

REVIEW

By Prof. Kirilka Simeonova Tagareva, PhD – Head of the Psychology Department of at Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv

of the works submitted for participation in a procedure
for awarding academic position **Associated Professor**
At the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv

in: Higher Education Field 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences
Professional Field 3.2. Psychology (Positive Psychology)

Chief Assistant Professor Dilyana Svetoslavova Angelova, PhD from Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv is an applicant in the procedure for the awarding of the academic position of “Associate Professor” for the needs of the Faculty of Education, announced in the State Gazette, No 96 of 11 November 2025, and published on the official website of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv.

1. Submitted Works General Overview

I was appointed a member of the Scientific Jury supervising the procedure for the awarding of the academic position of Associated Professor at the UoP in Higher Education Field 3 under order No RD-33-32 of 09.01.2026, issued by the Rector of the Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv (UoP). Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, Professional Field 3.2. Psychology (Positive Psychology), announced for the needs of the Faculty of Pedagogy.

Documents for participation in the announced procedure were submitted by one candidate only:

Chief Assistant Professor Dilyana Svetoslavova Angelova, PhD from Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, Faculty of Pedagogy.

Chief Assistant Professor Dilyana Angelova, PhD has presented a set of hard copy works for the present procedure, which works comply with the Development of the Academic Staff Regulations of the UoP and consist of the following documents:

1. Application addressed to the Rector.
2. Curriculum Vitae.
3. University degree diplomas and Doctor’s (PhD) degree diploma.
4. List of scientific publications.
5. Scientific publications.
6. List of citations.

7. Report on compliance with the minimum national requirements and the additional faculty-specific requirements.
8. Abstracts and self-assessment of the contributions of the submitted works in English and Bulgarian.
9. Declaration of originality and authenticity.
10. Certificate of employment record.
11. Documents related to teaching activity.
12. Other documents.

The competition conducting procedure has been duly observed and complies with the applicable regulatory documents. The works submitted by the candidate for participation in the procedure have been prepared meticulously and in compliance with the requirements of the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic Act of Bulgaria, the Regulations for the Implementation of the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act, and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at UoP.

The procedure documentation is complete. The doctoral dissertation has been published as a monograph entitled “Friendship, Empathy, and Self-Esteem,” which is not included in the evaluation of publications for the present procedure. The publications submitted for the Associate Professor awarding procedure do not duplicate those presented for the acquisition of the PhD degree or for appointment to the academic position of Chief Assistant Professor. These publications have not previously been subject to review.

For the purposes of the present procedure, Chief Assistant Professor Dilyana Angelova, PhD has submitted a total of 18 scholarly works, including 1 monograph, 1 book, and 16 scientific articles, of which 13 are in Bulgarian and 3 in English.

2. Short Biography of the Candidate

Dilyana Angelova was born in 1984. In 2007, she obtained a Bachelor’s degree in Pedagogy from Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, specializing in Primary School Pedagogy and a Foreign Language, and a Master’s degree in Counseling Psychology from the same university in 2010. Dilyana Angelova completed her doctoral studies at Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv in Professional Field 3.2. Psychology, PhD programme in Educational and Developmental Psychology. In 2013, she defended her doctoral dissertation entitled: “Interaction between Friendship, Empathy, and Self-Esteem among 13–20-Year-Olds.”

Dilyana Angelova's professional career is associated with Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv. Since 2018 she has held the position of Assistant Professor, and since 2022 to the present she has served as Chief Assistant Professor in the Social Science Department within the Faculty of Education. At the same time, she works as a psychologist at the Lokomotiv Plovdiv professional football club.

Dilyana Angelova's education and professional experience are in the fields of developmental psychology, counseling psychology, positive relationships, and social work with children and families. Thirteen years after defending her doctoral dissertation, D. Angelova has accumulated academic seniority, teaching experience, and research expertise that correspond to the professional field of the announced procedure: 3.2. Psychology (Positive Psychology).

3. General Overview of the Candidate's Records

Evaluation of Teaching and Educational Work

The candidate, Chief Assistant Professor Dilyana Svetoslavova Angelova, PhD is a faculty member in the Social Science Department, Faculty of Education at Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv. She teaches psychology courses in both Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes. She teaches the following courses in the Bachelor's programmes in Psychology, Social Science, and Preschool and Primary School Pedagogy: Positive Psychology, Introduction to Counseling Psychology, Developmental Psychology in Childhood and Adolescence, Developmental Psychology, Part IV, Development of Friendship Relations, Social Psychology, and Psychological Foundations of Crisis Intervention. She teaches Social Cognition and Behavior in the Master's programmes in Applied Psychology, School Psychology, Positive Psychology, and Psychology of Management. Chief Assistant Professor Dilyana Angelova, PhD performs her teaching and educational duties at a very high level.

The candidate works actively with students: She has supervised more than 15 undergraduate and graduate theses and has actively participated in the practical training of students in the Psychology and Social Science programmes.

