

REVIEW

by **Professor Veselin Zhelyazkov Margaritov, Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences**

Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv

of the materials submitted for participation in the procedure

for the occupation of the academic position of **Associate Professor**

at **Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv**

in: higher education field 1. Pedagogy, professional area 1.3. Pedagogy of Training in...

(Theory and Methodology of Pre-School Physical Education)

In accordance with the procedure for Associate Professor announced in the State Gazette, issue 32 from 09.04.2024 and on the website of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv on request of the Department of Theory and Methodology of Physical Education and Sports at the Faculty of Biology, Rositsa Hristeva Shtereva from Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv participates as a candidate.

1. General overview of the materials submitted

By order No. ПД-21-1182 from 07.06.2024 by the Rector of Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv (PU), I have been appointed as a member of the Scientific Committee summoned for the procedure for acquisition of the academic position of **Associate Professor in PU** in the higher education field 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional area 1.3. Pedagogy of Training in... (Theory and Methodology of Pre-School Physical Education), **announced for the requirements** of Theory and Methodology of Physical Education at the Faculty of Biology.

Chief assistant professor Rositsa Hristeva Shtereva PhD from Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv is the sole candidate who presented documents for participation in the announced competition.

The set of paper materials presented by Rositsa Hristeva Shtereva **complies with** the Regulations for the Academic Staff Development of PU, and includes the following documents:

- an application to the Rector for admissibility to the competition;
- a CV in EU format;
- a higher education diploma for the acquisition of a Master's degree with an appendix or a notarized copy;

- a diploma for a Doctor's degree or a notarized copy;
- a list of scientific works;
- scientific works (copies of publications);
- a list of citations;
- a certificate of compliance with the minimum national and additional faculty requirements;
- an annotations of the materials under Art. 65. from Regulations for the Academic Staff Development (in Bulgarian and a foreign language) with a detailed habilitation certificate, if no monograph is included;
- self-assessment of contributions;
- declaration of originality and authenticity of the documents enclosed;
- work record;
- academic workload evidence;
- any other documents according to the additional requirements of the respective faculty;

The candidate, Rositsa Hristeva Shtereva has enclosed a total of 2 monographs, 17 teaching manuals and a list of 25 scientific research projects. The works subject to review are: 2 independent and 15 co-authored teaching manuals, 2 monographs, 1 article in a journal, peer-reviewed and indexed in global databases, 12 independent and 2 co-authored articles in non-refereed journals, 5 independent and 5 co-authored articles published in conference proceedings and 2 research projects. 6 scientific works of the dissertation are not reviewed.

2. Brief biographical data

Rositsa Hristeva Shtereva was born in the city of Plovdiv in 1963. She completed her higher education at Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv in 1988 with an MA degree in Pre-School Education, nursery teacher and a specialization in Early Childhood Education. In 2014 she defended her PhD thesis entitled *The Multifunctional Nature of Active Games in Improving the Motor Skills of Preschool Children*. In the course of one year she held the position of a nursery teacher at *Malina* kindergarten, Plovdiv. Since 1989 she has been working as an assistant at Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv, where she currently holds the position of Chief Assistant.

3. Overview of the applicant's activities

Ch. assistant professor Rositsa Hristeva PhD has fulfilled the required academic workload as per the curriculum of the Faculty of Biology. She teaches the academic subjects Methodology of Physical Education, Methodology of Pre-School Physical Education – teacher training and seminars in Pre-School Education, Primary School Education, and Pre-School and Primary School Education.

She has prepared curricula for the programs of Pedagogy of Physical Education, Pre-school and Primary School Education and Pre-school Education. She participates in the implementation of academic practices and pre-graduate internships for students. The candidate provided methodological assistance to 2 students who participated in student forums, and was also the supervisor of 16 graduate students. Shtereva has been part of scientific research projects (two national ones), for which evidence has been submitted, of program accreditation commission of Professional Area 1.2. and 1.3. as well as in commissions for awarding qualification degrees to teachers of physical education and sports.

