

# ***OPINION***

on the dissertation  
of Yana Tsankova Marinova

topic: Methodology for Enhancing Physical Fitness in Primary School Students

For the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor", on the  
grounds of an Order of the Rector of the National Sports Academy "Vassil Levski"  
– Sofia № 646 of June 30, 2025

**Scientific field:** 1. Pedagogical sciences

**Professional field:** 1.3. Pedagogy of Education...

**Faculty:** Faculty of Pedagogy

**Department:** Theory of Physical Education

**PhD Program:** Physical Education in the Educational System

**Supervisor:** Assoc. Prof. Todor Marinov, PhD

**Prepared the opinion:** Assoc. Prof. Korneliya Naydenova, PhD

## ***Biographical Data of the Candidate***

Yana Tsankova Marinova was born on September 10, 1967, in the city of Varna. In 1991, she graduated from the National Sports Academy "Vasil Levski" with specializations in Volleyball Coaching and Physical Education Teaching. She began her professional career in the field of pedagogy in 2012 and has since been working at 191 Primary School "Otets Paisiy" in the village of Zheleznitsa as a Physical Education and Sports Teacher.

## ***Details of the Procedure***

In accordance with the provided information, the doctoral training of Yana Marinova was carried out without any procedural violations. The doctoral candidate has successfully fulfilled the requirements of the Law on the

Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria as well as the requirements of the Regulation on the Acquisition of the Educational and Scientific Degree "Doctor" at the National Sports Academy "Vassil Levski".

The verification conducted by the competent authorities on June 13, 2025, to establish similarity and plagiarism with other works confirmed that no inadmissible levels of plagiarism were detected in the dissertation. The dissertation successfully passed the procedure of internal discussion, after which the procedure for public defense before the scientific jury was duly initiated, based on the Rector's Order of the National Sports Academy "Vassil Levski" – Sofia, No. 646 of June 30, 2025.

### **Significance of the Topic**

Reduced physical activity among children in primary school, caused by the increasing use of digital devices and limited time for active outdoor play, leads to early onset of overweight, spinal deformities, and other health problems, highlighting the need for targeted, methodologically grounded work. On the other hand, the primary education stage is critical for the development of fundamental motor skills and the formation of healthy habits, which have a lasting impact on the physical and personal development of children. In this context, the relevance of the topic addressed by the doctoral candidate stems from the need for the systematic application of methodologies aimed at improving physical capacity, which not only meet contemporary health and educational priorities and the needs of students but are also scientifically substantiated and evidence based.

### **Structure and Content of the Dissertation**

The dissertation prepared by Yana Marinova comprises 177 pages. The bibliography includes 121 literary and documentary sources, of which 112 are in Cyrillic and 9 in Latin script. The dissertation is illustrated with 74 tables and 51 figures. Structurally, the dissertation corresponds to the format established for this type of work at the National Sports Academy "Vassil Levski." It is organized into four main chapters, a list of references, and appendices. It should be noted that,

given its small volume of only two pages, the section “Conclusions and Recommendations” does not need to be presented as a separate chapter.

At the beginning of the dissertation, the doctoral candidate presents an introduction in which she logically and consistently leads into the subject matter, clearly highlights its relevance, and naturally justifies the choice of topic.

The first chapter of the dissertation, entitled “Statement of the Problem,” is structured into four subsections over 38 pages. Based on a detailed analysis of literary and documentary sources, it addresses the main aspects of the study. By analyzing certain features of students’ motor development, the essence of physical capacity, the specifics of physical education instruction, and opportunities for improving physical capacity in primary school students, the candidate clearly formulates the theoretical framework of the chosen and developed dissertation topic. The preparation of the first chapter demonstrates Yana Marinova’s ability to analyze and interpret literary sources. Evidence of this is the working hypothesis formulated at the end of the chapter, which is logically sound and verifiable.

The second chapter covers 10 pages and examines the methodology of the conducted scientific experiment. The objective stated at the beginning of the chapter is correctly formulated and forms the basis of the subsequent experimental work. Concerning the objective, it is recommended to replace the word “prove” with “verify,” which is scientifically justified, as every assumption is subject to verification but not always provable. The four research tasks are clearly and concisely formulated, supporting the achievement of the stated objective. The object, subject, and scope of the study are accurately defined and described. The organization of the research is presented in detail, showing the timeframe within which the experimental work was conducted and the dissertation was completed. The research methods are precisely described, and the rich methodological toolkit allows for verification of the working hypothesis. This part of the dissertation would benefit from further enrichment by adding highlights from the methodology developed by the doctoral candidate, which is presented in the appendices.

The third chapter reflects the research work, consistently and logically presenting and analyzing the results of the conducted scientific study. Using appropriate and correctly applied statistical tools, the data obtained from the survey and from the instruments used to track the effectiveness of the developed and applied methodology are analyzed. It should be noted here that the candidate's ability to analyze and interpret her own data is evident. To further improve the dissertation, it is recommended that this chapter include, analyze, and interpret data from a correlation analysis, which would significantly enhance the value of the research.

The six conclusions and four recommendations presented at the end of the dissertation are well-formulated and deserve to be highly evaluated.

### ***Research Contributions of the Dissertation***

Having a detailed understanding of the research work, I can outline the following contributions of the dissertation:

1. In the literature review, a thorough analysis was conducted of the regularities in students' motor development; physical capacity was characterized; the specific features of physical education in the primary stage were clarified; and the opportunities for improving students' physical capacity were revealed.

2. An original methodology for improving the physical capacity of primary school students was developed and tested.

3. The data obtained from the experimental work provide information on the changes in the studied indicators, which demonstrate the effectiveness of the tested methodology for the respective age group. This, in turn, has a direct impact on physical education practice, allowing this contribution to be defined as one of practical significance.

### **Conclusion**

The articles included in the documentation, which are directly related to the topic of the dissertation, are scientifically rigorous. The abstract accurately reflects the content of the dissertation and has been prepared in full compliance with the established requirements.

The dissertation submitted for review demonstrates a substantial volume of research work. In view of this, and based on the considerations outlined above—while also taking into account the relevance of the dissertation and its applied contribution to enriching both the theory and practice of physical education—I recommend that the members of the specialized scientific jury confer upon Yana Marinova the educational and scientific degree of Doctor, in the field of higher education 1. Pedagogical Sciences, professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of Teaching..., doctoral program “Physical Education in the Educational System.”

Sofia  
20.08.2025г.

Reweuer:  
(Assoc. Prof. Korneliya Naydenova, PhD)