After obtaining her PhD degree, Chief Assistant Professor Dilyana Angelova, PhD has continuously enhanced her knowledge and professional skills, as evidenced by her participation in eight specialized training courses in Bulgaria and abroad. In Bulgaria, she has participated in training programmes on the following topics: Teaching in an Academic Environment; Digital Psychology; and Training for Administration of the d2-R Test of Attention and Concentration, among others. Abroad, she completed training under the Erasmus+ programme in Komotini, Greece (2024) and in Nice, France (2025).

The teaching and pedagogical experience of Chief Assistant Professor Dilyana Angelova, PhD is fully sufficient for appointment to the academic position of Associate Professor.

Evaluation of the Candidate's Research and Applied Scientific Work

D. Angelova, PhD pursues her research interests through participation in numerous academic forums – thirteen in total, including three international and ten national conferences. Four of the presented papers were delivered in English and nine in Bulgarian.

D. Angelova, PhD is also an active participant in the national project “From Higher Education to Employment,” funded under the 2021–2027 Education Programme, co-financed by the European Union and implemented by the UoP.

The candidate's publications may be classified by type (monographs – 2; articles – 16); by place of publication (publications in refereed and indexed journals included in internationally recognized scientific databases – 2; publications in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or edited collective volumes – 14); by language (in English – 3; in Bulgarian – 13); by authorship (single-authored – 13; co-authored (with one co-author) – 3).

According to the report on compliance with the national minimum requirements under the the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act and its implementing regulations, Chief Assistant Professor Dilyana Angelova, PhD has achieved a total of 540 points, exceeding the required minimum of 400 points. By sections, they are distributed as follows:

- Section A – 50 points;
- Section B – 100 points;
- Section C – 260 points;
- Section D – 130 points;

Under the additional faculty requirements related to teaching activity of the Faculty of Pedagogy, Chief Assistant Professor D. Angelova, PhD adds a further 108 points, which is entirely sufficient for her participation in the procedure.

The candidate's publication and teaching activity fully meet the quantitative criteria, the minimum national requirements, and the additional requirements of the Faculty of Pedagogy for the position of Associate Professor.

Evaluation of the Quality of the Publication and Teaching Work

The principal habilitation work submitted by Chief Assistant Professor Dilyana Svetoslavova Angelova, PhD is: “The Modern Face of Friendship and Peer Relationships in the Era of the Digital Revolution,” Koala Press Publishing House, ISBN 978-619-261-083-8, Plovdiv, 2025. This work constitutes an independent scholarly study and reaches findings that differ from conventional understandings of friendship and peer relationships in the contemporary world. The author sets as her objective the study of friendship bonds in the virtual environment and the delineation of both positive and other influences on adolescents’ personal development.

The monograph can be structured into four main parts.

The first part is devoted to friendship, examining various definitions of friendship, typologies of friendship relations, and the development of friendship through the perspectives of different theoretical approaches, including Sullivan’s interpersonal theory and Robert Selman’s stage theory of social cognition and the development of friendship, among others.

The second part focuses on positive relationships. It includes sections on close relationships, the interconnections between friendship, attachment, and romantic relationships, and friendship as a source of social support and well-being. Based on analysis within the framework of positive psychology, emphasis is placed on friendship as a core component of psychological well-being and positive development.

The third part examines the influence of social networks and social media on close relationships, communication, and empathy during adolescence. The results of contemporary empirical studies on online communication and friendship in virtual environments are analyzed in the context of mental health and well-being. Both the positive aspects and the potential risks of online communication are discussed.

The fourth part of the monograph presents the author’s own empirical study. Its aim is to examine the positive and negative effects of social media use among 127 respondents aged between 13 and 20 years. The proposed hypotheses are partially confirmed. It is found that adolescents with a secure attachment style also demonstrate security in their online relationships. Furthermore, young people tend to spend considerable time on social networks in order to maintain already established friendships and acquaintances.

The habilitation work demonstrates excellent command of the subject matter, skillful application of contemporary methodology, and intellectual courage in seeking new and modern pathways to well-being through friendship in the digital world.

The topic of friendship as a key factor for well-being among children, teenagers, and adolescents is also addressed in several of the candidate's articles. These publications examine: positive relationships and mental health among adolescents; friendship as a specific type of close relationship based on reciprocity, mutuality, and equality between partners, in contrast to family and parent-child relationships; the quality of friendship ties among primary school children in the context of mental well-being; friendship and positive relationships as key predictors of mental and subjective well-being across different developmental stages; empathy in childhood and its relationship to positive relationships with peers and parents.

The candidate's academic work – teaching, research, and publications – has been consistently concentrated in the field of positive developmental psychology and positive psychology in education.

The list of publications also includes works devoted to sport and the social sphere.