Evaluation of the candidate's research and scientific-applied activity

The offered list of publications (monographs, articles and reports) regarding her participation in the competition for associate professor indicates that Rositsa Shtereva authored 2 monographs and 25 publications, of which 14 scientific publications in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals, 10 in collections of scientific peer-reviewed conferences and 1 article published in a refereed and indexed scientific database. All presented articles are in Bulgarian and 1 in English language, 7 of the scientific publications are co-authored. All works are published posterior to the materials included in the defence of her PhD. The research activities of ch. assistant professor Shtereva PhD are relevant to the announced competition.

The monograph *General Fitness Exercises in Pre-school Education* (1.1.) is presented as the main habilitation work with a volume of 124 pages. This research work is introduced as a monograph, but rather bears the characteristics and content of a methodological tool which would be useful for work with university students. For example, on pages 25 – 28 some starting positions for the implementation of general fitness exercises and terminology are detailed. As those are also present in many other works, they cannot be counted as a contribution. In a large part of the appendix (pp. 99-114) ch. assistant prof. Shtereva includes sample curriculum plans of a pedagogical situation, which could be rather considered methodological guidelines. The

basic practical and applied contribution of this work is directly addressed to the improvement of the pedagogical experience of the pre-school teacher in the field of physical education.

The second monographic paper, *Impact of Motion Games on the Psychomotricity of Preschool Children* (1.2.) with a volume of 237 pages, examines motion games as a means of developing mental and motor abilities of 3 to 7-year-old children. Motion games are presented as an educational technology which actively supports the physical and mental development of preschool children. The author conducts an experiment which includes the implementation of a developed methodology in practice for the diagnosis of motor skills and motor qualities of children in the context of motion games. The purpose of this methodology is to improve the motor and mental components of the child's development. The results of the experiment indicate that motion games have an impact on the development of children's mental and motor abilities, which emphasizes their importance in preschool education. This paper would benefit from the use of some more recent diagnostic tools for research on the mental and motor abilities of children and from the update of the literary sources. From the above, the following question arises: "Is there a difference between the psycho-motor and psycho-physical abilities of children?" In summary, I would like to point out that in the monographic paper an attempt is made to consider motion games not only as a means of development, but also as a diagnostic tool for assessing the level of development of children's conditioning and coordination abilities and their motor skills. Some inaccuracies in citation (pp. 22, 23) are noted, but this does not undermine the value of the work. There is also some overlap of points from the monograph with some of the presented publications: page 9/3.5.; page 27/3.3.; page 44/3.11.; page 62/3.6.; p. 74/3.9.; 163/4.7.

At the analysis of the candidate's scientific work, two areas of research are evident. The first is related to preschool physical education, the motor and functional development of children (No. 1.1.; 3.4.; 4.3.; 4.4.; 4.5.; 4.8.; 4.9.), the development of some motor and mental characteristics of children through motion games, the level of development of the coordination and conditioning abilities of preschool children, as well as their health (No. 2.1.; 3.6.; 3.7.; 3.8.; 3.9.; 3.10.; 3.13.; 3.14.; 4.6.; 4.7.). Studies are presented which focus on exploring key processes and phenomena in the field of preschool physical education (No. 3.3.; 3.5.; 3.11.; 3.12.). I would note that the theoretical statements in the scientific production are uniformly repeated in some of the articles (4.7.; 3.7. and article 1 of the doctoral studies).

The second direction of the publications (No. 3.1.; 3.2.; 4.1.; 4.2.; 4.10.) covers areas related to student education. They examine the compliance of various pedagogical activities, the theoretical, methodological and practical training of students based on the competence approach in higher education. The opinion and attitude of the students towards innovative forms of teaching and assessment of knowledge is evaluated.

In her published papers, ch. assistant prof. Rositsa Shtereva is an independent author of 19 publications, as the remaining 7 research publications are co-authored, for which there are no enclosed declarations or separation protocols, which impedes the establishment the candidate's contribution.

