REVIEW

by Assoc. Prof. Emil Angelov Madzharov, PhD, Academy of the Ministry of Interior (MoI), Faculty of "Police"

Department of "Psychology and Police Management"

regarding the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in

Professional Field 3.2 Psychology, announced via Order No. 4581z-1651 dated July 29, 2026, by the Acting Rector of the Academy of the MoI, Senior Commissioner Assoc. Prof. Milorad Yordanov, PhD, to meet the needs of the Academy of the MoI, Faculty of "Police."

The sole candidate for the announced competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor"

is Dr. Diana Ancheva Bozhanova – Senior Lecturer in the Department of "Psychology and Police Management," Faculty of "Police," at the Academy of the Ministry of Interior.

Educational and Scientific Status of the Candidate

D. Bozhanova completed a degree in "Psychology" at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski," earning an additional qualification as a teacher of Psychology, Social Studies, Ethics, and Law (1987–1992).

From 1993 to 2016, Ms. Bozhanova worked within various units of the Institute of Psychology of the Ministry of Interior. Since 2016, she has served as a Senior Lecturer in Psychology in the Department of "Psychology and Police Management" at the Faculty of "Police" of the Academy of the Ministry of Interior. Between 2014 and 2016, Dr. Bozhanova successfully completed a number of courses covering computer skills, personnel selection and training, crisis management, and the operations of specialized rapid-response units.

From 2021 to 2024, Dr. Bozhanova was a doctoral candidate (pursuing an independent study program) at the Department of Psychology and Police Management at the Academy of the Ministry of Interior (AMVR). In 2024, she was awarded the academic degree of "Doctor" (PhD) in the field of "Psychology of Activity" from the Academy of the Ministry of Interior.

Since 2020, Ms. Bozhanova has actively participated in psychology congresses and conferences, presenting papers and publishing her work. Her primary research and applied interests lie in the field of criminal psychology (interrogation, lie detection, and negotiation), psychological counseling for personnel, and professional psychodiagnostics.

Assessment of compliance with minimum national requirements and

the requirements of the Academy of the Ministry of Interior

Based on the materials and documents submitted for the competition, I find that Dr. Bozhanova's core research interests and achievements lie in the field of:- Криминалната психология;

- Criminal psychology;

- Psychological counseling for personnel;

- Professional psychodiagnostics and the refinement of selection methodologies for various categories of personnel within the Ministry of Interior.

The scientific works submitted for review do not duplicate those used in other procedures for the acquisition of a scientific rank or academic position. The materials presented by the candidate, Bozhanova, for this competition raise no concerns regarding plagiarism.

Based on the review of compliance with the criteria stipulated in Article 2b of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB) for Scientific Field 3 (Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences), Professional Field 3.2... Regarding the academic position of "Associate Professor" in Psychology, it is evident that Dr. Diana Bozhanova fully meets the minimum national requirements, as well as the requirements of the Academy of the Ministry of Interior.

General Overview of Teaching Activities

Dr. Bozhanova's teaching activities encompass the development of all necessary training materials and instructional documentation, as well as the direct delivery of courses, as follows:

- In Bachelor's degree programs:

"Introduction to Police Psychology" – Faculty of "Police" – 45 hours of practical exercises

"Introduction to Criminal Psychology" – Faculty of "Police" – 45 hours of practical exercises

"Psychology" – Faculty of "Fire and Emergency Safety" – 30 hours of practical exercises

"Business/Professional Negotiations" – "Public Administration" – 30 hours of lectures

- In Master's degree programs:

"Psychology of Terrorism and Negotiation" – Master's program in "Psychological Support for Operational-Investigative Activities" – 30 hours of lectures

"Management Psychology" – Faculty of "Fire and Emergency Safety" – 14 hours of practical exercises

- In courses for initial professional training and professional qualification updating:

"Police Psychology" – 26-week initial professional training course – 10 hours of lectures

"Police Psychology" – 13-week initial... Professional training – 16 hours of lectures.

"Professional Psychology" – 6-week initial professional training course – 20 hours of lectures.

"Police Psychology" – 31-week initial professional training course – 20 hours of lectures, 5 hours of practical exercises.

"Psychological Aspects of Management" – 1-week course on "Counter-terrorism, Interruption of Terrorist Activities, and Managing the Consequences of Terrorist Acts" – 8 hours of lectures.

"Lie Detection" – 1-week course on "Conducting Screening" (for professional qualification update) – 8 hours of lectures.

Feedback data from the Quality Unit of the Academy of the Ministry of Interior's Training Department indicates that Dr. Bozhanova is highly regarded and respected by cadets, students, and trainees. She is viewed as an experienced, erudite, and innovative educator who fosters open dialogue and successfully navigates the challenging task of capturing the attention of learners and motivating them to participate, regardless of the specific format or profile of the audience.

Also noteworthy is the increasing teaching workload assigned to Dr. Bozhanova—a persistent trend to which she has adapted effectively by integrating a diverse range of didactic activities. General Overview of the Candidate's Research and Applied Scientific Activities

Since 2016, Dr. Bozhanova has presented papers at various scientific forums and has regularly published articles in both the scholarly periodicals of the Academy of the Ministry of Interior and the publications of other academic institutions.

