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OPINION

By Prof. Teodora Stoytcheva Stoeva

REGARDING: scientific papers submitted for participation in a competition for an associate professor under 3.2. Psychology (Consultative Psychology-Personality and Addictions) for the needs of the "Social and Counseling Psychology" section, Department of "Psychology“, Institute for Population and Human Research, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences;For the field of higher education; 3. Social, economic and legal sciences

The only candidate in the competition is Chief Assistant. Rositsa Racheva at the Department of Psychology, Institute for Population and Human Research, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences. The submitted documents meet the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its Application for the Occupation of the Academic Position "Associate Professor".

The participation of Racheva is a natural continuation of her academic development since 2016. until now. Her professional biography and overall scientific production shows one essential fact, namely that her teaching, research and practical activities are dedicated exclusively in the field of Counseling Psychology, more specifically in the scientific and applied field of addictions. I note this fact in order to emphasize that her scientific publications have the character of theoretical-empirical studies relevant to the lecture course she conducts. Racheva proceeds in the spirit of the classical tradition of covering the researcher and the teacher. The fact that she acquired a master's degree in Clinical Psychology, a field inextricably linked to psychological counseling, which is an activity with a practical and applied orientation, is also important. She worked in a therapeutic community and a day center for the rehabilitation of addicts, as a psychologist in a methodical program, and is currently at the medical center "St. Panteleimon". In this respect, her work is an example of making a connection between theory and practice, which undoubtedly enriches her research with new ideas. In this way, it shows that fundamental knowledge has a direct practical application. The project activity in which she participates is also of a practical orientation, dedicated to the solution of significant social problems such as road safety, addiction treatment, etc., which proves that psychological expertise needs to participate in the formation of policies in all areas and levels of society organization.

Biographical reference and general description of the applicant's works

Chief Assistant Racheva obtained a master's degree in Sociology at SU "Kl. Ohridski" in 1999. and in Clinical Psychology (psychoanalytic perspective) in 2004. in the NBU. He obtained the Doctorate in Pedagogical and Age Psychology at the Department of Psychology at the Institute of Psychology. From 2020 is a part-time teacher at the "Kl. Ohridski" University in the Master's program „Child and Adolescent and School Psychology“, where he teaches a lecture course "Use of alcohol and drugs in adolescence". The course taught is in the field in which the competition was announced, namely the field of addictions and psychological counseling.

Racheva has presented the complete list of her published scientific works - 24 in number (author's and co-author's). Including 2 monographs and another 22 publications in international and Bulgarian magazines, collections in our country and abroad. The two monographs were published by a leading publishing house for scientific books "Prof. M. Drinov". The articles have been published in prestigious Bulgarian and foreign magazines such as: "Psychological research", "Bulgarian journal of psychology, "Behavioral science". There are publications in Bulgarian and English.

In general, the scientific output of the candidate is characterized by the topicality of the developed topics and methodological robustness. The style, the language, the external layout, the way of presentation of the results correspond to the requirements and standards for scientific publications. Its cooperation with other units has allowed it to consider the problems in a complex way.

The visibility of Racheva in scientific sites and systems with scientometric indicators is also impressive. She has publications in journals, refereed and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information. The actuality of the issues to which Racheva is oriented. is proven by referring to the results of her research, which have become the subject of discussion by other researchers. The number of citations of her works in scientific publications - referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases - in monographs and collective volumes is an indicator of the significance of her scientific achievements, recognized by other scientists. References are also available from foreign researchers, which shows that Racheva has a strong authorial presence in the academic space and that her scientific achievements are becoming known not only to Bulgarian, but also to foreign scientists.

It is important to note that Racheva is a participant in 9 scientific forums at home and abroad. She participates in a total of 11 national and 4 international projects. Shee develops active expert activity in the field of higher education and to various institutions and governing bodies .

Racheva is a member of a number of professional organizations such as the Bulgarian Association for Cognitive-Behavioral Psychotherapy and the Council for Cooperation of the State Agency "Road Safety"

Scientific activity

The scientific activity of Racheva is distinguished by its complexity and consistency. Her scientific interests are oriented almost entirely to Counseling Psychology and Personality Psychology and is characterized by topicality, scientific and applied significance.

In thematic terms, the works of Racheva are oriented in three areas: The first covers the problem of the use of psychoactive substances. The scientific works presented in this regard provide a good basis for understanding the processes of prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of addiction to PAS based on evidence in this field. The second deals with the problem of personality characteristics in persons with problematic alcohol and drug use and presents methods of personality research during adolescence. The third research direction is in the field of transport psychology and is aimed at studying the cognitive and personal factors related to the driving process and risky behavior of drivers on the road. These thematic areas reveal the candidate's professional sensitivity to issues relevant to psychological science and social practice. In the focus of her research interest are psychological problems such as: personality

profile of substance abusers in adolescence; quality of life of alcohol addicts; construction of methods for assessment of personal characteristics; the relationships between driving styles and risky behavior on the road.

The unifying center of the variety of problems is the idea of the need for a complex approach to addictive behaviors, related to overcoming the traditional medical model and the view - of a dichotomy between the body and the psyche and the application of the biopsychosocial approach, addressing integrated care aimed at mental and social well-being of the patient. This thesis Racheva becomes fundamental in treating the problems of addicts. She is actively involved in the stream of efforts to overcome the traditional understanding of addiction as primarily a medical problem and counterpoints the biopsychosocial approach, pointing out that addiction to PAS includes psychological and sociocultural factors. Thus, Racheva became an exponent of the modern complex approach to the study of addictions, claiming to be the most accurate in explaining the complicated nature of this phenomenon and the most effective in terms of prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of addiction to PAS.

