

OPINION

by Prof. Virginia Ivanova Zhelyazkova, DSc,
from VUZF University - Sofia
of the materials submitted for participation in the competition
to occupy the academic position of "associate professor"
in VUZF University - Sofia
in field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences
scientific area 3.8. Economics (Marketing and Digital Business)

In the present competition for "associate professor", announced in the State Gazette, no. 30 of 15.04.2022 and on the website of VUZF University - Sofia (VUZF), the only candidate is Dr. Mihaela Metodieva Mihailova, currently a part-time lecturer at VUZF.

1. General presentation of the procedure and of the candidate

I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury in the procedure related to the competition for the academic position of "associate professor" at VUZF by order No. 170 of 27.07.2022 of the Rector of VUZF Prof. Boris Velchev, DSc, in field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional area 3.8. Economics (Marketing and Digital Business), announced for the needs of VUZF.

The only candidate for the announced competition, Dr. Mihaela Metodieva Mihailova, has submitted a complete set of materials in paper and

electronic format in accordance with the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB) and the Regulations for its Implementation and the Regulations for the Terms and Conditions of Employment in Academic Positions at VUZF. The materials include:

- Autobiography;
- Monograph as the main habilitation work;
- A book based on the dissertation work for the award of the educational and scientific degree Ph.D.;
- Reference to the publications after the defense of the Ph.D.;
- Summaries of the same publications;
- Reference to the original scientific contributions in the works
- Reference on the citations of the applicant's works;
- Reference on the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements for occupying the academic position "associate professor";
- Diploma for Ph.D.;
- Reference for the project activity carried out by the applicant.

The documents are presented in good condition.

2. General characteristics of the applicant's activity

Dr. Mihailova has presented a sufficient number of scientific publications and evidence of the citations of her works, with which she fulfills the minimum national requirements for the occupation of the academic position "associate professor", laid down in the LDASRB and the Regulations for its implementation. All scientific publications presented for the purposes of the procedure are from the field of the announced competition.

The candidate's habilitation work is on the topic: "Realities and Challenges Facing the Websites of Bulgarian Companies" - very topical and

extremely important for any modern business. The paper consists of an introduction, six chapters, a conclusion, and a list of references. In its framework, Dr. Mihailova examines the essence of websites as a marketing tool for companies and presents the results of research she made of the preferences of Bulgarian users regarding specifically Bulgarian websites.

I believe that the main contribution of the author in this research consists in presenting to the Bulgarian reader the new, highly practically oriented topic of using the Internet as a means of building company recognition and realizing profits. The contribution has a pronounced applied nature since the candidate supports the work of Bulgarian companies in the Internet space with the conclusions in her book.

Dr. Mihailova submitted for analysis by the scientific jury a book that was written on the basis of her Ph.D. dissertation work and is entitled: "Direct Marketing and Market Orientation of Companies in Bulgaria". I congratulate the candidate for choosing the subject of this work, as it is again modern, dynamic and sheds light on the problems of direct marketing for the situation in our country, which is its main contribution.

The candidate has also submitted for consideration thirteen articles and reports in proceedings of scientific conferences. Five of them are in Bulgarian, six are in English. These publications complement the analyzes presented by the candidate in her main habilitation monograph and shape the image of her as a serious and promising young scientist. At the moment, there are no grounds for doubting the authenticity of the applicant's works.

In the relatively short time after the defense of her Ph.D., during which she worked on her habilitation monograph and accompanying publications, the candidate gained good recognition, visible from the citation report of her works. This is an attestation of the interest that her scientific output arouses among the academic community. In addition to her scientific output on current and highly debated topics in the public space, Dr. Mihailova also has considerable teaching

experience from two leading higher schools in the country - the University of National and World Economy - Sofia (UNWE) and VUZF. In these higher schools, Dr. Mikhalyova has taught various disciplines in the field of marketing, and what is particularly valuable is that she develops independent courses not only in Bulgarian, but also in English.

From my observations as an administrative manager at VUZF during the last two academic years, during the period when Dr. Mihailova worked at this higher school, I have direct observations of her work. She has proven that she possesses high competence as a teacher and is distinguished by a responsible attitude towards the learning process. That is why the feedback from students about her teaching has been consistently excellent.

3. Critical remarks and recommendations

I have no serious criticisms of the applicant's work. I congratulate her for her activity as a young researcher and wish her to develop her knowledge and skills as a teacher and scientist in the future.

I have the following two questions:

- Do you think that there is a lack of knowledge in the society in Bulgaria about the benefits of digital marketing and that this is an obstacle to the realization of greater growth of the economy of our country?
- Should digital marketing tools be taught in secondary school to stimulate culture building in this field?

CONCLUSION

The documents and materials presented by the candidate, Dr. Mihaela Metodieva Mihailova, meet the requirements laid down in the LDASRB, the Regulations for its implementation, and the respective Regulations at VUZF.

After familiarizing myself with the materials and scientific works presented in the competition, analyzing their significance and the scientific,

scientific-applied and applied contributions contained in them, I confidently give my positive assessment and recommend the Scientific Jury to prepare a report-proposal to the Academic Council of VUZF for the election of Dr. Mihaela Metodieva Mihailova to the academic position of “associate professor” at VUZF in the scientific field 3.8. Economics (Marketing and Digital Business).

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Prepared the opinion:

(Prof. Virginia Zhelyazkova, DSc)