

## REVIEW

Reviewer: Prof. Ivan Petrov Paligorov, PhD, University of Forestry

Related to: a competition for the academic position “Associate Professor”, higher education – 3. Social, business and legal sciences, in the Professional Field 3.7. Administration and Management, Scientific Specialty "Economics and Management", Specialty – Management and development of organization and human resources, at the Department of Management, Faculty of Economics at Technical University of Gabrovo, announced in State Gazette No. 50 / 15.06. 2021

The candidate in the competition for Associate Professor at the Department of Management, Faculty of Economics at Technical University - Gabrovo is Nelli Ivanova Nikolova - Chief Assistant Professor and PhD at the same department at Technical University of Gabrovo.

### **1. Bionotes of the applicant**

The candidate, Eng. Nelli Nikolova holds a Master's degree in Textile and Clothing Technology (1995) and Industrial Management (1998) at Gabrovo University. She is a Doctor (PhD) at the Faculty of Economics of the University of Veliko Tarnovo in the specialty of Economics and Management (Industry).

The candidate's career began as a teacher at a secondary school in Gorna Oryahovitsa in 1995. Since 1999 she has been consistent a assistant, senior and chief assistant in the current Department of Management of The Gabrovo University.

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

The candidate Eng. Nelli Nikolova is presented with a whole set of documents and materials, which are required under the rules for participation in a competition for the academic position "Associate Professor". He is a Doctor of Economics and Management (Industry) since 2014.

He participated in the competition with 26 publications and monograph "Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Organizational Development – Management Theoretic and Applied Aspects" (published in 2019), 136 p. ISBN 978-619-7100-31-0. Additionally, 2 publications in indexed and referenced world databases, 23 publications in unreferenced and non-indexed publications with scientific review, collective scientific papers and reports at scientific conferences, 1 studios published in an unreferenced scientific journal with scientific review.

Two separate textbooks on "Human Resources Management and Development" (2020) and "Governance Basics" (2020) are presented, which contains theses, cases, examples, tests, management business games. One textbook on "Strategic Management" (2016), developed in co-authorship, 1 curriculum for students under "Human Resources Management and Organizational Behavior" (2011) and a handbook for the students "Personal Branding" (2021) in support of the dual learning system.

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

From the analysis of the documents submitted in the competition, it can be concluded that Dr. Nikolova's scientific publications are known to the scientific community in the field of management and development of the organization and human resources. There are 13 citations, of which 3 are in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases of scientific information or in monographs and collective volumes, 8 are in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review and 2 citations or reviews in unreferenced journals with scientific review.

### **4. Overview of the content and results in the submitted works**

In a meaningful respect, the candidate Dr. Nikolova presents scientific production, which is in the field of the specialty of the announced competition - management and development of the organization and human resources. The undoubtedly presented monographic work "Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Organizational Development – Management Theorized and Applied Aspects" is an in-depth study of sustainable organizational development in the new realities of the business. On the basis of information collected and processed from numerous up-to-date literary and online sources, as well as from own studies conducted in genuinely functioning organizations, the evolution of human capital has been tracked and the argument is based on the argument that the sustainability of the organizations is the result of the greater motivation of human resources, their professional and intellectual improvement, improving people-to-people relationships in the working teams, by effectively improving the entrepreneurial governance. Modern management recognizes the need to change the organizational culture and the development of managers – from best specialists with relevant expertise – to specialists, with a focus on the development of people and teams. The focus in the theorized and applied aspects presented for the sustainable development of organizations is on the effective management of human capital, seen as an essential resource crucial for achieving meaningful objectives and results.

The second thematic strand related to smart solutions for our modern sustainable development. The achievements of nature and physics provide innovative opportunities to change the economy, create new jobs and add value, optimize the resources used. The entrepreneurial way to do this is the blue economy, which uses technological innovations based on improving ecosystems where nothing is lost. The proposed practices, in cooperation with our environment, build sustainable models with which the business regains its competitive position.

Special attention is paid to the processes related to the Fourth Industrial Revolution in different areas of the Bulgarian economy and industry. The challenges and obstacles faced by the company's management in its implementation in manufacturing, digital education, qualification and training in the course of work are analyzed. Data from a survey on key skills and competences needed to work in digitalization conditions have been published. Recommendations and sample applications have been formulated to ensure a successful symbiosis of Industry 4.0 with Industry 5.0.

It is worth noting the effort to unveil the new role of human resources as a strategic factor for the effective development of business today. It is found that the people were taken by the leaders of Bulgarian organizations until the 1990s simply for granted. There are no clear management strategies regarding their selection, retention, improvement, motivation and career planning.

Many of the modern businessman and managers of small and medium-sized enterprises, taking advantage of the current unfavorable economic conditions in our country, the huge unemployment and the severe material condition of a large percentage of Bulgarians, do not give the significant to their own employees. It is only when their business fails that they begin to analyze the reasons that too often lie in the wrong approach and the negative attitude towards human resources.

