

REVIEW

**by prof. Vasilka Hristova Serafimova, Ph.D.
of Lyubomira Lyubomirova Vasileva's dissertation**

on topic: "Methods for Development of Specific Efficiency of 10-12-year-old Volleyball Players" for acquiring the educational-scientific degree "Ph.D." in scientific field 7.6. Sport "Theory and Methods of Sports Science"

One of the most important and significant issues for a society is the state of youth sports. Despite the efforts being made, we can certainly acknowledge that Bulgarian sports for children are somewhat undervalued in the conditions of modern realities. This is a serious reason for Ph.D. student Lyubomira Vasileva to focus her attention precisely on this issue, making her dissertation work relevant.

Born on February 26, 1990, in Sofia, she completed her primary, secondary, and high school education in her hometown.

After enrolling at the National Sports Academy "Vasil Levski", she successfully graduated with honors (5.84), obtaining the specialties of "volleyball coach" and "sports management" - bachelor's degree, and "sports journalism" - master's degree (5.90). Her latest educational degree from the National Sports Academy "Vasil Levski" is in "Pedagogy of Physical Education Teaching" – bachelor's degree (2019-2021).

Lyubomira Vasileva's sports biography is extremely rich. She has been a volleyball player in the women's teams of "Slavia" and "Akademik," a member of the national youth volleyball team, and a competitor with achievements in beach volleyball. Her field of activities is wide, and she possesses versatile abilities. She has demonstrated herself as a sports journalist, event organizer, promoter, and supervisor. She has served as the head of beach volleyball at the

Academic Sports Association (AUS), a volleyball coach at VC "Levski Sofia" and the Volleyball School "Vladimir Nikolov," and a coach at the Bulgarian Volleyball Federation (BFV) - Assistant coach in the coaching staff of the national youth volleyball team under 20 (2016). She is also a senior coach of beach volleyball for the under-18 boys' team at the Bulgarian Olympic Committee and competitions from the BFV calendar. Furthermore, after a competition, she secured the position of a "regular Ph.D. student" at the Department of Basketball, Volleyball, and Handball, where she is also an honored volleyball teacher. She has completed a one-year teaching internship at school CSU "St. George."

Currently, she holds two positions - volleyball coach at the "Vladimir Nikolov" Volleyball School and an honorary lecturer in volleyball at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski."

Lyubomira Vasileva's doctoral thesis is on the topic "Methods for Development of Specific Efficiency of 10-12 Year Old Volleyball Players." Her scientific advisor is Prof. Dimitar Petrov Mihaylov, Ph.D.

To write her dissertation, the candidate had eight years of experience.

The introduction is brief (2 pages). Some characteristics of volleyball are pointed out, and at the same time, the author emphasizes "the specific efficiency of adolescent volleyball players".

In **Chapter 1** of the dissertation, the author presents the problem under discussion according to the information found in the literature sources (64 pages). In our opinion, the volume of this part should be reduced by excluding some old publications and authors. This would add to the greater proportionality of the dissertation.

The parts of Chapter 1, "Theoretical foundation of the research," are:

“Morphological, physiological, and psychological peculiarities of puberty” (11 pages). The candidate discusses all these characteristics of young volleyball players, paying specific attention to this age group. She cites Russian and Bulgarian authors who are considered “classics” in the field of sport.

In the second part, “Volleyball as a means of the harmonious development of an adolescent organism” (3 pages), Lyubomira Vasileva discusses the positive influence of volleyball on human organisms. She talks about the idea of an earlier start of the training activities. She emphasizes the complexity of this magical sport due to the complex manifestation of the above-mentioned peculiarities.

The third part is “Nature of sports training for 10-12-year-old volleyball players”. Here, the candidate should cite authors whose publications view only adolescents and Lyubomira Vasileva’s personal view. In our opinion, the issue related to motor qualities should be viewed as regards adolescents. The motor qualities should be viewed in unity with technical-tactical skills to a greater extent (the part consists of 50 pages).

The presented literature review ends with a work hypothesis which is very well formulated.

Chapter 2, “Aim, tasks, methods, and organization of the research”, comprises 35 pages. I think that the aim and tasks are correctly formulated. The other components of methodology are also presented well: subject, object, and contingent of the research. There are two groups – for a preliminary experiment (56 boys aged 10-12 years) and for a major pedagogical experiment – 36 boys. This sample includes 21 boys (experimental group) and 15 boys (control group). Both groups were subjected to 2 surveys. The total number of participants - 92 boys.

The research methods are based on a survey of literary sources, a questionnaire, anthropometrics, and sports-pedagogical testing, grouped into anthropometric tests (4), motor (12), and sports technical tests (10).

