



KONSTANTIN PRES LAVSKY UNIVERSITY OF SHUMEN

## OPINION

**on the scientific works and educational activity of**

Sevdzhihan Ahmedova Eyubova, PhD –  
lecturer at Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen,  
participant in a competition for the academic position of *Associate professor*  
in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Studies,  
Professional field 3.2. Psychology (Developmental Psychology and Educational Psychology),  
announced by Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen, Department of Technological  
and Vocational Education, Preschool and Primary School Education at the Faculty of  
Education (State Gazette issue 20/10.03.2020)

**Opinion by: Prof. D-r Valeri Stoilov Stoyanov, D.Sc.  
Professor in the Professional Field 3.2. Psychology**

**Varna \* 2020**

## **1. Presentation of the documents, received in relation to the competition**

The competition for the academic position of *Associate professor* in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Studies, Professional field 3.2. Psychology (Developmental and Educational Psychology) is announced by Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen for Department of Technological and Vocational Education, Preschool and Primary School Education at the Faculty of Education State Gazette issue 20/10.03.2020.

The statement is assigned with a decision of the Scientific Jury, determined by Order № RD-16-067 of 10.07.2020 of the Rector of the Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen.

A sole participant of the competition is Sevdzhihan Ahmedova Eyubova, PhD, lecturer at *Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen*. The documents applied for the competition comply with the main requirements of Act on Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria for holding the academic position "*Associate professor*".

Sevdzhihan Ahmedova Eyubova, PhD presents 28 pieces of scientific papers in relation with the competition, as follows:

1. Habilitation work – monograph: Eyubova, S. (2020). "Screening for autism in early childhood". Shumen: University Publishing House Bishop Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen, ISBN 978-619-201-398-1;
2. Articles and reports, published in unrefereed journals with scientific review or published in edited collective volumes – 27 in total, 9 of which in co-authorship, 3 of which – in English.

The scientific works presented at the competition are not among the works indicated in the author's abstract of the dissertation for awarding the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor" and therefore are accepted for evaluation.

Along with the scientific works submitted for participation in the competition, the acquired educational and scientific degree of "*Doctor*" and the citations marked, Sevdzhihan Ahmedova Eyubova meet the minimum national requirements for holding the academic position "*Associate professor*" in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Studies, Professional field 3.2. Psychology, as per Art. 1a, para 1 of the Regulations on the Implementation of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (State Gazette issue 56 of 2018, in legal force since 06.07.2018) – minimum national requirements to the scientific, teaching and / or artistic or sporting activity of the candidates for obtaining a scientific degree and for holding the academic positions of "*Assistant professor*", "*Associate professor*" and "*Professor*" in field 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, Professional field 3.2. Psychology.

## **2. Information for the Candidate**

The educational profile and the acquired professional experience of Sevdzhihan Eyubova, PhD – both in higher education – as a lecturer, and outside of it are in tune with the requirements for acquiring the academic position of *Associate professor* in Professional field 3.2. Psychology (Developmental and Educational Psychology), as per art. 53, para 1, pt. 1 and pt. 2 of the Regulations on the Implementation of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act.

Sevdzhihan Eyubova is a master in arts and holds a PhD in psychology. She has obtained the necessary experience as a lecturer and a manager in the sector of higher education, as well as experience from her work as a clinical psychologist.

### **3. General characteristics and evaluation of the scientific production of the candidate**

The scientific production of Dr. Sevdzhihan Eyubova, presented for participation in the competition for the academic position of *Associate professor*, meets the requirements for submission of scientific papers and contributes to the transfer of modern scientific and applied research in the field of developmental psychology and their teaching in higher education.

The habilitation work presented by Sevdzhihan Eyubova for participation in the competition is “Eyubova, S. (2020). ‘Screening for autism in early childhood’. Shumen: University Publishing House “Bishop Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen, ISBN 978-619-201-398-1”.

The monograph is published by the University Publishing House of *Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen* and has two habilitated reviewers and a habilitated scientific editor.

Sevdzhihan Eyubova’s monograph is dedicated to an extremely topical and important social problem. If at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century autism is a rare state and the theme is not part of the basic professional education of the different groups of specialists, for whom this group of disorders are relevant, today we need even more systematic knowledge on the problem. Autism or autistic spectrum disorders are the terms for group of complex developmental disorders beginning in early childhood. These disorders are related to experiencing difficulties in social interactions, verbal and nonverbal communication, and stereotypical, repetitive behaviors, and limited interests.

In this regard, Sevdzhihan Eyubova sets a significant goal in her monograph, namely... *“to present the opportunities for autism-specific screening in early childhood in Bulgaria, taking into account the regulations and available resources - specialists, screening tools and methodology for working with parents... ”*(p.7).

The reaching of this goal is traced through ten logically grounded tasks. The core idea defended by the author of the monograph is that screening for autism in early childhood is a procedure in which the expertise of the specialists towards the child developmental disorders and the knowledge of the parents about their own child meet and unite in the effort to reach a better quality of life and a maximum development of the mental potential of the child. Based on methodologically sound empirical research presented in the monograph, autism-specific screening is proposed through the revised version of the M-CHAT R / F tool.

According to the author of the monograph, which I fully support, the participation of the parents in the screening, as well as their role in identifying the early behavioral markers, related to the clinical representation of autism is a keystone.

