

STATEMENT

By Prof. Albena Kerekovska, MD, PhD

Vice-Rector for Educational Affairs

Medical University “Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov” – Varna

Member of Scientific Jury pursuant to Order № P-109-344 from 09.10.2019r.
of the Rector of the Medical University – Varna

Re: PhD Thesis for the acquisition of the Educational and scientific degree “Doctor”
in the field of higher education 7. “Health care and Sport”,
professional direction 7.4. “Public Health”, Specialty “Management of Public Health”

Theme of PhD Thesis:

***„THE IMPACT OF THE BULGARIAN FOLK DANCES ON THE HEALTH OF THE STUDENTS OF
THE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY – VARNA“***

PhD Candidate: Senior teacher Julieta Georgieva Videnova

Head of the Scientific Sector “Physical Education and Sport”

Department of Foreign Language Teaching, Communications and Sport”

Medical University “Prof. Dr. Paraskev Stoyanov” – Varna

Scientific Supervisors:

Assoc. Prof. Dessislava Vankova, MD, PhD

Senior Assist. Prof. Silviya Nikolova, PhD

According to Order No P-109-344 /09.10.2019 of the Rector of the Medical University of Varna I was included as an internal member of a Scientific jury and with the decision of its first meeting held on 18.10.2019 I was appointed to prepare a Statement on the procedure for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree “Doctor”, in the field of higher education 7. “Health care and Sport”, professional direction 7.4. “Public Health”, Specialty “Management of Public Health”, of the senior teacher Julieta Georgieva Videnova, doctoral self-study candidate in a doctoral programme “Management of Public Health”.

The presented PhD dissertation has been discussed, accepted and directed for public defence according the legally accepted order.

1. Career development of the candidate

In 1994 Julieta Videnova acquired the educational-qualification degree “Master” in the specialties „Trainer in athletics” and „Teacher in physical education” at the National Academy of Sports. In 2018 she acquired a “Master” degree in Public Health at the Medical University of Varna.

In the period 1986 – 1990 Julieta Videnova was an active member of the Bulgarian Track and Field National Team and a multiple Republican junior girls sprint champion. She holds the national record for 200-meter indoor long-distance run. In 1987 she finished in the sixth place at the European Junior Girls Track and Field Championship in Birmingham, England, and in 1988 she took part in the

World Junior Girls Championship in Sudbury, Canada. The year of 1994 marked the beginning of her work experience as a physical education teacher at “Dr. Petar Beron” Secondary General Education School – town of Kostinbrod. In 1995 she was appointed as a methodologist at an applied science laboratory and as a lecturer in “Theory and Methods of Sports Training” at “Georgi Benkovski” Sports School – city of Varna, where she worked until 2003.

Julieta Videnova started her academic career in 2003 as a teacher in physical education and sport at the Medical University of Varna. In 2007 she was appointed for a Head of the Educational sector “Physical Education and Sport” at the Department of Foreign Language Training, Communications and Sport, MU – Varna.

Apart from training of the discipline “Physical Education and Sport” to the students from different specialties, since 2012 she has actively taken part in training of folk dances at the University.

In 2018 Julieta Videnova was enrolled as a PhD student with a dissertation theme „The influence of the Bulgarian folk dances on the health of the students of the Medical University – Varna” in the scientific specialty “Management of Public Health” at the Department of Social Medicine and Healthcare Organisation.

The candidate has publications in periodic scientific journals and participations with reports and abstracts in scientific forums. She has good Russian language proficiency, long practical experience and excellent professional qualification in the area of physical education and sport, as well as in the Bulgarian folk dances training and practice.

2. Timeliness and importance of the dissertation

The topic of the dissertation covers a topical and poorly studied issue. The issues connected with the impact of the Bulgarian folk dances on students’ health, their comparability to sports activities as an equivalent motor activity and their place in academic training have not been studied in Bulgaria so far. In view of the above, the dissertation is unique for the country in the field of the issue under review, as it has significant theoretico-cognitive and practico-applicable contributions of original nature, thus filling in a gap in this area of scientific knowledge.

There is a considerable potential for actual practical applicability of the outcomes. The dissertation contains some new ideas and approaches. There is a significantly growing importance related to the

3. Structure and content of the dissertation

The dissertation is presented on 139 pages. Its structure is logical and balanced and includes: Introduction, Literature review (Chapter one of the dissertation); Aim, tasks, objects of study (Chapter two); Material and methods (Chapter three); Results and discussion (Chapter four); Conclusions, recommendations and contributions (Chapter five); references, list of related publications and 9 appendices.

The findings are well presented by using 10 tables and 6 figures.

4. Literature review

The literature review is presented in Chapter one of the dissertation thesis. It is targeted, comprehensive and well structured. It demonstrates the broad and topical awareness of the author, as well as her capabilities for critical assessment, summarizing, systemizing, analyzing and comparatively interpreting the available literature in the research area.

The literature review reveals the historical development of the Bulgarian folk dances, their variability and importance for the national culture formation and preservation. A detailed classification of the Bulgarian folk dances is presented. The previous research on willingness, interest and motivation for folk dancing is summarized. The Bulgarian folk dances are revealed in the context of the health promotion concept, and are presented as culture, physical activity and educational discipline. The good literature awareness serves as a basis for drawing out the research problems.

The reference list contains 117 literature sources, 43 of which in Cyrillic and 74 - in Latin, correctly pointed in the dissertation text. The sources used reveal very good awareness of the author about the available literature on the studied problem.

5. Aim and tasks

The aim of the dissertation is clearly and precisely defined, based on a thorough review of the literature and the identified unresolved problems. Six tasks are formulated, directed at achievement of the aim – studying the impact of the Bulgarian folk dances on the health of the students of the Medical University - Varna and their place in the academic education. The tasks are logically consistent and encompass in full the studied problem.

