

OPINION

by Prof. Christian Stoyanov Hadzhiev, PhD, NBU, Department of Administration and Management,
professional field 3.7 Administration and Management,
Major: Social Management

Subject: Contest for the title Professor at IBSB, in professional field 3.7 Administration and Management (Human Resources Management and Organizational Processes), published in State Gazette, issue 8/28.01.2025, with candidate **Assoc. Prof. Mariana Nikolova Usheva, PhD**

Justification: Member of the academic panel, pursuant to Order No. 38/02.04.2025 by The Rector of IBSB.

The opinion was prepared in accordance with the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria Act, the Implementing Regulations for this Act and the Regulation on the Development of the Academic Staff at NBU.

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

One candidate, **Assoc. Prof. Mariana Usheva, PhD**, has applied for the announced contest for the title Professor. The application consists of self-assessment and evidence that are in full compliance with the provisions of national legislation and the IBSB legislative framework. The candidate has fulfilled the minimal academic activity and tutoring requirements for Field 3. Social, Economic and Legal Studies, Professional Field 3.7 Administration and management, determined by the Regulations for the Implementation of the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act, as well as the requirements of the Regulation on the Development of the Academic Staff at IBSB, which must be met by candidates for the title Professor.

The number of points achieved by the candidate on the relevant groups of indicators significantly exceeds the legally required minimum. Assoc. Prof. Mariana Usheva, PhD, holds a Master's degree in Russian Philology from the Komi State Pedagogical Institute (KSPI), Syktyvkar – Russia she has acquired the Doctor of Philosophy and Pedagogy degree from the Ural Pedagogical University, Yekaterinburg, Russia, which is certified by Diploma No. 013465/17.09.1993, issued by the Higher Attestation Commission, Moscow.

The monograph, which Assoc. Prof. Usheva presents – Multigenerational management of human resources: from Generation T to Generation Alpha. Characteristic features and motivational specificity of the generations", Book 2, Sofia: IBSB Press, ISBN: 978-619-7610-37-6 (Printed book), ISBN: 978-619-7610-36-9 (E-book), DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.14915685", ISBN 978-619-233-160-3, amounts to 795 pages and is reviewed by Prof. Dr. Lalka Borisova and Prof. Dr. Preslav Dimitrov.

Under the different groups of indicators, the applicant has provided evidence through which the following points can be confirmed:

- Group D: Additional academic publications – 410 points with a required 200 points.
- Group E, Citations in monographs and peer-reviewed collections and in non-referenced peer-reviewed academic journals – 1255 points, with a requirement of 100 points.
- Group F: Academic counselling of a successfully graduated doctoral student and Participation in/ leadership of academic projects – evidence presented for 275 points with a required minimum of 100 points.

II. Research (Creative) Work and Results

1. Evaluation of the monograph

The monograph *Multigenerational Human Resources Management: from Generation T to Generation Alpha*. Characteristic features and motivational specificity of the generations is an extremely up-to-date, homogeneous and consistent academic and applied research work with an integral approach to themes and problems. The focus is on the motivational specificity of five different generations in the modern working environment: T, X, Y, Z and Alpha in the conditions of accelerated digitalization, demographic changes and the need for flexible approaches to human capital. The special attention to Generation Alpha, albeit through a predictive approach, suggests an innovative and forward-looking view of the future of the labour market.

The monograph consists of 5 main chapters, each of which is dedicated to a separate generation. All structural elements of the monograph are unified, and the algorithm for presenting tables, figures and references is consistent. The theoretical foundation of the work consists of a wide range of academic sources (more than 200), including classical and modern research in the field of motivation, generational psychology, HR and organizational behaviour. The comparison between internal (intrinsic) and external (extrinsic) motivation, as well as the two-tier approach to the interpretation of the survey data (positive vs. negative scenario), is impressively well structured. The survey has a solid empirical justification, consisting of 573 panel interviews; 507 surveys completed in 2024; 15 professional areas; 69 questions divided into 6 core modules + 1 summary assessment module.

The methodology follows two interpretation scenarios (positive and negative), with 7 analytical stages for each generation group. This is a unique approach that provides a multifaceted view of motivational attitudes.

The language of the monograph is academic, rich and concise. Using precise definitions, consistent terminology and a rich analytical apparatus, the author demonstrates academic achievements at a very high level. The argumentation is objective, logical and soundly supported by data.

The monograph encompasses a number of academic and applied contributions such as: 1) ***development and application of 6+1 modular diagnostic toolkit***, built on the basis of internal and external motivational drivers, applied to five different generations in a working environment; 2) ***formulation and empirical verification of generational hypotheses*** on motivation in the working environment for Generations T, X, Y and Z, and, with a predictive interpretation, for Generation Alpha; 3) ***systemic analysis and comparison of quantitative and qualitative data*** through parallel processing of survey answers (Google Forms) and panel interviews conducted within five years (2019-2024); 4) ***introduction of a dual scenario analytical model for the interpretation of data*** (positive/negative scenario) with a seven-degree methodological analysis for each generation; 5) ***identification of the generational motivation profiles in the Bulgarian context***; 6) ***recommendations*** to businesses for generation differences management through creating adapted HR strategies; 7) primary forecast for the motivational orientation of Generation Alpha, on the basis of trends and theoretical rationalizations with methodological justification.

