



REVIEW

By: *Prof. D.Sc. Tanya Parusheva*
Scientific specialty “Economics and Management (Tourism)”
University of National and World Economy, Sofia

Regarding: competition for *associate professor in a professional field 3.8. “Economics” in “Economics of Tourism” to the “Regional and Sectoral Economy” section at the Economic Research Institute at BAS.*

1. Information regarding the competition

The competition has been announced for the needs of the “Regional and Sectoral Economy” section in *professional direction 3.8. “Economics”* in “Economics of Tourism” at the Economic Research Institute (ERI) at BAS, in accordance with its Regulations for the acquisition of scientific degrees and holding academic positions. It was published in the State Gazette, No. 44 from 19.05.2023. I participate in the composition of the scientific jury of the competition, according to Order No. 367/18/07/2023 of the Director of the ERI at BAS.

2. Information about the candidate in the competition

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Silvena Dencheva Yordanova is the only sole in the competition. She graduated from secondary school at the III Science and Mathematics High School “Acad. Metodiy Popov” Varna, speciality “Biology and English” with excellent grade (1995). In parallel, she also graduated from the First Language High School “Hr. Kabakchiev” in the city of Varna, as a private student with “English language” speciality.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Silvena Yordanova graduated from the University of Economics (UE) – Varna (1999) with a bachelor’s degree in “Marketing and Management”. She obtained a master’s degree in business administration with excellent results, also at UE – Varna (2000).

During the period 2001 – 2004, she was a full-time doctoral student at the “Management” department of the UE – Varna. She defended a dissertation on the topic: “Management of relations with users in the conditions of electronic

commerce” and received the ESD “doctor” in a scientific specialty 05.02.20. “Social Management” (HAC at the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2005).

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Silvena Yordanova began her scientific career as an assistant at the International College – Albena, Dobrich (2006). She also acquired a teaching qualification as a teacher of economics and management for secondary education (2012). From 2016 to the present, she is an associate professor at the Higher School of Management (VUM) – Varna in professional direction 3.7. “Administration and Management”. She obtained her habilitation with a monographic work on “Virtual Communities in Tourism”. It is included in the current Register of Scientists (NACID).

She performs expert activity in the preparation of a regional action plan to promote sustainable employment. She is a member of prestigious professional organizations – the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria and the Bulgarian Marketing Association. She is fluent in English and Russian language.

3. Fulfillment of the requirements for acquiring the academic position

3. 1. Fulfillment of quantitative requirements

The candidate in the competition, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Silvena Yordanova meets the requirements for occupying the academic position of “associate professor”, according to the DASRBA (Article 24, Paragraph 1).

- She has obtained the ESD degree “Doctor” in a scientific specialty 05.02.20. “Social Management” (HAC at the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2005).

- She has held the academic position of “associate professor” at VUM – Varna since 2016.

- She presents a published monographic work, which does not repeat the publications for obtaining the ESD “doctor” and for obtaining the academic position “associate professor” in professional direction 3.7. “Administration and Management”.

- There are other original scientific research works and publications that do not repeat those presented for obtaining the title of “Doctor” and for holding the academic position of “associate professor” in professional field 3.7. “Administration and Management”.

- She meets the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b, para. 2 and 3 of the DASRBA, the Regulations for its application and the Regulations for the acquisition of scientific degrees and the occupation of academic positions at the ERI at BAS.

- There is no proven plagiarism in her scientific works according to the law.

➤ *The candidate in the competition for the academic position of “associate professor” at the Economic Studies Institute at BAS, Assoc. Dr.*

Silvena Yordanova, fulfills the minimum national requirements, in accordance with the DASRBA (Article 2b), the Regulations for its application and the Regulations for the acquisition of scientific degrees and holding of academic positions in ERI at BAS. She achieved 522.5 points in groups of indicators A+V+G+D+E, with a minimum threshold of 450.

3.2. Fulfillment of quality requirements

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Silvena Yordanova is an established researcher with contributions to the national and international development of knowledge. Evidence of this is the direction she developed for digitization in tourism, participation in the projects “Innotour” and “Integrated solutions for employment in the culinary arts”, and in the team of VUM – Varna in the development of projects for EU funding.

