

REVIEW

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Concerning: *the academic work submitted for participation in the contest for awarding the academic degree “Professor” in professional strand 3.7. Administration and Management (Managing Virtual Teams), promulgated in SG, issue 38/20.05.2022, candidate Assoc. Prof. Kristiyan Stoyanov Hadzhiev*

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

The contest for the academic position *Professor* in Professional Field 3.7 *Administration and Management (Managing Virtual Teams)* is announced in accordance with the established legal procedures, to meet the needs of *Administration and Management* Department, of the School of Distance, Online and Continuing Education of New Bulgarian University. I participate in the academic panel summoned for the contest, under Ordinance No.: 3-PK-258 of 17.06.2022, by the Rector of NBU.

One candidate participates in the announced contest – Assoc. Prof. Kristiyan Stoyanov Hadzhiev, PhD. The documentation submitted for the contest meets the requirements of the *Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria Act* (DASRBA) (Art. 2b) The Implementation Rules for DASRBA (Art.1a, Para.1), as well as the requirements of NBU, as defined in Annex 2 of the NBU’s *Ordinance for Faculty Development*.

The Reference presented by Assoc. Prof. Kristiyan Hadzhiev, PhD for compliance with the minimum national requirements and the requirements of the NBU shows that the required minimum is considerably exceeded: 125% of the total number of points required for taking up the academic position “Professor” at NBU, and, at the same time, all specific requirements for the separate sections are also met. The total number of points of the applicant is 1707, with 760 as a minimum required.

II. Research (creative) activities and results

1. Evaluation of the monograph, creative performances or other publications corresponding in volume and integrity to those of a monograph, including evaluation of the scientific and applied contributions of the author.

The topic of the habilitation paper submitted by the applicant, Assoc. Prof. Kristiyan Hadzhiev, PhD, for the contest is *Managing Virtual Teams (theory and methodology)*, Sofia: NBU, 2021, ISBN: 978-619-233-160-3. The monograph is 408, pages, with extensive list of references, amounting to 184 sources. The focus in the monograph is on the implementation of virtual teams as an adequate organizational model in the modern volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous (VUCA) business environment. In his study, the author summarizes the basic concepts, identifies the key prerequisites, regularities, mechanisms, and processes, related to the design and functioning of highly effective virtual teams. The author provides a sound justification and analysis of the factors determining team performance and the indicators for its assessment. The work is a thorough study of multilateral links in integrative models and ways to achieve balance among team members and allows the author to summarize the theoretical and methodological basis of the fundamental performance models of virtual teams. The author justifies and presents a new conceptual integrative model for the effectiveness of virtual teams, as a kind of synthesis of existing theoretical models. The main idea in the work concerns the impact of the interpersonal and socio-emotional process on team results. Through the prism of the unique characteristics of this new organizational form, the virtual teams, the author successfully identifies specific skills and processes in their work. The focus of the study is on three main categories of processes: technological, socio-emotional, and managerial. The results achieved by the author's study deserve to be perceived as both theoretical and practical contributions. In terms of theoretical importance, the monograph features the following: the author's idea about the truly novel model of interaction between team members in a virtual environment; the author's interpretation of the new role of the digital leader and the characteristics of the unique style of the e-leader; the identified specificity of technological, socio-emotional and management processes in virtual teams; the systematic list of team efficiency factors in a virtual context. What can be classified as a contribution to be applied in practice is the author's systematization of the specific actions and key indicators in the design and implementation of a comprehensive system for monitoring and evaluating team efficiency in a virtual and dynamic context. The results achieved, the summaries and conclusions drawn would be useful for researchers, managers and consultants interested in both the possibilities for increasing organizational efficiency and the virtual interaction as a prerequisite for effective teamwork.

2. Evaluation of the contributions of the other attached publications (creative performances), made after being awarded the academic position Chief Assistant Professor or the academic position Associate Professor (for those applying for Professor). It shall also include an assessment of the requirement to review the publications.

Apart from the habilitation work, Assoc. Prof. Kristiyan Hadzhiev, PhD has submitted, attached to his application for the contest, the following publications:

✓ A published book, based on his dissertation, defended when he was awarded the academic doctoral degree - Hadzhiev, Kr., *Designing Excellent Organizations*. Sofia, Publisher: Lyuren 2000, 224 s., ISBN 954-568-062-8.

