

## **R E V I E W - Opinion**

**by Prof. Elena Blagoeva, PhD**

NBU, Area of Higher Education: 1. Education Studies, Professional Field: 1.1. Theory and Management of Education

with regard to the selection procedure for the academic position of

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR in the Area of Higher Education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, Professional Field 3.2. Psychology, announced in the State Gazette, issue 41 / 10.05.2024

Candidate: Chief Assist. Prof. Nadia Kolcheva, PhD

### **I. Assessment of compliance with the minimum national requirements and the requirements of the New Bulgarian University**

The submitted reference according to the requirements of the NACID shows that with her work and achievements Dr. Nadia Kolcheva satisfies, and in most indicators categorically exceeds, the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b of ZRASRB, as well as the additional requirements of the NBU for holding the academic position "Associate Professor" in professional direction 3.2 Psychology.

### **II. Research activities and results**

Dr. Nadia Kolcheva's monograph "Significant others in a person's life" is an extensive and in-depth study of the broad problem of human relationships and their influence on personality. It focuses on significant others as key figures in an individual's life journey. The concept is examined in the perspective of J. Bowlby's attachment theory, with central attention given to R. Rohner's Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection Theory (IPARTheory). It is evident that the book is the result of the author's long-term research efforts in the field of IPARTheory. It traces the development of relationships with significant others sequentially, in the different contexts in the course of individual development – in the family environment and parents as significant others (in childhood), school and teachers as significant others (throughout adolescence), intimate relationships and intimate partners, as well as the work environment and supervisors as significant others (during the maturity period). Relationships with significant others in each of these contexts are examined theoretically, followed by dozens of empirical studies within the framework of interpersonal acceptance-rejection theory. The presented research is a significant contribution of Dr. Kolcheva not only in terms of a thorough study of human relationships, but also for expanding the empirical base of IPARTheory. A number of evaluation tools, which she translates and adapts for Bulgaria, are a significant contribution to the work. One of them was developed by her.

For me, the studies of the child's relationships in the family and school environment are of particular interest. Relationships with parents, which are the earliest relationships formed,

directly and indirectly influence the overall course of an individual's life and quality of life more than any other relationship in a person's life. In school, children build the next type of relationships in which significant others become their teachers. These are the people with whom children have an emotional connection and who, through their behavior, influence not only their physical and intellectual, but also social and emotional development. Within these studies, attention is paid to the dynamics of teacher-pupil relationships, taking into account the age of the pupils. The results of the research conducted in our country represent a valuable resource for teachers and a wide range of specialists who work with children and students. I believe that the monograph, in this particular part, would also be useful for students of pedagogy, since the work competently reflects the relationship between the two scientific fields.

The monograph is a serious research work that systematizes and traces relationships with significant others over the course of a person's life through the prism of IPARTheory and is based on large datasets. Dr. Kolcheva has not only conducted dozens of studies, but some of them also have an impressive number of subjects. The fact that the studies on Bulgaria are analyzed in the context of numerous similar studies conducted in more than 60 countries around the world is impressive.

In addition to the monograph, as a candidate for this competition, Dr. Kolcheva submits 22 articles, 3 studies and 5 chapters of collective monographs as other scientific publications that demonstrate a sustained academic presence and are indicative of her systematic long-term work on the topics that she is interested in. The citations from other authors are proof of the quality of her scientific output. From the materials presented in indicators 11, 12 and 13, it is clear that the works of Dr. Nadia Kolcheva, with requirements of 50 points, collect 195 points from citations in scientific works, scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information, in monographs and collective works with scientific review.

