

R E V I E W

of the dissertation for the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" by Yana Tsankova Marinova on the topic: "Methods for improving physical fitness in primary school students," under the doctoral program "Physical Education in the Educational System," in the professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of teaching...

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Physical education and sports, as a compulsory school subject, are an integral part of the overall education system and ensure the intellectual and physical development of students. Its primary task is to improve children's physical fitness, which is a key indicator of the health and working capacity of the body, without which participation in any activity is practically unthinkable. The changes that have taken place in socio-economic life in recent years have led to a decrease in the physical activity of the nation as a whole.

Research in the field of physical fitness among primary school students is relevant and significant, especially in the context of increasing physical inactivity among school-age children. Yana Marinova's dissertation directly addresses one of the most significant problems in the contemporary educational environment—the lack of effective physical activity in the learning process. The choice of topic is entirely justified and timely, and the development of an effective methodology makes a significant contribution to improving the health and functional status of students. The work is in line with national and international recommendations for the development of physical capacity and the prevention of risk factors associated with a sedentary lifestyle.

This dissertation is the logical result of Yana Marinova's many years of work as a physical education and sports teacher, whose interests and knowledge in the field are indisputable. In this regard, the presented dissertation has the corresponding practical value.

The presented dissertation is fully in line with the scientific requirements in the field of theory and methodology of physical education and sports. The dissertation consists of an introduction, four main chapters, a list of references, and appendices. The volume of the work amounts to 158 pages plus 19 pages of appendices. The structure is logical, well-organized, and meets the scientific standards for doctoral dissertations. A rich literature base of 121 sources in Bulgarian and foreign languages has been used. The dissertation is illustrated with 51 figures and 74 tables that illustrate the results of the study. Each section is purposefully structured and leads to the next with a smooth transition.

The first chapter, "Statement of the Problem," focuses on the following main areas:

1. Some patterns in the motor development of students in the early stages;
2. Characteristics of students' physical abilities;
3. Features of physical education and sports training in the early stages;
4. Opportunities for improving the physical abilities of students.

In this chapter of the dissertation, based on a large number of contemporary Bulgarian and foreign literary sources, an in-depth theoretical review of the problem is made. The peculiarities of motor development in childhood are presented, with an emphasis on the period from 7 to 10 years of age. The author traces the influence of biological and social factors on physical capacity and compares it with established research and authoritative sources. Current data from scientific literature is introduced, including on the consequences of immobility at an early age and the importance of physical activity for cognitive and psycho-emotional development. Here, the author demonstrates her ability to analyze specific information and express her opinion, which is indicative of her in-depth knowledge of the research problem. Based on the analysis of literary and documentary sources on the research problem, a well-founded working hypothesis is formulated at the end of the first chapter.

Chapter Two, "Purpose, Objectives, Methodology, and Organization of the Study," is 10 pages long and has a classic structure. The aim of the dissertation is clearly formulated, and the four tasks set guide the research work in a direction that correctly corresponds to the topic of the dissertation. The object and subject of the study are correctly

and aptly formulated. The research sample consists of 97 students from grades I to IV from 191 OU "Otets Paisiy," Zheleznitsa, and 202 OU "Hristo Botev," Dolni Pasarel. The group of students studied is divided into experimental and control groups.

To achieve the set goal and solve the tasks, a sufficient number of informative and reliable research methods were used, such as: study of literary and documentary sources, interviews, pedagogical observation, questionnaire survey, pedagogical-transformative experiment, sports-pedagogical testing to measure the physical capacity of students. The test battery includes a total of 10 tests for assessing motor skills. The methodology is well-reasoned and tailored to the age characteristics of the students. The author has shown good judgment in selecting the tests and physical exercises that were applied in the experimental group.

The following highly informative mathematical and statistical methods were used for data processing: variational and comparative analysis. The research was organized in three stages, each of which involved specific activities from the dissertation.

In the third chapter, "Analysis of Results," the results of the questionnaire survey and the experimental study are analyzed in sequence. The results are illustrated with diagrams and tables and are analyzed in detail. There is a clearly justified correlation between the applied methodology and the improvement of physical fitness in students. The applied methodology has had a stronger impact on the development of speed, explosive power of the upper and lower limbs, endurance, agility, and abdominal muscles. A great deal of work has been done in interpreting the data, which is accurate and very detailed.

The fourth chapter contains conclusions and specific practical recommendations that could be successfully integrated into the education system. Here, the researcher's contribution is evident in both theoretical and practical terms.

Main contributions:

1. Development and testing of an innovative methodology for improving the physical fitness of primary school students;
2. Provision of practical guidelines for physical education and sports teachers on the optimal organization of lessons and the use of resources.

My question to the doctoral student is as follows: What are the reasons for choosing specific exercises in the experimental methodology and how do they differ in effectiveness from the standard exercises used so far in the initial stage?

Most of the recommendations I made during the internal defense of the dissertation have been corrected.

On the topic of the dissertation, the doctoral student presents three independent publications that meet the minimum requirements for the number of points required to obtain a scientific degree at the National Sports Academy "Vasil Levski." The abstract has been prepared in accordance with the requirements and reflects the main and most important points of the dissertation. No plagiarism or dishonest use of texts, results, and analyses has been found in the reviewed texts without this being correctly reflected through citation.

Conclusion:

Yana Tsankova Marinova's dissertation demonstrates in-depth research, methodological precision, and high scientific and practical value. A large amount of work has been done, which contains scientific and practical results for practice. In terms of its scope and degree of analysis of the results obtained, it has all the necessary elements of a complete independent doctoral thesis. I believe that it meets the requirements of the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its application at the National Sports Academy "Vasil Levski" and I give it an overall positive assessment.

As a result of everything stated so far, I have sufficient grounds to propose that the members of the academic jury award Yana Tsankova Marinova the educational and scientific degree of "Doctor" in the professional field 1.3. Pedagogy of teaching..., doctoral program "Physical education in the educational system." .

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