

**REVIEW**

**From Prof. Dr. DONKA BAYKOVA, MD, PhD**

*Specialist in Nutrition and Dietetics*

*External member of the Scientific Jury*

***According to Order No. RD-38-72/07.02.2024 of the RECTOR of SU "St. Kliment Ohridski"***

***regarding competition for "Docent"***

*in professional field 1.2. "Pedagogy" (School hygiene and health education) - for the needs of*

*Faculty of Pedagogy at Sofia University "Kliment Ohridski",*

***published in State Newspaper no. 103 of 12.12.2023***

***Regarding: PEDAGOGICAL, TEACHING AND SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITY***

of **Dr. BERJUHI MIHRAN YORDANOVA, PhD**

*Chief Assistant at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski",*

*Faculty of Pedagogy, Department "Theory of Education"*

In relation to: ***PARTICIPATION IN A COMPETITION FOR THE ACQUISITION***

***ACADEMIC POSITION OF "ASSOCIANT PROFESSOR"***

**According to the procedure:**

*One candidate* participated in the competition for the award of the academic position "Associate Professor" at the Faculty of Pedagogy, Department of "Theory of Education", Sofia University "Saint Kliment Ohridski": ***Dr. Berjuhi Mihran Yordanova*** – Chief Assistant at the same University (Sofia University "Saint Kliment Ohridski", Faculty in pedagogy, Department of "Theory of Education"). The process of the competition is *in accordance with the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations on the Terms and Conditions* for the to obtain Scientific Degrees and the Occupancy of Academic Positions at *SU "St. Kliment Ohridski"*.

*Dr. Berjuhi Mihran Yordanova, was born on June 27, 1976 in Sofia. She is married and mother of 3 children.*

**Educational Development of the Candidate**

- ✓ **1995** - Berjuhi Mihran Yordanova graduated from the ***Financial and Business School*** in the city of *Sofia*, majoring in "Machine Information Processing" with the professional qualification of designer-economist;

- ✓ **1995 - 2000** - Student at the *University of National and World Economy*, Sofia. Graduated with a *Master's degree in Economics* after defending a thesis on "Dynamics of unemployment in the Republic of Bulgaria for the period 1990-1998";
- ✓ **2002 - 2004** - Obtained a *second master's degree* in the specialty "*Social work with children*" at the "Saint Kliment Ohridski" Sofia University after defending a diploma thesis on the topic "*Development of communication skills and positivization of empathic attitude*";
- ✓ **2005 - 2009** - Full-time *doctoral studies* in the scientific specialty "*Theory of Education and Didactics*" (Preschool Education) at the Department of "Theory of Education" at the Faculty of Pedagogy of SU "Saint Kliment Ohridski";
- **2009** - Obtained educational and scientific degree "*Doctor*", *PhD* - (Diploma No33019/30.03.2009) in the *scientific specialty 05.07.01. "Theory of education and didactics"* after a successfully public defense of a Dissertation work on the topic "*The child's readiness for school as a psycho-pedagogical problem*".

### Professional development

- **Since 2010** – *Honorary lecturer* at Sofia University "Saint Kliment Ohridski" at the Faculty of Pedagogy, Department "Theory of Education";
- **Since 2012 to now** – *Chief Assistant* at the same department;
- **2012 – 2013** – *Training instructor*; Expert in creating training aids and manuals; Facilitator of conferences and press conferences under the Project "*Smiles for all children: Support for children with special educational needs from Razgrad region*";
- **From 2014 to now** – Academic mentor for the "*Student practices*" project;
- **2015** - *Head of an expert group* for the development of "Communication framework for inter-institutional cooperation to improve the quality of policies and practices for care and education of children from birth to 3 years".

