

## REFERENCE STATEMENT

By Camellia Doncheva Hancheva, Associate Professor in 3.2. (Developmental Psychology), PhD in Psychology; Department of General, Experimental, Developmental and Health Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy, Sofia University

In regard with the procedure for "associate professor" in a professional field

3.2 Psychology (Cognitive Psychology and Psycholinguistics), announced in SG, issue 96 of 19.11.2021 for the needs of the Faculty of Philosophy of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski "

In compliance with the: Order RD 38-587 / 10.12.2021 of the Rector of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski "

### **1. General information**

Application documents for the announced position, according to the procedure and within the term provided by the law, have been submitted by one candidate: Chief Assistant Professor Nikolay Rumenov Rachev, PhD from Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski ".

In accordance with the minimal national requirements and with the additional requirements of Sofia University "Kliment Ohridski", this reference statement has been prepared on the basis of the documents received and uploaded in a digital form. The documents submitted for the position, comply with the requirements of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in Republic of Bulgaria and Regulations of Rules of Procedure for the acquisition of scientific degrees and holding academic positions at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski "from January 23, 2019

Ch. Assist. Prof. Nikolay Rumenov Rachev, PhD has a university degree in psychology, ha has acquired with two master's degrees: Master of Clinical and Counseling Psychology 2001 and Master of Occupational and Organizational Psychology 2001 at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski ". His conduct of English, French and Russian is at a high professional level, which allows him to actively use those languages in his research and publish scientific papers in some of them. Since 2004 Nikolay Rachev has been a part-time assistant professor, and since 2006 a full-time assistant professor in Psychology, Faculty of Philosophy, Sofia University. In 2008 he defended his PhD titled: "Dimensions of musical experience" under the code of General Psychology. After the successful defense he continued his professional development on the position of Ch. Assist. Prof. at the Department of General, Experimental, Developmental and Health Psychology. For the current application procedure, the candidate has

presented a habilitation monograph, which does not repeat the ideas for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor".

## **2. Habilitation book**

The candidate Ch. Assist Prof. Nikolay Rachev, PhD presented a habilitation thesis in the form of a monograph published in 2018 by the University Publishing House "St. Kliment Ohridski", with the title: "Rationality in a Cultural Context". This work meets all the requirements for a monograph and fully coincides with the scientific domain of the associate professorship, which meets the requirements of the Regulations on the terms and conditions for obtaining scientific degrees and holding academic positions at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", art. 105, (1) .t. 3. The habilitation thesis is the result of many years of research and accumulation of theoretical knowledge in the field of cognitive science, in particular rationality and decision-making. The emblematic for homo sapiens "ratio" is defined beyond the philosophical tradition, which Nikolai Rachev knows all too well, but in terms of psychological knowledge, by operationalizing the constructs as rationality, hindsight bias, decision making and framing effect. The critical review of the two-process theories of cognition creates a basis for the formulation of highly productive research hypotheses and outlines the direction of the search for intercultural influences and context on, considered universal, effects in processes of thinking and decision making.

## **3. Fulfillment of the minimum national requirements for holding the academic position "Associate Professor"**

With the publications and quotations selected for the application procedure Ch. Assist Prof Nikolay Rachev, PhD meets the minimum national requirements for holding the position of "Associate Professor" in the field of academic education 3. Social, economic and law sciences, professional field 3.2. Psychology with a total of 450.79 points (by group of indicators A, B, D and E) which is more than the required 400. Specifically: for group A, B and C, respectively indicator 1, indicator 2, indicator 3 are calculated 150 points - the degree "Doctor" (50 points) and habilitation work (100 points). The requirement for publications for an associate professor according to group D (P4 to P10) of the Regulations for implementation of the Law are that for Associate Professorship the candidate has to provide proof for at least 200 points. According to the submitted report, the candidate has 205.79 points, and it should be noted that half of them are from publications in indexed and referenced in world databases. These are both stand-alone and joint publications at the highest scientific level. The required 50 points from the citations have been exceeded

almost twice. This could be interpreted as an indirect indicator of the quality of the candidate's scientific publications. An additional 145 points under indicator E are not included in the overall assessment, but should be taken into consideration as a proof of the active and successful project activity of N. Rachev as both participant and leader in national and international projects. The report is comprehensive and provides the necessary information. The requirements of the obligatory bibliographic description of the publications and citations are fully met.

#### **4. Publications**

In the complete list of publications of Ch. Assist. Prof. Nikolay Rachev, PhD there are a total of 21 scientific publications, of which one is an independent monograph (habilitation thesis). Among the selected publications, presented for the procedure there are 17 papers (in journals with scientific review or in edited collective volumes), of which 8 are in Bulgarian and 9 are in English.

Nikolay Rachev's publications, carried out in international cooperation with large teams of researchers, should be evaluated in two plans. First, in terms of content, these publications reflect the field and direction of Rachev's scientific interests of the last decade. In terms of planning and design of research, those publications carry the applicants precision and personal touch which can be recognized unmistakably. The use of the naturalistic quasi-experimental setting (related to the global processes around the Covid-19 pandemic) was made with the ultimate adherence to high research ethics, a clear goal of benefits and limitations and with great responsibility for possible practical actions informed by the results.

