

Bishop Konstantin Preslavski University of Shumen

REVIEW

of the submitted papers for participation in the competition for the academic position Associate Professor, announced by Bishop Konstantin Preslavski University of of Shumen in SG, issue. 97 of December 10, 2019

Reviewer: Prof. Natalia Ivanova Vitanov-Marinova PhD

Candidate: Natasha Lyubomirova Koleva

I. Brief CV of the applicant

Natasha Koleva was born in Shumen. In 2005 she graduated with a degree in Informatics – a Bachelor's Degree from Episkop Konstantin Preslavski University. In 2006 she graduated from the Master's Program in Computer Systems and Networks, level 7 in EQF at Angel Kanchev University of Ruse, and in 2008 she graduated from the Master's Program in School Pedagogy at the Episkop Konstantin Preslavski University. She received her PhD in Acquisition of the Theory of Education and Didactics in 2016.

She began her professional career in 1993 as a technical secretary at the Bar Association, Nikolova - Panayotov Law Firm, Shumen. From 2004 to 2009 she worked as a technical specialist at Konstantin Preslavski University, Faculty of Education. From 2006 to 2009 she was a part-time assistant at Episkop Konstantin Preslavski, Faculty of Education, Department "TMFV and Sport ". She has been working as a lecturer at the Episkop Konstantin Preslavski University, the Department of Pedagogy and Management of Education since 2009.

She is fluent in English (B1) and Russian (B1), which is a prerequisite for her scientific awareness. She has a very good level of digital skills - information processing, communication, content creation, security, problem solving. As a

proof of her competence, she has been involved in numerous international and national projects as well as in international and national conferences.

II. Characteristics of the applicant's scientific and applied production

The scientific production with which Ass. Prof. Natasha Koleva, PhD participates in the announced competition, corresponds to the scientific specialty and its specificity. It covers a total of 16 publications (4 in co-authorship), of which 2 monographs (one on the topic of the dissertation); 14 articles - 1 of which are in refereed and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information (Web of Science Core Collection) and 13, which have been published in the National Reference List. These publications meet the minimum national requirements and national scientometric indicators for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor". They are an indicator of the applicant's activity and interests.

A large part of Natasha Koleva's publications are concentrated in the field of digital competences and information technologies - 13 in number, and 3 in the field of physical education and sport. This thematic concentration can be interpreted in polar terms, both positive and negative. On the one hand, it is a guarantee for the completeness and scope of the research perimeter, for the thoroughness of presentation of the author's theses and arguments, and protects the author from fragmentation and divergence in her research searches. For this reason, the author's insights are distinguished by their apparent focus and depth. On the other hand, this thematic concentration significantly limits the research perimeter.

The other publications presented are socially determined and up-to-date. They respond to specific socio-practical orders and solve certain private problems in various scientific fields. Some of these theses are operationalized and can be successfully implemented in school practice.

The monograph **“Digital Competences of Bulgarian Teachers”** is the main habilitation work. Modern education, like the whole world, is moving towards digitalisation and following the path from unification to individualization and personalization of the learning process. Digitization makes the world a "global village" that goes beyond geographical, national and cultural boundaries, and in which "digital natives" ("digital natives", "digital by birth" - those who grew up in the digital age since their birth) and "digital immigrants" (acquire digital knowledge about digital devices as adults) "wander". In this context, the monograph is modern and innovative, pedagogical science needs such publications, since the effective learning process is largely determined by the competences of the teacher, in particular their digital competences, since the digital age requires specific knowledge, skills and relationships. The presented monographic work is a complete concept of the author, in which the ideas and views related to the discussed problem are sought and presented in a reasoned way. The presented and commented formulations sharpen the view and perceptions on some contemporary problems in education, which can become a foundation when looking for opportunities to overcome them. Style and language are scientifically sophisticated.

One of the positives of the monograph is the fact that the author is very familiar with digital tools and their potentials related to the formation and development of digital competences, and therefore not only makes findings on the subject, but also offers solutions to some of the problems.

Structurally, the monograph is well-balanced and well-constructed. Of particular importance are the results of the survey, which reveal the current state of Bulgarian teachers' digital competences. The findings of the study are relevant to the pedagogical theory and practice applicable in the modern school of the 21st century.

The author is well familiar with the literature on the subject. Her theoretical reasoning is the result of a study of 55 sources, 33 of which are in

Cyrillic and 22 in Latin; 45 are web-based, the rest are paper-based. Natasha Koleva is well familiar not only with the Bulgarian literature, but has referred to original works by foreign authors, which gives her the opportunity to substantiate her basic concepts correctly enough. This argumentation of the text wins the user's trust in this kind of information and supports the conclusions in the monograph. What impresses is the correct use of the didactic theory lexicon, which allows her to more reasonably defend her theses. And her expertise in digital technology reinforces that argument.

