

REVIEW

by: Prof. Dr. Boyan Lyubomirov Durankev, professor emeritus at VUZF - Sofia, Member of the Scientific Jury in the competition for the academic position of „Associate Professor“ in the field of higher education 3. „Social, economic and legal sciences“, professional field 3.7. „Administration and Management“, for the needs of the Faculty of Distance, Electronic and Advanced Training (FDENO), Department of „Administration and Management“, announced in SG no. 08 / 28.01.2022

By Order Z-RK-151 / 01.03.2022 of the Rector of NBU for approval of the Scientific Jury for election of „Associate Professor“ I was appointed a member of the Scientific Jury, and by decision of the first meeting of the jury (11.04.2022). I am obliged to prepare a review of the competition.

1. General presentation of the candidates and the received materials

In the announced competition, one candidate submitted documents, namely Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Maria Alexandrova Ivanova.

The presented documentation is in the required volume and complies with the Academic Staff Development Act and the Ordinance on the implementation of the NBU Academic Staff Development Act. The documentation is excellently prepared and presented, which significantly facilitates the preparation of the review.

2. Presentation of the candidate for participation in the competition

Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Maria Alexandrova Ivanova is at the beginning of adult academic age, when research teachers are both more productive and with an in-depth focus.

She graduated from the University of Economics - Varna in 1985. Since then she has acquired additional qualifications: 1993 - Certificate of Willsden College - London, UK for a lecturer in „International Tourism“, „Information Technology“, „Organization in the business environment“; 1997 - Certificate of qualification in pedagogy - teacher, Technical University, Sofia - Sliven branch; 1999 - Certificate in Management of OUBS-UK, UM-NBU; 2001 - Diploma in Management from Open University BS, Milton Keynes, UK; 2006 - Certificate in Mentoring, Business Mentoring Academy, Oxford, UK; 2010 - Certificate in Personal Coaching, The Coaching Academy, London, UK. All of them are convincing proofs that the

candidate has solid theoretical and practical accumulations, which allow her to have a reasonable self-confidence of a teacher and researcher.

Convincing evidence that she is constantly striving to develop and improve her scientific potential and experience are her participation in research projects, presentations at national and international conferences, development of current teaching materials and doctoral dissertation „Higher Education in Bulgaria and the European educational space - institutional and financial aspects“, which in 2012 was successfully defended at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences - Institute for Economic Research. On this basis, she published a monograph on „Higher Education in Bulgaria - Institutional and Financial Aspects in the Context of the European Education Area“, published in 2019. The dissertation and the monograph are considered when applying for „Associate Professor“, but were not reviewed.

She is a member of the European Research Networks: ESREA Network on Adult Educators, Trainers and their Professional Development (ReNAdET) and EDEN (European Distance and E-Learning Network), as a result of which she has published in group monographs of research networks. Additionally, she indicated membership in: Bulgarian Association for People Management; Bulgarian Association for Development of Society, Culture and Education; Balkan Association for Regional Initiatives and Association for Early Childhood Development.

She is currently a senior assistant at the Department of Administration and Management, a program consultant for the master's programs „Management and Development of Human Resources“ in Bulgarian and English, as well as „Management for Organizational Excellence“ - distance and full-time. Actively participates in the project for tutors of NBU. She has a number of author's courses and study materials, as well as numerous scientific publications, including a monograph „Management of the employer brand in the XXI century - opportunities and limitations.“

She has indicated authoritative participation in 19 national and international projects.

