

## STATEMENT

By assoc. prof. Vanya Borisova Bozhilova, PhD

*On the materials for the scientific and teaching activity of assist. prof. PhD Yordanka Stoynova Nikolova, submitted for participation in the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor in the professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Family Pedagogy, Andragogy) for the needs of department "Theory of Education" at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" N 103 of 12.12.2023.*

For participation in the announced competition there are submitted documents from the assist. prof. PhD Yordanka Stoynova Nikolova, who is the only candidate for the academic position of Associate Professor. The statement was prepared on the basis of the order № ПД-38-73 от 7.02.2024 of the Rector of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" and according to the decision of the scientific jury. The procedure of the competition and the submitted documentation are in accordance with the Law on the Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and Academic Positions in Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations on the Conditions and Procedure for the Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and Academic Positions in Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

### **General biographical introduction of the candidate**

Assist. prof. Yordanka Nikolova has a rich professional biography. She acquired her higher education at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", Faculty of Pedagogy, graduating in 1992 as a specialist in pedagogy, teacher and educator, with a specialization in "Educational Management" and a second specialty in "Bulgarian Language and Literature".

Her professional career began as a primary teacher in the school "Dimitar Matevski" - Plovdiv. She worked as a teacher for 14 years. Since year 2017 she has been an assistant at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". From 2019 until now she has been working as a senior assistant.

Her scientific interests and research accompany and enrich her teaching practice. In 2015, she successfully defended the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in 1.2. Pedagogy (Theory of education and didactics – Primary school pedagogy) with dissertation on a topic: "Formation of communicative-speech competence in students at the primary stage of education through the teaching of Bulgarian language and literature", under the supervision of prof. Neli Ivanova, PhD.

Her interests in pedagogy are the impetus for her participation in a series of projects focusing on the study of the level of proficiency of students in modern Bulgarian literary

language, the readiness of young people for family life and parenthood, the role of the family in preserving national identity in the global world, the study of evening schools and the motivations of adults to study, etc.

Since 2023 she is a member of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria.

### **1. Teaching practice**

In the process of working with the students assist. prof. PhD Yordanka Nikolova shows a serious attitude and high professional competence, which makes her a respected and valuable professional. She conducts lectures and exercises in the disciplines "Family Pedagogy", "School for Parents", "Family and Deviant Behaviour", "Family Interactions and Deviant Behaviour", "Andragogy", "Methodological Requirements for Adult Education", "Professional-Personal Profile of the Teacher", "Diagnosis and Development of Learning Skills", "Teamwork" - at bachelor and master level. Through various forms of collaborative work with students, she successfully transmits her professional experience as well as motivates young people for development.

### **2. Research activity**

The scientific research activity of assist. prof. PhD Yordanka Nikolova continues after the defence of the dissertation and shows the persistence of her research interests and searches. Among the main thematic areas of the author's work are:

- the formation and development of communicative-speech competence in students at the primary stage of education,
- an interdisciplinary approach to teaching Bulgarian language at the primary stage of education,
- approaches to active interaction with parents,
- the importance of the family and the school for the formation and preservation of national identity,
- readiness of young people for family life,
- parent in the inclusive educational environment,
- approaches to enhance the pedagogical culture of parents,
- formation of sociocultural competence through the interaction between the family and the school,
- the andragogical requirements for parents' training in a nonformal environment,
- evening schools in the context of lifelong learning,
- learning cities, etc.

A large part of the presented publications (monographs, studies and articles) analyse and summarize data from her own research, the results of which the author shares during her participation in scientific conferences at national and international level.

### **3. Scientific production**

#### **3.1. Compliance with the science metrics for the academic position**

The scientific production of assist. prof. PhD Yordanka Nikolova fully complies with the minimum national requirements for the scientific-metric indicators for the academic position "Associate Professor", as in indicators group D and group E significantly exceeds the minimum number of points. The candidate has also provided evidence for Group F indicators. The output is scientifically centred with a clear thematic focus, which demonstrates her high professional and academic competences.

The list of publications for participation in this competition includes 22 titles: 1 monograph, 20 articles and reports, of which 7 articles and reports published in scientific journals, refereed and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information, 13 articles and reports published in non-peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes (15 in Bulgarian language, 1 in English and 4 in Russian) and 1 study published in non-peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes. Of the articles presented, 19 are independent and 1 is co-authored.

The mentioned articles, studies and reports are in proven scientific journals, which makes assist. prof. Yordanka Nikolova a recognizable author. In the reference for citations 26 are present.

