

EXPERT OPINION

by **prof. Tsvetan Iliev, PhD** – lecturer at the **International Business School – Botevgrad** of materials submitted for participation in a **competition for the academic position of “Chief Assistant”** of the University of Insurance and Finance in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.8 Economics (Financial Optimization and Business Process Management).

In the competition for “Chief Assistant”, announced in the State Gazette, № 34 of 16.04.2024 and on the website of the University of Insurance and Finance, Nikola Nikolov Dimitrov from VUZF is admitted to participate as a candidate.

1. General presentation of the procedure and the applicant

By Order № 182/17.06.2024 of the Rector of the University of Insurance and Finance (VUZF) – Prof. Boris Velchev, PhD I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury of a competition for the academic position “Chief Assistant” at VUZF in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.8 Economics (Financial Optimization and Business Process Management).

Only one candidate was admitted to participate in the announced competition: Nikola Nikolov Dimitrov, PhD.

The set of materials presented by Nikola Dimitrov, PhD on an electronic carrier is in accordance with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of VUZF and includes the following documents:

- CV in European format
- An application from the candidate to participate in the competition
- A copy of a diploma for the academic degree “PhD”
- Summaries of publications for participation in the competition.
- A reference from the register of National Center for Information and Documentation (NACID) for the implementation of scientific requirements
- Medical certificate
- Criminal record certificate
- Official note for the availability of teaching experience at VUZF
- A copy of the employment record book

It is evident from the submitted reference from NACID that the candidate Nikola Dimitrov, PhD participated in the competition with 4 scientific papers, including: a defended dissertation and three articles in non-refereed journals with scientific review. The four scientific papers are accepted for review. In compliance with the requirement of Art 18(1) of the Law on the Prevention of Fraud and Corruption of the Republic of Bulgaria, there is

evidence of a PhD degree through a dissertation on the topic “Financial optimization of organization through Lean thinking”.

2. Brief biological data about the PhD student

PhD student Nikola Dimitrov was born on 27.11.1986. In the period 2004 – 2007 he graduated from with Bachelor’s degree in Computer Science at The University of Sheffield in Thessaloniki. In 2009 he acquired a Master’s degree in Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship at the same university.

The professional path of PhD student Dimitrov started in 2011 as Manager CRM and Process Optimization Specialist at Raiffeisen Bank Bulgaria. Since March 2016 he has been a Business Process Optimization Specialist at Ingram Micro Bulgaria, and to date he is a Continuous Improvement Consultant (LEAN) at Lean Institute Bulgaria. He is fluent in written and spoken English, Greek as well as French.

Since 2018 he has been teaching at VUZF in disciplines in the Bachelor’s degree (Sales, Management, Information Skills in Business, Information Risk Management, Introduction to Information Technology and Introduction to Business Analysis, Planning and Forecasting), Master’s degree (Sales Management).

The above gives me grounds to define N. Dimitrov, PhD as having professional training and experience relevant to the requirement for occupying the academic position of Chief Assistant.

3. Personal impressions

I do not know Nikola Dimitrov, PhD personal impressions of him but since I have participated in the scientific jury awarding the degree “PhD”, I am familiar with his professional path and with the research problems he works on. In this regard, I can emphasize that he has the necessary professional and personal qualities to occupy the academic position for which this competition has been announced.

4. General characteristics of the applicant’s activity

From the official certificate of academic experience submitted by the candidate, it becomes clear that he has such. At VUZF he has been assigned lectures and seminars in disciplines in Bachelor (Sales Management, Information Skills in Business, Information Risk Management, Introduction to Information Technology and Introduction to Business Analysis, Planning and Forecasting) and Master’s (Sales Management).

His scientific research interests are directly related to his professional path of development and I can define as up-to-date the modern trends in business process

management. In particular, his attention is focused on the possibilities for achieving organizational sustainability and correctly determining the scale of activity. In his developments, the thesis is established and proves that they can be identified through the approaches to strategic planning, implemented on the basis of the principles of Lean management. In this sense, in his scientific searches, N. Dimitrov is guided by the thesis that the application of Lean systems and tools could have as a final result not only mitigation of operational shocks but also provide an environment conducive to sustainable organizational growth and financial security.

The results of his research activities are evident in his dissertation on “Financial Optimizations of Organization through Lean Thinking” and in three articles. The following important scientific contributions stand out in them:

1. Through a theoretical study of “organizational chaos” and “lean management”, the academic understanding of how a chaotic environment affects the organizational structure and how management principles can be applied to mitigate such chaos is enriched. This contribution not only provides a scientific basis for the concepts mentioned above, but also seemingly connects the different areas of organizational theory and process management, suggesting a more integrated approach to the management of modern organizations.
2. The strategic importance of Lean Management in the rationalization of processes, promoting organizational stability and improving overall performance has been established and proven. By positioning Lean management as a central element of strategic planning, the research suggests that it is not just a set of tools or methods for effectiveness, but a holistic approach that can have profound implications for the success of an organization. The strategic angle helps organizations understand the broader impact of lean governance beyond the operational level.
3. The role of Lean Management in financial optimization is outlined. The contribution of the Lean principles to the financial health of organizations by reducing waste, improving process efficiency and leading better resource management has been established. By linking Lean management with financial results, practical recommendations are provided to organizations aimed at increasing their profitability and financial sustainability.

These contributions are important in the business world which increasingly values flexibility, efficiency and financial results.

A good impression is made by the fact that N. Dimitrov, PhD is familiar with the developments on the problem he researched by a number of foreign authors. In this regard, in his publications, he appropriately emphasizes the despite the huge volume of research, new aspects always arise that arouse scientific interests.

5. Evaluation of the candidate’s personal contribution

I accept the publications of Nikola Dimitrov, PhD presented to the attention of the scientific jury as a personal achievement of the author. The literary and information sources

indicated in the bibliographic reference to each of them are used correctly and conscientiously.

CONCLUSION

The documents and materials presented by Nikola Dimitrov meets all the requirements of the Law of the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (RASRB), the Regulations for the Implementation of LDASRB and the relevant Regulations of VUZF. The candidate in the competition has submitted a sufficient number of scientific papers. There are original scientific and applied contributions in his work, which have received international recognition and a representative park of the have been published in prestigious specialized scientific journals. His theoretical developments have practical applicability and some of them are directly oriented to the educational work. The scientific and teaching qualification of Nikola Dimitrov, PhD, in my opinion, is undoubted.

In this regard, I believe that the results achieved by the candidate in the educational and research activities are fully consistent with the Regulations of VUZF for the implementation of the Law on the Implementation.

After getting acquainted with the materials and scientific papers presented in the competition, analysing their significance and the scientific and applied contributions contained in them, I give my **positive assessment** and recommend to the scientific jury to prepare a report with a proposal to the Academic Council **for the election of Nikola Dimitrov, PhD to the academic position of Chief Assistant at VUZF University in the professional field3.8 Economics (Financial Optimization and Business Process Management).**

Date: 03.07.2024

Signature



/Prof. Tsvetan Iliev/