



R E V I E W

By: Assoc. Prof. Ivanka Andreeva Nikolova, PhD;
Department of Economics of Trade, UNWE;
Professional field 3.8. “Economics”,
Scientific specialty: 05.02.18 “Economics and Management
(economics of trade, hospitality and restaurant industry)”

Regarding: competition for the position of associate professor in professional field 3.8. Economics, scientific specialty “Economics of tourism” in the Division of Regional and Sectoral Economy at the Institute for Economic Research (IER) at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

1. Information about the competition

The competition for the academic position of associate professor was organised by the Institute for Economic Research for the needs of the Division of Regional and Sectoral Economy at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS) and was announced in the State Gazette, No. 44 of 19.05.2023.

I participate in the scientific jury for the competition in accordance with a decision of the Scientific Council at IER at BAS - Protocol No. 7/12.07.2023 and Order No. 367/18.07.2023 of the Director of IER at BAS.

2. Brief information about the candidate in the competition

The candidate, Silvena Dencheva Yordanova, finished the Science and Mathematics High School in Varna with excellent results in 1995. Her majors were Biology and English. At the same time, she finished the First Language High School as a private student with English as her major as well.

She graduated from the University of Economics – Varna and has a bachelor’s degree in marketing and management and a master’s degree in business administration, which she did in 2000 cum laude.

For the period 2001-2004 she was a full-time doctoral student at the Department of Management at the University of Economics – Varna.

While she was a doctoral student, the candidate worked as an expert in foreign trade and marketing, as well as a marketing manager in an international company. She defended her doctoral thesis in 2005.

In 2006 she started working as an assistant professor in the International College Albena. In 2015 the college transformed into Varna University of Management.

In 2016, she qualified as an associate professor in professional field 3.7. Administration and Management with a monograph entitled "*Virtual Communities in Tourism*".

Currently, she is an associate professor at Varna University of Management.

3. Fulfillment of the requirements for holding the academic position of associate professor

The candidate for the position Silvena Dencheva Yordanova became a PhD in 2005 after she had successfully defended her doctoral thesis entitled *“Consumer Relationship Management in E-Commerce”*.

The candidate exceeds significantly the requirement of a five-year teaching and research experience in a higher education institution. Silvena Yordanova is undoubtedly an established lecturer, with a considerable experience of 17 years, because since 2006 and without interruption, she has been working as a lecturer at Varna University of Management.

A published habilitation work was presented – the monograph *“Prospects and opportunities for digitisation in tourism”*, which definitely does not repeat the publications for obtaining a doctoral degree.

Other original scientific research works, publications and scientific-applied studies were also presented, which have been evaluated as a whole and as required include at least 2 publications in journals refereed and indexed in SCOPUS or WoS. In particular, the list of publications of the only candidate in the competition, Silvena Yordanova, includes: 2 studies in refereed indexed journals; 13 articles and papers in non-refereed peer-reviewed publications; contributions to 3 chapters of monographic studies published in peer-reviewed collective volumes; 2 textbooks that are used in the school network, as well as an independently developed, peer-reviewed and published habilitation monographic work in a volume of 135 pages.

The scientometric report presented by the candidate testifies to the fulfillment of the minimum required points in all groups of indicators, and the total number of points in the competition for the academic position of associate professor exceeds the minimum required 450 points.

It is noteworthy that in accordance with the law there is no proven plagiarism in the candidate’s publications presented for participation in the competition.

Both the minimum requirements and the additional requirements of the IER at BAS have been met.

4. General characteristics of the presented scientific works/publications

The scientific works and studies Silvena Yordanova has presented are mainly in the research areas of tourism and education, which corresponds to the subject matter of the competition.

The chief interest in the area of tourism is related to the candidate’s habilitation monograph *“Prospects and opportunities for digitisation in tourism”* which focuses on a contemporary topic of significance and importance for the science and practice in tourism. A secondary study of the possibilities for application of the various forms of digital technologies was conducted following the example of tourism and hospitality.

In the area of tourism, the state of tourism and the prospects for digitisation have been analysed, the best practices for implementing digitisation in tourism have been investigated; the differences between human and artificial intelligence; the potential of social media as a form of manifestation of digitisation tourism; the trends in tourism within EU before and after the pandemic; the implementation of the General Regulation of the European Union GDPR (**General Data Protection Regulation**) regarding the data protection in tourist

organisations; the types of workplace bullying in the hospitality and restaurant context and a strategy to tackle them.

A contribution to tourism theory and practice are the researched managerial issues of emotional intelligence and regulation of intra- and interpersonal emotions in the workplace from the perspective of employees and leaders; case studies of emotional intelligence of the leader are presented; the nature and forms of destructive leadership are explored; techniques are explored and a methodology is proposed for dealing with destructive leadership regardless of the type of organisation.

Another part of the articles and papers of the candidate Silvena Yordanova reflect the author's scientific research in the area of education. In this scientific field, scientific and applied results have been obtained with regard to: the study and analysis of the degree of digitisation in the field of higher education; the possibilities for implementation of artificial intelligence in the field of education; education modernisation through creativity and its enhancement; a methodology for measurement of university corporate identity; case studies of practical and applied nature, as well as game-based approaches aimed at encouraging innovativeness in the workplace among students, faculty and employees.

Topical problems in the field of tourism and education were examined and important practical-applied results were achieved which reveal clearly defined contributions to economic theory and practice in the presented scientific publications of the candidate Silvena Yordanova,

5. Synthesized evaluation of the major scientific and scientific-applied contributions of the candidate

Dr Silvena Yordanova's scientific production that was presented for participation in the competition encompasses scientific and scientific-applied results contributing to the expansion of the existing theoretical knowledge and practice in the field of tourism and education. The results are correctly enumerated in the attached Reference list of scientific and scientific-applied contributions.

The more significant of them can be systematised as follows:

- The existing scientific knowledge in terms of the possibilities of applying digitisation and artificial intelligence in the field of tourism and education is enriched;
- The author's methodology and author's model for digitalisation of the organisation in the field of tourism proposed in the candidate's monographic work can be defined as a scientific-applied contribution;
- Contributions of a scientific-applied nature are also the scientific results of the candidate's creative searches regarding:
 - The implementation of the common EU regulation (**General Data Protection Regulation**) for data protection in tourist organisations;
 - emotional intelligence and proposed methodology for tackling destructive leadership regardless of the type of organisation;
 - education improvement through creativity and emphasis on innovativeness;
 - the suggested methodology for measurement of university corporate identity.

6. Critical remarks and recommendations

My recommendation to the candidate is to increase her publication activity in refereed and indexed journals in Bulgaria and abroad.

7. Conclusion

The documents submitted for the competition, as well as the analysis and evaluation of the candidate's scientific production and contributions testify that they meet the minimum requirements of the Institute for Economic Research at BAS in accordance with the minimum national requirements for the scientific activity of the candidate for holding the academic position of associate professor in scientific area 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.8. Economy, the requirements under Art. 1, para. 2, as well as the requirements specified in Art. 81 of the Regulations for the acquisition of scientific degrees and holding academic positions at the Institute for Economic Research at BAS.

The above gives me reason to evaluate the candidate positively and to confidently propose to the members of the scientific jury that **Dr Silvena Dencheva Yordanova** be elected to the academic position of **ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR** in professional field 3.8. Economics, scientific specialty "Economics of tourism" in the Division of Regional and Sectoral Economy at the Institute for Economic Research (IER) at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, for which I will vote **positively**.

10.09.2023
Sofia

Signature:

/Assoc. Prof. Ivanka Nikolova, PhD/