

(English translation)

## **REVIEWER'S OPINION**

on Competition procedure for the position of Associate Professor in the field

3.2 Psychology (Cognitive Psychology and Psycholinguistics)

Announced by Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, Faculty of Philosophy in the State Gazette, issue 96/19.11.2021 and on the Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski web page

**By Prof. Irina Zinovieva, PhD, DSc**

**Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, Faculty of Philosophy,**

**professional field 3.2 Psychology** in her capacity of Scientific Jury Member following Order# RD 38-587/10.12.2021 of the Rector of Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski

**The only candidate who submitted documents for participation in the announced competition is Ch. Assistant Professor Nikolai Rumenov Rachev, PhD.**

### **I. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE CANDIDACY**

#### **1. Submitted documents**

For participation in the competition Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Nikolay Rachev presents all documents required by law and regulations for its application.

The documents submitted in the competition by the candidate fully comply with the requirements of the Law on Development of Academic Staff in Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB), the State Rules of Procedure for its application, and the Rules for Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and Occupation of Academic Positions at Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski.

#### **2. Details of the candidate**

Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Nikolay Rachev is a graduate of Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski. In 2001 he received a master's degree in Psychology, with two

specializations - clinical and counseling psychology and occupational and organizational psychology.

In 2016, as a doctoral student at the Department of General, Developmental and Experimental Psychology with research supervisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Evdokia Hristova, he defended a dissertation on "Dimensions of musical experience" for educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in professional field 3.2 Psychology.

His career began as a clinical psychologist at the State Psychiatric Hospital St. Ivan Rilski, Novi Iskar. Since 2006, the candidate has been a full-time Assistant until 2008 and Chief Assistant Professor till present at Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski.

Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Nikolay Rachev is the founder and head of the Laboratory of Cognitive Psychology Incoglab: Behavioral Laboratory for Controlled Psychological Experiments.

### **3. General characteristics of the applicant's scientific work and assessment of compliance with the minimum national requirements**

The research of Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Nikolay Rachev is mainly in the field of decision making and rationality, some of the publications concern the capacity of working memory, and another significant part is adaptations to the Bulgarian cultural context of tools for psychological measurement and computerized tasks for the experiments performed.

For participation in the competition Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Nikolay Rachev presented the monograph "Rationality in a cultural context", articles published in renowned scientific journals, referenced and indexed in WoS and SCOPUS, as well as publications in Bulgarian scientific journals. Special attention should be paid to the articles from the year 2021 in *Nature Human Behavior* with IF: 13.66 (2020), *Scientific Data*, IF: 6.10 (2020), *Royal Society Open Science*, IF: 2.963 (2020); *PLOS ONE*, IF: 3.240 (2020).

The first three articles are co-authored with dozens of other scholars, and it is difficult to assess the candidate's contribution. But integration into research teams of this rank boosts chances for strong academic achievements in the future. The fourth mentioned

article is co-authored with 6 other scientists, where Dr. Rachev is the first author, with the leading role in this work. The article in the *Journal of Cognition and Culture*, IF 2,444 (2020), which is an independent work of Dr. Rachev, is a testament to his skills in conducting and presenting high quality research to the international scientific community.

Other articles submitted for participation in the competition have been published in Bulgarian scientific journals - 4 in the *Bulgarian Journal of Psychology*, 2 in the *Yearbook of Sofia University* and 1 in the *Bulgarian Economic Papers*. The rest have been published in proceedings of national congresses in psychology.

*Citations.* Submitted for this competition are 3 citations in Scopus of two articles; 4 citations in monographs and collective peer-reviewed volumes; 2 citations or reviews in peer-reviewed non-indexed journals. All of these citations exclude autocitations and have not been used before.

**In conclusion:**

a) the scientific works presented for the competition meet the minimum national requirements (under Art. 2b, para. 2 and 3 of ZRASRB) and respectively the additional requirements of Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski for holding the academic position of Associate Professor in professional field 3.2 Psychology. The data are as follows: Under indicator B, a habilitation monograph in the field of the announced competition is presented, which brings 100 points. In indicator C, from articles and extended articles, including those indexed in SCOPUS, described above, the candidate amasses 205.79 points. Indicator D concerning citations yields 95 points. Finally, for indicator E - participation in research projects - the candidate participated in 3 projects: one national research project, of which he was the manager; one participation in a national research project as team member and one participation in an international research project as team member) - 145 points in total.

b) the scientific papers submitted by the candidate do not repeat those of previous procedures for acquiring a scientific title or an academic position;

c) there is no established plagiarism in the scientific papers submitted for the competition.

#### **4. Teaching activity of the candidate**

Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Nikolay Rachev has extensive experience in teaching as an Assistant and Chief Assistant Professor at Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski.

He is the titular of the disciplines Cognitive Psychology Part I and II and Psycholinguistics, and for many years he has given lectures and seminars in the bachelor's programme in Psychology, and, in recent years, also in the Bachelor's program in Non-Formal Education. He also gives lecture courses in the master's programs in Child and Adolescent and School Psychology and Psychology in English.

Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Nikolay Rachev enjoys a good reputation among students, is known as a demanding teacher capable of explaining complex problems in a clear way and of inspiring students for excellence. Until the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, together with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Evdokia Hristova, he organized an annual students conference on cognitive psychology.

#### **5. Scientific contributions of the candidate**

The author's statement of scientific contributions, prepared by Dr. Rachev, adequately represents his contributions. Hereafter, I will mention only some that are important in the context, which is closer to the areas, in which I work.

Many of the theories developed in the American and, in general, Western psychology, suggest the universality of mental processes, without taking into account the role of culture. The monograph, authored by the candidate, is devoted to the study of the role of culture in rationality and the lack of universality of the human mind. In one of the articles, a specific discrepancy is registered between the assumptions arising from the theory of perspectives (regarding the framing effect) with the empirically found effects in a Bulgarian sample of students.

In an empirical study on the myside bias, Dr. Rachev examines ten domains of everyday experiences, including previously unexplored domains such as preferences for popular music styles. This is an interesting choice because they are very popular with adolescents and young people. The results show that the music styles that receive the most extreme likes, whether positive or negative, generate a greater bias towards one's own

position. This type of data can open a new perspective for understanding a number of phenomena in social networks and the way of forming opinions in such a context.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the above, as a member of the scientific jury, I firmly believe that the scientific jury has all necessary reasons to propose to the competent body for candidate election - the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Philosophy at Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski - to elect Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Nikolay Rumenov Rachev in the academic position of Associate Professor, the professional field 3.2 Psychology (cognitive psychology and psycholinguistics).

February 9, 2022

Signature:

Prof. Irina Zinovieva, PhD, DSc