The main contributions of the research activity of Ch. Associate Professor Nadia Kolcheva, Ph.D., related to the current competition are convincingly demonstrated through the presented monographic work and the significant number of publications. Much of her research work is devoted to early and school-age children. She explores various aspects and dynamics of childhood and adolescent development; parent-child relationships; parenting styles; different types of correlates that are associated with these relationships; social development and development of social and emotional skills; career fulfillment and learning; research and assessment of children with typical development and with developmental deficits, etc. Special attention should be paid to her long-standing research efforts devoted to the construction, translation, adaptation and standardization of assessment instruments. Serious achievements are the scales constructed by her for assessing the social development of children to the Standards for Development and Learning in Early Childhood, for children 0-3 years and the one to the Screening Test for three-year-

old children. The screening test is laid down in the Ordinance on Inclusive Education (in force from 27.10.2017, Adopted by PMS No. 232 from 20.10.2017, amended and supplemented by SG No. 66 from 6 August 2024) and used in the preschool education system in Bulgaria as a tool for assessing children's development. Dozens of questionnaires and scales have been translated, adapted and standardized for Bulgaria. Dr. Kolcheva is also an editor of books on children's development and well-being related to food and nutrition and social and emotional development.

### **III. Teaching activities**

Dr. Kolcheva's educational and teaching activities meet the requirements of the NBU - she has a consistent and intensive teaching career. She has developed and taught in numerous university courses - over 35 undergraduate and graduate courses in the undergraduate and graduate programs in psychology, as well as in the undergraduate program and specializations in pedagogy. Five of the courses are conducted in a foreign language. Author's study materials have been developed for the taught courses. The candidate has international teaching experience. In addition to the development of psychology programs, Dr. Kolcheva participated in the development of the "Teacher" qualification program, the "Teacher in..." qualification program and the "School Psychology (for teachers)" qualification program at the School of Professional and Continuing Education of NBU. Dr. Kolcheva has participated in research and applied projects, and I would like to draw attention to the projects related to education - qualification course for teachers "Hyperactive and aggressive behavior in school-aged children", "The child with SEN - a person respected by adults and peers", "Study of Bulgarian and Swedish adolescents", together with a Swedish university, "Development of social and emotional skills in early childhood education and care in Europe". She also involves students in her research work, reporting 4 articles from this activity. Dr. Kolcheva contributes to the growth of young specialists through scientific supervision of over 19 successfully defended bachelor's and master's theses and numerous reviews. It supports the academic development of students, receiving a very good rating (4.32) in student satisfaction surveys. The high evaluation of her teaching work is a testament to her skills in engaging, supporting and guiding student work and professional learning.

### **IV. Administrative and public activity**

From the information presented, it is clear that Nadia Kolcheva was actively involved in administrative and public activities. It is impressive that she has been a director of the undergraduate program "Psychology" for four academic years from 2009 to 2013, during which she managed to provide practice and internship for the students in more than 16 relevant institutions. In addition, she is the head and coordinator of the Test Library at the Department of Cognitive Science and Psychology.

### **V. Personal Impressions of the candidate**

I know Nadia Kolcheva as a calm, well-intentioned, responsive and positive colleague who creates a cheerful mood and knows how to work in a team. She treats cases and problems of colleagues and students with attention and responsiveness. In my predicament as head of the Pedagogy section, when it was necessary to replace an inappropriate psychology course for students of BP "Primary School Pedagogy", she responded and promptly found a way to help. The course with which she joined managed to interest and motivate the interest in psychology of the future teachers.

**VI. Opinions, recommendations and notes on the activity and achievements of the candidate**

Bearing in mind the research contributions of Dr. Nadya Kolcheva, reflected in her monograph and other publications, the recognition of her scientific achievements and her active participation in the teaching and administrative work at NBU, I firmly believe that the candidacy of Ch. assistant professor Nadia Kolcheva for the academic position of "Associate professor" in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional direction 3.2 Psychology, fully meets the requirements.

I express a positive assessment of the academic activity of Ch. assistant professor Nadia Kolcheva and I propose that she be allowed to be elected by the NBU Academic Council for the academic position of " Associate professor ".

Date: 17.08.2024 r.

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