

# REVIEW

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*By Prof. Galina Georgieva Kurteva, PhD. Bourgas Free University, High Education Area  
“Social, Economic and Legal Sciences”, Professional Field 3.7. Administration and  
Management, Scientific Specialty Social Management*

of the materials submitted for participation in the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.7 Administration and management, specialty "Management and development of organization and human resources".

**Reason for preparing the review:** I participate in the scientific jury of the competition according to the Order № 3-01-379/24.09.2021 of the Rector of the Technical University - Gabrovo. By Order No. 3-01-387/28.09.2021 of the Rector of the Technical University of Gabrovo I am appointed as a reviewer for the evaluation of the candidate in the competition.

In the competition for Associate Professor, announced in the State Gazette, no. 50/15.06.2021 and on the website of TU-Gabrovo for the needs of the Department of Management at the Faculty of Business, as a candidate participated chief assistant. Dr. Eng Nelly Ivanova Nikolova

## **1. Brief biographical details of the candidate**

The candidate Nelly Ivanova Nikolova was born in 1971. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Commerce and Marketing from the Technical University of Gabrovo. She is studying in two master's degree programs at Technical University - Gabrovo. She holds a Master's degree in Textile and Clothing Engineering and Technology with a qualification in Mechanical Engineering. Nelly Nikolova also holds a Master's degree in Industrial Enterprise Management. In 2014 she obtained a doctorate degree in Economics and Management (Industry) in the professional field of Administration and Management at the Faculty of Economics, at The University of Veliko Tarnovo. Since 1999 she has successively held the positions of assistant, senior assistant, chief assistant in the Department of Management of the Faculty of Economics of the Technical University - Gabrovo. She speaks English and Russian. Member of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria.

## **2. General description of the submitted materials**

The submitted materials confirm the full compliance of the candidacy of chief assistant Dr. Eng. Nelly Ivanova Nikolova the terms of Article 54(1) of the Regulations for the Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and Academic Positions at the Technical University - Gabrovo:

- She has obtained the educational and scientific degree Doctor (2014).
- She has held the academic position of " chief assistant " for at least two years (since 2016).

- For at least two years she has taught courses in the field of the announced competition with an annual workload of not less than 180 hours (in the period 2016-2021, Dr. Nelly Nikolova taught courses in Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurial Behaviour, Fundamentals of Management, Human Resource Management, Strategic Management, Project Management, Fundamentals of Project Management, etc., with an annual workload many times exceeding the required annual minimum of 180 hours).
- Member of a research team at the Technical University of Gabrovo (Chief Asst. Dr. Nelly Nikolova has participated as a contractor in 12 research projects and has been a leader of two).
- She has proven achievements in the field of the announced competition (motivational model implemented in the practice of a specific organization).
- She has presented a monographic work and publications in specialized scientific journals, which do not repeat those submitted for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "PhD" ( at minimum requirements 15 publications, of which at least 4 independent and 1 with IF (WoS) or with SJR (Scopus), the candidate presents 26 independent publications and 2 with SJR (Scopus).
- All research presented in the candidate's publications is in the field of the competition.
- She has published textbooks and teaching aids (at the minimum requirements 1 textbook and 1 teaching aid in TU - Gabrovo, the candidate presents 3 textbooks, 2 teaching aids).
- There is no information about plagiarism in her scientific works (declaration signed by the candidate under Art. 44 (9), Art. 57 (1, item 17) and Art. 66, par. 1, item 19 of the Regulations for the Acquisition of Scientific Degrees and Academic Positions at the Technical University - Gabrovo) .
- In terms of the normative criteria and indicators for the evaluation of teaching and research work, the candidate significantly exceeds the minimum requirements for the position of Associate Professor at the Technical University of Gabrovo.

With regard to the minimum national requirements of the Law for the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (Art. 2b) and the Regulations for its application (Art. 1a, para. 1) for holding the position of "Associate Professor", the candidate Chief Asst. Dr. Nelly Ivanova Nikolova fully meets the requirements - she has defended her dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" (2014); she has published a monograph with different content than the subject of her dissertation (2019), she has submitted a list of publications that do not repeat those submitted for the acquisition of the PhD degree and for the academic position of " Chief Asst". The total number of points (665p) of the candidate exceeds the minimum national requirements for indicators of group A, C, D, E (400p) for holding the academic position of "Associate Professor".

### **3. Reflection of the candidate's scientific publications in the scientific community (known citations)**

On the basis of the presented reference of citations, it is evident that the publications of Dr. Nelly Nikolova have been cited 13 times, with the required minimum, according to the conditions of the Technical University of Gabrovo five. This is indicative of the positive acceptance of the candidate's scientific developments and the results and conclusions of her scientific research presented in them.

