

OPINION

By

Assoc. Prof. Anton Penchev Stoykov

Trakia University, Stara Zagora

Ref. competition for the occupation of the academic position “Associate Professor”

in the field of higher education: 1. Pedagogical Sciences,

professional field 1.3. “Pedagogy in Teaching.....” (Methods for Teaching Mathematics in Pre-school Age), announced in the State Gazette, issue 88, dated 20.10.2023, for the needs of the “Pre-school and Primary School Pedagogy” Department at the Faculty of Pedagogy, Trakia University, Stara Zagora

1. *Legality of the Procedure*

This Opinion is elaborated on grounds of Order No. 4378/06.12.2023 of the Rector of Trakia University – Stara Zagora according to which I have been appointed as a member of the Scientific Jury.

In connection with the occupation of the academic position “Associate Professor”, one candidate has participated, i.e. Senior Assistant Professor Yordanka Dencheva Ilieva, 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 Ilieva, PhD completed her higher education in 1993 at “Konstantin Preslavski” Higher Institute of Pedagogy in Shumen with the specialty “Pre-School Pedagogy” and the professional qualification “Specialist in Pre-School Pedagogy”. In 2018, she was conferred the educational and scientific degree “DOCTOR” in “Methods for Teaching Mathematics and Computer Studies in Kindergarten” after defending her dissertation entitled “Didactico-theoretical Model for Development of Key Competences by Children Aged 5-7 Years in the Process of Measuring and Comparing Values”.

During her professional career of more than 30 years, Senior Assistant Professor Yordanka Ilieva, PhD has been on the position “Kindergarten Teacher”, “Senior Expert in Pre-school Education” at the Regional Office Department of Education in Shumen, part-time Assistant Professor in “Methods for

Formation of Elementary Mathematical Representations and Concepts at the Shumen University” (since 2010) and Senior Assistant Professor at Trakia University in Stara Zagora (since 2022).

From the submitted documents it becomes clear that the candidate has participated in a number of trainings for improving her professional qualification.

3. *Candidate’s Scientific and Scientific and Applied Production*

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 Ilieva, PhD, it is seen that the candidate’s scientific activity meets the required minimum and with regards to some indicator groups even surpasses the required minimum. Under Group “A”, the candidate’s score is 50 points out of 50, under Group “C” – 100 points out of 100, under Group “D” – 215 (where the requirement is for 200), under group “E” – 100 (where the requirement is for 50).

In this competition for occupation of the academic position “Associate Professor” in “Methods for Teaching Mathematics in Pre-school Age”, Senior Assistant Professor Yordanka Ilieva, PhD has submitted two sole authorship monographs, one of them presented as a habilitation project. Submitted are 12 sole authorship publications, one of them published in a scientific journal refereed and indexed in world-known databases with scientific information, and the remaining are published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collections. In the submitted published materials, the citations are correct. I find no plagiarism.

The project stated as the candidate’s habilitation project for the occupation of the academic position "Associate Professor" is the monograph published in 2023 entitled “STEAM Workshop “Mathematical Kaleidoscope” in Kindergarten”. It presents a model invented by the author which incorporates STEAM games and scenarios of a constructivist type of learning designed also by the author. The model has been approved by the author and presented in Chapter 2 of the monograph. Referring its implementation in the pedagogical practice, in Chapter 3 games and complete scenarios are presented.

The analysis and interpretation of the statistical data obtained during the model approval are presented in Chapter 4 of the monograph. Formulated correctly are also conclusions.

The candidate’s publication activity related to the scientific periodicals includes 12 titles all of which are sole authorship publications in scientific journals and collections from scientific conferences. They are published mostly in refereed journals which is a proof of their scientific value.

4. *Theoretical and Empirical Contributions*

As major contributions in the scientific production submitted by the candidate, the following can be distinguished:

1. Invented and approved in the pedagogical practice is an author model STEAM Workshop “Mathematical Kaleidoscope”, incorporating STEAM games and scenarios of a constructivist type of learning designed by the author;
2. A successful attempt has been made for the integration of educational fields of study from the aspect of the STEAM approach and in particular, integration of the educational content from educational field “Mathematics” with that of the other educational fields.

5. *Citations:*

In the submitted documents, a reference is made to a total of 11 citations, two of which are in scientific journals, refereed and indexed in world-known databases with scientific information, five citations are in monographs and peer-reviewed edited collections, and four are in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals.

6. *Teaching and Teaching-methodological Activity*

Senior Assistant Professor Yordanka Dencheva Ilieva, PhD delivers exercises, practicals and seminars to the students from the specialties “Pre-school Pedagogy and Primary School Pedagogy”, and “Primary School Pedagogy”

7. *Recommendations*

1. I consider that the author should elaborate and implement in the higher schools educational process author’s training programmes based on the candidate’s profound scientific research presented in her scientific production;
2. The author should publish a larger number of scientific publications reflecting the results of her scientific pursuits in scientific journals, refereed and indexed in world-known databases with scientific information which would ensure her better recognition in the international scientific community.

8. 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 Ilieva, 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 Dencheva Ilieva, PhD, on the academic position "Associate Professor"** in "Methods for Teaching Mathematics in Pre-school Age", in the field of higher education: 1. Pedagogical Sciences, Professional field 1.3. "Pedagogy in Teaching.....".

21.02.2024

Opinion Author:

Assoc. Prof. Anton Stoykov, PhD