



## OPINION

By: Prof. Dr. Romyana Nikolaeva Neykova, Scientific specialty - 3.8. Economics and Management, external member of the scientific jury

Subject: Competition for a professor in a scientific specialty /scientific field, scientific field/ at the MVBU in the field of higher education Z. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.7. Administration and management (Human resources management and organizational processes), published in the State Gazette, issue 8 of January 28, 2025.

### **1. Information about the competition**

The competition was announced for the needs of the Botevgrad State University of Applied Sciences by Decision of the Academic Council No. 24/26.03.2025. I participate in the scientific jury of the competition in accordance with the Rector's Order No. 038/02.04.2025.

### **2. Brief information about the candidates in the competition**

For participation in the competition for „professor“, documents have been submitted by a single candidate - Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mariana Nikolova Usheva, who since 26.08.2024 holds the academic position of „Associate Professor“ at the International Business School in Botevgrad.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mariana Nikolova Usheva received her higher education in Russia, initially at the KGPI, Syktyvkar, and then at the Ural Pedagogical Institute in Yekaterinburg, where she also defended her doctoral dissertation for the scientific degree of „Doctor of Philosophy“. She has very good knowledge of Russian and English, which allows her to monitor international achievements in the field of human resources management, enrich them and adapt them to Bulgarian economic and social conditions, and on this basis builds its concept of transgenerational leadership and the typology of motivational profiles.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mariana Nikolova Usheva has extensive organizational and teaching experience. She is a leader, active participant and expert in many research and educational scientific university, national and international projects, a prominent lecturer with new non-traditional methods and approaches to teaching work with bachelors and Masters, operational coordinator for the Erasmus + program, expert in management psychology at the Bulgarian Chamber of Education, Science and Culture, member of domestic and international scientific organizations and editorial boards, expert in educational work and civic education, psychologist at the Municipal Center for the Protection of Children's Rights, school psychologist, etc.

The information presented by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mariana Usheva reveals her scientific focus on several groups of problems: in the field of human resources management; modeling of motivational profiles and strategic decisions; digitalization of human resources and innovations in training; the applicability of management models in practice.

### **3. Fulfillment of the requirements for holding the academic position**

The candidate for the academic position of "professor" Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mariana Nikolova Usheva fulfills and even exceeds the national requirements according to the ZRASRB, as well as the additional requirements according to the Regulations for its implementation in the MVBU. This is evidenced by the analysis of the submitted materials and the Map for fulfilling the quantitative and qualitative requirements for occupying the position of "Professor".

### **3.1. Fulfillment of the quantitative requirements.**

According to the "Map for the implementation of quantitative requirements", Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mariana Nikolova Usheva presents specific evidence of the implementation of the national minimum quantitative requirements and the additional requirements of the AC of the MVBU for holding academic positions. The presented map shows that 2090 were reported points, with a minimum of 550 points required to hold the academic position of "professor".

It is obvious that the candidate's scientific output fully meets the quantitative requirements set forth in the regulatory documents.

The scientific works submitted for participation in the competition do not repeat the publications for the acquisition of the academic position of "associate professor" and correspond to the thematic focus of the competition. They have been published in legitimate publishing houses.

### **3.2. Fulfillment of quality requirements**

According to the "Chart for Fulfillment of Quality Requirements", Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mariana Nikolova Usheva presents specific evidence of fulfillment of the national minimum quality requirements and the additional requirements for holding the academic position of "professor" at the MVBU. Evidence of contribution to the development of knowledge in the field of the conceptual role of the transgenerational leader as an integrator of different generations in the work environment; the typology of motivational profiles and personalization of motivational strategies for organizational diagnostics and strategic decision-making; the effects of digitalization of human resources and the financial dimensions of human capital; the applicability of management models and innovations in the qualification and development of future leaders.

The comparison of the scientific papers submitted for the competition by the candidate with the requirements in the "Map for the implementation of quality requirements" proves their implementation in the presence of the necessary thematic correspondence.