The visualization includes 3 tables, 2 figures and 11 “illustrations”.

The pedagogical experiment is described briefly and is given in full in the appendix. There the author introduces a lot of exercises and 12 training models. They were visualized using 21 figures, making them easier to perceive.

The math-statistical instruments which the Master L. Vasileva uses include variation and correlation analyses, a comparative analysis (Student’s t-criterion), and BMI methods, which have been established and applied by sports pedagogues.

The organization of the research is described in 4 stages. The research, investigation, and experiments were carried out in the period September 2015 – December 2017.

Chapter 3, “Analysis of the results”, is the biggest – 92 pages, which is logical and corresponds to the proportion of the work. Here, the candidate makes different analyses as regards the questionnaire, the preliminary pedagogical experiment, and the major pedagogical experiment.

The visualization includes 40 tables and 52 figures.

Our opinion is that the candidate makes an in-depth analysis of the data and interprets them properly. The conducted surveys prove the improved quality of the training process under the influence of the presented methods.

There should be a greater emphasis on interpreting the results in a sports-pedagogical aspect rather than purely statistical.

The conclusions are described in detail and prove the nature of the whole scientific work.

It has been proven that the experimental scientifically grounded methods, with a focus on speed and agility training, has yielded positive results on the specific performance abilities of 10-12-year-old volleyball players. In the experimental group, there was a significant increase in the results compared to the control group.

The recommendations provided by L. Vasileva are reasonable, beneficial, and practical for implementation.

In relation to the topic of the doctoral work, four scientific articles have been published: three in the journal "Sport and Science" (2015, 2016, 2017) and one publication in "Activities in Physical Education and Sport," Vol. 07, No. 1, Skopje, Macedonia, 2017.

In all of these publications, Master L. Vasileva is the sole and independent author, which further increases their value.

The dissertation comprises 198 pages. There are 56 tables, 43 figures and 11 illustrations. The presented dissertation includes an introduction – 2 pages; four chapters – 196 pages; a reference list – 10 pages (147 authors, of whom 136 in Cyrillic and 11 in Latin) and 3 websites.

The six appendixes comprise 60 pages and include: a questionnaire, 8 tables presenting the variation and correlation analyses, as well as detailed methods for the development of young volleyball players' specific efficiency. The comprehensive methodology provided in Appendix 6 consists of 45 pages, thoroughly and competently described, accompanied by 21 figures to enhance the visualization of the 12 training models.

In the end, the doctoral thesis concludes with a declaration of originality, confirming the independent, accurate, and loyal nature of the scientific work, which has not been used for other academic degrees or titles.

The doctoral thesis follows the classical scientific structure, including an introduction, literature review, objectives, research organization and methodology, conclusions and recommendations, bibliography, and appendices.

The doctoral thesis is presented in a very good typographical format, with precise illustrations, well-presented tables and figures, and a cultured and literate language style.

The doctoral work has been prepared in accordance with the established requirements. It is dissertable, relevant, and of significant scientific and practical value. Many of the derived conclusions and recommendations can be implemented in practice.

The abstract reflects the content of the dissertation. The reference to contributions and the declaration of originality are genuine and reflect the conducted research, in accordance with the Regulations for the Awarding of Scientific Degrees and Titles – Order No. 3П-357/26.04.2023 of the National Sports Academy "Vasil Levski" Sofia.

Contributions of the dissertation

- The issue about children and adolescent sport is viewed – young volleyball players aged 10-12 years who are our country's future hope.
- The author researches a modern approach to creating methods aimed at increasing the specific efficiency of adolescent volleyball players.
- The opinions of leading sports specialists (Bulgarians and foreigners) are expressed through the use of a questionnaire about the content of the training process of adolescent volleyball players.

- The author proves the influence and significance of the applied methods for the development of the specific efficiency of adolescent male volleyball players.
- The author presents the idea of an earlier sporting start and of increasing the number of training sessions within the weekly microcycle.
- On the basis of the whole work done, I dare to believe that it was done by the author herself, and the contributions are justified.

Conclusion

Based on the above-mentioned, and having in mind the author's sports-pedagogical, teaching, and so far humble scientific activities, as well as my personal observations, I give my positive vote and recommend that the members of the Scientific council of the Department "Basketball, Volleyball, Handball" at the National Sports Academy "Vasil Levski" to award the educational and scientific degree "Ph.D." in Professional field 7.6. Sport, Ph.D. program "Theory and Methods of Sports Science" to Master Lyubomira Lyubomirova Vasileva.

Reviewer:

prof. Vasilka Hristova Serafimova, Ph.D.

date: 08.05.2023

To the PhD student, I have the following question: How do your athletes achieve success at the club and national level in Bulgaria and abroad?