Prof. Manolov applied for the competition with 1124.1 points. According to indicator 1 of Group A, he has a doctoral degree (50 points). Under indicator 2, Group B, he has 100 points, which is not a requirement, hence demonstrating the moral integrity of Assoc. Prof. Manolov, who, prior to applying for the academic position of 'professor', defended a dissertation for the academic degree of 'doctor of science'. Under indicator 3 (Group C), a habilitation thesis has been submitted (100 points). Under indicator D (publications), there are 464.1 points, meeting the minimum requirement of 280 points. The additional requirements of having at least two publications in scientific journals, refereed and indexed in world-renowned databases, and being the author or co-author of at least one university teaching aid have also been met. For indicator D (citations) he has 250 points, with a minimum requirement of 130 points, and for indicator E (supervision of doctoral students, participation in projects) he has 160 points, with a minimum requirement of 100 points. The applicant has proven administrative and organisational experience and is registered in the NACID register. He meets the requirements for work experience and employment. All this testifies not only to the applicant's absolute competence, but also that he significantly exceeds the minimum requirements, noting his activity in all indicators and the impressive results achieved in just 5 years. The evidence presented confirms the high quality of Assoc. Prof. Manolov's work in addition to the quantitative indicators.

2. General description of the applicant's activities

Evaluation of teaching and pedagogical activities and preparation of the applicant

As of the date of the competition, Assoc. Prof. Manol Manolov has a total of 16 years of professional experience, including 8 years of teaching experience and 3 years and 6 months as an associate professor. His teaching load exceeds the norm. Over the past five years Assoc. Prof. Manolov has taught an impressive number of courses - 16 academic courses at the Bachelor's level and 18 academic courses at the Master's level, mainly in the fields of educational psychology, developmental psychology, psychology of personality, social psychology, general psychology, psychodiagnostics and psychological measurements, counselling psychology, and in particular courses in: Ethnopsychology, Psychology of Lying, Psychology of Risk, Research Methods in Psychology, Psychological Research, Psychodiagnostics, Differential Psychology, Psychology of personality, Social-psychological impact of advertising, Sports psychology, Conflict theory, Psychology of creativity, Psychology, Strategies for overcoming aggression in juvenile detention, Developmental psychology, Social and ethnic conflicts, Psychology of Social Conflicts, Dispositional Theory of Personality, Social Worlds of Personality, Political Conflicts in Decision-Making, Influence and Interaction in the Political System, Strategic Communication, Positive Cognitive Processes: Hope, Optimism, Awareness, Psychological measurement and assessment, Conflicts and coping strategies, Life script, Theories in counselling, Methods and techniques of counselling in positive psychology, Methods and techniques of counselling in organisations, Methods and techniques in counselling, Educational psychology.

Assoc. Prof. Manolov has published two teaching aids on violence prevention.

Over the past five years, Assoc. Prof. Manolov has also been impressively active as a supervisor of doctoral students and graduates, having supervised two doctoral students who successfully defended their theses and four other doctoral students who are currently in the process of preparing their theses, as well as 19 graduates who successfully defended their theses. All this testifies to the enormous potential of Assoc. Prof. Manolov as a lecturer covering a wide range of psychological disciplines and validates his qualities in working with students and as a supervisor of doctoral and master's students.

Evaluation of the candidate's scientific and applied scientific activity

The monograph 'In the Mirror of Temperament: Development and Challenges in Early Childhood' takes a central place. In it, Manol Manolov skilfully addresses one of today's priority areas: early childhood development. The author examines the complex interaction of genetic factors and the social context in a broad sense and through the prism of parenting styles and practices. He links this to triangulation, which provides a supportive environment for social and emotional development, and outlines interventions aimed at parents, teachers and children. He emphasises both stability and dynamics in temperament and outlines guidelines and profiles for selecting the most effective interaction strategies, highlighting effective and ineffective behavioural strategies and addressing the issue of ADHD. An important contribution is the standardised questionnaire, adapted for use in the Bulgarian context with children aged 3-8, and the outline of individual profiles and flexible options for adaptation and support for each child with a view to optimal development. The language of the monograph is extremely understandable, which facilitates the valuable and timely monographic work, which fills a research and practical gap, to reach teachers, specialists and families

and thus fulfil its mission. The monograph is also extremely useful for the training of students and specialists, as well as practitioners working with children and families.

In his overall research work Assoc. Prof. Manol Manolov takes an integrative and comprehensive approach to individual and environmental factors at the micro and macro levels, outlining the place of the family, parenthood and the broader global context, taking into account cultural specificities and peculiarities, and paying attention to both the stable and the adaptive and developmental moments in personality formation. This is combined with a precise research design of all studies conducted using appropriately selected methodologies adapted to achieve the set goals and objectives and a correct interpretation of the results. Critical analysis and conclusions remain within the framework of solid argumentation.