✓ Articles and academic papers, published in unreferenced journals with academic review or published in edited collective volumes – total **twenty-six**.

✓ Studies, published in unreferenced journals with academic review or published in edited collective volumes – total – **four**.

✓ Published chapter of a collective monograph - *Competitiveness of agricultural holdings in Bulgaria and models for its promotion*, Hadzhiev, Kr., Koteva, N., Alexiev, A. Uzunova, R., Hadzhichoneva, U., Georgiev, A., Publisher: AVANT-GARDE PRIMA, Sofia, 2021, ISBN - 978-619-239-561-2, COBISS. BG-ID – 46792200.

✓ Published textbooks for university students – **6**, of which two are single-author books: Hadzhiev, Kr., *Models for Organizational Excellence*. Sofia., NBU 2013, 342 p., ISBN 978-954-535-756-5 and Hadzhiev, K. *Organization Theory*. Sofia., NBU 2011, 370 p., ISBN: 978-954-535-663-6

The publications do not contain information from the works presented for earning a doctoral degree or taking up the academic positions of Chief Assistant Professor and Associate Professor, and to the best of my knowledge, there is no plagiarism identified through the statutory order in his works.

Regarding the theme of his works, all publications by Assoc. Prof. Kristiyan Hadzhiev, PhD submitted for participating in the competition for awarding the academic degree Professor fall into Professional Field 3.7 *Administration and Management*, as prescribed for the announced competition, and are focused on the following specific issues: organizational change, improvement of organizational models and team work management, with a particular emphasis on the designing and the effective management of virtual teams, as well as the specific dimensions of leadership in the virtual team.

What Assoc. Prof. Kristiyan Hadzhiev, PhD demonstrates in his works is knowledge and skills for interpreting theoretical productions in the areas studied. Kristiyan Hadzhiev's academic aspirations are underlaid, whenever possible, with practical research.

The review of the academic papers and publications submitted for the contest by the Assoc. Prof. Kristiyan Hadzhiev, PhD allows for giving a remarkably high grade for their

academic contribution and to emphasize their usefulness when applied in practice, in terms of results achieved.

The candidate has submitted, as a part of the application for the Professor contest, certificates for participation in 14 international academic conferences (from 2013 to 2020), in the in the academic field specified with the announcement for the contest, which reveal his outstanding ability to share information with both the academic community and the practicing specialists about the contributions in his academic theses, the results of his studies and their potential effect of their implementation.

3. Citation by other authors.

A major part of the publications by Assoc. Prof. Kristiyan Hadzhiev, PhD have been cited or mentioned in other researchers' papers. What the list of citations, submitted as a part of the application documents, shows is that nineteen publications by Assoc. Prof. Kristiyan Hadzhiev, PhD have been cited in monographs or collective referenced academic volumes, and authors of unrefereed academic journals have referenced twelve of the candidate's publications. The total number of citations is seventy-one, which attests to the positive perception of Kristiyan Hadzhiev's theses and the results of his studies.

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

Assoc. Prof. Kristiyan Hadzhiev, PhD has participated in eight national projects under the *Horizon 2020*, European Union funding for Research & Innovation: under OP *Human Resources Development*, and under PHARE Programme *Professional Development*. He has been a member of the research teams of six projects funded by the NBU Academic Research Development Fund.

When participating in the project implementation teams, the Assoc. Prof. Kristiyan Hadzhiev, PhD has manifested his professional skills in the field of organizational change management and teamwork. His individual contribution can be accounted for from his work as:

✓ Project Team Member in Improving the quality of the CDEE's distance learning at the NBU, funded under the OP *Human Resources Development*, co-financed by the EU European Social Fund, during which he has authored two multimedia textbooks.

✓ Tutor of the expert group in the implementation of the project *Higher Education in Economics - a Foundation of the Knowledge Economy*, funded by OP *Human Resources Development*, co-financed by the EU European Social Fund (2012-2014г.).

✓ Member of the team for the implementation of the project *Career Prospects* under the PHARE programme, and *Professional Development Perspective* (2009г.), during which he

participated in the development of a curriculum for the mandatory vocational education programme in *Company Management* of the Ministry of Education and Science.

✓ Member of the team engaged in drawing a Development Memorandum (the Positive Concept). The Memorandum was drawn up based on academic performances, forums seminars and conferences held in 2018/2019, and was dedicated to the Jubilee 25th anniversary of the first BA/MBA programmes in Bulgaria.