Four articles have been submitted for review: three authored independently and one co-authored. Thematically, they are quite diverse, addressing current issues such as burnout syndrome among firefighters, the personality traits of terrorists, societal changes and the manifestation of hostile or intolerant communication, as well as the psychological characteristics of the elderly and their relevance to police work. The submitted publications are distinguished by an innovative approach and a creative re-examination of topics traditional to criminal psychology; they offer original theoretical generalizations and highlight research findings with practical application. These works demonstrate Ms. Bozhanova's diverse scientific interests, her strong research competencies, and her heightened sensitivity to issues of significance to practical police operations.

Citations of Dr. Bozhanova's scholarly works account for a significant 70 points and appear in reputable international and Bulgarian academic publications. They serve as compelling evidence of the quality of Dr. Bozhanova's research output, as well as her academic erudition, depth, and innovativeness.

In her monograph *Verbal Indicators of Lying*, Dr. Bozhanova examines various types of lies and skillfully and resourcefully analyzes the cognitive mechanisms underlying deception, outlining both passive and active forms of its execution. On page 33 of the book, Dr. Bozhanova puts forward a productive perspective—shared by other authors—that non-instrumental methods and indicators for identifying lies should also be developed. She further posits that, in practice, liars often combine techniques from different strategies, tailoring their approach to the specific circumstances, the characteristics of the interrogating official, and the methods employed by that official. This is a precise and illustrative conclusion, supported by a wealth of arguments, detailed analyses, and original findings.

Dr. Bozhanova provides an excellent analysis of the functional characteristics of "brief accounts" (*short stories*) as a defensive disposition adopted by suspects under interrogation, drawing upon extensive empirical material from her own pedagogical practice. For the purpose of detecting lies, the author proposes a specific criterion: the proportionality of the narrative—specifically how it is divided into parts covering the past, present, and future of the event under investigation—can reveal the truthfulness of the subject's testimony (p. 91).

A notable research and pedagogical merit of the monograph under review is the inclusion of numerous examples and verbal formulations that precisely illustrate the author's specific scientific claims and generalizations.

Ms. Bozhanova's monograph contains a variety of interesting facts, events, and anecdotes. Their inclusion enhances the appeal of the academic text while simultaneously demonstrating the author's erudition and profound knowledge regarding deception—as well as the methods for identifying and neutralizing it—particularly within the context of investigative activities during pre-trial proceedings.

On page 132, Dr. Bozhanova offers an important methodological observation: one cannot conclude that a suspect is lying based on the detection of a single indicator alone. Instead, one must also consider the individual's personality traits, the specificities and irregularities of their behavior, and the concrete context. Consequently, any given indicator of deception must be linked to and interpreted through the lens of both the individual's personality characteristics and the situational context. Dr. Bozhanova also addresses the element of surprise during interrogation—achieved through the use of unexpected, provocative, and projective questions—as a means to uncover contradictions and inconsistencies in testimony, which are subsequently clarified in a systematic manner.

The questionnaire designed to determine an immigrant's age complements the monograph's empirical focus and adds a new didactic dimension to its pedagogical value.

The monograph's conclusion is well-balanced in its emphasis and highly persuasive, enriched by the author's personal assessments, past experiences, and reflections.

The following scientific contributions can be identified in the monograph under review:

**an original, comprehensive definition of lying, which synthesizes various existing perspectives on the phenomenon;

**an enriched understanding of the manifestations of lying, achieved through the in-depth documentation and analysis of numerous aspects and nuances;

**a skillful integration of theoretical concepts regarding lying and its underlying mechanisms with practical scenarios and challenges encountered in actual police work;

**the outline of a unique approach for the non-instrumental verification of lies. This approach is predicated on the combined use of verbal and non-verbal indicators, supported by precise observation and active listening regarding verbal cues. **The introduction of the concept of a "behavioral baseline" enables the identification—both for research and practical application—of various effective indicators that reveal the presence of deception in a specific suspect;

**evasive responses are precisely defined as a functional variant of lying and are aptly illustrated with examples, which should be regarded as a didactic innovation;

**the section of the monograph titled "Grammatical Rules" contains highly valuable material from research, practical, and didactic perspectives; it covers shifts in verb tenses, the mixing of tenses, pronouns, and adverbs (p. 102);

**a series of questions designed for use during the core phase of an interrogation is formulated, accompanied by a detailed breakdown of how innocent versus guilty individuals involved in the procedural actions typically react to them; furthermore, errors in the formulation of questions are examined in a consistent and thorough manner.

The scientific contributions of Dr. Bozhanova, as presented in her monograph and the articles submitted for review, fall within the realms of criminal psychology and operational-investigative psychology—a scientific-applied field that also encompasses specialized psychological research related to various procedural actions. Furthermore, it should be noted that a number of concepts presented in Ms. Bozhanova's reviewed works can be successfully utilized by forensic and correctional psychologists. Consequently, it is appropriate to situate her scientific contributions within the broader field of criminal and legal psychology.

Conclusion

A careful analysis of Dr. Bozhanova's scholarly works highlights their innovative nature and significant contribution to the field. Throughout her professional career, she has accumulated substantial experience in both practical and academic settings. She has also demonstrated a significant volume of effective teaching activity.

Ms. Bozhanova meets the mandatory requirements stipulated by the *Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria* (ZRASRV), as well as the established scientometric criteria.

Based on the considerations outlined above, I offer my firm, positive assessment and recommend that Dr. Diana Ancheva Bozhanova be appointed to the academic position of "Associate Professor" (*Dotsent*) within the Department of "Psychology and Police Management" at the Faculty of "Police" of the Academy of the Ministry of Interior.

October 10, 2026 Assoc. Prof. Emil Madzharov

Sofia – Academy of the Ministry of Interior