The classes she conducted at NBU during the period 2013/14 - 2019/20 academic years are in a wide range: Business context and human resource management; Compensation & Reward Systems; Entrepreneurship in organization and human resources; Knowledge management and information for human capital; Learning and Development in the organization; Management diversity and policies of equal opportunity; Organizational Analysis, Design and Development; Business context and human resource management; Ethics and corporate social responsibility; Career development in the public sector; Quantitative methods of analysis and control; Organizational analysis, design and development; Self-

knowledge and management of personal development; Remuneration and compensation systems; Business process management; Knowledge management; Management of knowledge and information about human capital; Project management; Project management in the organization; Change management and company culture; Diversity management and equal opportunities policy; Labor relations management (labor valuation and remuneration); Human Resources Management (in English); Human capital management; Learning and development in the organization; Human capital and talent management. The courses he leads in the academic year 2021 - 2022 at NBU are:

- Autumn Semester: MHRB113 Learning and Development in the Organization, MHRB117 Business Context and Human Resource Management, MHRB314 Project Management, MHRB316 Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility, MHRB113D Learning and Development in the Organization, MHRB117D Business Context and Human Management of Projects, MHRB316D Ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility, SQBM272D Project Management, SQBM275D Human Capital Management, BAEB727 Internship in Business Administration-I, MHRB126 Seminar: Personal Effectiveness, MHRB127 Seminar: The Role of the Business Manager, Management Manager Project: Project Development, MHRB126D Seminar: Personal Effectiveness, MHRB127D Seminar: The Role of the HR Manager in Business Environment Management, MHRB324D Project: Project Development, MHRE126D Seminar: Personal effectiveness, SQBM0176 Project: Self-knowledge capital;
- Spring Semester: BUBB619 Human Capital Management, MBAM193 Labor Relations Management (Labor Assessment and Remuneration), MBAM194 Human Capital and Talent Management, MHRB414 Human Capital Knowledge and Information Management, BUBB619D Human Capital Management, MBAM196D Human Capital and Talent Management, MBAM198D Labor Relations Management (Labor Assessment and Remuneration), MHRB212D Remuneration and Compensation Systems, MHRB216D Difference Management and Equal Employment Opportunity Policy, MHRB414D Human Capital Knowledge and Information Management, MHRB416D Organizational Analysis , design and development, SQBM153D Knowledge management, SQBM385D Organizational analysis, design and development; BABB668 Internship: Training Company, MHRB228 Project: Efficiency and Remuneration, MHRB228D Project: Efficiency and Remuneration, MHRB420 Internship, MHRE228 Project: Effectiveness and Compensation, MHRE420 Internship, Professional MHRB22, MHRB22 : Effectiveness and Compensation, MHRE420D Internship.

She is highly valued as a lecturer by the academic community - by colleagues and students. The average grade given to her by the student surveys for the last 10 semesters is 4.35 (with a maximum of 5.00), which puts her in the upper subgroup of the highest-class teachers.

3. Characteristics of teaching and teaching activities of the candidate

Ch. Assistant Professor Maria Ivanova, PhD, has the necessary employment at NBU, certified by a document for auditorium employment.

She is a well-known specialist in the professional field of Administration and Management not only at NBU, where she teaches, but also at other universities and at various academic forums.

The professional development of the candidate for the academic position „Associate Professor“ marks different (in ascending order) stages. During the period since she started working as a lecturer at NBU, she has participated in various specialized educational events and conferences. This is a very convincing professional (scientific and practical) career.

As a teacher Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Maria Ivanova specializes mainly in the field of human resources management and development. In this regard, I would like to add that the candidate speaks a high level of English, which (apart from her diverse curiosity) has allowed her to freely study a significant number of specialized scientific literature on the subjects taught in the original language, some of which are indicated and critically analyzed in her publications. She also teaches English.

Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Maria Ivanova is known as the author of a number of valuable publications. Especially for her participation in the competition she has presented 38 publications (after the defense of the dissertation): 1 monograph; 2 articles published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information; many studies and articles published in non-peer-reviewed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes; studies published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases of scientific information; studies in non-peer-reviewed publications with scientific review; published chapters of collective monographs. The total volume of the candidate's publications for „associate professor“ is about 1,200 standard pages (according to my calculations). They are not included in the list of jobs for obtaining the educational and scientific degree „Doctor“.

