

OPINION

by Professor Georgi Vladimirov Ignatov, PhD,
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**Regarding: reviewed scientific works and academic activity
of Chief Assistant Ivanka Nikolova Karparova, PhD,**

the only applicant for participation in a procedure for filling the academic position Associate Professor, announced by the Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski” in State Gazette, Issue 100 of 16 December 2022, under professional strand 1.3. Pedagogy of training in... (Physical Education and Sports – Athletics and conditioning) at the Division of „Individual sports and recreation” at the Department of Sports of Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski”.

I.Procedure details

The competition was announced for the needs of the Individual sports and recreation Division at the Department of Sports of Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski”, according to the Decision of the Departmental Scientific Council of the Department of Sports, Department of Teacher Training, Department of Language Training, protocol №2 / 06 February 2023. I participate in the scientific jury of the competition according to Order № RD-38-78 / 08 February 2023 of the Rector of Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski”.

II.Applicant details

Ivanka Karparova was born on January 01, 1974 in the city of Sofia. He completed his secondary education at the 47th Secondary Sports School „Emil Markov“ – Sofia in 1992. In 1996 he graduated from the National Sports Academy „Vasil Levski“ with two majors – „Athletics Coach“ and „Physical Teacher education“. During his studies at the National Sports Academy, he also completed a two-year course in „Sports Journalism“ and acquired the specialty „Reporter in the Sports Department“. Athletics competitor from 1984 to 1992 in the „Levski-Spartak“ Physical Education and Sports Association – Sofia. During her studies, NSfrom 1992 to 1996, she competed in student competitions for the NSA „Vasil Levski“. As an active athlete, she has won medals from State Championships and tournaments in the crown and discipline – 800 meters. Currently, he continues to play sports actively, participating in amateur long-distance running competitions.

In the period 1996-2006, he worked as an athletics coach at the „Levski“ Student Sports School, later renamed the „Sofia“ Central Sports School.

She was a part-time teacher of sports – athletics at Sofia University from October 1996 to January 2006. In 2006, she started working at SU „St. Kliment Ohridski“ as an assistant. Since 2009, he has been a senior assistant, and since 2011, he has been a chief assistant. In 2015, he defended his doctoral

dissertation on the topic „A model for developing students' endurance with the means of athletics running“ and received the scientific title „PhD“ on 1.3. Pedagogy of training in... (Methodology of training in physical education and sports).

From 1996 to today, he has been a student athletics coach at the Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski“, including of the representative student team (men and women), with which they won a number of prestigious rankings from the National University Championships and various student tournaments at home and abroad. He achieved his greatest successes as a coach at the University in 2019 and 2020, when he became Student Vice-Champion and in 2022, winning bronze medals in athletics at the National Student Universiade with the men's team of Sofia University. In 2019, the representative athletics team of the University, under her leadership, was third in the comprehensive ranking of the National Student Universiade. The cross country teams of SU „St. Kliment Ohridski“ for men and women are consistently at the top of the National University Championships, having many first places. Coach of the year of SU „St. Kliment Ohridski“ for 2016. She was the Chairman of the Technical Commission for Athletics at the Association for University Sports „Academik“ from 2009 to 2021. Licensed instructor and main lecturer in athletics for Bulgaria under the program for the development of children's athletics of the IAAF – „Kids athletics“.

He is the head of the „Individual Sports and Recreation“ Division at the Department of Sports from 2013 to 2021.

III. Summarized quantitative and qualitative data for the pedagogical and research activity of the candidate

The scientific production of Chief Assistant Karparova, PhD fulfills the criteria for scientificity such as reliability, innovation, contribution to science and practice and other features specific to scientific knowledge. The evaluation of the scientific results of the candidate, which he presents as scientometric data, written by National Center for Information and Documentation are as follows:

- Indicators in group A: a total of 50 points.
- Indicators in group B: total 100 points.
- Indicators in group G: total 200 points.
- Indicators in group D: total 50 points.

As can be seen, the scientometric indicators of the scientific activity of Chief Assistant Karparova, PhD, and in the four groups (A, B, D and D) meet the necessary minimum requirements, in accordance with the Law for development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

As a result of his training, Chief Assistant Karparova, PhD has acquired specialized scientific knowledge and specific professional skills and competencies, which he successfully applies academically and professionally, in research and project activities.

The candidate participated as an expert in 11 research and educational projects in the field of physical education and sports. Evidence of the high

professionalism of Chief Assistant Karparova, PhD are also found in the citation of her scientific works by 17 authors, which is undoubtedly valuable for all specialists.

IV. Description of the scientific works

Chief Assistant Karparova, PhD is the author of 28 scientific papers in the field of physical education and sports. For her participation in the competition she presents for review in theoretical, scientific-applied and practical aspects a total of 20 scientific papers, of which by type:

1. Monograph – 1
2. Articles and reports published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases – 4 pcs.
3. Articles and reports published in non-peer-reviewed journals with scientific review – 15 pcs.