The candidate in the competition is an established lecturer with a contribution to teaching, learning and pedagogical development. These qualities are manifested in the conduct of classes at VUM – Varna in Bulgarian and English language and UE – Varna, participation in the development of new study courses and teaching aids at a significant academic level, participation as a lecturer on electronic marketing in Finland and Norway on a joint study program and conducting seminars and training for teachers from Tajikistan.

The professional achievements of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Silvena Yordanova receive public recognition in practice. Her participation as a deputy editor of the European Journal of Tourism Research and a member of the editorial board of the international publication *Frontiers in psychology*, IGI Global, is indicative.

The candidate in the competition contributes to the confirmation of the good name of VUM – Varna through her participation in national and international scientific forums; as the main organizer and Editor of the VUM Yearbook – Varna; main organizer and coordinator of 8 (eight) International Scientific Conferences; organizer of 3 (three) Doctoral summer schools in Albena; participation in a training for teachers organized by Rennes School of business – France and Cardiff Metropolitan University – United Kingdom.

➤ *The candidate in the competition, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Silvena Yordanova, meets the quality requirements for the academic position of “associate professor” in ERI at BAS.*

4. Evaluation of the tutoring activity

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Silvena Yordanova teaches in Bulgarian and English in the following disciplines: “Fundamentals of Management”, “Strategic Management”, “Human Resources Management”, “People and Organizations”, “Introduction to Business”, “Organizational behavior”, “Diagnosis and development of the company”, “Career development”, “Electronic marketing”.

She leads lectures and seminars for the students of the EQD “Bachelor”. She is a lecturer in lecture courses in master’s programs from EQD “Master”. She possesses intercultural skills to work as a lecturer with students of different nationalities.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Silvena Yordanova develops and introduces study courses recognized at VUM – Varna. There is a serious contribution to the creation and updating of the study documentation. She develops module books in Bulgarian and English languages for bachelors and masters.

She actively works with students. She is an academic mentor and tutor to many students from the EQD “Bachelor”. She is the academic supervisor of bachelor’s and master’s degree graduates. She creates contacts between the tourism business and the students from VUM – Varna.

➤ *Assoc. Prof. Dr. Silvena Yordanova has extensive teaching experience. She has a high degree of preparation for the academic position of “Associate Professor” in ERI at BAS. The candidate’s academic competence corresponds to the specifics of the competition.*

5. General characteristics of the presented scientific papers

5.1. Main directions in the research activity

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Silvena Yordanova participated in the competition for associate professor with 21 publications. The scientific production proposed for review includes:

- 1 habilitation thesis – monograph – independent;
- 2 studies published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information – 1 independent (in press) and 1 co-authored;
- 13 articles and reports published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes – independent;
- 3 chapters of monographic studies published in collective volumes with scientific editing – 2 independent and 1 co-authored;
- 2 university teaching aids – independent.

The candidate impresses with the high quality of scientific works. In our opinion, the research activity of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Silvena Yordanova is concentrated in 3 main thematic directions:

1. Economy of tourism (№№ 1; 2; 3; 4; 8; 10; 12; 13; 14; 19; 21).
2. Digitization of tourism (№№ 1; 10; 15; 21).
3. Digitization of education (№№. 5; 6; 7; 9; 11; 16; 17; 18; 20).

She presented evidence of citability. There is 1 citation in a scientific publication, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information and 14 – in non-refereed journals with scientific review.

5.2. Scientific and scientifically-applied results

The obtained scientific and scientific-applied results can be summarized as follows:

- Best practices for applying digitization in the field of hospitality and tourism have been studied. Strategies for dealing with the destructive behavior of toxic leaders are examined. A strategy for dealing with workplace bullying in the hospitality and restaurant industry context is proposed.

- A methodology is presented for dealing with toxic leaders, regardless of the type of organization. Social media has been examined as a tool influencing consumers when choosing a destination to visit, planning the trip and after the trip itself. The employee benefits of being led by an emotionally intelligent leader are listed.

- Attention is focused on the application of artificial intelligence in the field of tourism and hospitality. The forms for implementing digitalization have been examined, and their advantages have been highlighted. A special place is devoted to the application of various forms of digital technologies, for example in tourism and hospitality.

- The tools for creative solving of students' problems were examined. The importance of artificial intelligence and its successful application in education is analyzed. Emphasis is placed on the essence of corporate identity and the methodology for its measurement, on the example of a university.

