

**VTU “St. St. Cyril and Methodius”**

**R E V I E W**

**By prof. Krasimira Yonkova, PhD**

**of the scientific output of Assistant Professor Nedelina Zdravkova Koleva,**

**candidate for the academic position "associate professor"**

**in Educational and Age Psychology**

**Scientific field 3. Social, economic and legal sciences**

**Professional direction 3.2. Psychology**

**The competition was announced by the Pedagogical Faculty of Thrace**

**University - Stara Zagora**

**In the State Gazette, no 60 of 14.07.2023**

**Data on the competition and scientometrics**

The scientific output of Assistant Professor Nedelina Zdravkova Koleva, presented for review, shows her scientific research work and professional realization for the time before and after the awarding of the educational and scientific degree "doctor", namely the publications until 2019, with which no participated in the current competition, and those with which he participated, developed in time until 2023. When reviewing the documentation, I found no violations; it is correct, in perfect order and meets the criteria in terms of the procedure for conducting the current competition.

From the verification of the fulfillment of the national requirements, as well as the additional ones defined in the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the University of Thrace, I found that with the number of 475 points collected, the candidate not only met, but also exceeded the minimum

requirements for covering the scientometric indicators. I also believe that with the indicated number of citations, he is already an established and well-recognizable researcher in our academic space.

### **Applicant data**

The information from the autobiography reveals a number of activities that testify to a step-by-step creative path, healthy ambition and a desire to improve competences, mainly in the field of scientific psychological-pedagogical theory and social practice. Nedelina Zdravkova is currently a member of the Bulgarian Alfred Adler Society for Individual Psychology, as well as the Union of Scientists - Stara Zagora branch. At the beginning of her academic journey was the bachelor's degree received in 2002. at Thrace University - Stara Zagora, with the qualification "Special pedagogue" with professional skills in the field of speech therapy and work with persons with SEN. In 2008 graduated from the master's program "Psychology" at VTU "St. St. Cyril and Methodius", as in the same university in 2019. he also obtained a doctorate in the Professional field of "Pedagogical and Age Psychology". There are two post-graduate qualifications – in English at advanced level and in Counseling Psychology. He has been working as a teacher at the University of Thrace, Faculty of Pedagogy, Department of Pedagogical and Social Sciences since October 2008. and currently.

### **Description of scientific works**

For participation in the competition, assistant professor Nedelina Zdravkova, PhD, submitted 11 publications, with full and accurate ISBN and

ISSN indicated in the bibliography, reciprocal to the Reference for covering the individual scientometric indicators, as follows:

1. 2 independent monographs, among which the first was announced as the main habilitation work:

Zdravkova, N. Lifestyle and social interest in preschool age. Stara Zagora: IC "Kota", 2023, 142 pages;

Zdravkova, N. Social responsibility and social interest – predictors of teachers' professional suitability. Stara Zagora: IC "Kota", 2023, 188 pages.

2. 1 book published on the basis of the dissertation work: Zdravkova, N. Social interest and educational environment. Stara Zagora: IC "Kota", 2023, 185 pages.

3. 1 studio:

Zdravkova, N. "Ethnocultural features in the development of social interest in children of Roma origin in preschool age", published in the E-magazine "Pedagogical Forum", 2023, no. 3, 37 p.

In the deposited documentation, the candidate has included the texts and presented a full bibliographic description of 7 articles and reports published in Bulgarian and international peer-reviewed journals, edited collective volumes, proceedings of scientific conferences, yearbooks for students and doctoral students for the period 2004-2023. The focus of the developments is on topics related to various aspects of the manifestation of social interest in the paradigm of Individual Psychology, theoretical analyzes and empirical studies of the dichotomy "social interest-social responsibility" among current and future pedagogical specialists, intercultural dimensions of deviant manifestations in children from PUV, professional satisfaction of the modern teacher.

I believe that the issues treated in them are adequate to the profile of the announced competition, clearly correspond to the subject area of Educational and Age Psychology and are an indicator of the author's consistent deepening of the theory and practice of the Adlerian School. Despite their undoubted merits, I will limit the specifics of my analysis and assessment of contributions to the four publications indicated above in points 1 to 3.

### **Analysis and scientific contributions**

It is more than obvious that the candidate demonstrates a sustained interest in open-to-solution problems of pedagogical and age psychology, generated in the course of socialization in early childhood and interpreted in the perspective of Adler's holistic psychoanalytical approach.

Based on my direct academic work with Nedelina as my assistant at the University of Thrace, I declare that the content of the scientific production represents an adequate theoretical base of the teaching style and practical activities in the professional realization of Dr. Zdravkova so far. I believe that to a high degree it meets one of the most important criteria for modern quality teaching, namely – achieved unity between theoretical constructs and empirical facts. I define this achievement as a **global contribution** of the candidate's research and teaching work to date.

Undoubtedly, in any habilitation procedure, the monographic work presented as the main one stands out with the greatest weight, significant value

and creative presence of the author. In this case, it is about the monograph "Lifestyle and social interest in preschool age". It has a balanced quantitative volume, is based on a sufficiently informative and up-to-date theoretical base and is built in four substantive aspects. The two key dimensions "lifestyle" and "social interest" are correctly placed in the rank of mental phenomena, the foundation of which occurs precisely in the preschool stage of personal development.

In addition to general psychological-pedagogical characteristics of the age stage, the exposition competently presents the basic concepts of the Adlerian approach to the interpretation of children's behavior. The text is in-depth by drawing on empirical results found in a previous study on the topic as of 2017. The core of the present author's research is the social interest in the perspective of Adler's concept of "lifestyle" in 70 children of Roma origin attending kindergarten. The observation method was applied based on a Questionnaire differentiated into four areas with adequately defined criteria and statistically processed data. The creative idea has received a successful conclusion in the carried out comparative analysis of the development of social interest in preschool children of different ethnic origins. These conclusions are relevant to the obtained results and undoubtedly reveal a statistically significant difference in the development of social interest in the two samples of children of Bulgarian and Roma origin.