In addition to everything mentioned above, in our country Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Maria Ivanova is a well-known name in academia both for her accurate hits on scientific topics and for their competent analysis and clear presentation in scientific language. Has indisputable analytical skills, is able to work effectively in a team. She is known as an extremely competent specialist who is distinguished by scientific dignity and professional modesty.

4. Quantitative assessment according to the normative criteria and indicators

According to the adopted „Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria“ the candidates for the academic position „Associate Professor“ are

evaluated by a set of criteria and indicators. They are specified imperatively in the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as in the related requirements adopted in the Ordinance on the Development of the Academic Staff of the NBU.

Answer to the basic legal and additional requirements of the Law and the Ordinance of the NBU:

According to: Art. 24. (1) (Amended, SG No. 101/2010) Candidates for the academic position of „Associate Professor“ must meet the following conditions:

1. to have acquired an educational and scientific degree „Doctor“ - yes;
2. not less than two years:
 - (a) have held the academic position of „assistant“, „chief assistant“ - yes;
 - (b) have been lecturers, including part-time teachers, or members of a research team at the same or another higher education institution or research organization, - yes;
3. to have submitted a published monographic work or equivalent publications in specialized scientific publications or evidence of relevant artistic achievements in the field of arts, which shall not repeat the submitted for the acquisition of educational and scientific degree „Doctor“ and for the acquisition of scientific degree „Doctor of Science“ - yes.

According to the Ordinance of the NBU:

Art. 56 (1) The holding of the academic position „Associate Professor“ shall be carried out after a competition and election by the Academic Council of NBU. (2) The academic position „Associate Professor“ shall be held by persons who meet the following conditions:

1. to have acquired an educational and scientific degree „doctor“, which for the specialties of the regulated professions must be from the same specialty - yes;
2. not less than two years: a) to have held the academic position of „assistant“, „chief assistant“ - yes;
3. to have submitted a published monographic work or equivalent publications in specialized scientific publications or evidence of relevant artistic achievements in the field of arts, which shall not repeat the submitted for the acquisition of educational and scientific degree „Doctor“ and for the acquisition of scientific degree „Doctor of Science“ - yes;
4. to meet the minimum national requirements and the requirements of the NBU, defined in Annex 2 - yes;
5. not to have plagiarism in the scientific works proven by the statutory order - none.

It can be concluded that according to the normative criteria and indicators for evaluation of the teaching and research work the candidate significantly exceeds the minimum requirements. These facts are reflected in the study of her scientific works.

5. Qualitative evaluation according to the criteria and indicators for the research activity

According to the adopted Law and Ordinance of the NBU, the candidates for the academic position „Associate Professor“ are evaluated by a set of criteria and indicators for research. I accept all submitted publications as academic papers.

First, I focus on the monograph „Employer Brand Management in the 21st Century. Opportunities and Limitations“, published in 2020. The volume is 232 pages, of which 154 pages are the main text, separately - bibliography and appendices. The monograph was positively evaluated by two authoritative reviewers. The topic can be categorically characterized as current and original - this is a serious academic study on this issue. The task of ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Maria Ivanova through this monograph is very ambitious. From the very beginning, it is correctly defined that „the task of the employer brand is to manipulate the minds of a large group of potential consumers in a certain direction“ (p. 15), and the author's goal is to outline the boundaries of manipulation. And not only that, according to the author, the task of the employer brand is not only to manipulate the minds of a large group of potential candidates in a certain direction, but also to create a work environment that satisfies employees. In this context, the aim is to define the limits of this manipulation, to derive the main characteristics of the attractive employer and the conditions under which the employer brand can serve as a tool for human capital management and retention of talent. I hasten to clarify that the author has gone very deep into the theory, research methodology and analysis of the concept of „employer brand“. The first part examines the theoretical evolution of the concept of the employer brand - a problem that was not so relevant half a century ago, but which in the last decade has become a major for many modern companies - and worldwide. I accept the second part as a great personal success of the author, not only because she has entered deeply and deeply into the management of the employer brand, but also because she has taken a step forward, namely - to the challenges of managing the employer brand in the digital environment. The last part of the monograph is an attempt to illustrate the theory and methodology through analysis and evaluation of the employer brand in a real environment. It can be argued that this research is not only a personal achievement of the author, but also a challenge to the academic college on this economic phenomenon and in particular - the problem of marketing management of organizations. I dare to say that through this research the candidate for „associate professor“ presents herself as a mature and courageous academic researcher.