Evaluation of Contributions

Chief Assistant Professor Dilyana Angelova, PhD has submitted an author's report outlining the contributions of the works presented for review. According to her assessment, they fall within two thematic areas:

1. Friendship and Positive Peer Relationships.
2. Positive Education and Counseling Practice.

In both thematic areas, the author has identified theoretical as well as applied contributions, with which I agree.

The thematic area “Friendship and Positive Peer Relationships” includes the following publications: the habilitation work – The Modern Face of Friendship and Peer Relationships in the Era of the Digital Revolution (2025); the articles: “Friendship – psychological aspects,” 2025 and “Friendship in the context of positive social relationships and subjective wellbeing,” 2025; articles 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12.

The major contributions in this area may be summarized as follows:

- An analysis is presented of the specific features of friendship, positive relationships, attachment, and well-being.
- Empirical evidence is provided regarding the protective functions of friendship and positive social relationships during youth.
- Friendship is analyzed as a source of social support and well-being.

- Several positive psychology concepts are examined, including the concept of positive relationships, the concept of meaning in life, altruism, self-actualization, and attachment theory.

- It is explained how friendship and positive relationships contribute to the achievement of well-being during adolescence and youth.

- In applied terms, the relationships between the qualitative parameters of friendship and indicators of subjective well-being, as well as indicators of mental functioning in adolescence, are investigated.

The Positive Education and Counseling Practice thematic area includes publications 1, 2, 9, 10, 13, and 14.

The major contributions in this area may be summarized as follows:

- A comprehensive vision of positive education is formulated as an integration of academic learning, development of character strengths, and students' social and emotional competencies and well-being.

- Key principles of a positive educational environment are systematized, with a focus on character strengths, intrinsic motivation, inclusion, and adolescents' emotional security and positive relationships.

- A coherent framework is developed, integrating various models and positive educational practices associated with positive emotions, engagement, meaning, achievement, autonomy, personal growth, life purpose, self-acceptance, self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, skills for maintaining meaningful relationships, and responsible decision-making.

- The need for a holistic approach to school policy is substantiated – one that places well-being on an equal footing with academic achievement and includes student self-governance.

Overall, the scientific contributions formulate and substantiate a new conceptualization of friendship and positive relationships during childhood and adolescence in the context of positive education and digitalization.

Citations

The citation report indicates that the candidate's publications have generated academic interest. A total of 13 citations are presented. The citations appear in peer-reviewed edited volumes.

The number of identified citations meets the requirements for appointment to the position of Associate Professor at the Faculty of Education of UoP.

4. Evaluation of the Candidate's Personal Contribution

The submitted habilitation work and the author's publications represent an original personal contribution, which gives me grounds to state that the candidate, Chief Assistant Professor Dilyana Angelova, PhD complies with the standards of academic ethics in connection with the procedure regulated by the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at UoP.

Within the limits of my professional competence, I have not identified any texts that could be classified as plagiarism, nor have I received any signals or allegations of such during the period of preparing this review.

5. Critical Remarks and Recommendations

I have no critical remarks. I do hereby recommend that Chief Assistant Professor Dilyana Angelova, PhD continue her research and teaching work in the field of positive psychology.

6. Personal Impressions

I have known Dilyana Angelova since 2007, when she was a student in the Master's programme in Counseling Psychology. In 2013, I was a member of the scientific jury and served as a reviewer of her dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific Doctor's (PhD) degree, and in 2022 I was a member of the scientific jury in the procedure for the awarding of the position of Chief Assistant Professor. My personal impressions are entirely positive. She successfully combines teaching and research activities.

CONCLUSION

The documents and works submitted by Chief Assistant Professor Dilyana Svetoslavova Angelova, PhD meet all requirements of the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act, the Regulations for its Implementation, and the relevant Regulations of Paisii Hilendarski UoP.

The candidate has submitted a sufficient number of scientific publications produced after the works used for the acquisition of the PhD degree and for appointment to the position of Chief Assistant Professor.

developments have practical applicability, with some of them directly oriented toward educational practice. The scientific and teaching qualifications of Chief Assistant Professor Dilyana Svetoslavova Angelova, PhD are beyond any doubt.

The results achieved by Chief Assistant Professor Dilyana Svetoslavova Angelova, PhD in teaching and research fully comply with the minimum national requirements and the additional requirements

of the Faculty of Pedagogy adopted in accordance with the University Regulations for the implementation of the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act.

After reviewing the materials and scholarly works submitted in the procedure, and after analyzing their significance as well as the scientific, scientifically applied, and applied contributions contained therein, I find it justified to give my **positive** evaluation and to recommend that the Scientific Jury prepare a report-proposal to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Pedagogy for the appointment of Chief Assistant Professor Dilyana Svetoslavova Angelova, PhD to the academic position of Associate Professor at Paisii Hilendarski UoP in: Higher Education Field 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, Professional Field 3.2. Psychology (Positive Psychology).

24.02.2026

Reviewer:

Plovdiv

(Prof. Kirilka Tagareva, PhD)