Formulated in a synthesized form, in this monographic work I find the following contributing points:

1. The phenomenology of the preschool age has been thoroughly developed as a result of the creative interpretation not only of established traditional models of the child's personality, but also within the methodological framework of the Adlerian interpretive approach.
2. The risk factors that frustrate the opportunities for physical, intellectual, volitional and motivational development of preschool children are clearly identified, and the degree of formation of social interest is argued as a criterion for assessing mental health in general.
3. Expertly for professionals and fascinating for the free reading audience, the concept of "lifestyle" has been innovatively further developed in the paradigm of Individual Psychology, and painful issues of children's integration are problematized in the context of the ethno-cultural peculiarities in the life of the Roma community in Bulgaria.
4. The empirical design of the study of the interrelationships between the lifestyle and the degree of development of social interest in preschool children of different ethnic origins is not only relevant to the theoretical conceptualization, but also creatively constructed; I appreciate the conclusions drawn as a psychologically relevant and up-to-date source of information for providing real help to children and families of Roma origin for their more successful inclusion in the modern preschool system of education and upbringing.

In summary, I will also indicate the main contributing aspects that I find in the rest of the author's works:

1. In the monograph "Social responsibility and social interest - predictors of the professional suitability of teachers", the characteristics of the construct "social responsibility", situated in the rank of a criterion for the social significance of the teaching profession, were originally investigated; the relationship between the degree of formation of social interest and the individual's tendency to direct his life project towards socially significant professions is particularly reliably argued; the empirical design of the study on the relationship "social responsibility - social interest" among teachers of various educational levels, improving their qualifications, as well as among students studying in pedagogical specialties - is methodologically well supported, and the comparative analysis of the obtained results undoubtedly has a high applied value ; on the other hand, the manner of interpretation of the relationship itself, conceptualized as a meaningful professional characteristic of specialists in the field of education - distinguished for a contribution of no less high theoretical value; in conclusion, the author's ideas in the direction of the built model for the professional suitability of the modern teacher in the context of the concept of development of social interest - I evaluate as elements of an innovative approach, supplementing and enriching the psychological-pedagogical knowledge of the interaction between the parties at all levels in the educational process .

2. In the book "Social Interest and Educational Environment", published on the basis of the author's dissertation, the entire exposition creatively gravitates around one of the fundamental concepts of Individual Psychology, namely - the complex and multifunctional German concept *Gemeinschaftsgefühl* with its confirmed translation into Bulgarian "social interest"; I find reason to place the

contributing aspects of the book in two research fields, which I will call "theoretical" and "applied": the first - in the extremely fine and detailed refinement of the semantic concepts for understanding the psychological nature of the Adlerian construct "line of life", presupposed from the direction in the development of social interest, whose real parameters are so well defined that they actually become a guide for reliable work on the part of the socializing factors; I see the second contributing aspect in the operationalization of the key concepts for the description of social interest and the successfully tested methodology for its research in the PUV for children deprived of parental care and raised in institutions.

In summary of my findings in relation to the scientific contributions in the work of Assistant Professor Dr. Zdravkova, I would like to state that in all publications well-developed academic skills for applying a complex approach are demonstrated, in which almost every phenomenon investigated by the author is theoretically analyzed, empirically studied, subjected to critical reflection in some aspects and, ultimately, accompanied by a vision to improve activities on the development of social interest through pedagogical and psychosocial support of children from standard and minority groups.

Regarding the language and presentation style, the author's texts are conceptually adequate, logically structured and easy to read. I am convinced that their popularization in non-academic circles would increase the psychological-pedagogical education of a wide range of readers.



## **Teaching job**

The report on the educational and teaching activity shows that assistant professor Dr. Zdravkova consistently maintains an optimal classroom load, holding lectures and seminars on Social Psychology, Prevention of Addictions, Psychological Counseling and Personal Development of children with SEN. Leads exercises in other academic disciplines as well, such as Educational Psychology, Psychology of Individual Differences, General and Age Psychology, Pedagogical and Psychological Characteristics of Early Childhood.

I cannot help but highlight Nedelina's exceptional commitment to the practical training of the trainees, where she is responsible for the organization and realization of the hospitalization and current socio-pedagogical practice of the trainees, as well as for the pre-graduate internship of the students from the Social Pedagogy magazine. He also carries out a number of additional academic activities, participates in national educational seminars, national and international scientific conferences, develops new curricula and training materials, is a member of State Examination Committees. Nedelina demonstrated to us excellent team skills in her work on projects, the goals of which are related to the development of the social interest, communication and competence of the students, but also of the already practicing pedagogical specialists.

In addition, I believe that a significant part of her scientific publications is distinguished by a clearly expressed practical-applied orientation for improving the methodological training of future teachers. Therefore, and based

on my immediate observations, I give an excellent assessment of the candidate's teaching work, in which I also include my personal professional and human satisfaction with her style of interaction with students, colleagues, employees - responsible, empathetic, helpful. I wish her the strength to preserve and develop it in her further academic path - forward and upward!

### **Conclusion**

Based on the stated findings, the result of the reading of the scientific production presented for the preparation of a review, I confidently declare a position with a categorical positive vote for awarding Assistant Professor Nedelina Zdravkova Koleva the academic position of "associate professor" in Pedagogical and Age Psychology, Professional Direction 3.2 .Psychology.

08.12.2023

Reviewer: Prof. K. Yonkova, PhD

V. Tarnovo

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