

## Review

for a competition for the academic position of “Associate Professor” in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, in Professional field 1.2. Pedagogy (Educational Sociology, Social Adaptation and disadaptation), announced in SG issue 22, 16. 03. 2021, for the needs of Faculty of Education, Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”

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*General data about the competition and the procedure:* the announced competition is based on a sufficient number of obligatory academic hours according to the profile of the competition: **280 hours lectures /560 hours equated exercises/, as 80 hours of them are in compulsory disciplines bachelor's level:** (“Educational Sociology” in the specialty Pedagogy part-time and "Society and Education" in the specialty Non-Formal Education full-time and part-time); **150 hours are in elective subjects** at the bachelor's level: "Society and Education" for the specialty of "Social Work" full-time and part-time, "Social Adaptation and Disadaptation" in the specialties Pedagogy and Non-Formal Education full-time and part-time; **50 hours** are in compulsory subjects in the master's level: “Education and Society” in Master degree program CEINNE and MSONO and “Stress management in professional (educational) environment” in Master degree program “Educational Management”. **220 hours** of exercises/seminars in these disciplines also take part in the competition. The procedure is legally compliant and goes through all the stages to the current second meeting of the scientific jury.

*Presentation of the candidates:* the only candidate in the competition is Chief Assistant D Silvia Varbanova, PhD. She has earned the name of an inspired, eternally young seeking spirit, a competent and responsive teacher, a direct and principled colleague, with a positive and constructive developmental attitude in setting and solving all problems and challenges in modern universities. In 1981-82 she worked as a lecturer at the Institute for Primary Teachers in Shumen, since 1983 she has been an assistant at the Sofia University, since 1989 - Chief Assistant Professor. In 2005 she defended her doctoral dissertation in Educational Sociology. Ch. Assistant Professor Varbanova is an organic part and one of the pillars of the lecture module in Pedagogical Sociology both at the Faculty of Education and outside it. She has long been a valuable staff member, a recognizable lecturer and author, a sought-after expert, consultant, collaborator in the areas of competence she has won.

*Scientific production:* the documentation presents a rich work: 20 papers are classified for the review in total, of which 15 in Bulgarian, 5 in English: 2 monographs, 3 studies, 3 articles in journals referenced in international databases; 9 in unreferenced with review; 3 handbooks. As quantity it is plenty enough. What does the qualitative assessment show? It multiplies the number due to the richness, diversity and versatility of the author's works.

The habilitation work deserves a special attention - the monograph "Individuality in the Mirrors of Postmodern Time". Undoubtedly, the problem area is inter-, intra- and trans-disciplinary with all the richness of intersections, nuances and all the possible existing challenges and significant choices that a researcher could make. This is one of the explanations for the long term diverse work of chief assistant Varbanova on the topic. The path, the option she chose for structuring the logic of the problems, for the design of the theoretical-empirical research is reliable,

and informative, problematic, and interesting, result oriented and effectively implemented. The study will find its place in the spectrum of similar and classical, and newer, and future studies in this area. *Content assessment:* The monograph consistently problematizes in its separate parts the Postmodern time at various angles - from the historical-chronological perspective to the aperspective perspective, with their consequences and reflections on the inhabitants; problematizes the Identity in its "development", in its dynamics, in its simultaneous unpredictability and sustainability, in its individuality and in its uniqueness; problematizes social adaptation and disadaptation in the context of postmodern socialization; problematizes their factors in combination and in contradiction; problematizes the results of the realized empiricism - both as a scientifically applied continuation of an established powerful tradition in the study of youth identity, and as a request for rethinking and setting new directions, in accordance with the new manifestations and assessments of phenomena. The result is a rich, generous work, springing from the knowledge and author's competent reference frame and use of a representative and significant bibliographic base of interdisciplinary and specific fields of human knowledge, interested in different perspectives on identity, person, and social context. The structure of the work is mastered and is characterized by an extreme desire for simplicity and order, organized around the basic logic of the author - postmodern age, identity, empirical research, factors of socialization and social adaptation-disadaptation. The empirical research has a clear and precise formulation, organized and realized in a stylish, informative way presented to the reader.

The author's style is definitely authentic and authorial - i.e. here the tautology is deliberate - a predominant necessity and a qualitative distinction as a mark and marker of the text of Silvia Varbanova, which designates it as its real name. **The monograph will be recognizable by its name and this autonomy is given to it by the quality of the creation by its parent - the author.**

The other main publications of the author have their *significant contributions over the years both in the field of Educational Sociology and in the specific field of the complex processes and phenomena in the Social adaptation and disadaptation of young people – through education and also inside and outside education; as well as within the strategic and specific issues in the practice of contemporary education.* Although the problems are intertwined in a unique way, three relatively independent groups can be distinguished, mainly related to one or the other or the third field of research.