## **4. Assessment of teaching and learning activities**

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mariana Nikolova Usheva is an established teacher with extensive experience, which is formed on the basis of active targeted research in the field of psychology and human resources. Her teaching and learning activities are related to the implementation of lecturing activities, developing curricula and programs, published textbooks and teaching materials, working with undergraduate and graduate students.

Since the beginning of her teaching career, she has developed lecture courses and curricula for more than 20 disciplines for the training of bachelors, masters and those specializing in postgraduate qualification. The center of the candidate's teaching work is an independent textbook on managerial psychology (Usheva, M. Managerial psychology: skills, diagnostics, impacts, Univ. ed. „N. Rilski", Blagoevgrad, 2017. ISBN 978-954-00-0130-2.). The textbook is relevant, because in an era of digital transformation, intensive communication and dynamic leadership models, management skills are crucial for the effectiveness of organizations. It should be emphasized that in this textbook the author manages to combine classical knowledge with new realities, which makes it relevant, timely and very necessary in modern business education and management practice. The practical module deserves special attention, which includes tests, self-diagnostic methodologies and creative tasks that encourage the active participation of the learner in his personal development. The thematic scope is balanced between theory and practice, between individual psychology and group interaction, between management and self-management. All this emphasizes its practical applicability.

Particularly useful, with specific applied significance for practice, is the candidate's participation in the textbook "Hospitality in the Tourism Industry", which refers to the training and management of human resources in tourism (Vodenska, M., M. Usheva (2019) Hospitality

in the Tourism Industry, Part I, Matkom Publishing House, Sofia, 136 pp.; pp. 73-131, ISBN 978-619-7423-13-6.). The topic examined by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mariana Usheva is extremely relevant, especially given the contemporary challenges related to the staff shortage, professional mobility, digitalization and the growing demands of tourists. The developed part answers a number of practical questions and provides realistic guidelines for preparing personnel in a dynamic business environment.

In the process of training, the candidate applies new non-traditional methods of teaching and learning. She prepares original materials for role-playing games, case studies, test tasks, discussion questions, trainings, etc., which enhance the interest of students and support the conduct of classes.

At the MVBU, the candidate for the academic position of "professor" leads lecture courses in seven disciplines in the field of human resources management (Academic workload report No. 18/21.03.2025).

The lecture courses are related to the subject of the competition.

In summary, it can be stated that the candidate is a very well-prepared teacher, possesses the necessary professional experience and academic competence, performs her teaching duties at a high level and meets the requirements for holding the position of "professor" at the Botevgrad State University of Applied Sciences.

## **5. Brief description of the submitted scientific works/publications**

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mariana Nikolova Usheva submits for participation in the competition 4 independent monographs, 2 textbooks (1 co-authored), 16 articles (14 co-authored) and 6 scientific reports (5 co-authored). These scientific works can be systematized in four scientific areas: Human Resources Management, Management Psychology, Corporate Governance and Sustainability and Human Resource Management in Tourism.

Central to the candidate's scientific publications is the unique large-scale study on multigenerational human resource management, published in three separate books:

-Usheva, M. Multigenerational Human Resources Management: from Generation T to Generation Alpha. Individual Psychological Characteristics of Generations, Book 1, Sofia, 2025, Publishing House of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences / IBS Press ISBN: 978-619-7610-32-1

- Usheva, M. Multigenerational Human Resources Management: from Generation T to Generation Alpha. Peculiarities and Motivational Specificity of Generations, Book 2, Sofia, 2025, Publishing House of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences / IBS Press.