#### **4. Overview of the content and results of the submitted publications**

From the presented scientific works it is established that the research activity of the candidate is focused on the problems of entrepreneurship, sustainable organizational development and strategic management of human resources. I agree with the author on the systematization of her publications into three thematic areas: (1) Management and Entrepreneurial Organizational Development; (2) Human Resource Management; and (3) Educational Technology and Training. Dr. Nelly Nikolova demonstrated good knowledge and skills in interpreting theoretical and analytical statements in the areas under study, as well as in providing a well-reasoned defense of her ideas and proposals.

A central place in the scientific production of chief assistant Dr. Nelly Nikolova has her monographic work "Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Organizational Development - Managerial Theoretical and Applied Aspects", published in 2019. It is an in-depth study of sustainable organizational development of business in the new realities, presented with original author's interpretation and results of own research and generalizations. It originally combines the most important and up-to-date elements of scientific knowledge in the field of entrepreneurship and sustainable organizational development. The information gathered and processed by the author from literature sources, as well as from her studies in real functioning organizations, confirms the thesis that modern management recognizes the need for a change in organizational culture and the development of managers - from the best specialists with relevant expertise - to specialists with a focus on the development of people and teams. A significant contribution of the author is the proposed model for improving the main intangible asset of the modern organization - human resources. The author's model is a successful modification of Mickiewicz-Groshev's Balanced Motivation System. In the author's proposed modified version one can find intersections between constructive entrepreneurial ideas, theoretical concepts and model exemplars for achieving higher efficiency of internal factors leading to the desired adaptation or transformation of the organization in relation to its external environment. Parts of the monograph by prof. asc. Dr. Neli Nikolova are included in the courses she teaches. This is a testimonial to her ability to transfer scientific knowledge and research results into teaching materials.

Dr. Nelly Nikolova's study "Transformational Model for Organizational Development through Improvement of Interpersonal Relations" deserves high praise. The main focus of the study is again on the problems related to human resource management, and the author's goal is to develop a transformative social-adaptive model for improving interpersonal relations in order to improve organizational development. In order to realize this goal, the author successfully applied a variety of tools - surveys, in-depth interviews with line and top managers, observations, empirical, identification and comparative methods of primary information processing. The application of the proposed model

in practice will definitely allow to build new integrated forms of labor activity, stimulate the application of managerial innovation mechanisms, approaches and procedures for building human and organizational capacity to achieve sustainable development of small and medium enterprises in modern technological and socio-economic conditions.

The articles and papers of the candidate for the competition are in the two thematic areas (1) Management and Entrepreneurial Organizational Development; (2) Human Resource Management. Through them, the author has successfully promoted and informed the scientific community about the results of her studies and research in both thematic areas. The articles and reports are also appreciated as a continuation, deepening and specification of important aspects in the scope of the announced competition. They present Dr. N. Nikolova as a good researcher who successfully develops topical issues related to human resource management and organizational development in scientific and applied terms.

In the scientific production of dr. eng. N. Nikolova is also distinguished by her published textbooks and teaching aids. In terms of content, they present key concepts, ideas and tools in the relevant areas of knowledge (fundamentals of management, strategic management, human resource management) in an accessible yet professional style.

## **5. General description of the applicant's activities**

### **5.1. Teaching and pedagogical activity (work with undergraduate and postgraduate students)**

The teaching experience of the principal asst. Dr. Eng. Nelly Nikolova at the Technical University of Gabrovo is 21 years. According to the attached reference on the teaching workload for the last five years, she has completed more than 4700 hours (total workload). Chief asst. Dr. Eng. Nelly Nikolova teaches classes (lectures and seminars) to Master and Bachelor students in many disciplines related to the subject of the competition - "Fundamentals of Management", "Human Resource Management", "Fundamentals in Project Management", "Project Management", "Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurial Behaviour", "Strategic Management", "Human Resource Development Strategies", "Corporate Culture", "Insurance and Assurance", "Risk and Insurance", "Investment Risk and Insurance", "Financial Markets and Intermediaries". Despite the significant number of disciplines, they are interrelated. It is necessary to emphasize the contribution of chief assistant Dr. Neli Nikolova in the development of curricula for training in the Bachelor's and Master's programs of the University, as well as in the compilation of two curricula for the specialties "Entrepreneurship and Management" and "Human Resources Management" at the Center for Postgraduate Studies at the Technical University - Gabrovo.

### **5.2. Scientific and applied activities**

The candidate Dr. Neli Ivanova Nikolova participated in the competition with 27 publications, including: one monograph; one study; 6 articles, 19 reports. All papers were presented at international forums. Two of the publications are in English, in publications refereed and indexed in world-known databases of scientific information. Neli Nikolova is the author of three textbooks, two of which are

independent and two textbooks. The presented publications represent a mature candidate for associate professor, with independent scientific and teaching production (except for her co-authorship in one textbook). This is evidence that Dr. Nelly Nikolova is a well-rounded researcher, scientist and teacher, able to work in a team and at the same time find the right form for independent expression.

Chief asst. Dr. Neli Nikolova has 27 participations in national and international conferences held in the country and abroad, through which she has popularized her scientific studies and research.

