

REVIEW

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Regarding: the scientific papers for participation in a competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in Professional Direction 3.7. Administration and Management (Management; Entrepreneurship and Innovation; Brand Management - in Bulgarian and English), announced in SG No. 96/17.11.2023, with candidate Ch. Assistant Prof. Raya Nikolova Kanazireva, PhD

Reason for presenting the review: participation in the composition of the Scientific Jury for the competition according to Order No. RD-38-673 of 21.12.2023 of the Rector of Sofia University and decision of the first meeting of the Scientific Jury of 31.01.2024.

The review has been prepared in accordance with the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria Act, the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for the Terms and Conditions for Acquiring Scientific Degrees and Holding Academic Positions at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski". Structurally, it consists of VI parts and a conclusion in accordance with the accepted standards for the preparation of a review for the occupation of the academic position "Associate Professor" in PD 3.7 Administration and Management.

I. Assessment of compliance with the minimum national requirements and the requirements of Sofia University

The competition for "Associate Professor" in professional direction 3.7 Administration and management (Management; Entrepreneurship and Innovations; Brand management - in Bulgarian and English) has been announced according to the established legal procedure, for the needs of the Faculty of Economics of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

One candidate has applied for the announced competition, i.e. Ch. Assistant Prof. Raya Nikolova Kanazireva, PhD. The submitted documentation for the competition meets the requirements of the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act (Art. 2b) and the Rules for the Implementation of the DASRBA (Art. 1a, Para. 1), as well as the requirements of Sofia University, defined in the Rules for the Conditions and the procedure for acquiring scientific degrees and occupying academic positions at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".

The reference presented by Ch. Assistant Professor Raya Nikolova Kanazireva, PhD on compliance with the minimum national requirements shows that the total mandatory amount of points for occupying the position of "Associate Professor" has been met in all groups of indicators in the individual sections.

According to the different groups of indicators, the applicant has presented evidence, through which the following can be confirmed:

- Group of indicators A "Dissertation work for awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor"" - 50 points out of the required 50 points;

- Group of indicators B "Habilitation thesis - monograph" - 100 points for the required 100 points;

- Group of indicators D "Additional scientific publications" - 210 points out of the required 200 points;

- Group of indicators D "Citations in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review and in non-refereed journals with scientific review" - 50 points out of the required 50 points.

II. Research (creative) activity and results

1. Evaluation of the monographic work, creative performances or other publications corresponding in volume and completeness to a monographic work, including an evaluation of the scientific and scientific-applied contributions of the author.

The habilitation thesis presented by the candidate Ch. Assistant Professor Raya Nikolova Kanazireva under the competition is on "Entrepreneurship in the public sector. Corporate entrepreneurship and innovation in public enterprises in Bulgaria, Sofia: UI "St. Kliment Ohridski", 2023, ISBN 978-954-07-5868-8. The monograph has a volume of 196 pages and is based on the results of own research among public enterprises in Bulgaria. The author systematizes and further develops the existing knowledge about the dimensions of entrepreneurship in the public sector, corporate entrepreneurship and innovations in public enterprises, generating new knowledge about manifestations and characteristics in public enterprises from different sectors in Bulgaria. The author demonstrates an impressive ability to conduct thorough scientific analysis and exhibit critical thinking towards alternative perspectives and concepts. This aptitude becomes notably apparent as she constructs her argument to support the central thesis in the monographic work. The study concentrates on pressing issues within management and economic science, particularly pertaining to the advancement of corporate entrepreneurship and innovations in the public sector, with a specific focus on public enterprises in Bulgaria. It elucidates the primary components and dimensions of entrepreneurial and innovation dynamics.

The process of entrepreneurship and the differences in the context of the individual and corporate entrepreneur are explored. The manifestations of Corporate Entrepreneurship in the organization has been analyzed according to the scientific literature on the subject. An in-depth review of the scientific literature in the field of entrepreneurship in the public sector is presented. Views, definitions, trends and perspectives according to different scientific directions are highlighted. The challenges facing the entrepreneur in the public sector are analyzed too. The main personal characteristics of the public entrepreneur are presented. In a comparative plan, results are presented for the views on entrepreneurial personality and the entrepreneurial organization in the public sector are explored in the context of a study involving public sector managers. Trends for the transformation of management in public organizations are delineated, and the main research directions concerning state-owned enterprises are thoroughly analyzed.

The employed methodology for the research is systematically introduced and substantiated, incorporating qualitative research, semi-structured in-depth interviews, the creation of case studies for the organizations under investigation, and a comprehensive cross-analysis of both case studies and interviews on pivotal themes. The study clearly outlines its objectives and subject matter. Additionally, it delves into the primary attributes of state-owned enterprises, referencing studies from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The discussion extends to include data on the sectoral distribution of state-owned companies, encompassing findings

from a survey spanning 40 countries conducted by the OECD. International examples of state-owned companies from various economic sectors and continents are provided, accompanied by recommendations from the IMF's reports. Summarized data on public enterprises in Bulgaria are presented, along with a brief analysis of the legal framework regulating their activities.