### Postgraduate educational and teaching, scientific and qualification development

*In her professional and scientific development, Dr. Berjuhi Mihran Yordanova is going successfully through different Postgraduate Courses - in the following areas:*

- **2002** - "Summer School of *Psychology*";
- **2006 - 2007** - "Experimental Doctoral School of Humanities and *Social Sciences*" at the Faculty of Philosophy of the SU "Saint Kliment Ohridski" on the thematic areas: "*Computer processing of empirical data SPSS*"; "Practical skills and techniques for conducting scientific research"; "Doctoral Workshop in Humanities";

- **2007** - "Doctoral School at the Faculty of Pedagogy of the University of "Saint Kliment Ohridski" - 2007" with postgraduate training in: *Work with literary sources* and sources; The Transformative Experiment in Dissertation Research; Processing and analysis of empirical research results;
- **2007** - Participation in the "*FameLab 2007 Bulgaria*" project, organized by the British Council and the Ministry of Education and Science;
- **2007** - "*FameLab Master Class*", Koprivshtitsa;
- **2013** - Training in the "Doctoral School" on the topic "Development and improvement of an *interfaculty doctoral program* in the field of pedagogical research and e-learning in SU" under the *Operational Program "Development of Human Resources"* with participation *in the following thematic courses*:
  - ✓ *Integration of technology in teaching and learning*;
  - ✓ *Theory and measurement methods in education*;
  - ✓ *English for Academic Purposes*; Computer programs for teaching purposes (LectureMaker & Camtazia Studio);
  - ✓ *Modern computer programs* to help research activity;
  - ✓ *Information search strategies in online pedagogical resources*;
  - ✓ *Outsourced field training*.
- **2019** – Training on the topic: Formation and improvement of skills for creation, editing, publishing and distribution of *scientific publications*" under Operational Program "Science and education for intelligent growth", European Union;
- **2019** – Qualification course "*Technological possibilities* and procedures for verifying *the authenticity* of course assignments, theses and dissertations by using an *anti-plagiarism system* integrated into the e-learning system of Sofia University";
- **2021** - Participation in a *webinar* on the topic: "*Unique identification of authors*", at the University Library "Saint Kliment Ohridski";
- **2021** – Postgraduate course on the topic: "*Development of electronic learning resources*";
- **2022** – Training on the topic: "*Designing competence models in electronic learning systems*";
- **2023** – Participation in a Training Course for the *international project "Activating Students in Online Classes"*;

- **2023** - Training on the topic: *"IBM SPSS Statistics for teachers"* for the *project "MODERN-A: Modernization in partnership through digitization of the Academic Ecosystem"*.

### **English Education:**

- **2004** – *English language course* at Prestige Language School with protected *intermediate level*.

### **Membership in Scientific organizations**

- **From 2007 to now** - *"Young University Researcher" Association* - member of the Management Board - Responsible for the students and doctoral students section;
- **From 2012 to now** - member of the *"Center for Interdisciplinary Research and Innovations in Non-Formal Education (CIINO)"* at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski";
- **2012** – *Member of the editorial board* of the Collection of Reports from a Scientific Conference;
- **2012 - 2018** - Member of the *Faculty Council at the Faculty* of Pedagogy of Sofia University "Saint Kliment Ohridski";
- **From 2018 to the present** - Member of the *Association "Interuniversity Institute on Educational Management - Interaula"* - Program for the implementation of the Municipal strategy for the development of physical education and sports of the Metropolitan Municipality (certificate and plaque) ;
- **From 2018 to the present** – Member of the *"Union of Scientists in Bulgaria"*, Section "Pedagogy and Psychology".

### **Social and organizational activity**

- **2002 - 2007** – *"Outstretched Hand" Association*, Sofia - chairman, project coordinator;
- **From 2017 to date** – *"Humanity" Foundation*, Sofia - member of the Management Board;
- **2019** - *Youth team of the "Green Network" Association* - Mentor for the project "Incubator of integrated urban educational networks", financed and organized by the "Interuniversity Institute of Education Management";
- **From 2021 to now**- Member of the Board of Trustees of the *People's Community Center "Iskra - 1964"*.

### Honors and awards

- **2009** - Included in the collection "*Notable Bulgarian Women*";
- **2014** - *Certificate* from the "Iskra-1964" *People's Community Center* for overall cultural and educational activity and on the occasion of 50 years since its foundation;
- **2023** – *Included in the Almanac* of the members of the "Pedagogy and Psychology" section of the *Union of Scientists in Bulgaria*;
- **2023** - Included in the "*Who's who in the Armenian community in Bulgaria*" *collection* (people of culture, art and science).

