

OPINION

on the competition for associate professor (docent) in specialty 3.2.
PSYCHOLOGY (EXPERIMENTAL PSYCHOLOGY AND
PSYCHODIAGNOSTICS), announced in SG no. 24 of 17.03.2023 for the needs of
the Department of Experimental Psychology and Psycho diagnostics of the Sofia
University "St. Kliment Ohridski"

Documents for participation in the competition were submitted by one candidate himself - chief assistant. Dr. Aneta Petrova Atanasova. Dr. Atanasova has presented 20 publications, including two monographs (Diagnosis and evaluation of disorders of the Autistic spectrum. Sofia, 2018, University Publishing House "St. Kliment Ohridski"; Specific disorders of the ability to learn. Dyslexia and other specific disorders in primary school age. Publishing House "East-West" 2006), two studies published in the Sofia University Yearbook and 16 articles published in scientific publications with a high impact factor. In terms of content and scientific approach, I have separated two main groups of publications: "Evaluation and measurement" - 6 publications; "Breastfeeding" - 4 publications. All publications are of a high scientific level and contain both interesting research and modern research methods of experimental psychology. The monograph "Diagnosis and Assessment of Autism Spectrum Disorders" is 450 pages long. The content is structured in 13 chapters and a conclusion. The author has examined in great detail the specifics of autism spectrum disorders in different age periods. In addition, she has shown how to assess these disorders and guide caregivers to effective methods of help and assistance in various situations. From a research point of view, the most interesting is the tenth chapter, in which the psychological tools for screening, diagnosis and assessment of autism spectrum disorders are presented in detail. Here, Dr. Atanasova has reviewed over 25 questionnaires and scales for the study of autism spectrum disorders. For most of the questionnaires and scales, she presents data from her own research. The data were processed with the most powerful statistical and psychometric analysis methods, which enabled her to make adequate decisions about their use in specific situations. The description of the methods and the results of data processing through them is at a high professional level and fully meets the modern requirements of experimental psychology, psychometrics and psycho diagnostics. It also shows the author's excellent training in the methods and procedures of experimental psychology. This monograph has the qualities of a habilitation thesis, which fully meets the requirements for holding the academic position of ASSISTANT PROFESSOR (DOCENT).

In the cycle of publications on the topic "Assessment, measurement", the article "I and others" stands out, in which a study was made with three people, using the method of interviews. People with autism spectrum disorder were studied. According to the authors, the main goal of this research is to reach the spontaneous responses and the verbalization in their own words of the thoughts, needs and experiences around the topics of "friendship" and "relationships" of people with autism. In order to realize the set goals of the study, semi-structured individual video interviews were conducted in an online environment with three types of participants - the person with autism spectrum disorders himself, a relative (parent) and a specialist. The transcribed interviews were analyzed using the method of interpretive phenomenological analysis, a systematic reflection on the content and relational aspects of what was shared was applied. Researchers worked collaboratively in a discussion format and in real time with the videotape and transcript, simultaneously coding the content and documenting their immediate emotional reactions to the interview, as well as their associations and reflections. The authors recommend this method as particularly useful in studies of people with autism spectrum disorders. In conclusion, the authors draw the following conclusion. "The presented fragment of the three interviews and their analysis reveal the clearly stated need and desire of the person with autism spectrum disorders for communication and connection, raise questions about the extent to which relatives and professionals identify this side of the functioning and development of people with autism spectrum disorders and how they all (families and the whole system of psychosocial care) respond to these needs, where are the deficits and what interventions should be planned and implemented going forward." This topic is best presented in two studies published in the Yearbook of Sofia University, namely "The Interview as a Method for Assessment of Autism Spectrum Disorders" and "Psychological Assessment of Autism Spectrum Disorders". The first study examines in detail the types of interviews, the validity of the interview, the structure of the interview, the non-verbal aspects of the interview, interviewing skills and much more, and the questions asked are clarified with very specific examples. The second studio is devoted to psychological assessment. According to the author, psychological assessment refers to measuring human behavior in a systematic way. This topic is best presented in two studies published in the Yearbook of Sofia University, namely "The Interview as a Method for Assessment of Autism Spectrum Disorders" and "Psychological Assessment of Autism Spectrum Disorders". The first study examines in detail the types of interviews, the validity of the interview, the structure of the interview, the non-verbal aspects of the interview, interviewing skills and much more, and the questions asked are clarified with very specific examples. The second studio is devoted to psychological assessment. According to the author, psychological

assessment refers to measuring human behavior in a systematic way. It is necessarily multidisciplinary. The philosophical concept of the multidisciplinary assessment of people with autism spectrum disorder is based on three main theoretical frameworks: 1. Care focused on the whole family; 2. Competence regarding the cultural specificity of individuals and families; 3. Perspective on strengths, not deficits. As stages of the psychological assessment, the author indicates the following: 1. Referral for assessment; 2. Acceptance of the request; 3. Planning the assessment; 4. Carrying out the assessment; 5. Planning after the assessment; 6. Writing a report on the conducted assessment; 7. Tracking. The evaluation functions are also discussed in detail. As a summary of this topic, I can say that the most essential problems related to evaluation and assessments are presented in the studios.

A topic represented by 4 articles is the topic of breastfeeding. On this topic, the post about mothers' attitudes and beliefs about breastfeeding is interesting. A study is described, the purpose of which is to study the attitudes and beliefs of Bulgarian mothers regarding breastfeeding. A study is described, the purpose of which is to study the attitudes and beliefs of Bulgarian mothers regarding breastfeeding. The author of the study sets herself the following 4 tasks: 1. To construct a questionnaire that measures mothers' attitudes about breastfeeding; 2. To discover the typical attitudes of mothers who breastfed for different durations; 3. To check the interrelationships between attitudes and duration of breastfeeding; 4. To test the possibility of predicting the duration of breastfeeding based on a short scale. In the study, the author sets herself the task of testing the following hypotheses:

1. There is a correlation between the duration of breastfeeding and mothers' attitudes;
2. There are differences in the attitudes of mothers who breastfeed for a shorter and longer time (0-6 months; over 6 months);
3. Mothers' attitudes about breastfeeding can be a successful predictor of breastfeeding duration.

The author examined 194 mothers with the constructed questionnaire. The obtained data were analyzed using factor analysis methods, as a result of which 4 factors were extracted:

1. "Well informed" factor, including statements that reflect current recommendations and data from recent research related to breastfeeding;
2. The "Limited" factor includes various statements that reflect the perception of certain limitations;
3. "Wrong beliefs" factor - reflects various beliefs about breastfeeding that are denied by modern research;
4. "Negative attitude" factor, including only five statements.

The four factors had a moderate correlation with the breastfeeding duration variable. Later, the author did a lot of additional research, as a result of which she obtained reliable data about the attitudes of mothers towards the variable duration of breastfeeding.

As can be seen, Dr. Atanasova has the ability to plan and conduct in-depth research on topics that she believes are important and contribute to the clarification of some important issues of our time. I do not know Dr. Atanasova personally, but her publications made an excellent impression on me. I propose to the Scientific Jury to vote on the proposal to give the academic position of ASSOC. PROFESSOR (DOCENT) Dr. Aneta Petrova Atanasova.

Sofia, 6/08/2023

Wrote the opinion:

/prof. Dr. Encho Gerganov/