

OPINION

By

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Ref. competition for the occupation of the academic position “Associate Professor”
in the field of higher education: 1.2. Pedagogy (Family Pedagogy, Andragogy),
announced in the State Gazette, issue 103, dated 12.12.2023,
for the needs of the Faculty of Pedagogy

1. Legality of the Procedure

This Opinion is elaborated on grounds of Order No. ПД-38-73/07.02.2024 of the Rector of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", according to which I have been appointed as a member of the Scientific Jury.

In connection with the announced competition for the occupation of the academic position “Associate Professor”, one candidate has participated, i.e. Senior Assistant Professor Yordanka Stoynova Nikolova, PhD. The review of the materials submitted by the candidate for participation in the procedure has not shown any violations of the procedure.

2. Candidate's Career Profile

Senior Assistant Professor Yordanka Nikolova, PhD completed her higher education in 1991 at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", with the specialty “Pedagogy” and the professional qualification “Specialist in Pedagogy, Teacher and Educator”. In 2015, she was conferred the educational and scientific degree “DOCTOR” in 1.2. Pedagogy (Theory of Upbringing and Didactics) after defending her dissertation entitled “Formation of Communicative Language Competence in Primary Students by Teaching Bulgarian and Literature”.

During her professional career of more than 30 years, Senior Assistant Professor Yordanka Nikolova, PhD has been on the position of a “Primary School Teacher”, “Assistant Professor” and Senior Assistant Professor. As seen from the submitted documents, the candidate has participated in a number of trainings for improving her professional qualification.

3. *Candidate’s Scientific and Scientific and Applied Production. Theoretical and Empirical Contributions*

From the statement of information for compliance with the minimal national requirements for the occupation of the academic position “Associate Professor” submitted by Senior Assistant Professor Yordanka Nikolova, PhD, it is seen that the candidate’s scientific activity meets the required minimum and with regards to some indicator groups even surpasses it. Under Group “A”, the candidate’s score is 50 points out of 50, under Group “C” – 100 points out of 100, under Group “D” – 340 (where the requirement is for 200 points), under group “E” – 165 (where the requirement is for 50 points).

In this competition for occupation of the academic position “Associate Professor” in 1.2. Pedagogy (Family Pedagogy, Andragogy), Senior Assistant Professor Yordanka Nikolova, PhD has submitted one sole authorship monograph, seven articles and reports published in scientific journals refereed and indexed in world-known databases with scientific information, thirteen articles and reports published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collections, as well as one study.

In the submitted published materials, the citations are correct. I find no plagiarism.

In the monograph published in 2023 entitled “Prospects for Family Life and Parenthood in the Context of the Family Pedagogy”, the author sets herself the ambitious goal of conducting a survey which aims at determining the readiness of young people for family life and parenthood in connection with their family upbringing. The relevance of the topic is indisputable considering the trends in the development dynamics of the modern family. Appropriately selected are the survey participants, i.e. 12th grade students and 1st year university students. A good impression leaves the broad representativeness of the sample which includes 2136 respondents.

The results from the profound survey have been used to outline the hierarchy of the values of young people in terms of family life, their attitude with regards to the roles of men and women in the modern family and their changing inherent functions in the family as a small social group.

In a theoretical and methodological aspect as a contribution it should be noted the elaborated system of activities suitable to be implemented in kindergarten and school settings focused mostly on the formation of competences needed in a life partnership.

The theoretical and empirical contributions are primarily associated with the author's constructed research methods, united in a constructed approach allowing the study of large samples.

A good impression leaves the attempt for an analysis of the family problems in terms of their presence in the curriculum of the modern Bulgarian school. The author justifies her scientific searches with building a conceptual frame for the construction of an effective model for improving the parents' pedagogical culture, whereas this goal finds its place also in some of the scientific publications.

In this connection, particularly valuable are the highlighted practices and tools for its improvement, which are supplemented by the accompanying andragogical requirements for parents training. Improving the pedagogical culture of the parents is a thematical scientific field in which the candidate for the occupation of the academic position "Associate Professor" has achieved significant scientific contributions by means of the monograph but also by means of a large number of the articles and reports submitted. The article "Master Classes" deals with a concrete example of shared good pedagogical practices in the form of master classes and discusses their role for improving the professional preparation of the future pedagogues.

A natural finish of the author's searches in the submitted monograph paper is the suggested "system of activities for the formation of family and parenting competences in school settings" which includes activities suitable for kindergarten age, primary school age, lower secondary and upper secondary school age. A more detailed and more profound presentation of each activity would increase its scientific and applied value.

Other thematic research fields in which with no doubt the author's unique contributions can be found are the capabilities and motivation of the adult people for lifelong learning, improving the preparation quality of the novice adult education teachers and the professional competences of the Pedagogy students in terms of their practical preparation for a career in the modern Bulgarian school.

The candidate for the occupation of the academic position "Associate Professor" Yordanka Nikolova, PhD, has presented to the attention of the Scientific Jury also a study entitled "Learning Cities in the Context of the Lifelong Learning Concept" (vision of the students studying the subject

learning city and the main activities which in the opinion of the students should be made a part of it should be differentiated.

In terms of its content, the overall publishing activity of the candidate corresponds fully with the scientific topic of the competition. The scientific research searches are subordinate to the elaboration of topics relevant to the theory and practice of the family pedagogy and andragogy.

To the materials submitted for the purposes of the competition, enclosed is a statement referring to the scientific contributions of Senior Assistant Professor Yordanka Stoyanova Nikolova, PhD. I accept the contributions as pointed out by the candidate and reckon that content-wise they correspond to the scientific production submitted for the purposes of the competition.

4. Citations:

In the submitted documents, a reference is made to a total of 24 citations, three of which are in scientific journals, refereed and indexed in world-known databases with scientific information, three citations are in monographs and peer-reviewed edited collections, and eighteen are in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals.

5. Teaching and Teaching-methodological Activity

Senior Assistant Professor Yordanka Nikolova, PhD teaches mandatory and elective subjects as part of Bachelor's and Master's programmes whose thematic orientation is relevant to the topic of the announced competition. She organizes and conducts educational tours, round table meetings with the participation of students and master classes with innovative teachers from Bulgaria. She takes part in a large number of scientific projects as a supervisor, researcher or trainer.

6. Recommendations

1. Taking into consideration the current needs of the pedagogical practice in our country, I reckon that the candidate should prepare and publish an extended and enriched version of the activities for kindergarten age, primary school age, lower secondary and upper secondary school age, included in the monograph.

7. **Conclusion:**

The topic of the presented scientific papers corresponds to the topic of the announced competition. The scientific and pedagogical activity of Senior Assistant Professor Yordanka Nikolova, PhD satisfies the requirements of the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act and the Regulations on its enforcement.

Granting my positive evaluation with regards to the candidate's educational and teaching activity, the scientific significance of her publications and the subsequent citations, **I suggest to the Scientific Jury at the Faculty Council, Faculty of Pedagogy that it appoints Senior Assistant Professor Yordanka Stoynova Nikolova, PhD, on the academic position "Associate Professor" in 1.2. Pedagogy (Family Pedagogy, Andragogy).**

14.03.2024

Opinion Author:
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