The Focus of the candidate's research programme is on the following spheres: managing virtual and self-managed work teams, social management, project management – theory and practice, organisational design, problems of targeted adaptive organisations, cross-cultural management, management of cultural changes and problems of cultural adaptation.

My overall assessment of the research of Assoc. Prof. Kristiyan Hadzhiev, PhD is positive. The candidate is renown and reputable in his academic field, and the results of his academic work meet university standards. His active participation in a variety of academic and research projects, the preparation of analyses and opinions in the implementation of his research projects, as well as his publications in reputable specialized journals show, that he is an established researcher with contributions to knowledge development in the field of management studies (in particular, virtual teams management) and its application in practice.

III. Tutoring and teaching activities

Kristiyan Hadzhiev has been holding tenure as a lecturer at NBU since 1997. He has acquired a doctoral degree in the same Professional Field, as the one announced for this contest. He has been an associate professor in Professional Field 3.7 Administration and Management (Social Management) since 2012.

Assoc. Prof. Kristiyan Hadzhiev, PhD has been teaching and tutoring students in Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes in the following subjects: *Fundamentals of Management, Project Management, Introduction to Company Culture, Management and Teamwork, Corporate Management, HR Management and Leadership*, as well as in the following training and practice courses: *Organizational Excellence Models Organisational Change Strategies*. Assoc. Prof. Kristiyan Hadzhiev, PhD also delivers lectures within the MA *Human Resources Management and Development* (taught in Bulgarian and in English) – Distance Learning. All subjects and courses are in Professional Field in which the contest is announced.

Assoc. Prof. Kristiyan has written two textbooks independently and has co-authored another four textbooks; he has also prepared a sets of printed study materials for four courses and has uploaded two single-author textbooks in electronic format, integrated accordingly in the educational platform of the university, with which he meets the requirements for publishing study materials in the electronic educational module Moodle NBU (in line with the requirements for the workload of lecturers with tenure at NBU).

His teaching is positively assessed by students. The average grade for student satisfaction with Assoc. Prof. Kristiyan Hadzhiev's courses is 4.53 (the maximum being 5.00) (according to a Report from the Centre for Quality and Assessment).

In order to improve and expand his teaching skills and knowledge, Assoc. Prof. Kristiyan Hadzhiev, PhD actively participates in the training programme for faculty and administrative staff of NBU. On the other hand, he has also been a trainer - as moderator in the teacher forum *How (to) Teach*, 2019, and as a consultant assisting other faculty members in utilizing the opportunities provided by NBU e-learning platform Moodle during the lockdown in 2019.

During the analysed period, Assoc. Prof. Kristiyan Hadzhiev, PhD has been tutoring twenty-one students, written seventeen reviews, and participated in 280 exam panels (information from e-teacher: Monitoring/Working with students and doctoral students).

Assoc. Prof. Kristiyan Hadzhiev, PhD is the leader of the team that has created one of the most successful programmes in NBU – BA *Business and Entrepreneurship Management*. He was also a member of the team that created MA *Business Administration*. The candidate for the contest has been actively involved in developing and improving various courses within the undergraduate and master's programs (full-time and/or distance learning): BA *Business and Entrepreneurship Management*; MA *Business Administration*, MA *Tourist Business Management* and MA *Luxury Hospitality Management*).

It is also collaborating with students in various research and creative projects Assoc. Prof. Kristiyan Hadzhiev, PhD that deserves to be awarded a high grade (Economy Film Days Festival, 2018, 17th Vienna Economic Forum, 2020, organizing and holding the Master Class - Sofia Business School in NBU, themed *Managing Global Economic and Financial Risks*, 2019).

All this gives me reason to conclude that Assoc. Prof. Kristiyan Hadzhiev, PhD is an established lecturer, a responsible and dutiful tutor. His tutoring and teaching activities are closely related to the subject area of the contest, and the accumulated teaching experience is fully satisfactory for holding the academic position Professor in Professional Field 3.7. Administration and Management (Managing Virtual Teams).