I fully accept the self-assessment of scientific contributions made by Assoc. Prof. Manol Manolov, which he divides into five areas: 1. Temperament, identity and parental influences with a validated model based on standardised instruments, a concept of the parental role and a described transgenerational mechanism and place of parenting styles and strategies with application in the diagnosis and prognosis of child development, pedagogical and counselling practice and a validated new psychometric model; 2: Attitudes and relationships and a proposed framework for understanding cynicism as a social defence mechanism and conceptualising interpersonal and social dynamics with proposed interventions and social policy; 3: Identity and self-concept. Status models, fragmented self and self-esteem with the introduction of a new concept of 'psychopathology of the dead self' and tracking of personality fragmentation with a well-founded theoretical framework for clinical diagnosis and intervention in cases of unformed identity profile; 4: Victimology and psychology of violence – attachment, prevention and interventions with a developed methodology for assessment and work with victims of domestic violence and tracking the relationship between attachment style and interpersonal victimisation with significance in psychological practice and social work; 5. Ethnic identity and social memory with a cultural-psychological explanation of the identification and cultural belonging of Bulgarians in the field of application of an interdisciplinary approach in political psychology, including ethnopsychology, linguistics and historical sociology, and an applied aspect of domestic violence prevention and intervention frameworks for working with students and teachers. It should be noted that all of Assoc. Prof. Manolov's publications are distinguished by their comprehensive research, practical and educational contribution. I would classify them into five main areas, with the note that most of them contain contributions to more than one category. This is the result of the comprehensive vision that accompanies the work of Assoc. Prof. Manolov, who is not interested in partial studies or only in current topics, but always strives to focus attention on trends and patterns that not only diagnose but also provide possible prognoses and concrete solutions for improving individual and group self-determination and well-being, as well as strategies for work. All of the studies presented are distinguished by their extremely precise research design and organisation, as well as their accurate data processing and interpretation based on evidence.

1) Contributions in the field of individual development, taking into account the joint interaction and effect of individual, environmental and socio-cultural factors, and proposing strategies to support the optimal functioning and development of personal potential and the establishment of a holistic framework for taking into account the role of individual, personal, age, social and cultural factors, the place of personal self-determination, perceptions and roles, and the relationship with social roles (publications 1, 2, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 14, 17). 2) Contributions to the field of social psychology with data on the cultural specificity of Bulgarian culture and in a comparative cross-cultural context. Author's concept in the interpretation of cultural characteristics that perform the function of coping strategies,

the place of transgenerational stereotypes and attitudes, as well as their interpretation as stable constructs in a dynamic context. Introduction of interpersonal victimisation and self-discrimination in the social attitudes of Bulgarians and cynicism as an adaptation strategy in conditions of social frustration, historical distrust and institutional inefficiency. This aspect raises the question of both personal and collective identity and offers a new framework for explanation in the field of political psychology (publications 2, 4, 9, 10, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19). 3) Prevention of violence taking into account the socio-cultural perspective, proposing mechanisms for prevention and intervention, and broadening the explanatory framework to include cultural specificities, which positions domestic violence not as an individual deviant act, but as a socio-psychological symptom and, in an applied plan, offering interventions and prevention programmes (pub. 3, 8, 20). 4). Scales created, tested and validated: A validated psychometric model and standardised instruments for monitoring early childhood development (publication 1), adaptation of the TIV scale (publication 2), a scale for interpersonal victimisation (publication 6) and the instruments used in other studies. 5) Place of educational, family and counselling work and proposed explanatory and practical frameworks with high application value (publications 1, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 19).

All this distinguishes Assoc. Prof. Manolov as a serious and competent researcher who is able to grasp the complex, sustainable and dynamic factors and their interaction in determining individual and group development and places a wide range of personal, developmental, social and cultural variables at the centre of his interest. The breadth of his research and the operationalisation and demonstration of his theses in clear and understandable language testify to the research competence of Assoc. Prof. Manolov, who simultaneously expands traditionally relevant fields by supplementing explanatory frameworks and provoking answers to current questions related to individual development and self-realisation, counselling, training, prevention, social and public phenomena and attitudes that determine behaviour, which not only covers but also exceeds the thematic scope of the competition and makes Assoc. Prof. Manolov a valuable and proven expert in several fields, including psychology, development, social psychology, educational psychology, counselling psychology, psychodiagnostics and psychological measurements.