The summary of the characteristics and advantages of the information person in the conditions of changing knowledge is also noticed. The requirements for company management regarding the information tools used for collecting and storing data in more voluminous models and structures of knowledge are defined.

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

### **5.1. Educational and pedagogical activity (working with students and PhD students)**

The candidate in the competition is a school teacher and then an assistant professor at university. It is apparent from the documents submitted that she leads lectures and exercises in 9 disciplines: Basics of Management, Human Resources Management, Strategic Management, Entrepreneurship and Entrepreneurial Behavior, Human Resources Development Strategies, Risk and Insurance, Insurance and Social security, Investment Risk and Insurance, Financial Markets and Intermediaries. He is the author or co-author of the 12 curriculum. He develops curricula and

leads training in "Entrepreneurship and Management" and "Human Resources Management" in the postgraduate qualification of Gabrovo University. He is an author or co-author of exam tests in 8 disciplines. She was a graduate reviewer of students from the Bachelor and Master's Degree.

She is a group leader of students from the specialty "Business Management" in the period 2001-2021. She was head of student pregraduate practices at Podemos AD – The Town of Gabrovo, between 1999 and 2001. She was the head of master's majors "Human Resources Management", "Business Management", "Project Management", "Management of the Industrial Enterprise", "Innovation and investment management in the industry" - part-time and full-time training with 1 and 2 preparatory semesters for the 2017/2018 school year; She is the head of a student group that participated in November 2011 in Sofia under the program "Student Education Company" of Junior Achievement. She is head of practice of students from the specialty "Business Management", conducted in companies, scientific leader is a graduate and of reports, presented by students of specialties "Business Management" and "Industrial Management" at student scientific sessions /SNS/, organized by TU-Gabrovo.

## **5.2. Scientific, applied-scientific and applied activities**

The candidate in the competition has presented participation in the collectives of 12 research projects in the period 2006 - 2021, funded by the Research Fund, presented in an official note by the University Center for Research and Technology at TU-Gabrovo

I appreciate as more significant participation in the educational projects "Active citizenship through training" - 2005-2006, dedicated to the role of education (mainly non-formal and informal) in the formation of individuals with active civic behavior. Work on 6.1.2-6.2 "General activities for monitoring, analysis and innovation" of the SOCRATES program, conducting computer and web-based training in combination with assessment through case studies and test questions of disadvantaged people in the union of the blind in the town of Gabrovo; Development of the academic staff of "St. Cyril and Methodius" Unniversity of Veliko Tarnovo, by increasing the motivation of young people for scientific work", OP "Human Resources Development" 2007 – 2013; "Support for the development of PhD students, postdoctoral students, graduates and young scientists", 2013; System for career development of academic staff at the University of Gabrovo with the financial support of OP "Human Resources Development", co-financed by the European Social Fund of the EU, 2013; Development and implementation of virtual technologies for the sustainable development of distance learning in TU - Gabrovo, Project BG051PO001-4.3.04-0051 OP "Human Resources Development", co-financed by the European Social Fund of the European Union, 2013-2014; Project "Improving the specialized knowledge and skills of the employees in the Regional Directorate for Food Safety, Gabrovo, funded by op "Good Governance", co-financed by the European Union through the European Social Fund, 2021.

She is the head of 2 projects funded by TU Gabrovo - a research project on "Approaches and tools for innovative development and capacity building for technological entrepreneurship", and a research project on "Management of technological change as a structured process for developing effective and flexible solutions through Industry 5.0".

## **5.3. Implementation activity**

It is apparent from a submitted official note that a developed motivational model of Dr. Nikolova was implemented in the human resources management activity of a production plant.

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

The contributions to the production of the candidate in the competition appreciate such as enrichment of theoretical statements, complementing and improving the application of known

theories in human resources management, accumulation of new scientific data and discovery of new methods and approaches for the application of human resources motivation.

As a **scientific contributions** may be indicated:

Enrichment of theoretical statements for organizational development based on defined problems and strategic objectives in the process of restructuring and technological changes;

Complementing procedural and meaningful motivational theories in human resources management with an algorithm for developing a transformative socio-adaptive model for more effective interpersonal relationships;

Determining the motivational profile of the staff by means of an appropriate toolkit for diagnosis and complex assessment of the motivational environment in the researched enterprises in the mechanical engineering sector;

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 its motivation for achieving intelligent organizational growth.

### **Scientific-applied contributions**

A motivational model for attracting, developing and retaining talented people has been developed and developed, combining motivational vectors: organizational and personal, in partner organizations that have shown an interest in the issues.

Application, maintenance and adjustment of the model in its implementation in specific organizations aimed at retaining and stimulating their valuable creative employees, involving them in innovative projects.

The actual (real) level of motivation among individual categories of staff has been studied through developed surveys, deep interview questionnaires and maps in organizations from different sectors.

Modified methods for researching the key role of the human factor in governance and communications in the organization have been proposed and applied.

