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S T A N O V I S H E

By Prof. RUMYANA BOZHINOVA Ph.D.

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The opinion is in connection with the procedure of the competition for the occupation of the academic position "associate professor" in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional direction 3.2. Psychology (Counseling Psychology - Personality and Addictions) for the needs of the "Social and Counseling Psychology" section at IPHS - BAS, announced of 09.07.2024 from the IPHS - BAS

Candidate - ROSITSA ZHELAZKOVA RACHEVA Ph.D.,

Ch. assistant at the IPHS - BAS

One candidate participated in the above-mentioned competition - Rositsa Zhelyazkova Racheva, Ph.D., ch. assistant in the Population and Human Studies at the BAS, Department of Psychology, Section of Social and Counseling Psychology.

Rositsa Racheva has been working at the IPHS at the BAS since 2016. Before that, he was a full-time doctoral student at the same institute, where in 2014 he defended his dissertation on the topic: Personal profile of adolescents with problematic use of psychoactive substances.

The candidate's direct experience in the workplace and on the topic of the competition is 8 years. In the mentioned period, Racheva was distinguished by serious professional commitment, both in the sections to which she worked (Section on Personality Psychology and Section on Social and Counseling Psychology) and outside of them. She participated in the preparation, development and implementation of more than 7 research projects, national and international. He teaches in the master's program in child and adolescent psychology at the Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". The volume and quality of her scientific and teaching work is largely related to her extremely broad competence. She has a master's degree in clinical psychology (NBU), a

master's degree in evidence-based social intervention (Oxford University), a master's degree in sociology (SU "Cl. Ohridski"). In the same time Racheva has very serious practical training and activity in the field of counseling, therapy and rehabilitation of alcohol and drug addicts.

For the current competition, the candidate has submitted 24 scientific publications:

- 1 independent monograph - habilitation thesis
- 1 independent book based on her dissertation work
- 6 scientific articles in English in refereed and indexed scientific publications
- 2 scientific articles in English and Bulgarian, referenced in a global database
- 4 studies, 2 of which in English, published in non-refereed, peer-reviewed editions and in edited scientific volumes;
- 10 scientific articles, of which 1 in English, published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals and in edited scientific volumes

18 of the articles are co-authored and in 11 of them Racheva is the first author.

In terms of content, Rositsa Racheva's publications are entirely on the subject of the announced competition. Their content orientation shows a clearly expressed consistency and purposefulness in research pursuits. There is also a connection between the scientific and the applied nature of the developed problems, the ambition to respond to the topical issues of the country and modern society.

The candidate demonstrates a broad awareness of the studied range of problems, including the latest developments in the relevant fields. This is evident both from the in-depth presentation and analysis of existing concepts and research, as well as from the formulation of her own distinctly up-to-date views.

The main researches and contributions of the author are in the field of counseling psychology and are reflected in the monographic habilitation work «Personality characteristics of those addicted to psychoactive substances» and in the monograph «Problematic use of psychoactive substances in adolescence. Personal Profile Specifics'. The specific works are oriented towards elucidating essential psychological mechanisms of regulation of the processes related to the acceptance of psychoactive substances, to prevention, to the diagnosis of the relevant addiction, and also to treatment and rehabilitation. They are focused on personality, an aspect that has been limitedly studied, and this greatly emphasizes their originality.

The contribution of the monographic studies proposed by Racheva is based on the complex psychological interpretation of the relationship between personality and the

use of psychoactive substances. It leads to the derivation of a model that reflects the main forms of specific psychological functioning of the individual, to the identification of the main characteristics related to the personality profile of addicts. The author provides convincing evidence that people who develop an interest in and dependence on psychoactive substances are distinguished by a certain expression of externalized and internalized personality traits. The specifics of the personality profile of those addicted to psychoactive substances in adolescence and adulthood are outlined, as well as their relationship with socio-demographic factors and specifics of the use of psychoactive substances.

With a specific applied contribution are the studies published by Racheva on: 1) The characteristics of the FMR1 mRNA gene in PAH addicts, related to biological disorders and the development of accompanying diseases; 2) The quality of life of alcohol addicts, with early onset and a certain duration; 3) The various aspects of treatment of PAD addictions in Bulgaria – demand and accessibility, safety and efficacy of supportive treatment, good practices and psychosocial rehabilitation; 4) Modern trends in the Internet-based prevention of the use of psychoactive substances.

It is also worth emphasizing that Racheva has contributed to the creation and adaptation of research tools. Scales were constructed to assess externalized and internalized personality characteristics. They are characterized by high reliability and, according to the reported results, are applicable for the early identification of youth at risk, in the process of planning strategies for prevention, in rehabilitation and in the prevention of relapses in psychological work with addicts. The MMPI-A (adolescent version) has been adapted for Bulgaria, allowing its application in the country, for the study of different clinical populations for the purpose of diagnosis and treatment.

In theoretical terms, Racheva's publications have a high cognitive value. They present a detailed analysis of contemporary views and empirical results dealing with or related to the problem of "personality - use of psychoactive substances". Leading epidemiological characteristics of the use of psychoactive substances in adolescence and adulthood, leading biological, psychological and social theories regarding the formation of addictions are systematized. It is output as a fundamental biopsychosocial model for understanding the processes of formation and overcoming of problematic use of psychoactive substances.

Racheva's main publications on the relationship between personality and the use of psychoactive substances also show a certain contribution of relevant research in the field of personality psychology. They complement the idea of the regulatory potential of

personal characteristics, reveal personally based mechanisms of specific interaction with environmental factors, which lead to behavioral orientation with negative consequences for the mental development and state of the individual, as well as for his physical health. Of certain importance is the derivation of externalized and internalized personal characteristics and the proposed possibility (method) for studying them.

The third problem area to which six of Racheva's publications relate is transport psychology. The contributions of the presented research are basically related to the identification of groups of individual characteristics that are important for driving, different in nature - cognitive characteristics, personality characteristics, non-verbal intelligence, gender and growth characteristics, individual experience.

Of particular applied significance is the definition of the driving style construct and the identification of eight driving styles in Bulgaria, outlining the real risky behavior on the road.

Created and adapted with the participation of Racheva are methods for reliable assessment of personal factors predisposing to dangerous behavior on the road and a certain driving style.

In general, Rositsa Racheva's research is in line with issues to which society demonstrates increased sensitivity. They contribute to their knowledge and search for adequate solutions, opportunities for their expedient management.

I especially want to emphasize that the results of Rositsa Racheva's research are distinguished by a certain significance for the development of counseling psychology in the country, for practical progress in the field.

CONCLUSION:

Rositsa Zhelyazkova Racheva, the only candidate in the competition for associate professor majoring in "Counseling Psychology - Personality and Addictions" at the Institute for Population and Human Research, Department of Psychology at the BAS, is a scientist with a visible presence in the field of counseling psychology. Through her publications, she presents herself as a competent and thorough professional – a researcher with a keen social sense of the relevance of the studied problems, broad literary awareness and a deep creative approach, with a serious attitude to the practice of psychological counseling. The volume of its production is quite sufficient and of certain scientific value.

As a member of the jury, I am convinced that **Rositsa Zhelyazkova Racheva** meets the conditions for occupying the scientific position "associate professor" and I give a positive conclusion for her selection

10. 10. 2024 **Prof. Rumiana Bozhinova Ph.D.**