The author's share of scientific publications is: independent author - 18 papers and co-authored – 2 papers, both of which he is the second author.

The presented scientific production can be distributed thematically as follows:

- Biomechanics of running (scientific papers numbered 1, 2, 4);
- Athletics (in particular, running athletics) and their application in the field of secondary and higher education (scientific works with numbers 8, 9, 10, 13, 15);
- Methodology of endurance training (scientific works with numbers 5, 6, 11, 17);
- Athletics (in particular some running disciplines) as a competitive sport (scientific works with numbers 7, 12, 14, 16, 19, 20).
- Endurance running as the most accessible aerobic activity in the field of amateur sports (scientific papers numbered 3, 18).

V. Scientific contributions

Based on the presented publications, scientific summaries, evidence, conclusions and the overall activity of Chief Assistant Ivanka Karparova, PhD, I allow myself to systematize the main and scientific contributions as follows:

I. In the field of biomechanics of running – in the presented monograph (№1), the author makes a successful general overview of the variety of methodical means in the runner's training. The author's personal views on training related to running technique are highlighted, based on both knowledge and serious observations. An important place in the work is devoted to the phases of the running stride and the parameters of running dynamics. The individual parts of the technique are described in detail from the point of view of biomechanics. In the text, a special place is devoted to the most common „running“ injuries and their relationship with running technique, and the author believes that good knowledge of the origin of injuries and good technique are a kind of injury prevention and a guarantee of sports longevity. The methodological guidelines in the monographic work have a significant contribution, as the priority points are highlighted and specific training tools are proposed.

The remaining two articles (№2 and №4) provide some essential guidance on the interpretation and manipulation of some biomechanical metrics of the technique. It is argued that the purposeful impact on the step frequency to influence the running speed is not always a prerequisite for improving the sports result. Rather, the theory is that increasing running speed is a complex of several factors, including balance of the adjacent musculature (strength component), appropriate running shoes, targeted work for active tendons, etc.

II. In the field of athletics (in particular running athletics) and their application in the field of secondary and higher education:

II.1. In article number 8, an analysis of the competition calendar in athletics, in the field of student sports, was made. The organizational rules and trends in organizing student athletic competitions have been studied and presented. As a result of the research and the recommendations in the article, a significant change was made in the rules for scoring the results of the National Athletics Universiades.

II.2. In the articles numbered 9, 13 and 15, recommended methodological guidelines are given for the benefit of training in sports – athletics at SU „St. Kliment Ohridski“. The author points out that unfortunately, due to various reasons, mainly the lack of a sports base for the development of athletics in the universities of our country, this sport is not present in the curricula, with few exceptions. Through some of his scientific research Chief Assistant Karparova, specifically states his firm intentions to contribute to athletics being a preferred, appropriate and necessary choice of sport for students. She worked hard in a practical and theoretical direction to „save“ athletics at her alma mater. In article №13, an experimental program was studied, based on the conclusions drawn based on its implementation, load parameters were determined, the use of the so-called „Motivational Diary“. Articles №9 and №15 explore muscle balance and the interrelationship between motor qualities. Specific recommendations are given for enriching and diversifying the study programs, and in report №9 some dependencies are traced in the study of students from the „Physical Education and Sports“ specialty at the University.

II.3. Publication №10 provides insight into World Athletics' popular youth sport development program worldwide. The role of the author is particularly important in a practical aspect, as he is one of the two main lecturers in Bulgaria, and apart from making this platform available throughout the country, by holding seminars and competitions, in this article, the author presents it in a theoretical form.

III. In the field of Endurance Training Methodology:

III.1. Article №5 analyzed the influence of training effects on amateur aerobic sports (running) athletes of different intensities and durations.

III.2. Articles №6 and 11 highlight the thesis that athletic performance in endurance training is based on a complex interaction between physiological, biomechanical, biochemical, psychological, etc. factors. Progress in the training

process and running economy are closely related to balanced musculature, body fat, muscle-joint complex, biomechanical indicators, etc.

III.3. Post №17 compares two of the most commonly used methods in endurance training – interval training and steady training. This article is a kind of beginning in the marked interest of the author to search and investigate in his scientific work the optimal ratio in the application of endurance training methods.

IV. In the field of athletics (in particular some running disciplines) as a competitive sport:

IV.1. Some of the published articles examine some trends in competition disciplines from long runs in Bulgaria. An interesting retrospective analysis of the most popular long and ultra-distance running events has been done, with much of the information to write the №7 and №14 articles gathered from statisticians and hard-to-find publications. The data provided are interesting, as well as the analysis made in the same publications of marathoners by time range (№7) and participation of ultramarathoners (№14). The collected and processed data from the two most popular marathon and ultramarathon competitions in our country enable us to follow interesting trends over the years in which they were held.