As an expert, Chief asst. Dr. Neli Nikolova has participated in 12 scientific research and educational projects, with final principals international or national institutions, funded with national or European funds. The report of the University Center for Scientific Research and Technology (UCRST) at TU-Gabrovo certifies her participation in 12 research projects with internal university funding, two of which she was the leader. The subject matter of the projects corresponds to the scientific interests of Dr. Neli Nikolova's research interests, and the materials published on some of them are proof of her good research abilities and teamwork skills.

### **5.3. Extramural activities**

Chief asst. Dr. Nelly Nikolova has developed a tool to stimulate change and dynamic balance in the organization and has approbated it in "Alfrida Peev" Ltd - Gabrovo and according to the feedback of the management of the company, the implemented motivational model contributes to building a positive working atmosphere and effective interpersonal relationships, transforming the organizational behavior of qualified specialists into innovative.

### **6. Contributions (scientific, applied, applied).**

I accept the stated by the candidate for the competition for associate professor Dr Nelly Ivanova Nikolova claims for contributions. They are formulated correctly and synthesized, and reflect the results and achievements of her scientific and applied research. The following contributions of scientific theoretical and methodological nature are worthy of distinction: the enrichment of theoretical formulations of organizational development based on defined problems and strategic goals in the process of restructuring and technological change; the complementation of procedural and substantive motivational theories in human resource management with an algorithm for the development of a transformative social-adaptive model for more effective interpersonal relationships; the determination of the motivational profile of the staff by means of an appropriate diagnostic toolkit and a complex assessment of the motivational environment in the studied enterprises in the Mechanical Engineering sector; the development of a methodology for the formation of a new motivational model for the management of creative staff in order to establish the level of their motivation to achieve smart organizational growth.

As scientific and applied contributions are distinguished the approbation of the developed motivational model for attraction, development and retention of talented human resources; the adaptation of the application of the model in specific organizations; the modification of methods for the study of the

role of the human factor in management and communication in the organization; the study of the relation "labor motivation - organizational development".

The publications of Dr. Nelly Nikolova's research papers also contain a number of ideas and proposals of an applied nature: the proposed diagnosis of the company environment for the implementation of reengineering; the proposed algorithm for the application of the transformational business model for the management of human, innovation and organizational capacity in enterprises based on Industry 4.0; the implemented technological change and management of transformed business processes through the building of communication teams and the implementation of flexible organizational structures for rapid and optimal adaptation; the implemented balanced motivational model in the human resources management of Alfrida Peev Ltd. Gabrovo.

### **7. Evaluation of the personal contribution of the candidate.**

I highly value the personal contribution of Dr. Eng. Nelly Nikolova in the scientific production presented in the competition. The developments are the work of independent research of the candidate. She is the sole author of the monograph, study, articles and reports included in the list of publications for the competition. I find no undue borrowing of other people's ideas.

### **8. Critical comments and recommendations**

I have no significant critical remarks to the chief asst. Dr. Eng. Nelly Ivanova Nikolova regarding her production presented in the competition for associate professor.

To the activity (teaching and scientific) of Dr. Eng. Neli Ivanova Nikolova the following recommendations can be made:

- I recommend the development of textbooks and teaching aids in all academic disciplines in which Dr. Eng. Nelly Ivanova NikolovaI to study. This would facilitate and increase the quality of her teaching activities.
- In her future scientific and applied activity it is good for the candidate to continue to seek opportunities for adapting modern concepts and practices in the field of human resource management and organizational improvement in the practice of Bulgarian enterprises.
- It would be good for chief asst. Dr. Eng. Nelly Ivanova Nikolova to maintain the level of her research activity in the future and to expand her publication activity in prestigious foreign journals with impact factor, which would definitely provide her with greater recognition and popularity in the scientific space. As a prerequisite for achieving this, I consider her involvement in larger-scale international and national empirical research that would broaden the territory and deepen her further scientific explorations.

### **9. Personal impressions**

I know Dr. Nelly Nikolova from her participation in various scientific forums. I accept her as a person with professional modesty and scientific dignity.

### **10. Conclusion**

Candidate chief asst. Dr. Eng. Nelly Ivanova Nikolova satisfies the mandatory legal requirements for holding the academic position of Associate Professor. Dr. Eng. Nelly Ivanova Nikolova satisfies, and even exceeds the basic and additional scientific-metric requirements of the Technical University - Gabrovo for the position of "Associate Professor". Her scientific publications are of a high scientific level, correspond to and are relevant to the profile of the competition. The contributions of the chief asst. Dr. Eng. Nelly Ivanova Nikolova enrich conceptually and methodologically the economic science, business and management practice.

On the basis of these conclusions, as a reviewer, I propose Dr. Eng. Nelly Ivanova Nikolova to be elected for Associate Professor in the field of higher education 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, professional field 3.7 Administration and Management, specialty "Management and Development of Organization and Human Resources".

20.10.2021

Reviewer:

/signature/

/Prof. Galina Kurteva, PhD/