### Teaching and learning activity

In connection with her participation in the current competition, Dr. Berjuhi Yordanova presents an official Document from the "Educational Activities" Department at Sofia University "Saint Kliment Ohridski" regarding her Study Employment as a Chief assistant in the "Theory of Education" department at the Faculty of Pedagogy *during the last 5 academic years*. The following official information has been verified (planned, respectively - reported):

- For the academic year **2018/2019**, the candidate's total study load is **672 hours, of which 450 hours are auditorium occupancy**;
- For the academic year **2019/2020**, total study load – **1277,3 hours, of which 870 hours - auditorium occupancy**;
- For the academic year **2020/2021**, total study load - **1969,8 hours, of which 1560 hours - auditorium occupancy**;
- For the academic year **2021/2022**, total study load – **1428,9 hours, of which 1163 hours - auditorium occupancy**;
- For the academic year **2022/2023**, total study load – **1215,5 hours, of which 940 hours - auditorium occupancy**.

To the materials submitted for review in the current "Associate Professor" competition, the candidate has also attached a Document, Sample N2, for her study load with bachelor's and master's degrees in the declared scientific field, detailed in **6 disciplines**, respectively, by lectures and exercises:

*A total of 150 hours of lectures and 300 hours of exercise.*

### My Estimation

I appreciate the specifics of the study load as convincing evidence that Dr. Yordanova is the right candidate for the academic title "Associate Professor" in the professional direction 1.2. Pedagogy (School hygiene and health education) in the current competition.

### **Main areas of teaching activity**

- *The main specialties* in which Dr. Yordanova teaches students - *masters and bachelors - regular and extra mural studies* (distance learning) are: "*Pedagogy*" and "*Non-formal education*";
- *Additional: Health and sex education* (from 2012 to 2020); *Health and environmental education; School hygiene and health education;*
- *Other additional specialties* in which Dr. Yordanova participates are: "*Geography*" and "*Geography and English*" in - "Faculty of Geology and Geography" of Sofia University;
- *And more: Work with extracurricular institutions;* Theory of education; Family pedagogy; Non-formal education and a number of practical activities in the field - both in regular and extramural studies.

In explanatory reports, the candidate presents information that her teaching activity as a chief assistant includes: classroom and non-auditory classes with bachelors, masters - full-time and extramural studies and postgraduate courses based on curricula developed by her personally.

### **Scientific and research activity**

At the same time with the intensive teaching workload/employment, chief assistant Yordanova has not abandoned her scientific and research investigations. *The main areas* of her research activity are: *School hygiene and health education and upbringing of children and adolescents in preschool and school age; Healthy life style; Theory of education; Pedagogy; Environmental education and upbringing; Non-formal education and work with out-of-school institutions; Sex education and upbringing; Family education; Education and upbringing of children with special educational needs; Manifestations of child aggression in preschool and school age; Theories of personality and age periods; Development and testing of a projective test for diagnosis of the child's socio-behavioral readiness for school; Theoretical study of the concept of "readiness of the child for school". Improving the eating habits of children and students; Educational aspects of healthy nutrition for children and students.*

### **Scientific indicators**

**The overall scientific output** of Dr. Berjuhi Yordanova includes:

- **Total: 66 titles** of scientific works:

- ✓ Participation with a *chapter of a book* - 2 pcs.;
- ✓ *Monographs* – 3 pcs.;
- ✓ *Scientific articles in magazines* - 12 items;
- ✓ *Publications in Collections with reports from scientific conferences* – 42 items;
- ✓ *Studios in a series* – 5 pieces;
- ✓ *Textbook* – 1 pc.;
- ✓ *Study guide* - 1 pc.

**For the purposes of THIS COMPETITION, the following scientific works are to review:**

- **Total: 21 pcs.** from which:
  - ✓ *independent* – 19 pieces;
  - ✓ *in co-authorship* – 2 issues.

This scientific production can be attributed mainly to 2 thematic areas:

- *School hygiene and health education* and upbringing of preschool and school-age children;
- *Educational aspects of healthy eating* for children and students.

