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OPINION

by Prof. Yolanda Zografova, DPhil., Institute for Population and Human Studies at Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, regarding 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 (Professional orientation and Career development), Research unit "Work and Organizational psychology", Institute for Population and Human Studies at Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, announced in the St. G. issue 58 of09.07.2024

For the announced competition for an associate professor position at the Institute for Population and Human Studies (IINCH) in the field of organizational psychology, particularly in professional orientation and career development, there is one candidate – assist.prof.PhD. Sezgin Mumun Bekir. The submitted documents, which are required for the competition, contain all the indicators necessary to meet both the legal and the minimum national requirements, as well as those established by the Regulations for the conditions and procedures for obtaining academic degrees and positions at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

The documentation also includes the candidate's publications – a monographic habilitation work, a book based on his dissertation project, four co-authored articles in indexed journals, and 16 articles, 12 of which are sole-authored, in non-refereed but peer-reviewed scientific journals.

Sezgin Bekir joined IPHS as a doctoral student in 2015, and later continued his research work as a postdoctoral researcher under the National Program for Young Scientists and Postdoctoral Researchers. In 2022, he was selected through a competition and appointed as a assist. professor at the institute. Dr. Bekir demonstrates a strong consistency in his scientific interests and development. His dissertation focused on the research potential of transactional analysis, particularly through ego states and life positions. Even at that time, his interest in transactional analysis extended beyond theoretical aspects to its applied side, particularly in personal realization within the professional sphere. In his subsequent academic career, Sezgin Bekir carried out a postdoctoral project in the field of personality psychology, and in recent years, the synthesis of his research achievements has been reflected in a monographic work.

The research developed by Dr. Bekir is both actual and highly significant. It focuses on the individual in their various states and life orientations, their social interactions, and the development from childhood to adulthood—topics that remain central to the psychological thought. This presents a significant challenge for the researcher to delve deeply into the aspects of this development without falling into already well-known and established patterns.

Bekir's monographic habilitation work, "Transactional Analysis and Professional Orientation", comprises three chapters. The first chapter covers the foundational principles of transactional analysis, that are the main in theoretical and practical plan. It thoroughly examines transactional analysis as an approach that reflects key lines and directions in personal development and realization. The core personality constructs of the analysis, such as ego states, transactions, life positions, and scripts, are presented competently and based on the psychological research sphere. The chapter also addresses important aspects of transactional analysis as a theory of personality, communication, and social interaction. The position is put forward that transactional analysis could be or already is a useful practical approach in the areas of professional orientation, career development, human resource management, and organizational consulting.

The author also highlights another area where this approach could be particularly useful—the educational sphere. He explores its potential applications in various educational environments, including preschool, school, and university settings.

In the second chapter, in addition to a transition into the organizational psychology perspective on the terminology used, paragraphs are devoted to own research and data analysis within the context of transactional analysis, focusing on career attitudes among eight professional guilds. Through this, Bekir seamlessly introduces the direct application of the approach using dominant personality constructs in an organizational context and among real professional groups. Naturally, individual factors, as well as interpersonal interactions—or, according to the approach, "transactions"—are closely related to personal career success and professional realization. Particularly interesting and important are the data and their analyses concerning professional groups, which explore the relationship between ego states, life

positions, and career success. The results show that these dynamics are also evident during adolescence; for instance, in the 7th grade, data were collected on the relationships between ego states, life positions, and choice of the profession.

The analysis also covers more specific factors influencing career choice during adolescence. This section presents a multifaceted picture of the influences on the development of career orientations and professional choices during this transitional age period. A literature review of three theories on career guidance in childhood and adolescence is also included. Dr. Bekir synthesizes, though briefly, but with substantial content, the trends regarding the widening of research models and approaches to studying personal development in childhood and adolescence, with a focus on career and professional orientation and interests. This expansion includes deeper analyses of personality traits, self-assessments, and relationships at different developmental stages, as well as a richer presence of environmental factors such as family, peers, and school. It also takes into account the development of educational and professional opportunities and trends.

The third chapter bears the same title as the book but focuses on organizational transactional analysis. The author describes the goals of organizational transactional analysis as aiming "to study personal experiences, interpersonal and/or group relations in the workplace by analyzing transactions, structure, goals, roles, and dynamics in organizations as complex social systems." This chapter also presents methodologies that were adapted for Bulgarian conditions in collaboration with Prof. Tair and implemented over the years in a series of studies.

Among Dr. Bekir's research efforts and significant contributions are two models: the multidimensional model for career guidance and the "Career" model for professional orientation. These were created based on systematic studies and theoretical analyses of the development of transactional analysis theory and its potential applications in career guidance and counseling. A key contribution is the candidate's overall approach of simultaneously developing and applying both a personal psychology and organizational psychology's perspective in his research. This provides a stable foundation for the real and ongoing development of research achievements, as it allows for a multifaceted approach to research design and depth in discovering

interdependencies. Another important aspect of Dr. Bekir's work is the practical application of the transactional approach and the results of the research.

In the publications submitted for the competition, Dr. Bekir presents a work based on his dissertation—Bekir, S. (2022). Ego States and Life Positions in the Professional Realization of the Personality—as well as 20 scientific publications. These works analyze a broad range of relationships between ego states, life positions, and the professional realization of individuals, as well as the connections between personality traits and the subjective sense of career success. Studies have been published on the basic personality constructs of transactional analysis theory among adolescents and their parents, as well as on relationship styles between students and teachers. Research has examined the influence of ego states, self-esteem, and life positions on teachers' subjective sense of career success, as well as the impact of parents' ego states and education levels on the self-esteem of 7th-grade students. The articles also present studies on professional groups, such as doctors and nurses, exploring the connection between personality traits and subjective career success, among other topics.

There has been no evidence of plagiarism in Dr. Bekir’s works.

My personal impressions of Dr. Bekir are of a scholar with high competence, openness to contemporary scientific knowledge, and someone who displays remarkable tolerance toward colleagues and loyalty to the institute.

In conclusion, based on Dr. Bekir’s demonstrated qualities as a scholar with long-standing interests and significant scientific output, published in high-level national and international journals, as well as the needs of the Institute for Population and Human Studies, and specifically the Research unit of Work and Organizational Psychology, for a researcher with a clear vision for the development and application of scientific knowledge, I fully and convincingly support the appointment of Assist.prof. Sezgin Bekir to the academic position of "Associate Professor."

21.10.24. Prof. Y.Zografova