

PEER REVIEW

of the scientific works of Chief Assistant Dr. Liliya Stoilova

for occupation of the academic position of Associate Professor under Professional field

1.3. "Pedagogy of Education in ...", in specialty "Psychology and Pedagogy" at Music
Pedagogy and Conducting Department

Reviewed by: Prof. Nataliya Hr. Aleksandrova, Doctor of Psychological Sciences

The data regarding the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements are presented accurately and comprehensively. In the scientific publications submitted for the competition for occupation of the position of "Associate Professor" by Chief Assistant Liliya Stoilova, I would like to draw attention to the essential aspects of this academic work. The issues related to motivational determinants in choosing the teaching profession are relevant. This publication constitutes a habilitation thesis with in-depth analysis and examination of professional scientific literature sources, studying the specifics and factors motivating young people to pursue a career in teaching.

At the same time, the research also examines the motives of those teachers who leave the teaching profession. The study contributes to the clarification of school organizational culture and school management. These trends are particularly relevant to the current state and issues of Bulgarian education. The work outlines research horizons for identifying effective internal motivational stimuli – determinants focused on the selection of the teaching profession and development in this professional field. In the context of this issue, the candidate presents an article indexed in the Web of Science, as well as a publication indexed in Scopus and Web of Science. The latter reflects a modified version of a scale for studying the academic motivation of students studying mathematics.

In the focus of educational policy is also the emphasis on research into the characteristics of organizational culture in schools and its distinctive features. A research interest and scientific development include studying academic stressors among students, supported by a sample of 187 students. The publication is also indexed in Scopus.

In her publications, Dr. Stoilova also addresses a contemporary challenge of university education, namely the influence of distance learning on the academic motivation of students in the arts field. Dr. Stoilova emphasizes and acknowledges the importance of academic motivation for the professional development of students by exploring the impact of academic stress on the resilience and academic engagement of first-year students.

In her research endeavors, Dr. Stoilova places an important emphasis on addressing a serious issue, namely the reasons for young teachers leaving the

profession. By analyzing the relationships between satisfaction with the selection of the teaching profession and the reasons for leaving the profession, Dr. Stoilova aims to improve strategies and policies that encourage young teachers not only to remain in the teaching profession but also to unfold their professional potential. It is found that workload is one of the most significant factors influencing teachers to decide to leave their jobs.

A research focus in the presented publications is also the study of academic resilience as a predictor for well-being, academic achievement, and internal motivation. Dr. Babakova-Stoilova directs her efforts towards validating and testing a scale designed to measure academic resilience among first-year students. The psychometric properties of the academic resilience scale make it a reliable research tool. Simultaneously, the obtained data have effective reflections on educational practice. The psychometric properties of the academic resilience scale provide an opportunity to identify students who perceive themselves as unable to cope with the challenges related to their university success.

Dr. Stoilova's research developments extensively cover a range of issues accompanying the psychological aspects of aging. Particularly interesting in this aspect is the book *"Everyday Hassles, Coping Strategies, and Life Satisfaction in Old Age"*, reflecting Dr. Liliya Stoilova's dissertation studies. The data obtained here enrich our understanding of the nature of everyday hassles among older people. It is found that older adults cope successfully or not with these everyday hassles depending on the type of stressor. Of particular practical significance is the representativeness of the sample, which makes the obtained results valuable. These data provide a reliable basis for the development of programs for social institutions dealing with and studying the problems of older people. A scholarly contribution is that the results expand the scope of scientific understanding of the psychological nature and specifics of everyday hassles among older people.

Regarding another pressing issue of our time, "loneliness", Dr. Stoilova emerges as a thorough and precise researcher with impressive skills in applying adequate statistical and mathematical knowledge, particularly necessary for conducting contemporary and convincing scientific studies. The cited publications make it clear that she is also a team-oriented researcher – a quality especially essential for carrying out scientific research projects. The presented publications depict Dr. Babakova-Stoilova as a thorough researcher who synthesizes and systematizes scientific professional research information, and as a precise scholar who clearly understands not only the scientific value of the interpreted results but also their practical implications.

The presented scientific works have a particular relevance in practical terms. The obtained data, reliably presented with representative samples and derived conclusions, serve as a solid foundation for formulating and developing programs and strategies focused on the particularly relevant problems of our daily lives in education. These

include academic motivation, the selection of the teaching profession and its neglect, as well as teacher attrition, and academic stressors.

The summaries and conclusions drawn from the study of the current issues of aging in psychology also hold significant scientific and practical value, enriching our understanding and knowledge of the specifics of the aging process and its accompanying conditions and factors.

The presented publications portray Dr. Babakova-Stoilova as a highly motivated and engaged educator regarding the socio-psychological issues of the teaching profession, with a focus on university education.

All of this gives me ample reason to recommend and endorse the candidacy of Dr. Liliya Babakova-Stoilova for the position of “Associate Professor” under Professional field 1.3. “Pedagogy of Education in ...”, in specialty “Psychology and Pedagogy” at Music Pedagogy and Conducting Department.

Sofia

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