

OPINION

by Assoc. Prof. Elena Kalfova, PhD

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of the materials submitted for participation in the contest

for the academic position of "ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR"

of the VUZF University

by field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences

professional direction 3.7. Administration and Governance

In the competition for associate professor, announced in the SG, no. 52 of 07/05/2022 and on the website of the VUZF University, the only candidate participating is Dr. Daniela Petrova Karaangova from VUZF.

1. General presentation of the procedure and the candidate.

The set of electronic materials presented by Daniela Karaangova is in accordance with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of VUZF and includes the following documents:

–CV in EU format; a copy of a diploma for holding the scientific-educational doctor's degree; habilitation thesis with summary; a list of publications after obtaining the scientific and educational degree "doctor" and copies of them, and their summaries in Bulgarian and English; medical certificate; criminal record certificate; certificate of the required experience under Art. 20, item 2; certificates for participation in scientific projects and other research tasks - 2 pcs.; reference on the fulfilment of national minimum requirements for holding the academic position "associate professor"; reference to original scientific contributions and citations; consent form for personal data processing.

Candidate Daniela Karaangova submitted a total of 3 scientific papers, all three of which are monographs. All of the scientific papers are accepted for review and it is confirmed that the candidate did not participate in other procedures for acquiring scientific degrees or occupying academic positions. All scientific papers provided by the candidate fully fit in the scope of the contest. All scientific papers were published in Bulgaria, 2 of which are in Bulgarian, and the habilitation work is in English.

I have no comments on the documents provided. They meet the requirements set by the AZAS and the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of VUZF.

1. Brief biographical data about the candidate

Dr. Daniela Karaangova graduated from a bachelor's program in public relations and communications in 2012 at the University of Southampton, UK. In 2013 Daniela Karaangova obtained a master's degree in Management/Management and Marketing, University of Bournemouth, UK, and in 2015 she successfully defended her PhD in Management/Management again at the University of Southampton, UK. Daniela Karaangova is deputy-editor-in-chief of the VUZF Review magazine, and since 2019 is a part-time teacher at VURF. Dr Karaangova worked as an honorarium research assistant from January 2013 to September 2013 to Dr Hong Bui from Bournemouth university. Dr. Karaangova's accumulated teaching and research experience are entirely in the field of contest. In summary, my opinion is that the participation in the contest of Dr. Daniela Karaangova is permissible: she holds PhD degree; she worked for more than two years as a teacher in a higher school; for participation in the competition she submitted a published monographic work; it is clear from the provided reference for the fulfilment of the minimum national requirements that she fulfils the requirements for the occupation of the academic position "associate professor" in professional direction 3.7. "Administration and Management". No plagiarism detected.

2. Personal impressions

I do not know the candidate personally.

4. General characteristics of the applicant's activity

Evaluation of the candidate's scientific and applied activity.

The works presented are mainly in the field of theory and research methodology of the development of organizations, organizational change and focus in problem areas such as the development of higher education. The citations of Dr. Karaangova's works are sufficient and meet the national minimum requirements.

All the candidate's publications are monography, two of which are in Bulgarian, and the habilitation thesis is in English. Publishing in English, of course, increases the visibility of the work to the international scientific community, which can be considered an advantage.

I find particularly valuable the general practical direction of Dr. Karaangova's research, in which she makes numerous proposals for improving the governance system and especially for the governance of higher education.

Dr. Karaangova's monographic study "The personality and organizational constructs of systems thinking" represents a comprehensive and complete analysis of a current and innovative topic for the application of the methodology of systems thinking both as an explanatory mechanism and a

means of evaluating management skills and potential. The research approach used is innovative, combining as objects of analysis organizations from the public, private and non-governmental sectors. Part of the overall process of public governance change is precisely the changed role of the different sectors and the constant overlapping of roles between organizations from the three sectors. The study of these problems is one of the most complex challenges in modern management science, which Dr. Karaangova does very well. She was able to construct an explanatory model that was valid for all three sectors. This is a substantial contribution of theoretical and applied importance that develops further scientific concepts. In addition, the factors that determine the formation of the skill "thinking in systems" are defined and systematized. This new classification is a good basis for the development of future research in the field and the expansion of the scientific field. The derivation of the relationship "organizational culture - thinking in systems" has a significant practical-applied meaning. Application of these results would enable organizations from all three sectors – private, public and non-governmental – to improve their performance.

The other two monographs with which Dr. Karaangova participated in the competition are dedicated to an extremely important and challenging topic from a research point of view - the reform of higher education and its role in economic development. The derivation and systematization of the factors that influence the success/failure of the reform in higher education is one of the most significant contributions of the presented scientific papers. Recommendations for improving strategies and policies for the development of higher education and science also deserve significant attention. My personal opinion is that this type of applied contributions is very important for the development of science and the relationship with practice.

In conclusion, I fully accept the contributions defined by the candidate in the Statement of Original Scientific Contributions. I believe that they are the author's personal achievement, based entirely on her scientific research.

5. Notes and recommendations

Deriving factors for the failure of reforms is one of the most interesting and useful results of the research done. Conducting an evaluation based only on subjective data is a widely used approach. Like any approach, it also has its drawbacks - the assessment is based on the perceptions of participants in the processes, which are also influenced by other factors (values, overlays of certain understandings and assessments in society, the phenomenon of the socially desired response, etc.). I would recommend that in subsequent research in the field, the author expands the methodological framework of evaluation. For example, by introducing criteria for the result of the educational and scientific activity, the indicators

for which are quantitative and the information about them is collected based on objective data.

Both monographs, as well as the thesis, use the comparative approach of analysis. Applying comparative approaches is a huge challenge, which Dr. Karaangova does very well. However, I would recommend Dr. Karaangova, in her future research works, to expand the scope of her comparative research. Their results would have a much higher applied value if countries with a similar organization of educational systems to the one in Bulgaria were also included. This would empower the achieved results to have a much more significant explanatory power and, accordingly, to give the possibility of much more adequate recommendations for the future more successful development of the system in Bulgaria.

CONCLUSION

The documents and scientific works presented by Dr. Daniela Karaangova fully comply with the requirements of the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ZRASRB), the Regulations for the Implementation of ZRASRB and the relevant Regulations of VUZF.

The candidate has submitted a sufficient number of scientific papers that were not used in the defence of the PhD thesis. The candidate's works contain original scientific and applied contributions. Her theoretical developments have practical applicability for public-private management.

The results achieved by Dr. Daniela Karaangova in her 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 papers presented in the competition, analysing their significance both from scientific 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 council for the election of Dr. Daniela Karaangova to the academic position of 'associate professor' at VUZF in professional direction 3.7. Administration and Management".

30. 11. 2022 г.

Prepared the opinion:

(Assoc. Prof. E. Kalfova, PhD)