

OPINION

**from Assoc. professor PhD Diana Minkova Dimitrova, University of Plovdiv
“Paisii Hilendarski” Faculty of Education,**

Department "Pedagogy and Education Management"

of materials, submitted for participation in a competition

for occupying the academic position "docent"

at University of Plovdiv „Paisii Hilendarski“

in: higher education area 1. Educational Sciences,

professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Preschool Pedagogy - game technologies)

In the competition for ‘Associate Professor’, announced in the State Gazette, issue 34 of 07.04.2026 and on the website of Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski” for the needs of the Department of Preschool Pedagogy at the Faculty of Education, the participant is Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Teodora Zhivkova Bakhchevanova from the Department of Preschool Pedagogy at the Faculty of Education of PU “Paisii Hilendarski”.

1. General presentation of the procedure and the candidate

By order No. RD-22-1119 of 05.06.2026 of the Rector of Plovdiv University “Paisii Hilendarski”, I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury for the competition for the academic position of ‘**Associate Professor**’ at PU in higher education area 1. Educational Sciences, professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Preschool Pedagogy - game technologies), announced for the needs of the Department of Preschool Pedagogy at the Faculty of Education of PU. For participation in the announced competition, a single candidate has submitted documents: Ch. Asst. Prof. Dr. Teodora Zhivkova Bakhchevanova from the Department of Preschool Pedagogy at the Faculty of Education of PU.

The set of materials on paper presented by Ch. Asst. Prof. Dr. Teodora Zhivkova Bakhchevanova is in accordance with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of PU and the Faculty of Education.

The candidate Ch. Asst. Prof. Dr. Teodora Zhivkova Bakhchevanova has attached a list of a total of 15 scientific works, including 1 monograph, 1 book based on a defended dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor", 11 scientific articles in Bulgarian, 2 scientific articles in English, as well as information on citations, teaching, research, and expert activities.

2. General characteristics of the candidate's activity

The scientific production of Ch. Asst. Prof. Dr. Teodora Bakhchevanova is well-structured, with her research focusing on preschool education. Her main topics are learning through play and the development of key skills in early childhood.

The presented monograph, as the main habilitation work, is dedicated to the study of the competence-based approach within the play activity of preschool children. The scientific quests in the work are oriented towards resolving the existing dissonance between the modern trend for intensive acquisition of academic knowledge by young children and their natural need for play.

A central place in the candidate's research activity is occupied by the conceptualization of children's play as a leading pedagogical and didactic resource in the pedagogical interaction of preschool institutions. Ch. Asst. Prof. Dr. Bakhchevanova aims to show that play is not just a means of entertainment, but a fundamental methodological framework for developing key skills at an early age. This creates a prerequisite for the application of various didactic models that transform the traditional educational environment into a space for active and nature-conforming child development.

In the scientific publications presented for participation in the competition, the candidate develops her research in the field of game diversity as a factor for linguistic, communicative, social, cognitive, and creative child development.

Alongside the scientific production, the candidate's teaching commitment in disciplines directly related to the competition should be noted, as well as her

administrative contribution in the role of scientific secretary. There is a balanced combination of teaching, academic leadership, participation in scientific initiatives and practical expertise, which strengthens her profile as a university lecturer with a clear applied orientation.

The analysis performed on the scientific production and scientometric indicators proves compliance with the Minimum National Requirements for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor" and acquiring a scientific degree, according to the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ADASRB), and the regulations for its implementation. In the context of the above, the scientific works presented are in accordance with the announced scientific field of the competition.

3. Questions

In order to more fully reveal the scientific contributions in the presented habilitation work, I submit to the candidate a proposal to present her position on the following questions:

1. Based on your research, which scientific-theoretical constructs in the work of L. S. Vygotsky do you point out as determining for arguing his contribution to the genesis and development of key competencies?

2. In the context of the propositions presented in chapter five of the habilitation work ("Applied dimensions of the competence-oriented model for learning through play"), you frequently operate with the term "active pedagogical technologies". In this regard, how does your view correspond to the definition of this term in pedagogy? From the position of modern pedagogical science, how would you scientifically argue your view that pedagogical observation possesses the structural and functional characteristics of an active pedagogical technology?

CONCLUSION

The documents and materials submitted by Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Teodora Zhivkova Bakhchevanova correspond to the requirements of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ADASRB), the

Regulations for the Implementation of ADASRB, and the corresponding Regulations of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv.

The candidate in the competition has presented a sufficient number of scientific works published after the materials used in the defence of the "Doctor" degree. In the candidate's works, there are scientific and applied contributions. Her theoretical developments have practical applicability and are oriented towards enriching pedagogical interactions in kindergarten. The results achieved by Dr. Bakhchevanova in teaching and research activities correspond to the specific requirements of the Faculty of Education, adopted in accordance with the Regulations of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv for the implementation of ADASRB.

After getting acquainted with the materials and scientific works presented in the competition and analyzing their significance, **I find it justified to give my positive assessment and propose to the Scientific Jury to award Dr. Teodora Zhivkova Bakhchevanova** the academic position of 'Associate Professor' at PU "Paisii Hilendarski" in professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Preschool Pedagogy – game technologies).

28.07.2026

Opinion prepared by:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Diana Dimitrova