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REVIEW

by Assoc. Prof. Valery Denev Todorov, PhD,

Professional field 3.2. Psychology

on the submissions for participation in the competition for academic position of Associate Professor in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic, and legal sciences, professional field 3.2. Psychology (Vocational guidance and career development), announced in State Gazette, No 58 of July 9th 2024

This review is a part of procedure set to render a decision on the competition for filling the academic position of an Associate Professor in professional field 3.2. Psychology (Vocational guidance and career development), as announced in the State Gazette issue No 58 of July 9th 2024 by the Institute for Population and Human Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (IPHS – BAS) for the needs of "Work and Organizational Psychology" Section at the Department of Psychology at the same institute. The review has been prepared on the basis of the Rules of Procedure of the Scientific Jury for occupying academic positions at IPHS – BAS following Order No RD-6-446/05.09.2024 issued by the Director of IPHS – BAS.

The only candidate in the competition is Sezgin Myumyun Bekir, holding a PhD in Psychology, Assistant Professor at IPHS – BAS, Section "Work and Organizational Psychology" at the Department of Psychology at the same institute. The candidate meets the requirements of Art. 27 of The Rules for the terms and conditions for occupying academic positions at IHPS – BAS and was admitted for evaluation by the Scientific jury of the competition.

According to the procedure, all legally required materials and documents have been provided. The following materials have been submitted for evaluation: one scientific monograph, one book on the basis of defended dissertation, and 20 scientific articles, 4 of which published in refereed scientific journals and indexed in world-renowned databases with scientific information (WoS, Scopus).

I. Research activity and results

1. *Evaluation of the scientific monograph*

The monograph entitled "Transactional analysis and vocational guidance" presented for evaluation summarizes the results of long-term research efforts and is a successive step in the academic development of the author – Dr. Sezgin Bekir. Dr Bekir is well known to the Bulgarian psychological community for his work in the field of Transactional Analysis (TA) and the promotion and dissemination of this theoretical perspective. His professional biography so far includes a monograph and numerous research articles devoted to this area of psychology.

As the title suggests, the work is devoted to the application of the theory and the methods of the Transactional Analysis in the field of vocational guidance as a specific element of career counselling. The importance of these services, both for adolescents and adults, has grown significantly in recent years due to the extraordinary dynamics of the labour market, implying frequent job changes and demanding continuous updates of the professional qualifications of the job seekers. The significance of these type of services is crucial in particular for adolescents in a disadvantaged social situation, as it is important to provide them with opportunities for maximum utilization of their talents and abilities aiming to reach sustainable improvement of their social status and development prospects. Therefore, I consider that the choice of a research problem is appropriate and in correspondence to a significant and current public need.

The work provided for review is structured in three chapters, the first of which is a systematic presentation of Transactional Analysis (TA) as a theoretical approach and conceptual basis for interventions. The author convincingly elaborates the thesis that TA is a particularly suitable option for formulating pragmatically oriented counselling approaches, with a clear definition of the roles and commitments of the parties in the process, intervention protocols and criteria for achieving results.

The second chapter includes a systematic review of previous own and co-authored research on the interrelationships between key variables from transactional analysis theory and the subjective sense of career success in subjects from different professional fields, as well as the expressiveness of ego states and the choice of profession in seventh grade students. Along with the own developments, this section also presents an overview of research devoted to the identification and classification of the main factors in the choice of a profession, as well as concepts of the choice of a profession in adolescence. Essentially, the section builds the argumentation and brings to the reader's attention the theoretical and empirical prerequisites for the practical intervention model proposed in the third chapter in counselling for vocational guidance and career development.

The model employs a number of personal variables from the TA theory, through which the counsellor can build a clear and justified concept of how to direct his client to a field of vocational development that best matches his personality and interests. Four psychometric instruments are proposed to measure *ego-states, life positions, drivers/working style* and *types of life script* with a total of 19 scales. Two of the tools are developed by the author, and two are Bulgarian adaptations of proven and widespread methods of other authors. Evidence of the psychometric qualities of the instruments are presented as well as guidelines on how their results should be interpreted in the context of career guidance counselling. In addition, three projective methods are presented, integrated as elements of the seven-step model of career counselling for vocational guidance suggested in the last part of the third chapter. The model is based on Julie Hay's (Hay, 1992) Personality Adaptation AP^3 model, and this is, in my opinion, the central contribution of the monograph. Creating a specific practical protocol based on the research results is a serious challenge and the author of the paper has taken this risk. The model is clearly formulated in logically grounded and clearly understandable sequential practical steps. As such, it could be easily transferred to a wide range of applied contexts and easily understood and applied by career counsellors with diverse theoretical orientations and previous practical experience. The tool could be particularly useful when working with adolescents living in a deprived social environment, where the opportunities to receive feedback about one's own abilities and talents, as well as information about prospects and opportunities for development, are limited, and that is precisely why receiving external support, guidance and encouragement are of great importance to them. The content of the monograph and the scientific results summarized in it, in my opinion, could easily serve as the basis of a training program for consultants in the field of vocational guidance with good practical effectiveness.