Second, in formal terms, Nikolay Rachev is the first (leading) author in the fragment of a large-scale study with 88,181 participants from 47 countries which has the highest applicability in social situations. Differences in results of different countries of proportion of risky choices and the framing effect were used as an argument for the need of further exploration of contextual factors in highly relevant real-life situations.

All publications (independent and co-authored) are thematically and substantively in the field of the announced position (Cognitive psychology and Psycholinguistics).

#### **5. Research and scientific contributions**

Scientific contributions Theoretical contributions of Ch. Assist. Prof. Nikolay Rachev, PhD: The main monograph summarizes the achievements of heuristics and theoretical assumptions about biases about the deviations in thinking, rational solutions, and decision making. An indisputable contribution of the monograph is the problematization of the established systematic deviations from the rational decisions that people make under different influences in the light of mostly contextual and cultural factors. The mediating influence of culture, taking into account the influence of mental abilities on decisions, is a fruitful direction of research, with a huge potential for the applied science influence upon important spheres of public life, such as education. The research program aimed at the participation of culture in good thinking is formulated on these theoretical and research findings.

Contributing to the development of the theory of cognitive science is the article co-authored with Nelson Cowan. "Merging with the path not taken: Wilhelm Wundt's work as a precursor to the embedded-processes approach to memory, attention, and consciousness", published in the prestigious journal *Consciousness and Cognition*. In-depth knowledge of the history and theory of cognitive psychology has been demonstrated in an indisputable and fascinating way. Far from nostalgia for the pioneers in the field of memory research and with the eagerness of a consistent scientist and researcher, Nikolai Rachev formulated the connection that reveals the continuity and development of Wundt's ideas in the new theories of working memory.

The contributions of research that is replicating, are in temporal and cultural contextualization. The replication of research paradigms is done with precision to method and design, and with the clear research task to check the influence of many factors of contextual, temporal and cultural order on the resulting dependencies. The precise analysis of the data and the ingenious raising of alternative explanatory hypotheses are a definite advantage and an indisputable scientific contribution to the candidate's publications.

Contributions to the applied field of psychological scientific knowledge are the guidelines for constructing messages that influence in a certain direction on public opinion and, accordingly, the behavior of different groups of people. Research and its impartial presentation are a valuable contribution of science to the awareness of biases and mastering the tendency, inherent in human beings, to participate and in the production and dissemination of distorted facts and messages. The responsibility of the researcher and the scientist is fulfilled, the invitation to applied it in practice remains open (an invitation to the people, responsible for the application of evidence-based theories).

## Projects

Nikolay Rachev, PhD is taking an active part in research projects. He has developed, won and successfully implemented two projects under his lead, he has participated in three other NIS projects. For the last two years Nikolay Rachev has been part of two major international research projects, as a leader of the Bulgarian side.

## Other contributions

At the initiative and as a result of the consistent efforts of Ch. Assist.Prof. Rachev, a functional laboratory - Laboratory of Cognitive Psychology Incoglab: a behavioral laboratory for controlled psychological experiments has been established in Dept. of Psychology at Sofia University. The Incoglab has extensive research and teaching activities and its initiatives are very popularity among students majoring in Psychology since its beginning in 2013.

Nikolay Rachev has made three working visits to prestigious European and American universities and laboratories leading in cognitive science. He has participated in over 20 scientific forums with reports, posters and presentations.

## **6. Teaching activity**

Ch. Assist. Prof. N. Rachev, PhD is Lecturing three basic obligatory courses in the bachelor's program in Psychology - Cognitive Psychology (First and second part) and Psycholinguistics, as well as one course in the program of the Faculty of Pedagogy. There are three courses developed in the master's programs, two of which are in English. As an assistant, Dr. N. Rachev teaches six courses in various bachelor's and master's programs. He continues the tradition of Cognitive Sessions for presenting student research projects upon completion of Cognitive Psychology courses. The huge commitment to student projects can be partially traced through the indicator of extracurricular working hour credits, many times exceeding the usual limits. Nikolay Rachev was also the scientific supervisor of four successfully defended dissertations.

## **CONCLUSION**

Chief Assistant Professor Nikolay Rumenov Rachev, PhD meets all the requirements of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in Republic of Bulgaria and the regulations for its application both in the country and at Sofia University. His scientific and professional development, his teaching and research practice are mainly at Sofia University "St. Kliment. Ohridski ". Nikolay Rachev has been Lecturing in the previous academic years all lecture courses that are the subject of this Associate professorship. The overall creativity of the candidate is characterized by methodological and analytical precision, originality of interpretations and explicit connection with the possible practical applications of the results. Ch. Assist. Prof. N. Rachev, PhD has extensive research experience, showing his undoubted abilities for independent work, as well as for leading and participating in scientific national and international teams. The high assessment of the scientific and teaching activity of Chief Assistant Professor Nikolay Rachev, PhD gives me all the reasons to strongly support his election as "Associate Professor" in the professional field 3.2. Psychology (Cognitive Psychology and Psycholinguistics) at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski ”.

25.03. 2022

Sofia

Member of the Scientific Jury:

(Assoc. Prof. Camellia Hancheva, PhD)