#### **3.2. Content analysis of the scientific papers submitted to the competition**

All publications submitted to the competition deserve high praise. In them assist. prof. Yordanka Nikolova shows an excellent style of scientific writing, serious theoretical training, analytical thinking, defends her own position and theses. The applied scientific works are in two main areas: family pedagogy and andragogy, but the author successfully finds their intersections and opportunities for interpretation.

The habilitation thesis is the result of her research activity to reveal the role of the family as a determining factor for the behaviour of young people as partners and parents. The thesis on the necessity of increasing the pedagogical culture of parents is successfully defended. The approaches to increase parental capacity in the context of andragogical requirements for adult education are also in the field of her research work. A separate focus of research inquiries is also the opportunities and motivation of adults for lifelong learning.

The monograph systematically and consistently examines the readiness of young people in Bulgaria for family life in the context of their preferences for the beginning of sexual relationships and the form of cohabitation, readiness for life in a partner relationship and potential strategies for resolution of conflicts. A specific focus is placed on the perceptions and expectations of the role and functions of the parent, as well as the search for contemporary solutions for the upbringing of the child in the family. The results of the

research work allow to successfully determine the necessary competencies for family life and parenting, as well as the ways of their formation. The results obtained are skillfully and thoroughly analysed and the *correlation between readiness for family life and the educational potential of the family is highlighted*. Another correlation that the author traces successfully is *between family upbringing and readiness for family life and the performance of parental functions*. The nature of family experience and its influence on young people's attitudes and expectations about the performance of the parental role and about the upbringing of the child in the family are identified. Also of interest are the analyses and evidence of the conditioning of the relationship between partners and parenting efficacy. Of value and relevance are studies on: young people's values related to family life, preferred parenting methods, preparation for parenthood and approaches to parenting capacity building, and the role of school and non-formal education in this process.

All of the author's researches are subordinated to the construction of a comprehensive conceptual framework and model for increasing the pedagogical competence and culture of parents by studying ideas and scientific concepts, world practices and forms of pedagogical interaction. Models for the development of parental competences through trainings, workshops, etc. have been developed and approved among young people - students who are about to become parents. The enclosed articles, studies and reports, which for the most part describe real applied research work of the author on family pedagogy, also deserve high praise.

The second field of research in which the author has obvious contributions is andragogical. From the specific forms of training proposed for the formation of parenting competencies among both young adults and other groups of adults in their role as parents, she makes a successful transfer to the broader field of opportunities and motivation of adults for lifelong learning, as well as enhancing the quality of preparation of novice adult educators. The results of these studies also allow enriching the theory and practice of the university courses taught by assist. prof. PhD Yordanka Nikolova.

#### **4. Scientific-theoretical, applied and other contributions**

The submitted for the competition works of assist. prof. PhD Yordanka Nikolova have undeniable contribution to the theory and practice of family pedagogy and andragogy as sciences and applied fields.

Contributions of a *scientific and theoretical nature include*:

1. The role of family upbringing and its influence on young people's readiness for family life and parenthood is outlined.
2. The relationship between readiness for family life and the development of the educational potential of the family is analyzed.

3. The conditionality between the nature of the relationship between partners and their parenting effectiveness has been demonstrated.
4. The need for targeted andragogical training of young people to fulfil their parental role and build their parental capacity has been proven.

Contributions of a *practical and applied nature include:*

1. Reasoned and tested author's forms of interaction between the family and the school.
2. Reasoned and tested approaches to increase pedagogical competence and culture of parents.
3. Approaches to motivating adults to learn throughout life are explored, analysed and summarised.
4. Developed original applied training sessions and materials for adult education, including for parents.

#### **5. Comments, recommendations and questions.**

To the candidate in the competition, assist. prof. PhD Yordanka Nikolova, I have no comments and questions. My only wish for her is to follow worthily the path of a scientist, researcher and lecturer in her chosen socially significant research fields.

#### **7. Final evaluation**

I categorically and convincingly state that the scientific production and teaching activity of assist. prof. PhD Yordanka Nikolova meet all the requirements of the Law on the Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and Academic Positions in Republic of Bulgaria for holding the academic position of Associate Professor. This is confirmed by the serious scientific-theoretical and applied contributions of the presented publications.

I give a well-deserved positive assessment of the materials presented in the competition and recommend the Scientific Jury to award to assist. prof. Yordanka Nikolova the academic position of "**Associate Professor**" in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical Sciences, professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Family Pedagogy, Andragogy), for the needs of the Faculty of Pedagogy.

Date: 22.03.2024

Member of the scientific jury:  
(Assoc. prof. Vanya Bozhilova, PhD)