The monograph submitted for review contains significant scientific, applied and methodological contributions, and I would highlight the following among them:

1. An accessible and consistent systematic presentation of the main ideas of the transactional analysis approach is performed, with an emphasis on its application in an organizational environment;

2. Own research on the relations between basic personality variables from the transactional analysis are presented, as well as variables related to professional development and career success;

3. A systematized multidimensional model for describing the personality characteristics and behaviours in work environment is proposed, and four types of profiles for determining vocational choices and interests are described;

4. A seven-step practically oriented protocol for counselling in vocational guidance is derived;

5. Psychometric tools for assessing key transactional analysis variables are created and adapted, paving the way for future research in this theoretical domain.

I believe that the scientific contributions and overall qualities of the monographic work satisfy the requirements and the conditions for the scientific position in the competition.

2. *Evaluation of the contributions in the other submitted publications*

The candidate provides for evaluation another 21 scientific works, one of which is a book based on defended dissertation, 14 are independent, 4 of which published in refereed scientific journals and indexed in world-renowned databases with scientific information.

Among the scientific contributions mentioned above, the candidate's long-term research work in the field of transactional analysis and the applications of this theoretical perspective should be highlighted in the context of the organization, career development, vocational guidance and personal growth. A significant place in the candidate's work is occupied by his research on the subjective career success and its personal and contextual antecedents.

The pursuit of practically applicable research results for solving important social problems, mainly related to helping adolescents in a disadvantaged social situation in choosing a vocation and helping them building a strategy for personal, educational and professional development, emerges as a leading trend in the candidate’s works.

Last but not least, the development and adaptation of a number of methods should be highlighted, such as the author's questionnaire for the three types of life script according to the theoretical model of Eric Berne, a Bulgarian adaptation of the short version of the working styles questionnaire by Julie Hay (Hay, 1996).

Through the above-mentioned publications, the candidate demonstrates a solid and sustainable presence in the academic field of the competition, thoroughness and systematicity of his scientific work.

3. Citation by other authors

The scientific works of Assistant Professor Sezgin Bekir have been cited a total of 8 times, 3 times of which in peer-reviewed and indexed in world-renowned databases journals, and 2 times in collective volumes and monographs with scientific review, according to the provided reference. The remaining 3 citations are in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals. As per this indicator, his scientific work also fulfils the requirements of the position under the competition.

4. *Evaluation of the results of participation in research and creative projects and application of the obtained results in practice*

Dr. Sezgin Bekir was the head of a scientific project entitled "Personality, education and professional self-realisation for people from vulnerable groups: scientific dimensions and practical approaches", financed by the National Program "Young scientists and postdoctoral students". After acquiring his doctoral degree, he completed the implementation of 2 internal research projects.

The candidate has also taken part in a number of applied projects mainly with a social and administrative focus, such as social and economic integration of individuals from minority and underprivileged groups.

5. *Scientific contribution, originality of the presented works and authenticity of the presented scientific data*

The scientific contribution of the presented works is convincing, significant, and diverse. No grounds were found to doubt the authenticity of the presented scientific data and results.

II. Administrative and public activities

In parallel with his work as an Assistant Professor at IPHS – BAS, Dr. Bekir is also the chairman of the Municipal Council on Drugs in the Municipality of the town of Kardzhali. This body is engaged in the development, adoption and implementation of municipal programs to combat drug abuse and drug trafficking in accordance with the national strategies and programs, and also carries out trainings, consultations, preventive activities and information campaigns.

III. Fulfilment of the requirements for holding the academic position

The candidate completely fulfils and, in some areas, exceeds the requirements for holding the academic position "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education 3. Social economic and legal sciences, professional direction 3.2. Psychology (Vocational guidance and career development).

IV. Personal impressions of the candidate (if any)

I have favourable personal impressions of Dr Bekir both professionally and personally. I believe he enjoys a good professional and academic reputation, as well as respect in the professional community.

V. Conclusion

In conclusion, my overall assessment of the criteria and indicators for the academic activity of Assistant Professor Sezgin Myumyun Bekir, PhD is positive, as he fulfils the requirements of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (DASRB, Art. 2b, Art. 24, Art. 26), 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 for holding the academic position "Associate Professor" in the professional field 3.2 Psychology (Vocational guidance and career development) and without hesitation I propose his admission to election by the Scientific Council of the Institute for Population and Human Studies at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

Date: 11.10.2024

Signed: …….

Assoc. Prof. Valery Todorov, PhD