

OPINION

by prof. Virginia Ivanova Zhelyazkova, DSc

of the materials submitted for participation in a competition for the academic position of "associate professor" at VUZF University - Sofia

in field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences professional direction, 3.7. Administration and Management

(Public Administration and Educational Strategies)

In the competition announced in the State Gazette, no. 52 of 07/05/2022 and on the website of the VUZF University – Sofia (VUZF), the only candidate participating is Dr. Daniela Petrova Karaangova, part-time lecturer at VUZF.

1. General presentation of the procedure and the candidate

By Order of the Rector of VUZF No. 371 of November 10, 2022, I have been designated as a member of the scientific jury under the present procedure. With the decision of the scientific jury during its first meeting, I am prepare an opinion on the scientific publications and other materials submitted by the candidate for the competition.

The only candidate under the current procedure, Dr. Karaangova, has submitted the following documents and materials in connection with the competition:

- Autobiography;

- Diploma for acquired educational and scientific degree "Philosophiae Doctor";
- Habilitation work on the topic of the announced competition;
- Two independent monographs, different from the main habilitation work;
- Reference to the fulfillment of the national minimum requirements laid down in the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (LDASRB) and the Regulations for its implementation;
- Reference to contributions in scientific publications;
- Reference to the citations of scientific works in publications of other scientists;
- Employment certificate;
- Other administrative documents accompanying the procedure.

The number and type of the applicant's scientific publications, as well as the available citations of her works in the publications of other authors, are sufficient for the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements laid down in the LDASRB and the Regulations for its implementation. At the time of preparation of this opinion, there is no information that would give grounds to doubt the authenticity of Dr. Karaangova's publications.

Dr. Karaangova has completed her higher education in Great Britain. She holds a BA in Public Relations and Communications from the University of Southampton and an MA in Management/Management and Marketing from Bournemouth University. In 2020, she was awarded the educational and scientific degree Ph.D. at the University of Southampton. Dr. Karaangova has been a part-time teacher at VUZF since 2019, and her academic load is impressive - she has been doing lectures and exercises in a total of six disciplines, some of which she develops independently.

Student evaluations of her work have always been high, which is a testament to her qualities as a lecturer.

Since October 2022, Dr. Karaangova has been appointed deputy editor-in-chief of the academic journal of VUZF - VUZF Review. This is a testimony by the university management of her qualities as a scientist.

2. General characteristics of the applicant's activity

In the announced competition, Dr. Karaangova participates with a total of three monographs, and as the main habilitation work she indicated "The Personality and Organisational Constructs of Systems Thinking". The remaining two monographs thematically fall within the field of the competition and in them the author examines important aspects of the management of higher education in Bulgaria: "The Role of Higher Education in the Transformation of the Bulgarian Economy" and "Perspectives for Reforming Higher Education in Bulgaria".

The main habilitation work is dedicated to a current topic - systems thinking, and here the author's innovative approach to the problem - presenting it in the context of personal and organizational constructs – is revealed. The extent to which systems thinking is the result of a certain type of cultivation in the personality or whether a person is born with or without it is investigated, as well as how organizational cultures influence the formation and development of systems thinking. Clarifying these questions is important from both a scientific and a practical, managerial point of view. If systems thinking can develop under certain conditions (at the individual level and in an organizational context), then there are ways to do so and multiply the beneficial effects of it. For the goals set by the author within the framework of her monographic work, she carried out a large-scale survey in various economic sectors in Bulgaria and in Great Britain, collecting and analyzing a total of 353

questionnaires filled in by persons in managerial positions. The results show that there is a relationship between certain types of personal behavior and systems thinking, and that there is a definite relationship between the type of organizational culture and the development of this kind of thinking. An important conclusion is the importance of transparency in relations and positive criticism within the organization for the free development of systems thinking.

The study consists of a total of 121 pages and is structured within a total of six parts. Dr. Karaangova has critically analyzed a total of 200 sources of scientific information. This speaks of her high awareness and competence on the issues under consideration. The methodology that she appropriately chose to achieve the goals of the work is of a combined nature - it represents a combination of methods from the field of both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The results reached by Dr. Karaangova have indisputable scientific validity.

The main contribution of the author with this work consists in the presentation in an interesting, accessible and fascinating way of a non-standard interpretation of an important issue for every organization and reaching conclusions as a result of a sound empirical study in Bulgaria and abroad. I congratulate Dr. Karaangova for the scientific courage to take such an innovative approach to an otherwise highly debated issue.

The other two monographs of the candidate shed light on issues central to our country in the field of higher education management. In "The role of Higher Education for the Transformation of the Bulgarian Economy", Dr. Karaangova analyzes the particularly topical problem of the adequacy of higher education in relation to the needs of the Bulgarian economy. The other book: "Perspectives for Reforming Higher Education in Bulgaria" is practically a logical continuation of the first. In it, the author presents her views on the future of higher education in our country, which,

according to her, must undoubtedly undergo reformation. Both books represent valuable and in-depth scientific studies, in which a strong author's participation and position on the analyzed issues is felt. They complement the candidate's profile as a promising young scientist.

3. Critical remarks, questions and recommendations

I have no significant criticisms of the candidate's work. I have the following questions:

- How do you explain the result of the survey in the framework of the habilitation work, which shows that conscientiousness does not lead to the development of systems thinking? Logically, most people would expect it to be the other way around.
- Should the educational reform start from higher education or from secondary education - where do you think the problems require a more urgent solution?

CONCLUSION

Based on the above, I give my positive assessment of the materials provided for consideration in connection with the present procedure and vote "FOR" the occupation of the academic position of "associate professor" in 3. Social, economic and legal sciences professional direction 3.7. Administration and Management (Public Administration and Educational Strategies) by Dr. Daniela Karaangova

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