2. Evaluation of the contributions in the other attached publications made after the appointment as an Associate Professor

The candidate Assoc. Prof. Mariana Usheva, PhD, has submitted a set of 19 publications for the announced Professor contest in professional field 3.7 Administration and Management (Human Resources Management and Organizational Processes) at IBSB, for group D indicators, consisting of: ***4 articles*** in academic journals, referenced and indexed in world-renowned academic databases, such as Web of Science, ***and 15 articles and reports*** in non-referenced journals with academic reviews or published in reviewed collections.

The analysis of the publications of Assoc. Prof. Mariana Usheva, PhD for the period 2017-2025, demonstrates an ***evolution of the academic issues, which*** could be classified in four groups:

- **Behavioural aspects of individuals and of members of managerial structures (2017-2018)**, with a focus on human behaviour and competencies in the management context at individual and organizational levels.
- ***Economic and organizational stability*** (2019-2020), with a focus on economic and structural problems, sustainability and strategic management.
- ***Organizational behaviour, motivation and analysis of the human factor in the organization*** – especially during crises and digital transformations (2021).
- ***Multigenerational approach and model integration*** (2025) - creating new models for sustainable management.

The conclusion is that the development of academic issues discussed by Assoc. Prof. Mariana Usheva, PhD, moves from ***individual and psychological aspects, through economic and organizational topics, to the conceptualization of models for multigenerational management and strategic optimization.***

The submitted publications do not overlap with those for the attaining the candidate's doctoral degree and the title Associate Professor. The total number of points achieved by Assoc. Prof. Mariana Usheva, PhD according to the relevant indicator is 410, with a required minimum of 200 points, relevant to the minimum national requirements under the Development of the Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria Act for attaining the title Professor and IBSB's Regulation for the Development of the Academic Staff, which exceeds the norm by more than 100%.

3. Citations and references

Within the framework of the Professor contest in professional field 3.7 Administration and Management (Human Resources Management and Organizational Processes) at IBSB, Assoc. Prof. Mariana Usheva, PhD, has submitted a reference list consisting of 124 citations of her academic publications. One citation has been registered in the most reputable database, ***Web of Science***.

I believe that the work of the candidate is of high academic quality, it is included in leading academic publications, and it is also available to a wide audience. The topics discussed in the candidate's work are focused on specific issues of science and practice and have scientific and applied importance.

4. Evaluation of the results of participation in research and creative projects and application of the results obtained in practice

Assoc. Prof. Mariana Usheva, PhD, has participated in 6 international scientific and research projects, and is the head of one of them. I believe that the candidate has undeniable potential to expand her participation in research projects in the European Research Area as a leader, as well as to continue her efforts to integrate her research work with modern aspects of academic education.

I highly appreciate the participation of Assoc. Prof. Mariana Usheva, PhD in academic and educational projects and believe in its significance and in the academic, educational and social benefits it provides.

III. Activities related to academic tutoring

Assoc. Prof. Mariana Usheva, PhD, has been a full-time lecturer at IBSB since 26.08.2024. She teaches important management disciplines in entrepreneurship, management and business marketing in undergraduate and graduate programs, full-time, part-time and distance learning, such as Human Resource Management, Supply Chain Management, Organization Management, Innovation and Creativity in Human Resource Management, and Strategic Management and Development of the Organization's Human Capital. She works actively with doctoral students and has been the academic advisor of ***three successfully graduated doctoral students***. In addition, she is ***the author of two textbooks*** used in university courses. The tutoring work of Assoc. Prof. Mariana Usheva, PhD is highly

appreciated by the students. The candidate has many years of experience in advising graduates and participates in academic panels diploma defences and state exams.

IV. Personal Impressions of the Candidate (if any)

I know Assoc. Prof. Mariana Usheva, PhD due to the fact that our professional interests are in the same academic fields, and we have had the opportunity to exchange ideas at different forums and participate in academic panels. My personal impressions of her research and tutoring are entirely positive. She is a thorough researcher, an erudite tutor, a scholar actively involved in the professional practice.

V. Opinions, Recommendations and Notes on the Activity and Achievements of the Candidate

I have no critical comments to the materials presented by Assoc. Prof. Mariana Usheva, PhD. She is a renowned scholar and educator who combines high academic and research standards with practical application of knowledge. I believe that the candidate has undeniable potential to participate in research projects in the European Research Area and has the knowledge to expand her research in the field of HR management in an international context.

I recommend that she continue to develop her tutoring and research initiatives, promoting interdisciplinary cooperation and knowledge sharing among colleagues and students.

CONCLUSION

Based on the opinion, I declare that the candidate Assoc. Prof. Mariana Nikolova Usheva, PhD, fully meets all the requirements of the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act, the Regulations for its Implementation, as well as the requirements of the IBSBU NRAs for occupying the title Professor in the professional field 3.7 Administration and Management (Human Resources Management and Organizational Processes). The scientific publications of the candidate for the contest contain important *theoretical, methodological and applied contributions*, which are the result of her personal academic research and contribute to the development of the scholarly discipline.

Based on the above, I express my positive assessment of the submitted application and state that I will strongly support the awarding of the title Professor at IBSB in professional field 3.7 to Assoc. Prof. Mariana Nikolova Usheva, PhD. Administration and Management (Human Resources Management and Organizational Processes).

Sofia,
20.04.2025

Signature.....
/Prof. Christian Hadzhiev, PhD/