The monograph "**Blended Learning in University Education**" is published on the basis of a thesis for the award of the doctoral degree. It is on a high professional level and shows detailed knowledge of different aspects of the problem presented. The issues discussed are topical and relevant because they are related to two important issues for education - one of team work and one of the use of educational information technology in the learning process. The new didactic paradigm that is currently emerging is influenced by the second generation of technologies (Web 2.0) that allow students to not only find and download information (Web 1.0), but also to work together and put text and media information on the Internet in a large volume. Web 2.0 eLearning uses a wide range of technologies, tools and systems that help to enhance knowledge and refine skills in a time and context defined by the individual learner. Web 2.0 technologies are primarily applied to collaborative activities and content generation, at the same time giving learners access to a large array of ideas. Recently, opportunities have been sought to integrate them into the formal learning process.

The monograph is intended for students, teachers, university professors, as well as anyone interested in the problems of education, in particular the problems of using ICT in education. It can be successfully used in seminars and for students' self-study.

The two monographs are well structured. They present current problems for contemporary education and analyze significant trends. The points of intersection between them and their integrative nature and value should be emphasized here.

In general, Natasha Koleva's scientific production is distinguished by a high degree of thematic concentration, meaningful relevance and professional thoroughness. They demonstrate scientific competence, precision, integrity.

The scientific works by which Assistant Professor Natasha Koleva participates in the competition are her personal research and achievements. The substantive analysis of theories and practices in the field of digital competencies, their characterization and juxtaposition, reveals and proves the possibilities for positive change in this field. My assessment of the scientific works of Assistant Prof. Natasha Koleva PhD is positive. They are professionally written, peer-reviewed and meet the requirements for high quality educational and scientific literature. Through them she demonstrates a professional sense of discovering and presenting significant problems in the field of pedagogical science and the gradual digitalization of the learning process, respectively digital competences. Successfully identifying, presenting, and interpreting them are some of the author's distinguished contributions.

In the scientific production of Assistant Prof. Natasha Koleva, PhD the following positive aspects can be highlighted:

- research-based work in the field of professional direction;
- supporting modern paradigms, concepts and perspectives in the field of pedagogy and information technology;
- analytical approach;
- great practical applicability;
- very good scientific style;
- joint publications are an indicator of collaboration with the scientific community and successful communication with colleagues.

The citations related to the publications of Assistant Prof. Natasha Koleva, PhD are 6 (traditionally reported). Of these, 2 are in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information (Web of Science Core Collection) and 4 in collective volumes with scientific peer review. The quotations are from people outside the copyright teams in which the candidate participates.

III. Major contributions to the applicant's scientific, applied and teaching activities

I accept the scientific contributions made through Natasha Koleva's self-assessment, which are objective. Theoretically, European policies have been systematized and analyzed for the transformative change of digital technology training and their use in the field of education. In the context of the competence approach, a detailed review of the DigCompEdu European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators and its applicability in the context of Bulgarian education has been made. In practice, an effective model for the application of blended learning in university education has been developed and put into practice. It can be defined as a kind of matrix, which after adaptation can be successfully applied in the field of school education.

IV. Critical notes and recommendations

Assistant Professor Natasha Koleva has extensive experience in teaching in the field of university education and a wealth of cognitive experience in information technology and digital competencies, so it is advisable in her future work to expand her research scope.

Questions: Can any of the participants involved in the learning process (teachers and students) be digitally more competent? If students are digitally more competent than teachers, is this acceptable, and what steps should be taken to address this if it occurs?

V. Conclusion

The analysis of the teaching, research and scientific activity, as well as the presented reference for compliance with the national scientometric indicators for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor", present Natasha Lyubomirova Koleva as a good professional, purposeful and conscientious researcher, with deep scientific interests. The applicant fulfills the minimum national requirements for occupying the academic position of associate professor. I have no doubt about plagiarism in scholarly work and publications. The ideas developed in the publications presented, the author's contributions to the areas of digital competence and information technology, the academic and research activities of Assistant Prof. Natasha Koleva give me reason to give my positive conclusion and recommend to the Scientific Jury to prepare a report proposal to the Faculty Council for the selection of Assistant Professor Natasha Lyubomirova Koleva for the academic position of Associate Professor at Episkop Konstantin Preslavski University of Shumen in higher education 1. Pedagogical sciences, professional field 1.2 Pedagogy (Theory of education and didactics - Educational technologies).

Date: 09.03. 2020

Reviewer:
(Prof. Natalija Vitanova, PhD)