Вх. № ЧР-03-381/16.10.2024 г.

REVIEW
by Prof. DSc Plamen Petrov Kalchev
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The review is a part of the election procedure for associate professor in the professional field 3.2. Psychology (Consulting psychology - personality and addictions), promulgated in the State Gazette no.58 of 09.07.2024 for the needs of the "Social and Counseling Psychology" section at the Institute for Population and Human Studies, BAS. It was elaborated on the basis of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.
One candidate applied for the above-mentioned position – Chief Assistant Professor of Psychology PhD Rositsa Racheva

Chief Assistant Professor, Dr. Rositsa Racheva, graduated with a Bachelor's and Master's Degree in Sociology at the "St. Kliment Ohridski" in 1999 and a Master's Degree in Clinical Psychology (psychoanalytic perspective) at the New Bulgarian University in 2004. She obtained a Master's Degree in Evidence Based Social Intervention at the University of Oxford in 2007. She passed also through training for social interventions (at the Business School, Oxford, 2007) and for management skills (at the Bulgarian School of Politics, 2010). She received a PhD in „Educational and Development Psychology" in 2014, after a successful completion and defense of her doctoral thesis: at the Department of Psychology, Institute for Population and Human Studies, BAS, on the topic "Personal Profile of Adolescents with Problem Use of Psychoactive Substances". Since 2016, she has been a Chief Assistant Professor at the Department of Psychology, Institute for Population and Human Studies, BAS. Since 2020, she has been a part-time teacher at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski", in the Master's program Child & Adolescent and School Psychology, with a lecture course "Use of alcohol and drugs in adolescence".

Research and results
In regard of the application requirements, Rositsa Racheva presented two monographs: “Personality characteristics of people addicted to psychoactive substances”, BAS publishing house "Prof. Marin Drinov" (2023), as a habilitation thesis, and “Problematic use of psychoactive substances in adolescence. Specifics of the personality profile”, BAS publishing house "Prof. Marin Drinov" (2024), which developed the basis of the dissertation research. The list of publications submitted for review also includes 8 articles (in co-authorship) published in refereed and indexed scientific databases (for two of which protocols of the author’s contribution are presented), as well as 4 studies and 6 articles published in non-refereed but peer-reviewed publications.

The habilitation work – “Personality characteristics of people addicted to psychoactive substances” presents a comparative analysis of externalized and internalized personality characteristics in persons with addictions to psychoactive substances and persons without experience of substance use. The problem is undoubtedly current, with research and applied aspects, in particular, in regard both to prevention and possible intervention/rehabilitation in persons with addictions. The presentation is structured in an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion and references (152 pages). The first chapter systematizes basic concepts related to the use, abuse and dependence of psychoactive substances, as well as their classification and description. The theories related to substance use are reviewed, and a bio-psycho-social model is presented. The factors related to the formation of problematic use are summarized in three groups: physiological, environmental and individual. The second chapter is devoted to the relationship between personality and addictions. Current models and approaches to the study of personality are successively examined, with data on the personal profile of addicts. In conclusion, a conceptual

model of personality traits in persons with addictions is presented, based on the distinction between externalized and internalized characteristics.

Chapter three presents the empirical study. The indicated theoretical framework allowed to justify the choice of the evaluated personality variables: the externalized include: antisocial behavior, impulsivity, sensation seeking, aggressiveness and risk-taking; to the internalized: emotional stability, self-esteem, anxiety and depression. The experimental (clinical) group of addicts (N=135, with a predominance of men) was formed by two subgroups: drug addicts and alcohol addicts. In addition to the status of the persons (with or without addiction), the type of psychoactive substance used, the beginning of use, as well as the presence of problematic use in the family are additionally monitored. Achieving this clinical sample size no doubt testifies to the author's efforts, motivation and good organizational skills in planning and implementing the study. The control group also consisted of 135 individuals from the general population of five institutions/organizations with different profiles and was balanced by gender, age and place of residence with the experimental group. Self-descriptive scales were constructed for the evaluation of externalized and internalized personality characteristics, using questions from the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP). For each trait, 10 items were selected, which, in some cases, were reduced on the basis of item analysis.

The comparison of the control and experimental groups was made on the basis of t-tests for independent samples, and in the cases of distinguishing the two clinical groups (addicted to alcohol or drugs), using one-way ANOVA. The effects of initiation of use and presence of problematic use in the family were also analyzed using independent samples t-tests. Correlations within groups of externalized and internalized characteristics are also discussed. The results identified significant differences between the experimental and control groups in the evaluated externalizing and internalizing characteristics, as well as a higher level of antisocial behavior in drug addicts compared to alcohol addicts. The effects of "initiation of use" and "problem use in the family" were also assessed.

In short: the monograph presents a carefully planned and successfully implemented empirical study, the positive characteristics of which can be summarized in several main points:

- An explanatory model for the level of externalized and internalized personality characteristics in persons with addictions is presented.
- A series of self-descriptive scales have been developed, with good internal consistency, to assess a wide range of personality characteristics. The toolkit is economical, compact and easy to use, with the potential to be useful for research and applied purposes.
- The data are based on a clinical group with a large number of subjects, which requires a significant resource of time and effort.
- Significant differences were obtained concerning personal characteristics in persons with addictions, with practical application in the two "major spheres of impact on the use of psychoactive substances - prevention and treatment/rehabilitation".
- The text is very well structured, which further facilitates the reader's familiarization with the study.

Some recommendations could be made to the study, which essentially set opportunities for expanding the analysis.

- It is recommended to assess the convergent validity of the new developed scales, through the correlations with other, independently constructed instruments.

