

Opinion

in a competition for holding the academic position "Professor" in a professional field 3.2. Psychology (General and developmental psychology), published in the State Gazette, issue 22 from 16.03.2021 for the needs of FNOI at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski "

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Information about the candidate for professor

The competition for the academic position "Professor" in a professional field 3.2. Psychology (General and Developmental psychology) was announced for the needs of FESA at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in accordance with the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its implementation. The only candidate is Assoc. Prof. Dr. Margarita Angelova Stefanova-Bakracheva.

She has a master's degree in pedagogy from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Doctor of Psychology from the Institute of Psychology of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, since 2011 is an associate professor at the Department of Psychology, Institute for Population and Human Studies, BAS, and since 2018 she is an associate professor at the Faculty of Philology at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski ", and since 2019 she has been the Deputy Dean for Research, Project, International Affairs and Public Relations.

M. Bakracheva has an active participation in scientific life, organizing and holding 12 national scientific forums, is a member of 6 editorial boards of Bulgarian and international scientific journals, and is a member of the Society of Psychologists in Bulgaria, the Bulgarian Association for Training and Development and the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria.

Overall evaluation of the submitted publications

Assoc. Prof. M. Bakracheva applied with an impressive number of publications, which significantly exceed both the national requirements and the requirements of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski " for holding the academic position " Professor " (a total of 1556.2 with a minimum required 550 points). She participated in the competition with a total of 55 scientific papers, of which 3 monographs, 4 publications in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases of scientific information, 43 publications in non-refereed journals with scientific review, 2 studies and 3 book chapters. A reference is presented for 52 citations, of which 5 in referenced and indexed editions in world-famous databases.

The scientific production of the candidate of Professor M. Bakracheva impresses not only with the quantitative indicators, but above all in terms of quality, as the focus of her research are significant theoretical and applied problems of modern psychology. She is the author of three monographs, one of which is presented as a major habilitation work - "Identity and Coping with Stress" (2017), and the other two "The Many Faces of the Self (Self-image in modern reality)" 2019) and "Proactive Mindfulness - Ways to Mental Well-Being and Flourishing" (2020) expand her research interests and achievements.

Her publications focus primarily on the study of psychosocial identity, personality stress coping, mental well-being and happiness, thus expanding both traditionally established areas in psychology and considering and interpreting in the context of modern paradigms of positive psychology. In terms of content, several research areas of M. Bakracheva's publications can be distinguished, which are related not only to general and developmental psychology, but also to social psychology.

Leading publications include those dealing with individual strategies for coping with stress (12 publications), mental well-being and quality of life, including for different age groups and people with disabilities and disadvantages (12 publications) and psychosocial identity (11 publications), with a focus on the study of virtual identity (7 publications).

Apart from the fact that it can be stated that the research searches are balanced in the three areas - identity, coping strategies and mental well-being and in the interaction and intersections between them, Assoc. Prof. Bakracheva has publications in other important from a theoretical and empirical point of view problem areas such as: prevention of violence and deviant behavior, intercultural dialogue, parenting style and building self-

determination as well as current and current issues for learning in e-environment and crisis management. In her publications she took into account the applied significance of problems important for practice, as part of her publications aimed at building skills to cope with stress, the application of psychology in photography, deriving an innovative typology that distinguishes individual profiles of addictions, as well as the topic of social entrepreneurship as part of modern career development for disadvantaged people.

The desire to apply the results of psychological research in training and counseling practice is expanding and is reflected in participation in 4 national and 3 international projects.

Evaluation of scientific and scientific-applied contributions

The scientific contributions of Assoc. Prof. Dr. M. Bakracheva are correctly presented by her and can be summarized as follows:

1. Analysis of strategies for coping with stress and ways to transform reactive behavior into proactive as part of successful stress management and increase personal adaptability. It is emphasized that coping is a complex process that has many dimensions and depends on both individual characteristics and the social context. The role of virtual reality and the conscious escape of the individual from reality in the virtual world as a specific coping behavior is taken into account. Emphasis is placed on the optimism and resilience of the individual in the process of adaptation and coping.

2. The leading constructs applied in the modern positive psychology are studied and summarized. Assoc. Prof. Bakracheva's publications significantly contribute to the establishment of positive psychology in our country, as research has been done and statistically significant patterns have been derived that consider mental well-being, personal flourishing and coping as leading to optimal personality functioning. Their connection with the mindfulness attitude and the role of the meaning of life is taken into account. Among the significant research contributions is the establishment of the interaction and connection between well-being, life satisfaction, happiness and flourishing, but also the differences in their predictors based on regression analyzes. The role of positive and negative effects on mental well-being is emphasized and practical guidelines for increasing well-being are presented. Optimism and the idea of the meaning of life are

defined as important for the flourishing of the individual and emphasize the influence of personal and situational factors. The practical application of the obtained results is sought and three ways to prosperity are offered, which can be learned: support of proactive coping; stimulating the attitude of active acceptance and active cognitive, emotional and behavioral meaningfulness and self-reflection in various spheres of life.

3. Psychosocial identity is considered in the process of adaptation and coping with stress. In the context of identity, a research direction is being developed to establish the importance of social networks and virtual identity, which contributes significantly to understanding the behavior of young people in virtual reality.

4. Research has been done and practical recommendations and interventions related to violence and aggression, deviant behavior and the formation of prosocial behavior of students have been proposed.

5. Emphasis is placed on the development of social entrepreneurship and work with disadvantaged people.

6. The dynamics of the environment and the impact of the COVID crisis on e-learning and distance learning and the ways to maintain the interest and motivation of learners are taken into account.

The contributions of Assoc. Prof. M. Bakracheva have a high theoretical and scientific-applied value and are used in the process of training, psychological counseling and interventions. Her research results in derived approaches and practical paths that can be applied in the practice of school and social psychologists.

Evaluation of lecturer's activities

Assoc. Prof. M. Bakracheva is an established university lecturer in the field of general and developmental psychology. According to the attached reference she teaches compulsory courses in General and Age Psychology, General Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Crisis Psychological Intervention and an elective course in English in Art Therapy in bachelor's and master's programs at FNOI at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". In addition, she was hired as a part-time lecturer in master's programs at the Department of Psychology and Leadership, Military Academy "G. S. Rakovski ", in the specialties of Psychology and Social Pedagogy at the Department of Psychology, Faculty

of Fine Arts, University of Plovdiv“ Paisii Hilendarski ”, in the master's program“ Art Therapy ”of the Faculty of Fine Arts, National Academy of Arts. Under her supervision, 9 graduates and 3 doctoral students successfully defended their theses.

CONCLUSION

Assoc. Prof. Margarita Bakracheva is an established specialist who deservedly enjoys authority among the academic and professional community. Her scientific publications cover significant problems in psychology, and along with fundamental scientific problems, she manages to be on the "crest of the wave" in terms of current issues relevant to practice. Her research is well-argued, methodologically and statistically sound, with significant results for theory and practice. The presented scientometric data correspond to the requirements of the Law for the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its application. No reports of plagiarism have been reported and no such cases have been identified.

All this gives me reason to propose to the respected members of the Scientific Jury to be awarded the academic title "Professor" in the professional field 3.2. Psychology (General and Age Psychology) of Margarita Angelova Stefanova-Bakracheva - Associate Professor in the Department of Social Pedagogy and Social Affairs at the Faculty of Science, Education and Arts at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski ”.

07/17/2021

Prepared the opinion:

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