The zenith of her research in this direction can be found in the monograph "Personal characteristics of substance abusers", which is also presented for the main habilitation thesis. The theoretical design unfolds in the direction of understanding the conceptual model for studying the personality characteristics of substance abusers. In order to clarify the author's position on the issue of researching the personality of the dependent Racheva leads a polemic that is directly or indirectly present in the text. Delineating a skeptical field about the possibility of a certain approach to personality to explain the personality characteristics of specific clinical groups, the author continues her search in another direction. Without pretensions to originality and at the same time substantiated Racheva discovers a new perspective in the study of the personality characteristics of addicts in the approach to describing dysfunctions in the field of psychopathology. It must be recognized that the adaptation of this approach to the goals of the study of personality characteristics of addicts is innovative in its essence and is an indisputable contribution for psychological science. The main advantage of this approach is the ability to refine the assessment and develop a therapeutic plan tailored to the individual needs of the addict. The constructed conceptual model links personality traits to internalized and externalized psychopathology. In this regard, the study is methodologically significant, expanding the perimeter of the classic approach to personality research in the direction of covering specific clinical groups, giving the opportunity for good practices in the field of prevention, treatment and rehabilitation for these groups. All this outlines not only the cognitive, but also the applied value of the development.

The problem of personality characteristics in dependent Racheva conceptualizes based on the classic paradigm models in psychology: the psychodynamic; behavioral; social-cognitive, reaching the modern concepts of the problem of Moran and Mitchell. The development abounds with data on the neurophysiological mechanisms of PAS influence, which increases the evidentiary value of the presented constructs by verifying their credibility, which ensures the scientific significance of the study.

With regard to the research methodology, it should be noted that the studied constructs of internalized and externalized personality traits were found to have an appropriate operationalization and corresponding variables, according to the theoretical propositions that underlie them. This is an indicator of compliance with the universal principle of conformity

between a theoretical model and an empirical method. The obtained results validate the author's assumptions about the specificity of the interaction of the studied personality traits with some specifics of the use of PAS. The conclusions drawn on the basis of the study prove that Racheva masters the art of meaningful interpretations. Broad generalizations have been made about the role of the personality in the process of forming and overcoming addiction to PAS. Of particular importance is the conclusion about the potential of the proposed conceptual model to build a bridge between theory and practice, insofar as it is useful in the field of prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of dependencies.

In general, this monograph is a natural continuation of the ideas laid down in the book "The problematic use of PAS in adolescence", as the thesis about the role of the personality, about the complex biopsychosocial approach is present as a leitmotif here as well. The theoretical model, however, is enriched with the ideas of Achenbach, building a general interpretive framework in which personality traits are tied to internalized and externalized psychopathology, which is an indisputable contribution in theoretical and methodological terms.

In the conducted research, the scientific achievements of Bulgarian and foreign scientists are taken into account. Various theoretical models concerning addictive behavior and the factors predetermining its manifestation are analyzed. This proves convincingly that the author not only knows, but has studied in depth the existing concepts on the problem, referring to more than 230 sources related to the names of leading researchers in the field. The domestic experience in the study of this problem is also well represented and integrated, associated with the names of famous scientists such as Stankushev-made his pioneering contribution to the region and Kalchev, with which the autor convinces us that she possesses skills not only for systematic presentation, but also for the creative rethinking of the achievements of his predecessors.

In general, the conducted empirical studies are well conceived and correctly implemented, which shows that the candidate has a high research culture. Different algorithms were used to transform the data through powerful complementary methods - factorial, dispersion, correlation analysis, t-test, which allowed to collect a respectable volume of information about the measured variables. The candidate uses, in addition to methods established in practice, but also author's, his personal development, which made it possible to obtain sufficient data and make reliable conclusions. In her analyses, Racheva shows a high linguistic culture, a high academic, sometimes essayistic style, emotionally captivating, showing the author's personal bias towards the topic, helping us to empathically understand the deep meaning of the text and hers, as she points out "immeasurable love to people waging war with themselves'.

Scientific contribution of the candidate

I agree with autor's assessment of the contributing moments in her scientific work. I would highlight the following contributions:

In theoretical-analytical terms:

1. Scientific studies have been systematized, further developed and adapted to the field of Counseling Psychology, specifically in the field of addiction.

2. Significant problems of Counseling, Transport Psychology and Personality Psychology have been developed.

3. New knowledge was obtained on the treated problem based on the accumulated facts. Indicative of this are the established dependencies between personal characteristics and the specifics of PAS use.

4. The research toolkit of psychological science has been enriched. The adaptation and construction of diagnostic methods is indicative of this.

In practical terms:

5. The conducted research lays a good foundation for the development of preventive programs and interventions in the field of addictions and that of road safety.

Conclusion

The theoretical and practical training of Racheva give her the opportunity to face any challenges in her professional activity. She skilfully combines teaching, research and practical activities. This is how she proves the applicability of the scientific theses she develops. The topics of her publications are in accordance with the topics of the announced competition. Her scientific and pedagogical activities satisfy the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Rules of its Application. Based on the positive assessment of her educational and teaching activity, the scientific significance of her works and the response they have found in the academic literature, I support the awarding of the academic position "Associate Professor" to Rositsa Racheva.

The opinion was prepared by: Prof. Teodora Stoeva