Assoc. Prof. Manolov has presented 25 citations of the publications presented, 6 of which are in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases, 13 citations are in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review, and 6 are in non-referenced journals with scientific review. The publications of Assoc. Prof. Manolov are recognised in scientific circles and confirm the relevance of his work.

An important contribution that may go unnoticed is the impressive database compiled as a result of Assoc. Prof. Manolov's research. The publications submitted for evaluation include results obtained from over 8,000 respondents, which provides a basis not only for drawing well-founded conclusions, but also for creating and validating scales that have broad research and practical applicability.

A particular contribution that applies to all the works presented and distinguishes the candidate as a precise researcher is the analytical and holistic approach in considering the interaction of individual and environmental factors determining personality development, interpersonal relationships and social identity and models, and the combination thereof.

A significant unrecognised contribution is Assoc. Prof. Manolov's undisputed expertise in the field of studying social and cultural specificities, with a distinct authorial contribution in linking them to coping mechanisms and studying the individual and social manifestations of self-discrimination and victimisation. These challenges and prospects are a field outlined by Assoc. Prof. Manolov as the only expert in this area.

Expert and project activities

Assoc. Prof. Manol Manolov has also been actively involved in expert activities since 2013. He participates as a psychologist in expert committees and research projects, as an evaluator of project proposals and reports, in working groups, and is chair of a working group at the Ministry of Education and Science. He has accumulated organisational and administrative experience, expertise in child protection and the preparation of psychological expert reports as an expert witness, in project supervision, management and participation in projects. He has also gained experience as a trainer and supervisor, and since 2016 he has conducted training courses for social service managers, social educators and psychologists in social services, non-specialised social service staff, students, educational advisors, non-specialised residential service staff, resilience training, and training for the team of centres for inclusive environment support.

From 2016 to 2025 he has participated in 18 scientific forums as a guest lecturer, participant, working group leader and panellist, 7 national, 5 international and 5 abroad, and is also a member of the organising committee of the Early Childhood Development Conference. Since 2018, he has been a member of the editorial boards of five scientific journals, two national and three foreign.

Over the past 5 years Assoc. Prof. Manolov has participated in 4 scientific research projects. He has been the head of a national scientific research project for young scientists and postdoctoral researchers, head of an organisation funded by the EIO project, and a member of the teams of two national scientific research projects.

3. Critical comments and recommendations

I have no critical comments on the materials presented and believe that Assoc. Prof. Manolov possesses both the professional and personal qualities to deepen and develop research in the field of psychological knowledge and practice, complementing both the fundamental and applied aspects of individual development, interpersonal relationships and group self-determination. Assoc. Prof. Manolov's publications are distinguished by their theoretical, empirical and methodological contribution, and the results have direct implementation in counselling, educational and social practice. In addition to the scientific and practical contributions, I would like to add the public benefit of Assoc. Prof. Manolov's research.

As a personal impression, I can note that Assoc. Prof. Manolov, in addition to his professional competence and qualities, has a strong attitude towards cooperation, an innovative spirit and interest in addressing scientific and practical niches, as well as teamwork skills. Throughout his professional career, Assoc. Prof. Manolov has demonstrated focused interest, depth, precision and accuracy. His scientific output, organisational and administrative skills, and proven teaching and academic activity distinguish Assoc. Prof. Manolov as fully qualified for the position of 'professor'.

Conclusion

The documents and materials submitted by Manol Nikolov Manolov meet the requirements of the Act on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its Application and the relevant Regulations of Paisii Hilendarski University.

The applicant in the competition has presented a significant number of scientific papers published after the materials used in the defence of the doctoral thesis, the acquisition of the academic position of associate professor and the defence of the doctoral thesis. The applicant's works contain original

scientific and applied contributions that have received international recognition, a representative part of which have been published in journals and scientific collections published by international academic publishers. His theoretical developments have practical applicability, some of which are directly oriented towards teaching. The scientific and teaching qualifications of Manol Nikolov Manolov are unquestionable.

The results achieved by Manol Nikolov Manolov in his teaching and research activities fully comply with the minimum national and additional requirements of the PU 'Paisii Hilendarski', adopted in connection with the Regulations of the University of Plovdiv for the application of the Act on the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its application for the Faculty of Pedagogy.

After reviewing the materials and scientific papers submitted for the competition, analysing their significance and the scientific, scientific-applied and applied contributions they contain, I find it entirely justified to give my positive assessment and recommend that the Scientific Jury prepare a reportproposal to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Pedagogy for the appointment of Manol Nikolov Manolov to the academic position of 'professor' at Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv in field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.2. Psychology (Educational and developmental psychology).

1st July 2025

Signature:

Prof. Margarita Bakracheva, DSc