The monograph unveils immediate research results based on six case studies compiled according to a uniform methodology. These case studies include profiles of the researched organizations, senior executives interviewed, interview summaries, and analyses on key topics related to the management of public enterprises, introduced innovations, and entrepreneurship in the organization. *The analysis focuses on characteristic features* of each organization, including history, transformations, economic sector specificity, specific innovations and activities in the area of CE, prospects for development, and obstacles to the organization. *A cross-analysis of the case studies* is presented, covering perceptions of innovation, practical experiences, factors and manifestations of corporate entrepreneurship in the studied organizations, obstacles and support for corporate entrepreneurship and innovation, and the role of the Law on Public Enterprises. Prospects for the development of public enterprises are also explored. Based on the comparative cross-analysis among the cases on the researched topics, the conclusion draws generalized findings, recommendations, and guidelines for future research, which are theoretically and contextually justified.

The monograph encompasses a series of propositions, proposals, and results that can be regarded as theoretical and practical contributions to the field of management studies, particularly in the realm of corporate entrepreneurship and innovations in public enterprises, as well as in the public sector as a whole. The findings from the research can be utilized by policymakers, public administrators, and managers in the public sector for formulating policies and strategies for the development of innovations and Corporate Entrepreneurship (KII) in public enterprises. *In terms of theoretical contributions* of the monographic work, the results can be perceived as a synthesis of fundamental concepts and theories that form the framework of modern economic and management perspectives, shaping the emergence of corporate entrepreneurship and innovations in the public sector. *A theoretical contribution* can also be attributed to the proposed author's model for analyzing the entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem of public enterprises in Bulgaria.

Based on the empirical research, specific combinations of factors and manifestations of Corporate Entrepreneurship (CE) and innovations in Bulgaria have been identified. The existing knowledge about the dimensions of entrepreneurship in the public sector, corporate entrepreneurship, and innovations in public enterprises has been systematized and further developed. *New insights* have been gained into the manifestations and characteristics of Corporate Entrepreneurship (CE) and innovations in public enterprises across various sectors in Bulgaria. *The analysis of the functional dynamics of public enterprises* in Bulgaria, including on an international scale, has been systematically reviewed and enhanced. Directions for future research, the formulation of specific policies, and the ongoing exploration and improvement of strategies to effectively harness the entrepreneurial and innovative potential of public enterprises have been identified. The role of public enterprises in influencing the level of innovation in the country's economy has been substantiated. *A distinctive combination of barriers* to innovation in public enterprises, specific to the Bulgarian context, has been identified.

The results of the author's empirical research, highlighting trends in the development of entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystems, can be valuable for researchers, policymakers, public administrators, managers, and consultants in the public sector.

In summary, I acknowledge and endorse the candidate's claims regarding contributions made in the monographic work, considering them well-formulated and substantiated. Ch. Assistant Professor Raya Nikolova Kanazireva has showcased a strong dedication to her research in the scientific and applied domain, demonstrating notable achievements in the studied issues.

2. Evaluation of contributions in the remaining attached publications (creative works) made after the appointment to the academic position of "Chief Assistant." The evaluation also includes an assessment of the requirement for the publications' peer review.

Apart from the habilitation thesis submitted for the competition for the position of "Associate Professor," Chief Assistant Dr. Raya Nikolova Kanazireva has presented the following publications:

- Chapters in collective monographs: **2 (co-authored);**
- Articles and reports published in scientific publications, refereed and indexed in world-renowned databases with scientific information: **1 article (approved for publication in the journal "Economic Studies");**
- Articles and reports published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes: **a total of 14, of which 7 co-authored. The candidate's reference for meeting the minimum national requirements includes 7 independent publications and 2 co-authored;**
- Studies published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes: **a total of 4 in the extended list, with 2 studies included in the candidate's reference for meeting the minimum national requirements (Group of indicators D)**
- Textbooks: **1 (co-authored).**

The publications do not duplicate those submitted for obtaining the academic degree "Doctor" and for occupying the academic positions of "Chief Assistant," and I am not aware of any proven plagiarism in the candidate's scientific works.

All publications with which Chief Assistant Prof. Dr. R. Kanazireva participates in the competition for the position of "Associate Professor" in the thematic areas announced in PN 3.7 Administration and Management. The highlights and contributions of her scientific works can be grouped into several directions: (1) dynamics of corporate entrepreneurship and development of the entrepreneurial ecosystem; (2) sustainable entrepreneurship, innovation, and management of innovation processes; (3) entrepreneurship in the public sector; (4) digital brand management; (5) socially responsible investment; and (6) commons management and sustainable business.