IV. Administrative and Social Work

The candidate in the contest for the academic position *Professor*, Assoc. Prof. Kristiyan Hadzhiev, PhD actively participates in the work of various collective NBU management bodies:

✓ Since 2012 he has been heading of *Administration and Management* Department at NBU and he has been performing his management functions responsibly. He also participates actively in the work of the Programme Council on Strategic Issues for the Department. In his capacity of Head of the Department, he has established and developed a team with a research focus in the field of *Corporate Governance, Innovation Management, Public Administration, Tourism, Hospitality, and European Transport Policies, Institutional Experience, and Steady Development Trends in EU Member States*. The research work of the team is based on the modern theoretical systems of institutional economy and management and has the ambition to create academic products in the field of business and administration, tailored to the Bulgarian specificities of the institutional environment and structure.

✓ Assoc. Prof. Kristiyan Hadzhiev, PhD is a member of the Academic Council of NBU and the councils of the School of Distance, Online and Continuing Education and the School of Graduate Studies and regularly attends the council meetings. He performs his academic duties diligently, regularly holds his classes and adheres to his office hours as a tutor and as head of department.

✓ Assoc. Prof. Kristiyan Hadzhiev, PhD was a member of the committee electing the Rector of the NBU, pursuant to a decision of the AC, meeting No. 5 on 21 January 2020 and he has been Vice-President of the Council of the School of Distance, Online and Continuing Education since 2018/2019. Currently, he participates in several committees of the NBU School Distance, Online and Continuing Education and the School of Graduate Studies – the commission assessing the annual basic workload of faculty members with tenure with the School of Graduate Studies; the commission examining projects under the Study Programs Fund within School of Distance, Online and Continuing Education, and commission reviewing documents for the announced contests for taking academic positions and degrees.

Assoc. Prof. Kristiyan Hadzhiev, PhD is also actively involved in holding various academic events. He has been the chairperson or the vice-chairperson of nine teams organizing national and international conferences held by the NBU's *Administration and Management Department* from 2013 to 2021.

Another aspect of the candidate's activity that deserves a high grade is his public and social work, such as participating in a number of national organizations and associations, operating in the same Professional Field as that of the *Professor Contest*. From 2013-2019 he

was member of the Consulting Council of the *Risk Management Laboratory* at NBU, and since 2019 he has also taken part in the activities of the Consulting Council of the Laboratory of Quantitative Methods and Modelling. He is a member of the *Association of Economics and Industry Management Educators* (AEIME), since 2011 as well as of the Bulgarian Human Resources Management Association (BHRM).

What serves as an attestation for the high level of professionalism of Assoc. Prof. Kristiyan Hadzhiev, PhD as a researcher in the field of management studies is his participation in several editorial boards: the EB of *Economic Thought* magazine, issued by the Economic Research Institute (BAS), the EB of the *Annual Academic Issue of the Administration and Management Department*, as well as the EB of the periodical issued by the *Administration and Management Department, Methodology, Interdisciplinarity, Analysis, Strategies (Leadership, society, strategic visions Series)*.

All this gives me reason to conclude that with his active administrative and social activities, Assoc. Prof. Kristiyan Hadzhiev, PhD contributes to the development of good governance practices in the NBU, as well as to improving the University's Master's and Bachelor's Degree programmes.

V. Personal impressions of the candidate

Extremely competent in his academic field, flawless in his relationships with colleagues, with a highly developed sense of responsibility in the performance of his duties.

VI. Opinions, recommendations and notes on the applicant's activities and achievements

I have no notes to make on the academic theses expressed and defended in the publications of Assoc. Prof. Kristiyan Hadzhiev, PhD.

In terms of his future tutoring and teaching activities, it is advisable to continue drawing up and publishing independent study materials (textbooks and additional materials) for the subjects he teaches. I recommend that he find the balance between teaching, public and administrative activities so that in the future he can deepen his research in the field of virtual team management, an up-to-date problem in the modern volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous (VUCA) business environment.

CONCLUSION

As a summary of what has been laid out so far, and as an overall assessment, I can state that the candidate meets the requirements for the academic position *Professor*, in accordance with the DASRBA, its Implementation Rules and the requirements by NBU, as posed in Appendix 2 of the Ordinance for Faculty Development at NBU.

With complete conviction and responsibility, I recommend that Assoc. Prof. Kristiyan Stoyanov Hadzhiev, PhD be awarded the academic position *Professor* in Professional Field 3.7 *Administration and Management (Managing Virtual Teams)* at NBU.

Date 08.09.2022

Signature