ISBN: 978-619-7610-37-6

- Usheva, M. Multigenerational Human Resources Management: from Generation T to Generation Alpha. Stimulating the Motivation of Different Generations in the Work Environment, Book 3, Sofia, 2025, Publishing House of the Bulgarian University of Business Administration / IBS Press. ISBN: 978-619-7610-39-0

Based on information from 573 panel interviews and 507 questionnaires, through in-depth comparative and content analysis, historical analysis, induction and deduction, surveys, panel interviews, observations and statistical information, characteristics and trends in human resources development are summarized and presented by groups for the period from 1941 to 2024. The study of a given object for such a long period of time makes it possible to track and report the occurrence of changes that can be crucial for developing human resources strategies, as well as for the effective functioning of the organization.

The research focuses on three main problems of the formation and development of human resources through the prism of five generations: Individual-psychological characteristics of generations – Book 1, Peculiarities and motivational specificity of generations – Book 2 and Stimulating the motivation of different generations in a work environment – Book 3.

The trilogy "Multigenerational Human Resource Management: from Generation T to Generation Alpha" can be assessed as a highly scientific, well-argued and practically relevant study. It combines theoretical soundness, innovative methodology, a rich empirical base and clear practical conclusions.

In summary, it can be stated that both in scientific and applied terms, the scientific work deserves a high academic assessment. The results of the study can be integrated into university programs in human resource management, organizational behavior and management in the training of master's and doctoral students, and can be implemented in the practice of HR departments and in various training programs. However, the most significant significance is the provision of a large amount of summarized and systematized information to researchers and managers from practice on the development of several generations of human resources. From this, trends can be defined and strategies for the development of human resources in our country can be developed.

The achievements and significance of this monographic study are determined primarily by the fact that it is the first of its kind for our science and is based on extensive and large-scale research, uses a rich empirical base and normative information, and has high applied value.

The other publications submitted for participation in the competition comply with the requirements and reveal the author's attitude towards developing current problems in human resources management of significance for the organization, the country and at the international level.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mariana Nikolova Usheva is known to our and the international scientific community, which is confirmed by the Citation Index.

## **6. Synthesized assessment of the main scientific and scientific-applied contributions**

The scientific works presented by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mariana Nikolova Usheva reflect a significant stage in her growth and development as a researcher and academic lecturer. The Report on Contributions correctly reflects in detail the achievements results of the research conducted in the four scientific areas, which undoubtedly prove that scientific works have a contributing character both for scientific knowledge and for teaching and learning work, and especially for practice, because human resources are the main driving element of the organization and its competitiveness depends on their qualification and rational utilization.

I accept the above contributions as a result of the candidate's independent, purposeful research work, through which new, enriched and further developed existing scientific knowledge in the field of human resource management, managerial psychology, corporate governance and sustainability is presented.

The contributions are properly structured in accordance with the candidate's research areas of creativity.

At the time of writing the opinion, I have no information about plagiarism and the use of confidential information.

## **7. Main critical remarks and recommendations**

I have no critical remarks on the materials submitted for participation in the competition. I have a recommendation for continuing research work in the field of motivational attitude of human resources in the conditions of digitalization, the rapid development of artificial intelligence and the rapid changes in the labor market in our country and in the EU.

## **8. Conclusion**

The candidate for the academic position of "professor" has provided evidence of significant scientific and applied scientific contributions in the field of human resources management and the optimization of organizational processes. Based on the overall assessment

of the scientific research and teaching activity of the candidate, it can be concluded that Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mariana Nikolova Usheva fully meets the requirements and scientometric indicators determined in the Law on Academic Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria and in the Regulations for its application for the acquisition of scientific degrees and for holding academic positions at the MVBV.

Therefore, it can be concluded that Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mariana Nikolova Usheva fulfills all the requirements for holding the academic position of "professor" in the professional field at the Bulgarian University of Business Administration in the field of higher education H. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.7. Administration and management (Human Resources Management and Organizational Processes). Therefore, I strongly recommend that she be appointed to the academic position of "professor" at the Bulgarian University of Business Administration - Botevgrad.

05.05.2025

Sofia

Signature: .....

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