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OPINION

Preperd by Prof. Ergyul Tair Redzheb, Doctor of Science in Psychology, Institute for Population and Human Studies at Bulgarian Academy of Sciences,
Sofia 1113, Acad. G. Bonchev str., bl. 6, fl. 5
Regarding a decision on the competition for filling the academic position of a Associate Professor in Higher education division 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, Professional field 3.2. Psychology (Transport psychology), unit "Personality psychology and Cognitive psychology", Institute for Population and Human Studies at Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, as announced in the State Gazette issue 46 of 26.05.2023
Candidate: Assist. Prof. Zornitsa Petrova Totkova, PhD, unit "Personality psychology and Cognitive psychology", Institute for Population and Human Studies at Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

1. Summary data on the candidate's scientific work and activity

This statement was prepared in accordance with the order No. РД-6-367/21.07.2023 of the Director of the Institute for Population and Human Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences based on documents submitted through a competition for the academic position "Associate Professor" in Professional field 3.2. Psychology (Transport Psychology), announced in State Gazette No. 46 of 26.05.2023. The documents submitted for the competition meet the requirements of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (DASRB), the Rules for the Application of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act, the Rules of BAS and with the Rules set at the IPHS-BAS.

The candidate Zornitsa Petrova Totkova has obtained her PhD in professional field 3.2. Psychology (General Psychology) in 2014, and since 2015 she has been Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at IPHS-BAS. The publications and citations presented by the candidate (А, В, Д5, Д6, Д7, Д9, Д11 and Д13) completely meet the minimum national requirements for holding the position of "Associate Professor" in Higher education division 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, Professional field 3.2. Psychology. They also meet the minimum requirements laid down in the Rules for the Application of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act in the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in the same Higher education division and Professional field. The subject and content of the presented

scientific works correspond to the profile of the competition and are focused on personality, cognitive characteristics and their manifestation in driving behavior.

2. Evaluation of the candidate's scientific and scientific-applied contributions

To participate in the competition, Assist. Prof. Zornitsa Totkova, PhD presents 30 scientific publications, of which: 1 independent scientific monograph in Bulgarian (habilitation thesis); 1 book based on defended PhD thesis for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in Bulgarian; 4 scientific articles in English published in refereed scientific journals and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information (Scopus); 3 independent studious (2 in English) and 21 scientific articles (1 in English) published in non-refereed journals with peer reviews or published in edited collective volumes.

In the proposed monographic work "Transport Psychology. Personality and driving behavior" (ISBN: 978-619-245-293-3), structured in three chapters, the author thoroughly research and analyzes personality factors related to the driving process. The first chapter focus on essence and the main goals of Transport psychology, outlining some problems and challenges faced by the discipline. Four main groups of models for the study of driving behavior are defined, along with their application possibilities. The second chapter presents two studies examining individual differences in the driving process with a focus on driver personality and driving styles, with an emphasis on negative driving outcomes. In the third chapter, a profile of the dangerous driver in Bulgaria is presented based on a study of the subjective assessment of compliance with road traffic rules. The personal factors and driving styles directly related to negative driving outcomes were identified, and the demographic characteristics (e.g. gender, age, experience) of dangerous drivers were outlined.

The present monograph (I.1.) and series of publications (incl. III.1., III.2., IV.2., V.1., V.2., V.4., V.8. etc.) outline the main scientific and scientific-applied contributions of Assist. Prof. Zornitsa Totkova, PhD in the substantive direction Transport psychology. Among the main contributions can be mentioned: 1) Establishing the role of personality (anxiety, sensation seeking, anger while driving, aggressive and risky driving behavior, impulsivity and locus of control) and cognitive (attention, memory, executive functions, visual-spatial orientation, etc.) factors on the negative results of driving (e.g. registered violations of traffic rules, the revocation of motor vehicle driving licenses, participation in traffic accidents); 2) Defining the

psychological construct “driving style”, deriving the profile (personal, demographic and based on the driving style) of drivers with dangerous behavior on the road; 3) Studying the psychological processes that underlie the behavior of drivers, constructing and adapting methods for reliable assessment of personal factors related to dangerous behavior on the road and driving style and deriving the practical application of the obtained results (e.g. informational campaigns, training aimed at different groups of drivers and interventions aimed at drivers with established risky behavior), in order to increase the effectiveness of measures to deal with road safety problems in Bulgaria.

The other substantive direction in the candidate's scientific work is in the field of developmental psychology and child-adolescent psychology, studying parenting styles, attachment in early adulthood, personality and motivation for learning of students according to teachers, etc. (incl. IV.9, IV.10, IV.11, IV.12, IV.13, IV.14, IV.15, IV.16, IV.17, IV.19, IV.20, IV.21, etc.). The works presented in this direction extend and enrich scientifically, methodologically and applied research on the perceptions of parenting style in early adulthood, bringing out perceived mixed styles in early adulthood and proving the role of responsiveness and warmth as leading in the assessment of parental behavior in a retrospective plan. At the same time, on the basis of a large-scale survey of teachers in a collective project, the leading motivations for students' learning, their attitudes towards applying approaches that arouse interest and understanding of the practical value of the studied material, the style of teacher-student interaction, etc., are established. The obtained results provide grounds for redirecting the attention of specialists to the search for and popularization of approaches and forms of work with students that help to form, maintain and deepen interest in the studied subjects, which are subsequently a prerequisite for achieving a higher academic result, both for more permanent knowledge and the development of the students personal abilities.

3. Opinion on the presence or absence of plagiarism

After reviewing the provided scientific publications and habilitation work of Assist. Prof. Zornitsa Totkova, I can, in my capacity as a member of the scientific jury, ascertain the absence of plagiarism.

4. Critical notes and recommendations

I have no critical remarks and recommendations regarding the design of the research, the statistical processing of the data, the analysis and the summaries of the obtained results presented in the candidate's works.

5. Personal impressions

I know Assist. Prof. Zornitsa Totkova from the period of her study (2011 - 2014) in the Department of Psychology, IPHS-BAS for the acquisition of the PhD in "General Psychology" and subsequently as the Assistant Professor in unit "Psychology of personality and methodology of psychological measurement" (2015-2023). She was distinguished by a serious attitude to learning, desire for development and personal commitment in scientific research (e.g. projects, publications, etc.) and scientific organizational activities (e.g. conferences, schools, seminars, etc.).

6. Conclusion

Based on the evaluation of the original scientific contributions of Assist. Prof. Zornitsa Totkova, PhD, the presented scientific publications and a reference for their citation, which fully cover the minimum national requirements laid down in the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (DASRB), the Rules for the Application of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act, the Rules of BAS and with the Rules set at the IPHS-BAS, I confidently suggest to the respected members of the scientific jury to support the election of Assist. Prof. Zornitsa Petrova Totkova, PhD for the academic position "Associate Professor" in Higher education division 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, Professional field 3.2. Psychology (Transport psychology), in unit "Personality Psychology and Cognitive Psychology", Institute for Population and Human Studies at Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

21.08.2023 Signature:

Sofia (Prof. Ergyul Tair Redzheb, DSc., PhD)