IV.2. Publications co-authored with №19 and №20, a comprehensive review of the men's 10,000m world record was made and some interesting data at the time of writing was derived from the statistical processing.

IV.3. Post №12 touches on the current topic of fluid intake during prolonged exercise. The awareness of active sportsmen regarding this reception and the influence on the body, and the realization of the possibilities, has been studied. Based on scientific research, a recommended scheme for hydration during prolonged exertion has been made.

V. In the field of endurance running as the most accessible aerobic activity in the field of amateur sports:

V.1. The author has the opportunity to observe and study a large number of runners in the field of amateur sports, and in article №3 she touches on the serious anatomical defect – flat feet. Recommendations for prevention are given, as well as methodological guidelines that can be of benefit to runners. The important relationship between the way the foot makes contact with the support, biomechanical suitability and low medial arched feet is highlighted.

V.2. The other article №18 summarizes the most significant factors affecting progress in endurance sports and groups them into those of a subjective, psychological, biological and physiological, anatomical nature.

The presented scientific production in a wide range, its content, results and conclusions give me reason to define the author as a leader in the problems of the sport of athletics and, more specifically, athletics in higher schools in our country. From the analysis of the scientific production of Chief Assistant Ivanka Karparova, PhD impresses with her high competence and interpretation of scientific research.

Proposed by Chief Assistant Karparova, PhD in Scientific Production meets the requirements for the academic position of „Associate Professor“.

VI. Academic and scientific research activities

In reviewing the published data on the teaching and research activities of Chief Assistant Karparova, PhD, it is revealed that the conditions of the Regulations on the terms and conditions for acquiring scientific degrees and holding academic positions at Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski“. In particular, the announced competition has a full workload with the relevant compulsory courses.

Chief Assistant Ivanka Karparova, PhD is a keynote lecturer of Individual sports and recreation Division at the Department of Sports at Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski“.

It is extremely important to note that Chief Assistant Karparova, PhD leads the discipline „Methodology of teaching athletics“ with the adjacent exercises in the specialty „Physical education and sport“ at the Faculty of Education Sciences and the Arts from its creation in 2009 until today, and from 2021 leads and the lecture course in the same discipline. At the moment, he leads a lecture course on the discipline „Health Education“ at the Department for Information and Teacher Improvement, as well as a lecture course on Sports at the Faculty of Law. Leads exercises with all students from all 16 faculties of the University in the discipline „Athletics and conditioning“.

According to my personal impressions, she is the author of a number of innovative approaches to the needs of educational work with students from the profiled groups in athletics, with those from the „Physical Education and Sports“ specialty at the Faculty of Education Sciences and Arts, and of course with the students participating in the University's track and field team. She is also the author of her own lecture courses, teaching the students of the Faculty of Law and the Department of Information and Teacher Development. This fact testifies that she is perfectly prepared to create, present and continuously update the content of the lecture courses she leads. In terms of content, the created courses reveal the classical aspect of pedagogical science, but also its modern achievements, additionally illustrated with numerous examples from practice. All this makes them not only theoretically-applied oriented, but also particularly useful and attractive for the wide audience of students, doctoral students, and specialists.

Chief Assistant Karparova, PhD, is a member of the editorial board of the Proceedings of the International Scientific Conference, organized by the Department of Sports at SU „St. Kliment Ohridski“ – from 2014 to today. Since 2022, he has been a member of the editorial board of the journal „Research in Kinesiology“. Since the same year, he has been a reviewer for the magazines „Research in Kinesiology“ and „Activities in Physical Education and Sport“, published by the Federation of Sports Educators in the Republic of North Macedonia. The candidate has 19 participations in scientific conferences at home and abroad. All this testifies that she invests long-term, consistent and

purposeful efforts in her academic studies and in achieving high professionalism.

The presented production for review does not duplicate works by other authors and there is no plagiarism.

No violations were found during the competition.

VII. Conclusion

On the basis of the overall analysis of the presented scientific production, of my long-term personal impressions, I believe that the candidate for the academic position „Associate Professor“ Chief Assistant Ivanka Nikolova Karparova, PhD, has the necessary professional-pedagogical and scientific training. Ivanka Karparova is a respected teacher with extensive practical and excellent theoretical training. She is an example of a sports pedagogue in the higher education system who successfully combines research activity with specific teaching work and actual activity. He is respected among his students and colleagues.

Based on the above and the qualities of the candidate, with conviction I propose to the Honorable members of the Scientific Jury to award Chief Assistant Ivanka Nikolova Karparova, PhD – the academic position „Associate Professor“ according to 1.3. Pedagogy of training in... (Physical education and sports – Athletics and conditioning) for the needs of the of „Individual Sports and Recreation“ Division at the Department of Sports at Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski“.

16 March 2023
Sofia

Prepared the opinion:
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