The monograph of Sevdzhihan Eyubova is an integral and complete scientific work dedicated to a specific current issue, which is thoroughly and systematically analyzed. There is a bright and logically justified author's position. Significant theoretical and practical contributions have been achieved. The presented family-oriented approach and the described good practices for effective communication with parents contain useful guidelines for the direct work of general practitioners, pediatricians, nurses in nursery groups, psychologists, speech-language pathologists, special pedagogues, kindergarten teachers and other practitioners in the field of early intervention.

In Sevdzhihan Eyubova’s articles presented for participation in the competition she analyzes empirical research and presents concepts in relation to: problems related to professional exhaustion and its determinants for specific samples; opportunities for the use of

modern mobile technologies to improve the emotional development of children; the opportunities for initial screening for autism spectrum disorders also through mobile technologies; problems of emotional and cognitive development of children; the use of specific tools for psychodiagnostics of the mental development of children suitable for Bulgarian cultural conditions.

The results of these studies contribute to the enrichment of modern knowledge in psychology of development and the practical and applied goals of specialists in practice.

I have not noticed any plagiarism in the scientific papers presented for participation in the competition. Literary sources, in my opinion, have been used correctly.

#### **4. Characteristics and assessment of the educational and pedagogical activity of the candidate**

It is difficult for me to evaluate the teaching activity of Sevdzihan Ahmedova Eyubova, PhD due to the fact that we work in different universities. However, the information presented by the university shows that Sevdzihan Eyubova is respected by both students and fellow lecturers.

My personal impressions of Sevdzihan Eyubova are mainly from her presentations at various scientific conferences in Bulgaria and from her training and doctoral studies in the Psychology Department of Varna Free University *Chernorizets Hrabar*, in which I was a lecturer at the time. Sevdzihan Eyubova impressed me with her very good theoretical and methodological training, with her skills to present her empirical research and analyze the results of it, to participate in scientific discussions and express her arguments. These are very valuable qualities for a habilitated teacher and a prerequisite for a quality learning process. In this sense, the *Konstantin Preslavsky* University of Shumen would benefit greatly from the appointment of Sevdzihan Eyubova to the academic position of *Associate professor*.

#### **5. Summary presentation of the scientific and scientific-applied contributions of the candidate**

The contributions of the scientific works of Sevdzihan Eyubova, PhD can be generally systematized as the developing of ideas, concepts and approaches in the field of developmental psychology and especially in the period of early childhood.

More specifically the scientific and scientific-applied contributions of Sevdzihan Ahmedova Eyubova are as follows:

1. An in-depth, systematic analysis of autism spectrum disorders has been developed, the opportunities for specific screening for autism in early childhood in Bulgaria in accordance with the regulations and available resources - specialists, screening tools, as well as a methodology for working with parents has been developed and tested.

*(See publications № 1, 2.14, 2.15, 2.19, 2.23 and 2.26 from the list attached by the participant)*

2. Through series of empirical researches in 21 of the administrative regions of Bulgaria the benefits of the implementation of specific for autism screening in early childhood is motivated, as a part of a national programme for screening of childhood development in Bulgaria.

*(See publication №1 of the list attached by the participant)*

3. A critical, systematic review of the diagnostic potential of the most widely used tools for specific screening for autism spectrum disorders in early childhood has been made - CHAT, Q-CHAT, Q-CHAT 10, M-CHAT, M-CHAT R/F, PREAUT, ESAT, CESDD.

*(See publications №1, 2.14 and 2.23 from the list attached by the participant)*

4. A mobile application for autism-specific screening has been created on the basis of a pilot study and psychometric data for reliability and validity for Bulgarian cultural conditions of the instrument "M-CHAT R / F".

(See publications № 1 and 2.15 of the list attached by the participant)

5. The use of two functional models of effective communication of undesirable news has been motivated - SPIKES and Safe Cross Code, based on analyses of the results of research on the challenges in the practice of specialists in their work with children with autistic spectrum disorders and their parents.

(See publication № 1 of the list attached by the participant)

6. Various aspects of the cognitive and emotional development of modern children in early childhood, preschool and primary school age have been analyzed, and the results obtained have practical and applied value.

(See publications № 2.3, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, 2.10, 2.12, 2.16, 2.17, 2.18 and 2.24 from a list attached by the applicant)

## CONCLUSION

Having in mind the above-stated, I am drawing the following conclusions related to the candidacy of Sevdzhihan Ahmedova Eyubova, PhD for the academic position of *Associate professor* in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, Professional field 3.2. Psychology:

1. Sevdzhihan Ahmedova Eyubova, PhD meets the minimal national requirements for holding the academic position of *Associate professor* in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, Professional field 3.2. Psychology, as per Appendix to Art. 1a, para 1 of the Regulations on the Implementation of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act.

2. She has gained the necessary professional experience as a lecturer and researcher in accordance with the requirements of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act for holding the academic position of *Associate professor*.

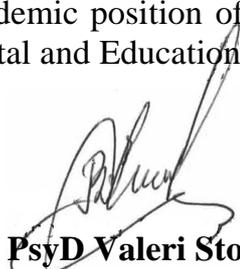
3. She has offered for review scientific production with significant scientific and practical contributions.

All this motivates me to state a **positive assessment** of Sevdzhihan Ahmedova Eyubova, PhD as a candidate for the academic position of *Associate professor*.

In this regard, I recommend to the Scientific Jury, as per the procedure settled in Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen, to propose that Sevdzhihan Ahmedova Eyubova, PhD to be selected for the appointed academic position of *Associate professor* in the Professional Field 3.2. Psychology (Developmental and Educational Psychology).

29.07.2020  
Varna

Prepared by:

  
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