

OPINION

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on the materials submitted for participation in a competition
for the academic position of **Associate Professor**
at Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv

Field of Higher Education: 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences
Professional Field: 3.2 Psychology
Scientific Specialty: Positive Psychology

In the competition for the position of Associate Professor, announced in the *State Gazette*, issue 96 of 11.11.2026 and on the website of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, for the needs of the Department of Psychology at the Faculty of Education, the candidate is Dilyana Svetoslavova Angelova from the Department of Social Activities at PU.

1. General presentation of the procedure and the candidate

Dilyana Angelova holds a Bachelor's degree in Primary School Pedagogy and Foreign Language, followed by a Master's degree in Counseling Psychology, and has obtained the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in Professional Field 3.2 Psychology, Doctoral Programme "Educational and Developmental Psychology". She has worked as a deputy school principal; since 2018 she has been an Assistant at Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, later becoming a Chief Assistant at the same university in the Department of Social Activities. She also holds a qualification in child psychology and possesses 29 certificates from various academic and creative forums. According to her CV, she speaks three languages at different levels of proficiency.

She has 28 publications, some co-authored, published in reputable outlets. Her dissertation, defended in 2023, is entitled: "*Relationship between Friendship, Empathy and Self-esteem among Individuals Aged 13–20.*"

In the competition for Associate Professor, she participates with: one monograph, one published book based on her dissertation, and 16 articles, studies, and conference papers, two of which are in refereed and indexed journals, while the others are peer-reviewed. She has 11 citations, significantly exceeding the required minimum. She

fully meets the scientometric indicators required in the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as the additional institutional requirements.

She teaches the following courses in Bachelor's programmes: Positive Psychology, Introduction to Counseling Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Developmental Psychology (Child and Adolescent Development), Development of Friendship Relations, Social Psychology, and Psychological Foundations of Crisis Intervention in the programmes "Psychology," "Social Activities," and "Primary School Pedagogy," as well as in two Master's programmes in "Social Cognition and Behaviour." She has developed four academic programmes and has enhanced her teaching competencies through eight specialized trainings.

The documentation includes a self-assessment of scientific works, a declaration of originality, declarations of employment and teaching workload, and other required materials. The materials are very well structured and presented, which is evidence of the candidate's commitment, responsibility, and precision—qualities that should not be underestimated.

The competition has been announced for the needs of the Department of Psychology at Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv. No procedural violations have been identified.

2. General characteristics of the candidate's activity

The candidate has presented a sufficient number of scholarly works of different types: one habilitation monograph, one book based on the dissertation, and 16 articles and conference papers.

I fully accept Dr. Dilyana Angelova's self-assessment, in which she defines two main research areas:

- Friendship and positive peer relationships;
- Positive education and counseling practice.

A distinguishing feature of her works is that they are written in a strictly academic yet accessible language, allowing them to reach a broader audience. Another characteristic is their orientation toward a positive perspective on education, counseling, friendship, and peer relationships. In addition to their relevance, this positive focus offers a new perspective on the topics addressed, creating expectations for hope, optimism, and confidence that the analyzed phenomena can transform negative attitudes and patterns often present in this field.

The contributions in the field of friendship and positive relationships can be summarized as follows:

- A well-argued theoretical framework of friendship as an integral part of human relationships, interpreted through interpersonal theory, attachment theory, developmental theories, peer relationship concepts, and emerging forms of communication such as digital communication, virtual interaction, online connectivity, and the influence of social media on personal development;
- A systematized multidimensional theoretical construct of friendship, including six main dimensions: contextual factors; friendship in social networks; parameters of relationships; personality traits of adolescents; characteristics of friendship circles; and dynamics of interaction with significant others;
- Adaptation of psychometric instruments enabling empirical examination of multiple characteristics of adolescent friendships, such as anxiety, conflict, risks, as well as benefits and positive aspects of new communication forms.

The contributions in the field of positive education and counseling practice include:

- Development of a comprehensive concept of positive education in the contemporary world, including principles, models, and educational practices, as well as the role of the psychologist as facilitator and agent of a positive approach, emphasizing the need for a holistic educational environment;
- Construction of a personal and professional profile of the school psychologist as an expert, facilitator, consultant, supportive figure, and promoter of positive education;
- Enrichment of knowledge regarding counseling practice in the educational context, highlighting best practices in contemporary schools, including analysis of international experience and its applicability in the Bulgarian educational system.

Summary: The submitted works fully correspond to the field of the competition and have high scientific value for both theory and practice in Positive Psychology. I emphasize Dr. Angelova's commitment, sensitivity, and responsible civic position toward one of the most important areas of society—the educational environment.

3. Critical remarks and recommendations

I have no critical remarks regarding the scientific, teaching, or expert activity of Dr. Dilyana Angelova. My only recommendation is that she continue her in-depth work in her chosen field and further expand her scientific potential in Positive Psychology.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above analysis of the works of Chief Assistant Dr. Dilyana Svetoslavova Angelova, I confidently give my positive vote for her appointment to the academic position of **Associate Professor** for the needs of the Faculty of Education, Department of Psychology, at Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv.

I recommend to the esteemed jury, as well as to the Faculty of Education, that the candidate be elected as Associate Professor in Field 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, Professional Field 3.2 Psychology (Positive Psychology).

08.03.2026

Prepared by:

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