The work hypothesis is clearly formulated and corresponds to the stated tasks.

6. Material and methods

The methodology is suitable and adequate to the research aim and tasks. Significant merit of the dissertation is the modern complex 'mix method approach', combining quantity and quality research, studying in depth and comprehension the research problem. The quantitative observational study involves 184 subjects and applies direct individual inquiry, using specially designed questionnaires for the assessment of the stress, motivation for studying folk dances and self-assessment of health. Anthropometrical measurements are also used for the assessment of the physical ability of the subjects. The statistical methods applied are adequate for assessing the studied relationships.

The qualitative study involves Delphi survey among three panel groups of experts aiming to achieve consensus on the issues of the place of the Bulgarian folk dances in the mandatory university syllabus as a type of motor activity positively influencing students' health and quality of life.

All these guarantees reliability of study results and the correct drawing of conclusions, which is an excellent assessment for the research abilities of the doctoral candidate.

7. Results of the study

Chapter Four of the dissertation presents in detail the results from the own research and their discussion, separately for the Quantity Research and the Quality Research.

The results from the Quantity Research reveal a favorable impact of the Bulgarian folk dances on students as such having a positive impact on their health behavior and improving their subjective health assessment in its physical, mental and social aspects. There has been established a general positive attitude of students towards the Bulgarian folk dances – they assess them as exciting, interesting, sport-equal, resulting in good health, bringing energy and motivation, and contributing to the establishment of friendships and fighting stress. An assessment has been made of the students' anthropometric profile, as the comparative anthropometric analysis shows identical results in both groups subject to comparison – the students dancing Bulgarian folk dances and the students playing sports, which is indirect evidence of the full value of the Bulgarian folk dances as a motor activity.

The results from the Quality Research are highly valuable, as it has been made by using the Delphi survey by the three panel experts who have reached a consensus regarding the statements that the practice of the Bulgarian folk dances improves the health and quality of life, that the Bulgarian folk dances are an equal alternative to sports activities set in the syllabus of students, and that the teaching of Bulgarian folk dances at the Medical University – Varna is a successful academic model. The summarized statement of the respondent experts is an outcome of significant practical applicability, as it covers the necessity of studying Bulgarian folk dances and their inclusion into the syllabus of all higher education institutions in Bulgaria as an equal alternative to sports activities.

8. Main findings and conclusions

The conclusions have been clearly formulated, as they follow the research tasks set and logically result from the outcomes obtained. These are grouped into two groups, namely: conclusions of the Quantity Study and the conclusions of the Quality Study.

Practical significance may be found in the conclusions of the favorable effect of the Bulgarian folk dances not only on the motor activity of students, but also with respect to their emotional strength, ability to cope with stress, healthy behavioral habits, communication skills and relaxation skills. The grounds for the highly valued paper may be found in the conclusions of the Quality Study of experts' statements on the positive impact of the Bulgarian folk dances on the health and quality of life, which determine them as a strong protective determinant and a motor activity of full value, an equal alternative to sports activities set in the syllabus of students.

Furthermore, there are the especially valuable conclusions that approbate the teaching of Bulgarian folk dances at the Medical University – Varna as a successful academic model, the base for a recommendation for a transfer and to the students from all other higher education institutions in the country.

9. Contributions of the dissertation

The paper has significant theoretico-cognitive, methodological and practico-applicable contributions of extremely original nature. These are of material importance for teaching a healthy

motor activity and practice of the Bulgarian folk dances.

This is the very first analysis made in Bulgaria of the impact of the Bulgarian folk dances on students' health and quality of life. Furthermore, this is also the first time in Bulgaria when the concepts of "health promotion", "quality of life", "health determinants" and "community" are brought together into a study on the Bulgarian folk dances. The developed audio and visual training

10. Assessment of author's summary of dissertation

The author's summary of dissertation complies with the requirements and in a synthesized manner reflects completely the content of the dissertation.

It is developed on 48 pages, well presented by informative tables and figures. It contains a list of publications, related to the dissertation topic, as well as an audio-visual educational tool for studying Bulgarian folk dances.

11. Publications related to the dissertation

In relation to the dissertation are presented three full text publications, two of which – in international journals. The doctoral candidate is a first author of all three publications, which proves her personal participation and contribution to the conducted research. Apart from the publications she also has two participations with abstract publication in scientific forums on topics, related to the dissertation.

12. Personal impressions of the applicant

My personal impressions of Julieta Videnova characterize her as purposeful, consistent, precise, responsible, devoted and hard-working professional.

She has rich practical and professional experience in the area of physical education and sport, and shows values of a thorough and diligent professional and teacher pursuing constant academic development and advancement.

Conclusion

The presented PhD dissertation is on a topical and very original theme, conducted very precisely on a high methodological level, using complex methodology, providing new knowledge, contributing to the development of healthy physical activity, incorporating own practical experience of the doctoral candidate, with significant theoretical and practically applicable scientific contributions of original character.

The dissertation thesis reveals deep knowledge and competency in the research area and demonstrates skills for conducting scientific research.

The dissertation fully complies with the requirements of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the Medical University – Varna.

The assessment of all merits of the PhD dissertation gives me the reason for a positive statement and convinced to suggest the members of the Scientific jury to vote in favor for Senior teacher Julieta Georgieva Videnova to acquire the educational and scientific degree “Doctor” in the field of higher education 7. “Health care and Sport”, professional direction „7.4. Public Health”, Specialty “Management of Public Health”.

Date: 11. 11. 2019

Reviewer:
/ Prof. Albena Kerekovska, MD. PhD/