I will refer to some of my favorites among the studies and articles presented by Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Maria Ivanova, abstracting from the „new non-academic traditions“ the most important are those published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases of scientific information. As an extension and enrichment of the ideas from the monograph are the works: „Employer brand - advertising gimmick or professional strategy for attracting talent“, „Digital transformation and human resource management - the positive concept“, „Professional digital literacy and transformation of leaders“, „The new digital literacy and human capital - a paradigm for successful adaptation and competitiveness in the conditions of the fourth industrial revolution,, and others. Very interesting are some scientific findings such as: „Internet based social networks - new informal spaces for gender social relations and lifelong learning“, „Creation and management of remuneration systems“, „General characteristics and specific features of remuneration systems“, „Creating a competency model of the leader in the organization - challenges and benefits“, „Creating a sustainable workplace in a multicultural organization“ and others. Special attention should be paid to the issues of higher education management, which are not overlooked in: „Bulgarian higher education in the European educational space - financial problems and possible solutions“, „Innovative approaches to teaching in master's programs in the field of Administration and Governance,,“ „Higher Education in Bulgaria and the European Educational Space - Financial and Institutional Aspects“, „European Educational Space - a challenge to higher education in Bulgaria“, etc.

Surprisingly, very often when evaluating candidates for „associate professor“ and „professor“, their participation in the development of textbooks and teaching materials is underestimated. I interpret such an approach not only as incorrect, but also as very harmful because to prepare a certain textbook material it is necessary to study a huge amount of specialized and current literature, and accordingly - synthesize the most important points and conclusions of the study, to be transmitted in an accessible language for university graduates. I emphasize that the candidate has a number of participations in textbooks and teaching aids in both paper and electronic form. I am particularly positive about the textbook „Information Technology in Human Resource Management“.

I accept all submitted publications as directly or indirectly related to the competition for „Associate Professor“ for the following reasons: they prove a very high degree of knowledge of methodology and research methodology in the field for which he applies - „Administration and Management“ (in particular - human resource Management); they are based on personal research (library, scientific or practical), which can be used directly in the teaching activities of the candidate; the publications testify to and are an illustration of the evolution in the academic

growth of Ch. Assistant Professor Maria Ivanova, PhD, which led to publications in specialized publications, which in itself is a guarantee of a sufficiently high scientific level; in the monograph, studies and articles are developed classically and new moments are expressed about the theory and practice of management of organizations and people in them. The scientific publications of the candidate contain original author's achievements, which determined a place for Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Maria Ivanova in academia; they are a personal product of the author, and all significant works presented are reviewed.

As is clear from the above, ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Maria Ivanova covers and exceeds the required quantitative and qualitative indicators.

6. Contributions to research

The scientific interests, respectively the scientific contributions expressed in her personal and collective publications, can be subdivided into the following important areas:

6.1. Further development and refinement of the theory of innovative approaches to human resource management in organizations, as well as the theory of employer brand management. The author has gone very deep into the theory, research methodology and analysis of the concept of „employer brand“; The great personal success of the author is the assessment of the challenges of managing the employer brand in a digital environment.

6.2. Theoretical models for research and development of strategic and operational management of the employer brand are summarized; the strategic and operational management of human resources in for-profit organizations. At the same time, an adapted model for researching the image of the employer brand has been developed.