The review of the scientific works and publications submitted for the competition of Chief Assistant Professor Raya Nikolova Kanazireva allows a high assessment of their scientific content and their practical usefulness from the point of view of the achieved results.

3. Being cited by other authors adds a layer of credibility to Ch. Assistant Professor Raya Nikolova Kanazireva's research. A significant portion of the publications has been cited in the works of other researchers (**9 citations**), serving as evidence of the positive reception of

her theses and research results. Four of Dr. Raya Nikolova Kanazireva's publications are cited in monographs and peer-reviewed collective volumes. The required number of citations is confirmed by a reference attached by the candidate for the competition. The candidate meets the requirements.

The research interests of Chief Assistant Prof. Dr. Raya Nikolova Kanazireva lie in the field of management, entrepreneurship, innovation, and brand management. The candidate actively promotes the results of her research at numerous national and international conferences and scientific-practical forums.

My overall assessment of the research activity of Chief Assistant Prof. Dr. R. Kanazireva is *positive*. The candidate is an established researcher and an authority in her scientific field.

III. Learning and Teaching Activity

The competition candidate, Raya Kanazireva, holds a doctorate in business administration (social management) since 2015, and since 2016, she has been a Chief Assistant Professor and lecturer at the Faculty of Economics, Department of Business Administration, Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski." She teaches students from the Bachelor's degree program in the discipline of Fundamentals of Management – delivering lectures and exercises in English. For Master's degree students in Economics, she conducts lectures and exercises in various disciplines, including Entrepreneurship, Management and Development of Organizational Culture (in Bulgarian and English), Digital Brand Management, Corporate Entrepreneurship and Innovation, National and Organizational Culture, Management of Common Goods and Sustainable Business, Social Entrepreneurship, and Social Innovation, among others.

All academic disciplines and courses fall within the professional direction for which the competition is announced. The teaching activities of Chief Assistant Dr. Raya Kanazireva receive positive evaluations from the students.

From 2016 to November 2023, she supervised 15 students who successfully defended their diploma research theses.

Conclusion: The educational and teaching activities of Chief Assistant Dr. Raya Kanazireva are undeniably related to the subject of the competition, and the accumulated teaching experience is entirely satisfactory for occupying the academic position of "Associate Professor" at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski."

IV. Administrative and Public Activity

The professional achievements of the candidate also receive public recognition in practice. This is evidenced by the authoritative positions she held at different periods of her career development:

- Member of the Board of Directors and Executive Director of "State Consolidation Company" EAD (2021).
- Director of Marketing and Communications at "ADVENT GROUP" (2018-2020).
- Project Manager at "MELON," part of Kin+Carta (2016-2018).
- Director of Strategy and Outsourced Services at "KNOWAY" (Digital Marketing Agency of the Year - 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015 - Bulgarian Web Awards) from 2011 to 2016.
- Head of Marketing and PR at "ProCredit Bank" (2009-2011).

- Senior Manager of Strategic (and Special) Projects / Head of the Quality Management Department, BTC Group/VIVACOM.

- Chair and Member of the Governing Board of the association "Friends of Waldorf Pedagogy," a non-governmental organization since 2016.

V. Personal impressions of the candidate (if any)

I have no direct personal impressions and connections with the candidate. We do not own joint publications. I know her indirectly as a conscientious, fair and thorough researcher, valued and respected in the academic community.

VI. Opinion, recommendations and notes on the activity and achievements of the candidate

I have no critical comments on the presented self-evaluation by Ch. assistant professor Dr. Raya Kanazireva's and the materials attached to it, proving her achievements and contributions for holding the academic position of "Associate professor".

Each candidate for the position of "associate professor," nevertheless, can be encouraged to further evolve their perspectives and scientific ideas. It is advisable for the candidate to enhance the representation of her creativity through personal engagements, such as contributing to new scientific publications and participating in additional conference discussions, not only within Sofia University but also beyond its borders. Concerning Raya Kanazireva's prospective role as an associate professor, it would be fitting to elaborate on and publish independent textbooks related to the key disciplines she teaches.

Conclusion

In summary of the presentation up to this point, evaluating it as a whole, it can be confidently asserted that the candidate satisfies the requirements for the occupation of the academic position of "Associate Professor" according to ЗПАСРБ, the rules for its application, as well as the requirements of the Sofia University defined in the Rules for Terms and Conditions for obtaining scientific degrees and holding academic positions at the university. The candidate's scientific production contains results representing scientific and scientific-applied contributions; it is aimed at improving science and, in particular, management as theory and practice; contains summaries of results obtained through research activity.

It is with complete conviction and sense of responsibility, that I wholeheartedly recommend the appointment of Ch. Dr. Raya Nikolova Kanazireva, Assistant Professor, to the academic position of "associate professor" in the field of professional direction 3.7 Administration and Management at Sofia University.

Date 26.02.2024

Signature