Works in the field of *Educational Sociology*: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 12, 13, 15. Works in the field of *Social Adaptation and Disadaptation*: 1, 7, 8, 14, 15, 16. With the monograph about inequalities and differences in education, Silvia Varbanova stated her penetrating sense, her ambitions to study long and deep the phenomena that interest her, to give them time to reveal the richness and nuances of the dependencies and relations between them as much as possible. In practice, despite the fact that Varbanova's empirical research covers certain specific time periods, all her theoretical statements, all her analyzes and forecasts are in fact evidence of longitudinal theoretical-analytical procedures that trace far back in time and extrapolate even further forward. **According to me, this is the most distinctive mark of the researcher and author Varbanova** - and when she studies socialization in general, and the relationship between parents and children, and the media, and the school environment – classmates - teachers, and friends; and the interactions between them determining the emergence of secondary and tertiary factors, determining **the complex "effects" – adaptation - disadaptation - not separately, but as a necessary conjunctive-applicative whole. I would allow myself an analogy and metaphor with regard to the characteristics of the research of Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Varbanova - patience, concealment, observation, overstrain until waiting for the exact moment of "flashing and catching" the desired mark, gesture, twitching of the object - just as the hunter stalks his catch /let the analogy be with**

**the fisherman and the golden fish - there are many goldfinches in the net of the author Varbanova/.** Slowly and patiently written texts, with seemingly endless waiting and returning again and again to what has been done, analyzed, and written and their corrections, in order to reach this relatively stable level of conviction that they are as reliable as possible.

*Works in the field of Pedagogy - theory and practice of teaching and learning: 6, 9, 10, 11, 17, 19, 20.* The title of the last manual, ed. 20, maybe be an epitaph of Varbanova's work in this sector - "the learning adventure" - open, endless, always new, provocative and provocatively presented to the specialist and reader. These are developed competently problems of teaching, adaptation of pupils and students, assessment in the training process, professional burnout, and support of managers in their professional activity and progress.

*Scientific contributions in the professional work of the candidate:* they are both at the theoretical and applied level in the field of **Educational Sociology and Social Adaptation and Disadaptation** as highly interacting fields:

1. At the macro pedagogical-sociological level the conditions and complex processes in the social sphere and in contemporary education are analyzed and predicted in their mutual correlation and with manifestations of the key problems of contemporaneity - equality and education, discrimination and education, adaptation - disadaptation and education, the main factors and their responsibility - family, peers, school, media, social and public environment /4, 1, 2/.

2. Systematized and re-thought theoretical statements from different interdisciplinary fields; from different research paradigms; from different research epochs - about human/youth identity. An adapted author's concept of identity is proposed with a center of individuality, determined by the characteristics of the postmodern era.

3. A multi-layered *reading of the postmodern time as a qualitatively new social life situation* with its contradictory and bright consequences on human development - from the historical-chronological to theaperspective perspective. In this social environment are placed, interpreted and are given solutions to *key issues of contemporary Education* - social equality, discrimination, socializing processes in school, dissocializing factors /2, 10, 12, 13, 15/.

4. Conducted *numerous empirical studies* with adapted scientifically précised tools in different sectors of pedagogical sociology. The rich cross-analyzes and judgments, cumulatively and accumulatively built up over the years, *complement the scientific and applied knowledge* of human identity and the dynamic processes of socialization. Fitting into the tradition, they carry out perspectives of the individual and community evolution /1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc./

5. Based on both theoretical analyzes and empirical results, problematic variable perspectives for the natural development of identity-individuality are outlined, actively interacting with the factors of influence from the social environment (family, peers, school, media) in their diversity and dynamics - as socializing, leading to adaptation or disadaptation /3, 4, 5/.

6. At the theoretical and practical level, models for training and adaptation in the educational environment have been developed - both for university and school students /ed. 8 and 7/; as well as for managers in professional environment in the context of professional workload and "burnout" /18, 19/.

The colleague has significant contributions in the field of **Pedagogy**, in particular the theory and practice of teaching /ed. 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 17, 20/: developed learning styles, innovative moments in the lecture and in the assessment of the learning process, the connection between formal and non-formal education.

*Scientific and research activity, project activity and consultancy:* the candidate is extremely curious and at the same time full of questions and doubts researcher. The combination of these options turns the chief assistant Varbanova in an authentic real seeker of pedagogical and social Knowledge. Rich project activity, through many years of experience: 9 national and international projects. Rich and diverse international contacts: dozens of countries - both as an Erasmus teacher and as an Erasmus student trainer. Numerous qualifications and trainings of various client groups at all levels of education and profession as an expert and consultant: Member of the editorial board of the magazine "Management of Secondary Education", of the magazine "Management of Higher Education", consultant at the "Medical Horizon" Center; since 2006 trainer in numerous courses and trainings.