### **Applied contributions**

A diagnostic of a company environment has been carried out for carrying out reengineering for optimization of company resources and business processes and development of a company digital strategy for ensuring sustainable organizational development.

Implementation of a transformative business model for human, innovation and organizational capacity management to support the development of enterprises based on Industry 4.0.

Technological change and management of transformed business processes has been carried out by building communication teams and implementing flexible organizational structures for quick and optimal adaptation.

A balanced motivational model has been implemented in the human resources management of Afrida Peev EOOD – Gabrovo.

### **Learning and methodological contributions**

Textbooks, books and tools have been developed and co-authored to support the training in the disciplines taught to students from different specialties, as well as for the graduates of Entrepreneurship and Management at the Center for The Promotion of Entrepreneurship at TU-Gabrovo.

Presentations used in teaching lecture material and trainings outside TU-Gabrovo have been prepared: to increase the qualification of unemployed young people up to 29 years in the field of office and business management to educational organizations in Sofia, Pleven and Gabrovo; employees working in the Regional Directorates for Food Safety in stara Zagora, Veliko Tarnovo, Gabrovo and Lovech to improve their specialized knowledge and skills and other projects;

Provision of activities and developed up-to-date tasks with assigned tasks for realization in a practical environment outside of TU-Gabrovo.

Requirements have been developed and criteria have been formulated for the preparation and evaluation of coursework by students in the disciplines: "Basics of Management", "Human Resources Management" and "Strategic Management".

She is the head of a student group that participated in November 2011 in the town of Sofia under the program "Student Education Company" of Junior Achievement.

Developed and issued under the project "Support for Success" manuals used in the dual training of students at the Vocational and Technical High School "Dr. Nikola Vasiliadi" – Gabrovo and the Professional High School of Mechatronics "Gen. Ivan Bachvarov", Sevlievo in 2021.

## **7. Assessment of the applicant's personal contribution**

The scientific production presented in the competition is entirely independent, which is proof that these achievements are entirely the personal work of the applicant.

## **8. Critical notes and recommendations**

No significant contradictions or inaccuracies were found in the scientific production submitted. The monograph edition has been reviewed, as well as all published works in scientific publications with scientific review. I allow myself to make a note to the candidate that in my future work should include more fellow professors, students and PhD students or young people from practice in research projects and research developments.

It is also necessary to develop participation in international projects and networks, as in the field of human resources management, and this will be a contribution to the international authority of the Gabrovo Faculty of Economics, as well as to the higher education of Bulgaria in the European Educational Area. This will allow for a greater number of publications in referenced and indexed global scientific databases. The basis for this, the applicant has put in his/her work and in his/her achievements so far, especially as far as

The basis for this the applicant has put in his activity and in her achievements so far, especially as regards the improvement of the management and development of human resources with the approaches of training and motivation.

## **9. Personal impressions**

I know Dr. Nikolova from her participation in the International Scientific Conferences "Management and Engineering" of the Faculty of Economics of TU Sofia, as well as the "Management and Sustainable Development" of the Faculty of Business Management of the University of Forestry, of which I have the honor to participate as an organizer since its founding in 1999. Dr. Nikolova is an author in scientific journal "Management and Sustainable Development", of which I have a responsibility to be editor-in-chief, as well as in the scientific journal "Industrial Management", of which I am a member of the editorial board.

It is necessary to stress that the reporting of scientific results, participation in the discussions, as well as the proposed publications form a specific style and creative amputee of Dr Nikolova as a distinguished researcher and lecturer in the field of management and development of organizations and human resources. Moreover, participation in the dual learning system in secondary schools, prepared teaching tools and manuals show its ability to work as an educator with different categories of learners and their educational needs and opportunities.

## **10. Conclusion**

In accordance with the requirements of Article 24, para. 1 of the Law of Academic Staff Development (LASD), and Art. 53, para. 1 of the Rules for LASD Implementation, assessing the scientific production submitted, as well as the other documentation, I believe that the candidate

for the competition, Dr. Eng. Nelli Ivanova Nikolova fulfils the necessary conditions for the academic position "Associate Professor". She is a "Doctor", for more than 2 years she is a "chief assistant", has presented more than the necessary minimum scientific production – 1 independent monographs, 1 studios and 25 other independent scientific publications. The guidance submitted for review contains specific scientific, scientific and practical and imaging achievements that do not repeat those for obtaining the "Doctor".

**Given the above, I propose that the candidate, Dr. Eng. Nelli Ivanova Nikolova have to be selected as an "associate professor" in higher education field - 3. Social, business and legal sciences, professional direction - 3.7. Administration and management, specialty - Management and development of organization and human resources on the competition for associate professor, announced in the State Gazette, issue 50 of 15.06.2021 and on the website of TU-Gabrovo for the needs of the Department of Management at the Faculty of Economics.**

Sofia, 15.10.2021

Reviewer: /signature/  
Prof. Ivan Paligorov, PhD