**Point assessment**

- **Group 1: Dissertation work for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor", PhD: 1 number 50 points**  
- **Total for group 1. – 50 points**
- **Group 2: Dissertation work for awarding the scientific degree "Doctor of Sciences" - 0 points**  
- **Total for group 2. - 0 points**
- **Group 3: Habilitation thesis - monograph: 1 issue - 100 points**  
- **Total for group B - 100 point**
- **Group 4:**
  - ✓ *Published monograph based on a defended dissertation* work for awarding the educational and scientific degree "Doctor", PhD: **1 issue - 75 points**
  - ✓ Articles and reports published in scientific *publications, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases* with scientific information: 1 issue – **10 points**
  - ✓ Articles and reports published in *non-refereed* peer-reviewed journals or published *in edited collective volumes*: **14 issues – 130 points**

- ✓ *Studios: 3 pieces – 45 points*
- **Total for group 4.: 260 points**
- **Group 5: Citations or reviews in non-refereed journals with scientific review: 70 points**
- **Total by group 5.: 70 points**
- **Group 6:**
  - ✓ Participation in a national *scientific or educational project: 45 points*;
  - ✓ Participation in an *international or educational project: 80 points*;
  - ✓ Published university *textbook that is used in the school network: 40 points*.
- **Total by group 6.: 165 points**

**The total number of points for all indicator groups for Dr. Yordanova are**

- **645 points at set minimum of 400 points.**

**My assessment:**

*The set minimum of national requirements* for a scientific field 1. Pedagogical sciences, Professional direction 1.2. Pedagogy (School hygiene and health education) and the additional requirements of Sofia University "Saint Kliment Ohridski" ***are not only completely covered, but also significantly exceeded.***

For *the quality of the scientific production* of the Chief Assistant Dr. Yordanova may show:

**Number of citations**

The presented official reference of the University Library at Sofia University "Saint Kliment Ohridski" certifies that based on *Web of Science Clarivate databases; Central and Eastern European Online Library /CEEOL; Russian index of scientific citations /RINC/ eLIBRARY.ru; Google Science; Google Books; Google Network*, **28 citations** were found - from Bulgarian and foreign author collectives (without auto-citations), **and 2 of the publications** were indexed (Central and Eastern European Online Library /CEEOL /). The so-called *Hirsch index (h-index)* gives an objective assessment of the scientific value of the author's publications, based on the number of publications and their citations. In this case: **2 issues of the articles** of the chief assistant. Yordanova ***are indexed with h-index = 1.***

The specialized and scientific journals in which she has published the results of her research also provide clarity of the prestige of the candidate's scientific output: "Science - education - profession: systematic personal development approach"; "Pedagogika" magazine



(indexed and referenced in Web of Science); Articles, reports and studies published in non-refereed journals, but with scientific review or published in edited collective volumes, etc.

### **Scientific contributions**

*I divide* Berjuhi Yordanova's scientific *contributions* into three categories:

*Contributions with theoretical value; Contributions of a methodical nature; Contributions of scientific-practical value, namely:*

#### I. *By thematic area:* **School hygiene and health education and upbringing of children of preschool and school age**

##### **- Contributions of theoretical value**

- ✚ *The child's health culture* was examined as *an essential part of his/her behavioral readiness for school*, and more specifically: Knowledge and skills for healthy eating; personal hygiene; daily study routine; physical activity and sports; recreation; sleep; etc. *in preschool age*, (2; 20);
- ✚ Based on in-deep analyzes and evaluations from own studies, a *concept* was built and presented that *the hygiene norms* and rules at school on the one hand and health education and upbringing on the other, are an *important basis for forming skills for a healthy lifestyle in students*, (15);
- ✚ Based on the results of own research, an analysis and evaluation *of the students' health education was carried out*, with a view to justifying opportunities for its optimization by: Conducting discussions; information campaigns; meetings with health professionals and other experts; increasing opportunities for sports for students at school; introduction of the optional discipline "Health Education and Education" into the curricula; development of interesting information materials, including - suitable for the age of the students, health and educational television programs, etc., (16; 17);
- ✚ *The interaction between formal and non-formal health education* was analyzed and evaluated *in 2 own surveys* - one among school and extra-curricular *pedagogical specialists* and the second - *with students*. The conclusions are categorical that *between formal and informal education* in the field of health, physical and environmental education, *interaction is necessary*. Training in the field of health education at school is insufficient, and the potential of non-formal education in this field remains untapped. The conclusions give grounds to the candidate to *present an opinion based on scientific evidence* that it is necessary *to apply formal and non-formal forms* of

education at the same time, to use the existing ones more effectively and to create new ones. Because the interaction between them would be of key importance for increasing the quality of health education, (3, 19);

- ✚ The basic *health and education programs* applied in our country *are presented* (21).
- ✚ Challenges and *problems concerning students' health education* are indicated (14);
- ✚ The *factors influencing the mental health* of young and older students (adolescents) have been studied and discussed (10; 12; 19);
- ✚ The role of health education in upbringing in *prevention of Internet addiction* among children and students has been examined (11).

