

OPINION

by Prof. Dr. Encho Gerganov - New Bulgarian University, Department of Cognitive Science and Psychology, retired lecturer,
in the competition for associate professor in the Professional field: 3.2. Psychology (Cognitive Psychology and Psycholinguistics), announced in SG, issue 96 of 19.11.2021. Field of higher education: 3. Social, economic, and legal sciences for the needs of the Faculty of Philosophy of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski "

Documents for participation in the competition for associate professor of Psychology (Cognitive Psychology and Psycholinguistics) has been submitted by a single candidate - Dr. Nikolay Rumenov Rachev, Chief Assistant in the Department of General, Experimental, Developmental, and Health Psychology at the Faculty of Philosophy, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". Nikolay Rachev has completed the master's program in clinical and counseling psychology, as well as the master's program in occupational and organizational psychology at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", after which he enrolled in the doctoral program in cognitive psychology at the same university. In 2008 he defended his dissertation and received the educational and scientific degree DOCTOR. Since 2008 he has been a chief assistant at Sofia University and has been teaching students. She teaches courses in Cognitive Psychology - Part One and Two, and Psycholinguistics. He has taught Cognitive Psychology in English to students from the Master's Program in General Psychology in English. His teaching activity at Sofia University is more than 10 years. Nikolay Rachev has attached to the documents a Report on the workload, which documents his heavy workload as a teacher. He actively works with students. He was the scientific supervisor of one master's thesis and three bachelor's theses successfully defended. He is the head of the Incoglab Laboratory of Cognitive Psychology: a behavioral laboratory for controlled psychological experiments since 2013. He has participated in two international research projects and five Bulgarian projects funded by the Research Fund of Sofia University. He has been a research supervisor on two of these projects. At the invitation of the editors-in-chief, he has reviewed more than 10 articles submitted for publication in international psychological journals. He constantly reviews master's and bachelor's theses of psychology students at Sofia University. His creative activity as a university lecturer meets the highest criteria and state requirements. According to the report on the implementation of the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b of the Law on Social Science, Economics and Law, professional field 3.2. Psychology chief Assistant Professor Dr.

Nikolay Rumenov Rachev has 596 points, which significantly exceeds the minimum national requirements.

For his participation in the competition for associate professor, Dr. Nikolay Rachev has submitted 18 scientific publications, one of which is a monograph, *Rationality in a cultural context*, University Publishing House “St. Kliment Ohridski”(2018), 7 publications in English in international peer-reviewed journals and collections, and 10 publications in Bulgarian peer-reviewed scientific journals. These publications have a high citation rate. The author has attached a Certificate from the Department of Library and Information Services of the University Library at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" for the citations of his publications. According to this assurance, he has 25 citations of 7 indexed documents in the Web of Science Clarivate (1950 – 2022) with an h-index = 3; 24 citations of 7 indexed documents in Scopus ELSEVIER (1960 – 2022) with an h-index = 3; 1 citation in ScienceDirect; 1 citation in SpringerLink, and 6 citations in the Russian index of scientific citations (RISC / eLIBRARY.ru). From the number of citations in authoritative publications, it can be concluded that Nikolay Rachev's publications have provoked a wide response in the scientific community and are an indicator of the high scientific level of his published research.

Of all the scientific publications, the monograph *Rationality in a cultural context* deserves special attention. It reflects the author's research on the problems of rational thinking, as well as on the role of culture in good thinking. According to the author, to think rationally means to make good judgments, to make good decisions and to think well. However, people often deviate from rational decisions. The author shows the systematic ways of these deviations, as well as the differences in the degree of deviations. He draws attention to cultural influences on these deviations. Different cultural backgrounds predispose to different ways of thinking. In the first part of the book Nikolay Rachev reviews the theoretical approaches to this issue, and in the second part he describes initial empirical results on two main issues: what is the intercultural variation of effects that are usually considered universal, and how culture can mediate the relationship between good thinking and mental abilities as traditionally measured. The author identifies five theoretic and applied contributions in the monograph. Among them the most important are the following: it presents basic theoretical issues in the study of rationality; it makes a critical review of the two-process theories of higher knowledge; it outlines the possible role of the cultural environment in the automation of certain thought processes and emphasizes the need to study, in different cultural environments, effects considered universal; it offers a research program focused on the participation of culture in

good thinking. These scientific contributions fully correspond to the actual results obtained from the theoretical and empirical research described in the monograph.

Interesting research results have been published in international journals, such as the article “Rachev, N. R. (2021). Myside bias, school performance, and the polarity of music preferences. *Journal of Cognitive Psychology*, 33(1), 77–86.”, which examines myside bias among Bulgarian students. The most significant scientific contribution in this article is the first exploratory evidence that the strength of prior opinion predicts the magnitude of myside bias not only within a certain topic, but also in a set of related topics (in this case – musical styles).

Interesting research has also been published in Bulgarian publications. For example, the article “Bulgarian versions of automated working memory capacity tasks, *Bulgarian Journal of Psychology*, 2021(1), 159–167”, presents initial data from a study of working memory capacity using Bulgarian versions of two automated tasks – the Operation span task and the Reading span task. Findings are reported regarding the internal consistency, construct validity and criterion validity of these tasks. The article "The general propensity for psychological misconceptions: New evidence among Bulgarian students, *Bulgarian Journal of Psychology*, 2021(1), 168–177”, describes research on psychological misconceptions. Using exploratory factor analyzes of scales for psychological misconceptions, dualism, paranormal and extrasensory beliefs, Dr. Nikolay Rachev replicated previous results that support the existence of a common tendency to psychological misconceptions. This tendency is explained in terms of the dual-process approach to thinking. Other articles also present empirical findings of a contributing nature.

From the presented publications it can be concluded that Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Nikolay Rachev is a researcher who masters and applies in his research modern research methodology, including planning factor experiments, conducting them in controlled conditions and analyzing the results with adequate statistical methods such as analysis of variance, regression analysis, various types of factor analyzes, etc. The results of these analyzes are interpreted within the framework of the most appropriate theories.

In conclusion, I can give the highest grade to Dr. Nikolay Rachev for his research and teaching activities. By actively working with students, he has involved them both in research and in expanding their knowledge in various fields of psychology. For his participation in the competition he, has presented perfect documentation that meets the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

As a member of the Scientific Jury, I will vote Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Nikolay Rumenov Rachev to take the academic position of associate professor in the announced competition. I call on the other members of the Scientific Jury to vote in favor of this proposal.

Sofia, 17.03.2022

Prof. Dr. Encho Gerganov