- At a next stage of the analysis, a more complex multivariate model could be tested, in which the effects of externalized and internalized characteristics are simultaneously entered for estimation. Such an approach, using discriminant analysis (or, if the conditions for discriminant analysis are not met, by logistic regression) would identify the most important predictors of the person's belonging to the given group, after considering the relationships with others variables. As the author himself points out, "the profile of patients with problematic substance use includes a set of characteristics that are related to each other and mutually influencing each other." In particular, one of the interesting questions concerns the relationships between externalized and internalized characteristics. Here, too, there is scope for formulating and testing research hypotheses.

The indicated recommendations essentially outline perspectives for future work on the problem and the potential of the research, without casting doubt on the results obtained.

The second monograph – "Problematic use of psychoactive substances in adolescence. Specifics of the personality profile", Sofia, BAS Publishing House (2024) was published on the basis of the dissertation study. The book includes an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, references and appendices (168 pages). The author has approached the analysis of the mentioned issues by presenting a broad theoretical framework, in which presents the specifics of adolescence period: definitions, tasks and aspects of development, relations in the main social networks; the dominant models of psychopathology; the stages of use of psychoactive substances. The second chapter presents in detail personality characteristics and mental disorders in adolescents with problematic use of psychoactive substances, and the third chapter - the personality profile of adolescents with problematic use of psychoactive substances. The data were obtained using the Minnesota Multifactorial Personality Inventory for Adolescent Research (MMRI-A), as Rositsa Racheva, together with Eliana Pencheva and Nikolay Nikolov, is one of the authors of the Bulgarian adaptation. A total of 839 adolescents between the ages of 14 and 18 were studied, of which the data for 665 individuals were used in the analysis (complete data and valid protocols); of these, 503 adolescents form the normative sample for the Bulgarian adaptation of the MMPI-A; 100 adolescents formed a clinical sample, with different psychopathological symptoms, and 62 with diagnosed problematic use. The adaptation of such an inventory, unconditionally imposed in world practice, undoubtedly requires a high level of professionalism and a wide range of specific competences, which the authors of the adaptation have demonstrated. The successful work on the Bulgarian version of the MMRI-A, with potential for wide practical application, is a fundamentally important contribution of the work.

In the analysis of adolescents with problematic use, both demographic factors and the specifics of drug use are additionally included. The obtained results show that the group of adolescents with problem substance use has an elevated level on scales measuring externalized characteristics: impulsivity, weak inhibitions and problem behavior. One of the impressive results is the high score on the PRO content scale (Potential for Addiction, T= 74.11), an indicator developed specifically to assess behavioral characteristics associated with problematic alcohol and drug use. It is probably one of the best (and economical) screenings for the identification of the mentioned group, and the data obtained with Bulgarian youth represent a serious argument in favor of its validity.

At the next stage, based on a cluster analysis, three subgroups of adolescents were distinguished: a subgroup with externalized characteristics; a subgroup with a wide range and high level of emotional problems and distress; and a subgroup in which there is no manifestation of characteristics outside the norm.

Since I also know the candidate's dissertation work (as a reviewer), I would like to note that the author has worked additionally on the text: the theoretical part is extended, and the experimental part has been partially restructured in a way that is suitable for reading by a wider audience.

This testifies to the author's responsibility and exactingness when preparing a text for publication.

Of the 4 studies and 14 articles presented for the election procedure, two are with theoretical nature, the content of which is included in the habilitation work. Of the remaining publications, two have separation protocols, with the candidate's participation of 75% and 50%. The first of them presents a review of Internet-based programs for the prevention of the use of psychoactive substances, and the second - results of an empirical study of the quality of life of alcohol addicts with early onset and long-term use. Both articles are interesting and informative primarily for addiction professionals.
In the remaining publications, for which there are no protocols of authors contributions (or in some of the publications identical contributions are indicated), the candidate's contribution can be more difficult to assess. Among them, in addition to studies related to problematic substance use, there are works with a different thematic focus, in particular a series of studies in the field of transport psychology. They assess cognitive characteristics (non-verbal intelligence, executive functions) and personality factors (emotional stability, anxiety, locus of control, anger, aggression, risk-taking and sensation seeking) related to the driving behavior. Eight driving styles are also evaluated. On this basis, scales have been constructed and adapted to assess factors increasing the likelihood of risky behavior on the road. Without going into details, the obtained results, with a markedly applied nature, confirm the impression of the candidate as a competent researcher with broad research interests.

Participation in projects. The candidate has taken part in 11 research projects, the results of which are generally presented in the publications. Participation in such a large number of projects shows not only a strong motivation, but also a desire and opportunities for teamwork.

Teaching and academic activities
Since February 2020, the applicant has been a part-time teacher at the Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski", in the master's program "Child & Adolescent and School Psychology ", with a lecture course "Use of alcohol and drugs in adolescence". Reviews of the course are entirely positive. The lectures invariably arouse interest, and the teacher enjoys respect and authority from the students.

Personal impressions of the applicant
I know Rositsa Racheva as a motivated and responsible specialist, with a high level of preparation for academic and practical work. She is a curious person who loves professional challenges and is not afraid to take on the challenge.

The applicant fulfills the national requirements for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor".

Conclusion
Based on the presented materials and the presented arguments: I strongly recommend the Honorable Jury to award Rositsa Racheva, academic position „Associate Professor" in professional field 3.2. Psychology (Consulting Psychology - Personality and Addictions) at the Institute for Population and Human Studies, BAS.

October 14, 2024 Signature:

Prof. DSc Plamen Kalchev