#### **- Contributions of a methodical nature**

- ✚ *Models for awareness and building healthy habits* in preschool age are grounded and presented, (2);
- ✚ A process is presented - an author's *algorithm* of acquiring by the preschool child of basic *rules for a healthy lifestyle*, which is an important part of the child's socio-behavioral readiness for school. Because: In order to feel *well accepted in the social environment* of other children-students and teachers and to have self-esteem as a first-grader, the child from preschool age must be able *to take care of himself* (get dressed, eat independently and healthily, observe personal hygiene, order and cleanliness), (2).

## II. By thematic area: **Educational and educational aspects of healthy nutrition for children and students**

#### **- Contributions of theoretical value**

- ✚ Based on analyzes and assessments from own studies, the *factual status of the eating habits of primary school-age children is presented* - a basis for building intervention programs. Serious inconsistencies with modern expert recommendations for healthy eating have been found. Deficiencies in the formation of healthy eating behavior both in the family and - indirectly and through the school buffets and commercial food outlets near the schools - fast foods, snacks, chips in shiny packages - tasty, accessible, satiating, but with negligible nutritional value, but with high energy value (so-called "junk foods").

✚ *At primary school age, teachers educate* their young school-children *on correct eating habits and healthy food choices*, using scientifically based and age-appropriate specialized literary sources on Healthy Nutrition. Emphasizing the importance of nutrition as a powerful factor for health, an *author's position* has been taken to expand the training and education in Healthy nutrition for students from the earliest school age by including *different and appropriate extracurricular forms*, (18).

✚ *The factual status of the educational problems* in Healthy Nutrition *and in upper school age* students has been established and presented. The findings are alarming: *The educational participation of teachers in this area is extremely insufficient*. The recommendation is categorical: Efforts to increase knowledge on Healthy nutrition as part of a Healthy Lifestyle during the period of growth and development, when organs, systems, sexual maturity and adaptation mechanisms are finally formed, are imperative (1; 5).

#### **- Contributions of methodical value**

✚ *An algorithm for the ascending development of awareness and healthy eating habits* among children and students has been proposed (6 -9);

✚ Developed and proposed for implementation is a *specific intervention program* for forming the foundations of health culture in children and students in 3 parts:

- ✓ *First part:* For the elementary school course - as an important part of the child's socio-behavioral readiness for school, (1);
- ✓ *Second part:* Upgrading the health culture among upper school age students, called by the author - "Conceptual model of healthy eating for students of upper school age", (2);
- ✓ *Third part:* Model for the work of teachers on the health education of students, (17).

#### **Contributions of scientific-practical value**

✚ *Based on* a review and analysis of the *normative base* and national policies on healthy nutrition for students, *the role and participation of educators in inter-institutional complex intervention programs* to optimize and improve student nutrition is justified.

#### **Summary**

*The teaching, scientific and research activities of Dr. Berjuhi Mihran Yordanova meet the requirements for acquiring the academic position "Associate Professor" and significantly exceed the quantitative and qualitative criteria listed in the Regulations of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" for application of Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria. The volume of her scientific work is in accordance with the requirements, has a contributing character and is of important professional-practical, theoretical, methodical and social significance for Bulgarian Pedagogy.*

**Conclusion:**

*Based on the presented facts and the impressive scientific documentation, I express my categorical opinion that the only candidate in the current competition - Dr. Yordanova, is an authoritative representative of the Bulgarian pedagogical academic potential and meets the requirements for the academic title Associated Professor ("Docent").*

*I recommend to the honorable members of the Scientific Jury to evaluate the overall educational and teaching activity and the scientific and creative production of Berjuhi Mihran Yordanova, PhD as performed at a high modern scientific and methodical level, with a significant contributing character and to vote positively for awarding her with the academic position "Associate Professor" (Docent) in professional direction 1.2. "Pedagogy" (School hygiene and health education), for the needs of the Faculty of Pedagogy at Sofia University "Saint Kliment Ohridski".*

Sofia,

22.04.2024

Reviewer:

Prof. Dr. Donka Baykova, MD, PhD