*Teaching activity:* beloved, sought after, elected, respectful teacher - these characteristics of Chief Assistant Professor Varbanova are rediscovered in the opinions of her colleagues, and in the assessments of students, and in the authority gained in the university and non-university academic community. The teaching commitment of the candidate corresponds entirely with the reference hours of the competition, as Chief Assistant Professor Varbanova is a full-time lecturer in the structural unit, an applicant for Associate Professor. Nevertheless it should be noted that the course "Social adaptation and disadaptation" is an elective course, however for years it has regularly gathered an impressive number of students, ch. assistant professor Dr. S. Varbanova constantly updates and deepens both the content and teaching methods, so that in the end the discipline functions as mandatory, unchangeable, although with a formal status of "elective".

As a rule the results of the attestation assessments of the colleague are one of the highest in the parameter "student opinion". It testifies itself for the quality of work and academic professionalism of the candidate. It applies to the same extent to the disciplines at master's level "Education and Society" and "Stress Management". *The total teaching employment hours of the candidate (280 lectures and 220 lectures) are entirely according to the profile of the competition. She has trained 17 foreign students in the Erasmus program in "Social Adaptation and Disadaptation" and in "Education and Society". She was an Erasmus lecturer in Porto, Portugal in Sociology of Education with over 250 students.*

*Scientific guidance:* Chief Assistant Dr. Varbanova is a sought-after supervisor of diploma theses at bachelor's and master's level. The candidate has supervised over 50 graduates - with wisdom, skill, extravagance. An impressive number, not only have they successfully defended, but also have noticeably grown in educational, professional and research terms in the process of interaction with their supervisor. **I look forward to see Silvia Varbanova as an associate professor so she can quickly and urgently deal with the preparation and guidance of doctoral students in the current and future areas of pedagogical science and social knowledge in general.**

*Citations:* Silvia Varbanova has long proved to be an author who has established own name as one of the most used one in the scientific community because of her valuable ideas, great works and conceptual determination and productivity. An impressive number of citations with a certificate from UL - 59 are presented in international databases. Separately, 61 citations in unreferred peer-reviewed journals and 16 citations in monographs and peer-reviewed volumes are duly described in the reference for scientometric indicators. The numbers themselves speak of the recognition and value of the candidate's scientific output.

*Notes and questions:* These lavish and central to many social sciences issues could also be crossed by many different research trajectories. Therefore, each of them can raise many questions. Those placed here are born with full confidence in the competence and open research worldview of the author, who will answer them through her future works at a time and stage when she deems it appropriate.

1. The prospective, extrapolative accents of the habilitation work can be strengthened, the different possible perspectives of the problems in their development towards the future, **after the "post modernity"** can be emphasized. **It would be very valuable to understand the author's position on the stage of post modernity - where are we now? In the end, in the middle, do we experience it, is it already experienced, in the global age do we experience the last characteristics of our postmodern essence? What are the relations between the realities and concepts of "postmodern-global"?** (According to the first part of the monograph).

2. At the end of the habilitation work, after the empirical study of the statuses and the analysis of the factors for socialization, adaptation and disadaptation, could the empirically **distinguished proven "more probable" variants of the development of the individuality in the future be outlined? And to answer the question - which of the factors are, according to the author, leading in the current and future social situation -like a question that can be addressed to a reliable futurologist?**

*I explicitly note that the questions are caused by curiosity and the need to hear the competent opinion and position of the author as an analyst, critic and forecaster of the processes.*

*Conclusion: The candidacy of Dr. Silvia Varbanova and the competition procedure carried out by the FP correspond to the scientometric criteria and indicators, as well as to all the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria*

Arguing on the account of the content characteristics and merits of the candidate's publication, the extremely current and promising issues, the realized valuable scientific contributions, the authenticity of the author's many years of professional teaching and research experience, I confidently offer the members of the highly esteemed scientific jury to vote "positively" of the introduction of Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Silvia Varbanova in the *academic position of "associate professor" /growth on the spot/ according to PN 1.2. Pedagogy (Educational Sociology, Social Adaptation and Disadaptation) for the needs of the Faculty of Pedagogy at Sofia University. This is an extremely necessary and long-awaited procedure by the entire faculty community.*

The candidate ch. assistant professor Dr. Silvia Varbanova is a person whose potential is yet to be developed in many directions in order to multiply the work so far, supporting individuals and adding new horizons to a contemporary perspective in the field of Educational Sociology as a synergy of flows of social and educational processes and factors (multiple mirrors), creating and lead off the person - identical to himself in both Individuality and Kinship, in the crystalline Image of the Future. It is the Energy and the Spirit, embodied and flowing from the overall work of the candidate and outside the regulation of evaluation of materialized acts and contributions that assure and trust to the greatest extent the merit and value of the personal and institutional request in this competition.

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