5.3. Evaluation of the monographic work

A high praise deserves the habilitation work *Yordanova, S. (2023). Perspectives and opportunities for digitization in tourism. "Matador 74" publishing house. ISBN 978-954-371-747-7*. Reviewers of the monograph are Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ognyan Boyukliev, BAS and Prof. Dr. Temenuzhka Karolova Khromi-Zhigalova, SWU.

The development solves a significant scientific and scientific-applied problem. The topic of digitization has gained significant relevance in the context of a pandemic crisis, which has proved detrimental to tourism.

The purpose of the monographic study is to present the phenomenon of digitization and examine its impact on business, in particular, on hospitality and tourism. The object of research are tourism and hospitality as sectors of particular importance for the economy of the Republic of Bulgaria. The subject of research is the definition of digitization.

In the first chapter "**Fundamentals of digitalization of tourism**" the essence of digitalization and its influence are discussed. A place is reserved for virtual communities in tourism. Emphasis is placed on digitization through virtual reality. Blogs are considered as a form of digital technology in tourism. Attention has been paid to social networks as a form of digitalization. Digitization in tourism

through the use of artificial intelligence and process automation was discussed.

In the second chapter “**Applied aspects of digitalization in tourism**” the development of digital technologies in tourism is analyzed. Successful examples from practice in tourism and hospitality are indicated. The state of tourism and hospitality in the EU has been studied. Social networks and their influence in tourism and hospitality are studied.

In the third chapter “**Methodological aspects of the application of digitization in tourism**” a model for digitization in tourism is proposed. A methodology has been developed for digitalization of the organization in the field of tourism and hospitality.

The monographic work complements the theoretical and practical-applied knowledge in the specialized tourism literature. The development is also valuable for interested circles of the tourism business.

6. Evaluation of the scientific and scientifically applied contributions

In our opinion, the statement of contributions has been prepared correctly. We accept the contributions made by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Silvena Yordanova.

The following significant contributions clearly stand out in the candidate's creative output:

- **First**, the scientific knowledge of the nature of digitization has been enriched by applying artificial intelligence to the example of tourism and hospitality. The regulation of intra- and interpersonal emotions in the workplace has been studied through the lens of employees and their leaders. Information related to workplace harassment and its varieties in the context of the hotel and restaurant industry has been systematized.

- **Second**, the research interest is aimed at determining the ways of using social media in the tourism and hospitality industry. The nature and forms of toxic leadership are explored. The state and trends in tourism before and after the pandemic crisis at the level of EU countries are analyzed.

- **Third**, based on a detailed literature review, an author's definition and concept of digitization are derived. An author's model for digitalization of the organization in the field of tourism has been developed. An author's methodology for the digitization of the organization in the field of tourism has been prepared.

- **Fourth**, the digitization of higher education in Bulgaria was investigated. There is a focus on the use of artificial intelligence in the context of competition between universities. The factors affecting the degree of digitization of universities are analyzed.

7. Critical remarks and recommendations

I have no critical remarks on the tutoring and research activities of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Silvena Yordanova. I would recommend that in the future she continues her research in economics of tourism and focuses on publishing in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information – Scopus and Web of Science.

8. Personal Impressions

I have known Assoc. Prof.r Dr. Silvena Yordanova in partially since 2018 in her capacity as the main organizer and coordinator of International Scientific Conferences at VUM – Varna. She is distinguished by ethics and tolerance, responsibility and correct attitude towards the participants in the scientific forums.

9. Conclusion

The candidacy of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Silvena Yordanova for participation in a competition for the academic position of “associate professor” corresponds to the regulatory requirements, according to the DASRBA, the Regulations for its application and the Regulations for the acquisition of scientific degrees and the occupation of academic positions at ERI at BAS. She has indisputable merits as a teacher and researcher, with proven contributions in the scientific specialty of the competition.

I clearly state my **positive assessment for** the only participant in the competition for docent. I am fully convinced that **Assoc. Prof. Dr. SILVENA DENCHEVA YORDANOVA** should be elected and acquire the academic position of “**associate professor**” in **professional direction 3.8. “Economics”** in “Economics of Tourism” in the Economic Studies Institute at BAS.

Sofia,
15.08.2023

Reviewer:
(Prof. D.Sc. Tanya Parusheva)