6.3. They have been proposed, substantiated with appropriate scientific evidence, and the applicability of different models of management of employer brands and human resources „top-down“, „bottom-up“, „inside-outside“ and through matrix relationships has been studied.

The candidate's publications can serve the learning process in a number of disciplines.

Summarized the scientific achievements of Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Maria Ivanova can be referred to the group of „enrichment of existing knowledge“ and „application of new scientific achievements in practice“, as well as obtaining new data and facts about the studied economic and organizational sites.

What has been said so far gives me reason to conclude that the works presented by the candidate for the academic position of „Associate Professor“ in content and quantity are sufficient to hold this position. In addition, it should be borne in mind that the chosen scientific profile meets the need for research and teaching in the specified scientific specialty. The

presented scientific papers and the teaching activity of the candidate cover the profile of the announced competition.

7. Characterization of the academic fame of the candidate

Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Maria Alexandrova Ivanova is a popular name and a respectable colleague with her in-depth knowledge, ideas and interpretations, as well as with her public appearances at various academic events. Despite this circumstance, and perhaps due to the short period of acquaintance of our academic community with the monograph (published in 2020), studies and articles, they have not received enough attention and are not widely cited. 6 foreign references to publications by the author have been established. I assume that this circumstance will change.

8. Critical remarks and recommendations

Each candidate for „associate professor“ can be challenged to further evolution of their views and scientific ideas. I allow myself the following recommendations. They have the best collegial feelings, the idea that through them the candidate can (and should) think about both her future and the future of science, which will continue to develop in her academic pursuits:

8.1. For this reason, the work of the candidate for „associate professor“ is desirable to be even more accessible and more public and relevant. From this point of view, it is advisable to promote his work even more representatively through personal events such as new scientific publications and participation in new conferences - at NBU, but more outside it.

8.2. The topic of employer brand management is very broad and rich in content. On the one hand, how a profit-based organization (salary is an expense) strives to position itself as a different and better employer brand. On the other hand, how does the organization measure the dynamics of the real brand with a cascade of indicators - what people think about the organization and what they do not tell their bosses. Third, how to fit the organization as a more valuable and valued employer brand among the hundreds of peers in an era of chaos. I find that in this respect the author's research can be continued and developed - both in theoretical and practical terms.

8.3. I find the future writing of textbooks in the main guided disciplines very productive. And an indirect recommendation to the NBU employer brand: the exploitation of staff, realized by loading them with more than 4-5 courses per year, not only does not lead to a higher effect, but also does not benefit the quality of the „final product“ - students. I recommend shrinking the taught disciplines and focusing on the most important 4-5 of them.

These remarks are not of such a nature as to challenge the candidate's contributions to the academic position of „Associate Professor“.

9. CONCLUSION

Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Maria Ivanova in her capacity as a candidate for the academic position of „Associate Professor“ meets the accepted recommended scientific and scientometric formal requirements. The scientific output of the candidate contains results representing scientific and scientific-applied contributions; it is aimed at improving science and in particular management as theory and practice; contains summaries of results obtained through research.

I have no family ties with the candidate. We do not have joint publications. I know her indirectly as a conscientious, correct and thorough researcher, valuable and respected in the academic community.

Based on the acquaintance with the submitted scientific papers, their significance, the scientific and applied contributions contained in them, I find sufficient grounds to propose Ch. Assistant Professor Dr. Maria Alexandrova Ivanova to be elected to the academic position of „Associate Professor“ in the field of higher education 3. „Social, economic and legal sciences“, professional field 3.7. „Administration and Management“ at the NBU. I am convinced that holding the academic position of „Associate Professor“ will be deserved and will provide good opportunities for her future research and performance as a lecturer.

My personal decision will be to vote „YES“!

Author of the review:

(Prof. Dr. Boyan Lyubomirov Durankev)

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