

Standpoint

Prof. Dr. Julia Dobрева - **Vice rector VUZF**

of the materials submitted for participation in the competition
to hold the academic position of 'associate professor'
of the Higher School of Insurance and Finance (VUZF)

By professional direction **3.7 Administration and management (Organizational leadership and psychological aspects of management)**

In the competition for associate professor, announced in the State Gazette, no. 52 of 07/05/2022 and on the website of the Higher School of Insurance and Finance, **Dr. Victoria Gatsova from VUZF participated as a candidate.**

1.General presentation of the applicant and the procedure

By order No. 370 of 10.11.2022. of the Rector of the Higher School of Insurance and Finance, I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury of a competition for the academic position of associate professor at VUZF in the professional direction **3.7 Administration and management (Organizational leadership and psychological aspects of management)**.

For participation in the announced competition, documents were received from only one candidate:

Dr. Victoria Gatsova - Acting Dean of the academic program of VUZF

The set of materials presented by Dr. Victoria Gatsova on paper/electronic media fully complies with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of VUZF and includes all the necessary documents.

After a thorough review of the provided documentation, I confirm that it is in full compliance with the requirements of the Law for Development of Academic Staff in R Bulgaria and the Regulations for its implementation. From the presented report on the implementation of the national minimum requirements (scientometrics), there is the feasibility of the criteria.

The candidate, Dr. Victoria Gatsova, has submitted 2 monographs (one of which is a habilitation thesis on the topic of the competition), 1 book based on a dissertation for the acquisition of the

PhD degree, as well as 3 articles in peer-reviewed publications and 1 study - in total 220 points from section D (of the minimum required 200).

A citation report is also presented, from which 8 citations are confirmed, 6 of which are in books or 70 items out of the required min. 50.

Documents (in the form of official notes) for participation in scientific research projects, as well as a report on academic workload, are also presented.

2. General characteristics of the activity of the candidate

As can be seen from the presented documents, for the period 2014-2022, Dr. Gatsova led lectures and exercises in an impressive number, a total of 15 disciplines at VUZF, among which: Organisational culture, Consumer behaviour, Basics of business psychology, Leadership and management, Leadership and crisis management, Group dynamics in business, etc. She also actively participated in a number of scientific and research tasks at the Laboratory for Scientific and Applied Research (LNPI) of VUZF.

Regarding the research work of Dr. Victoria Gatsova, I can highlight the following:

1. The habilitation thesis "**Professional stress and counterproductive behavior in the organization**" has a total volume of 159 pages. The author, Dr. Victoria Gatsova, examines a significant problem with a special place in the context of a dynamically changing socio-economic environment and lifestyle in the 21st century. The author's approach to illuminate the concept of "burnout" (emotional overheating) is particularly interesting. Structurally, the monograph is appropriately structured and consists of: an introduction, four chapters, a conclusion and references. Each chapter is followed by a "Conclusions" section, in which the author summarizes the main scientific conclusions from the relevant part of the study. The author begins by examining the nature of occupational stress, then moves on to ways of managing it and ends up surveying the types of counterproductive behaviour in the workplace. This approach provides an appropriate theoretical framework and summarises central issues of the problem. Of particular interest is the fourth chapter, in which the author presents an empirical study of occupational stress and counterproductive behaviour. It takes into account interesting factors such as gender and age differences, the influence of demographic factors and stressogenic factors. The author skilfully traces the selected research problem in detail. The text is distinguished by a highly academic style, thoroughness of research and research maturity. A comprehensive literature review was made, with a total of 204 sources used.

The author's participation, analysis and findings are clearly distinguished in the text. The conclusions of the empirical study are interesting. The author, for example, summarises that the result of the research shows that the most common stressful factor at work for the studied sample is work overload, and the most atypical for the respondents is role ambiguity. The investigated employees in Bulgarian organisations estimate that they often have a lot of work and are required to work hard and to complete the assigned tasks in a short period of time, but they almost never or rarely face uncertainty of duties and lack of clarity about what is expected of them and how they must fulfil it.

2. The monograph "**Toxic leadership in the organisation**" is focused on a rarely studied issue - the dark side of leadership. In the focus of most studies, the constructive model of the leader is considered, while in this monographic study, Dr. Gatsova adopts the original approach to examine the negative image of the leader and on it to construct and validate a model for successful leadership in modern organisations.

The monographic study has as its main goal to direct the attention of managers and employees to the dark side of leadership, which leads to a number of dangerous consequences. Not every leader is a good manager, and in some situations he can have a lasting negative impact on the development of the organization. It is this emphasis that contributes to distinguishing the work and its practical-applied character - it can be extremely valuable both for educational purposes and for managers of various organisations.

The work is structured in two chapters. In the first chapter, basic theoretical statements and empirical data are examined and analysed. The psychological image of the destructive leader is examined and some of the types of toxic leaders are explored. The second chapter of the monograph examines in detail the destructive consequences of applying toxic management models and the need to overcome the problem. The author offers his own model for dealing with toxic leadership in the organisation, which implies work in two directions - at the employee level and at the senior management level. Considered and analysed factors for effective management: appropriate management style, use of individual sources of power and application of a set of skills, including communication skills, emotional intelligence, time management skills, etc.

3. Research contributions stand out in the following main directions:

1. An in-depth theoretical level study of workplace stress and counterproductive work behaviors.
2. Further development and upgrading of the problems of occupational stress and counterproductive work behaviors with empirical data obtained as a result of the conducted research.

3. Investigating the relationship between workplace stress and counterproductive work behaviors.

4. Empirical verification for Bulgarian conditions of the existing in specialized literature model of P. Specter and S. Fox for counterproductive behavior.)

5. Preparation of specific recommendations for successful management of professional stress in organizations and counterproductive work behaviors.

6. Researching the little-known problem of "toxic leadership" by systematizing and analyzing theoretical information.

7. Development of an author's model for dealing with toxic leadership in the organization, offering different strategies to overcome the problem both at the individual and organizational level.

3. Critical notes and recommendations

I have no specific criticisms.

I recommend the author to continue his research on toxic work environments and ways to overcome conflicts through appropriate management solutions.

CONCLUSION

The documents and materials presented by Dr. Viktoria Gatsova meet all the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB), the Regulations for the Implementation of the ZRASRB and the relevant Regulations of VUZF.

The candidate in the competition has submitted a sufficient number of scientific works published after the materials used in the defense of the PhD degree. The candidate's works contain original scientific and applied contributions. The theoretical developments have practical applicability, and some of them are directly oriented to the academic work.

Dr. Victoria Gatsova's scientific and teaching qualifications are unquestionable. The results achieved by her in the educational and research activities are fully in line with the VUZF Regulations for the application of ZRASRB.

After getting acquainted 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 find it reasonable to give my positive assessment and recommend the Scientific Jury to prepare a report-proposal to the Academic advice on the selection of Dr. Viktoria Gatsova for the academic position of "associate professor" at VUZF in professional direction **3.7 Administration and management (Organizational leadership and psychological aspects of management)**

14.11.2022

Referee:

Prof. Julia Dobrevá