Rositsa Shtereva supplied 17 manuals, of which 15 are co-authored and 2 independent. The majority of the programs address the preschool educators and children in the field of physical education, introducing the curriculum content, tasks, means and methods of teaching and assessment. The contribution in this context is the development of programs for the organization and conduct of physical education in kindergarten, as well as the implementation of pedagogical technologies for physical education of children aged 3 to 7 years.

Ch. assistant professor Rositsa Shtereva PhD has been cited 14 times in articles, in non-refereed journals with scientific review by Bulgarian authors, no self-citations are detected and they are not used for previous procedures. Some (11) citations are dated from 2023 and 3 citations - from 2020, given the fact that ch. assistant prof. Shtereva has been a teacher for more than 35 years.

4. Evaluation of the candidate's personal contribution

My satisfactory evaluation of the research and applied activity of ch. assistant prof. Rositsa Shtereva is the result of the analysis of her scientific output and personal contributions in theoretical and practical terms.

5. Critical remarks and recommendations

In the context of the arguments detailed so far, supporting my overall assessment of the submitted candidacy for the academic position of Associate Professor, I would like to summarize some critical remarks and recommendations.

1. The monograph *General Fitness Exercises in Pre-school Education* (1.1.) is presented as the main habilitation thesis, but it does not possess a clearly defined and formulated methodology necessary for a scientific study, rather it has the characteristics and content of a

methodological manual. In this scientific paper, I do not find the necessary justification of the researched scientific problem. Moreover, it is also unclear what the new knowledge which the author has achieved is.

2. Repetitions in the text of the monograph *Impact of Motion Games on the Psychomotricity of Preschool Children* (1.2.) and some of those offered for the peer-reviewed publications (3.5.; 3.3.; 3.6.; 3.11.; 3.7.; 3.9.; 4.7.) are detected.

3. The attached curriculum plans in the monograph *General Fitness Exercises in Preschool Education* (1.1.) of a pedagogical situation can be considered methodological guidelines.

4. The basic weakness found in the publications submitted for review is that there is an overlap of the theoretical statements in the scientific production, as they are duplicated in a series of articles (3.7.; 4.7. and article 1 of the doctoral studies).

5. The absence of declarations or separation protocols for the published papers of ch. assistant professor Rositsa Shtereva, of which she is a co-author, makes it difficult to some extent to define her contribution.

6. It is evident that the interest in the scientific production of ch. assistant professor Rositsa Shtereva has grown in the last year, despite her many years of experience in research.

I have the following recommendations for the scientific activity of the candidate:

1. The monography *Impact of Motion Games on the Psychomotricity of Preschool Children* (1.2.) would have benefitted if some more recent diagnostic tools for assessment of the psycho-motor abilities of children were applied.

2. I recommend that the literature sources be updated.

7. Personal impressions

I have been acquainted with ch. assistant professor Rositsa Shtereva for more than 35 years. We have had joint activities. However, her research work would have benefitted if her activity was similar to that of the last two years.

CONCLUSION

The documents and papers submitted by Rositsa Hristeva Shtereva meet all the requirements of the Development of the Academic Staff Act in the Republic of Bulgaria (ASDA), the Regulations for the Implementation of ASDA and the relevant Regulations of Paisii Hilendarski university.

The candidate in the competition presented 44 research papers, published posterior to the materials used in the defence of her PhD dissertation. The candidate's works contain original scientific and applied contributions. Her theoretical research has practical applicability, and some of it is oriented to academic work.

The results achieved by Rositsa Hristeva Shtereva in the academic and research activities correspond to the minimum national and additional requirements of the Faculty of Biology, adopted in compliance with the Regulations of the PU for the application of ASDA.

After studying the materials and the research work presented in the competition, and analysis of their significance and their research, scientific and applied contributions, I find it reasonable to recommend the Scientific Committee to propose to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Biology the occupation by Rositsa Hristeva Shtereva of the academic position of Associate Professor at Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv in: higher education field 1. Pedagogy, professional area 1.3. Pedagogy of Training in... (Theory and Methodology of Pre-School Physical Education).

01.08.2024

Reviewer:

Prof. Veselin Margaritov, D.Sc.