

STANDPOINT

From: Prof. Lina Georgieva Anastassova PhD, Burgas Free University, Center of Business Studies, Scientific specialty "Marketing"

Regarding: competition for the academic position of "associate professor" in professional direction 3.8. Economics (Marketing - Brand Management), Faculty of Finance, Department "Economics", announced in SG no. 56/02.07.2024

Grounds for submitting an opinion: The competition has been announced for the academic title "docent" in the field of higher education

I. Information about the candidate at the competition

The only candidate in the competition for an associate professor in professional field 3.8. Economics (Marketing - Brand Management) is a Chief Assistant Professor Dimitar Ivanov Trendafilov, Ph.D., who submitted in his documents a Reference regarding the fulfilment of the minimum national and additional university requirements for holding the academic position "docent" in professional direction 3.8. Economics (Marketing – Brand Management). The candidate has the educational and qualification degree "Master" in Law (VTU), Business Administration (NBU) and Intellectual Property Management in Industry (UNSS), and in 2014 he defended his doctoral degree at the NBU in the field of origin, development and study of trademarks and commercial communication. His professional path, in addition to his academic activities, also includes work experience in the state administration and in the marketing departments of several firms engaged in trade and manufacturing. During the entire period of the last 10 years, Dr. Trendafilov has also carried out active research and consulting activities in the field of strategic branding. From 2018 to 2022, he mentored the NBU student teams participating in the annual editions of the National Marketing Olympiad, organized by UNSS, the Economic University - Varna and New Bulgarian University.

II. Research activity and research results

According to academic requirements and practice, an obviously important element of the academic activity of a university teacher is his scientific production and scientific research activity. Apart from the publications on the subject of the dissertation according to the information provided, Dr. D. Trendafilov submitted for review in the set of documents two monographs: 1. Trendafilov, D., 2017, Semiotic studies of the trademark: tools, analyses, results, Sofia: New Bulgarian University; 2. Trendafilov, D., and 2. Trendafilov, D., The Mobile User, 2023, NBU, Sofia, 190 pages, ISBN 978-619-233-153-5. Scientific reviewers: Assoc. Dr. Nadezhda Dimova (NBU), Assoc. Dr. Alexander Hristov (UNSS). The publications meet the requirements for volume and scientific value of this publication type.

The monographic work sets itself an interesting group of tasks to simultaneously synthesize the latest information on topics such as digital marketing, consumer interests and experience,

to make a retrospective of 20 years back on specific indicative solutions implemented in practice and to derive and summarize results from a variety of surveys, thus creating a different profiling of the mobile consumer. As a result, the competition applicant clearly defines in a more holistic perspective the concept of "mobile user" and its determinants beyond "mobile devices". The interpretation of the term "digital nomadism" is again interesting and also broader than the traditional meaning.

The author also touches on strategic topics about the future of marketing as a profession and more precisely the aspects related to the digitalization of marketing activity, as marketing becomes more and more cross-functional along with the IT sector.

Two textbooks have been submitted in the set of publications, namely 1. Trendafilov, D., "Retail Marketing and Management", 2018, Sofia and 2. Trendafilov, D., "Building and Imposing a Brand", New Bulgarian University, (2022), Sofia, 449 p. In the second textbook, the candidate for the competition touches on many topics that are related to the disciplines taught by him, and the essence, the chronology of the origin and the development of branding are examined in great detail. It should be noted that the author substantiates in detail the value of the brand as an intangible asset, which contributes to enriching the theory of branding in Bulgarian literature, because the more modern concept of the brand as a consumer experience (pp. 36-42), which I also support in my publications. The publication also has a practical application value with the presentation and analysis of excellent examples from the brand portfolio of leading Bulgarian companies, as well as emblematic examples from the world practice of branding (pp. 30-33).

Presented for review in the self-assessment report are 7 scientific articles and 3 reports from conferences, published in various editions of the NBU, University of Economics-Varna, Economic Academy "D.A. Tsanov"-Svishtov and of BAS - "Economic Thought" magazine. The predominant part of the publications concern important aspects of marketing and more precisely of brand management - trends in management, innovation or renovation in the management of trademarks [publications #2, #3, #7 of the Reference], the holistic approach in the marketing of business organizations [#8], the trademark and reflecting its economic value in its protection as an object of intellectual property in the EU etc. [posts #6 and #9]

As for the status of scientific publications, the information from the submitted report/self-assessment of Dr. Dimitar Trendafilov reveals the following status: 1 article in refereed and indexed in the Scopus Edition database, namely: Trendafilov, D., Design incorporated: IKEA as personal experience, in "Punctum", 4(1), Aristotle University, Thessaloniki, 2018, pp. 165-178, ISSN 2459-2943 (справка: Scopus, Crossfer).

The remaining publications- 6 articles and 3 reports are written in Bulgarian and were published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes.

The topics of most of the author's publications are of extreme relevance and have, in addition to the theoretical contribution mentioned above, also a practical-applied character, because they provide a good basis for brand management and marketing activities of business organizations. All publications are distinguished by a scientific style, while at the same time they are written in a clear and accessible language for a wider audience, and in most of them the personal opinion and creative thought of the author is felt.

There is no plagiarism discovered when 90% of the publications were checked via

specialized software Grammarly.

As for the citations of Dr. Dimitar Trendafilov's works, the information from the reference indicates that a total of 10 citations were recorded, as follows: 2 citations in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information, 6 citations in peer-reviewed monographs and collective volumes and 2 citations in non-peer-reviewed journals

As a summary: According to the information presented and according to the Reference for the performance of indicators - quantitative and qualitative to the scientific and the teaching activity of the candidate for the academic position of "associate professor" according to Regulations for implementation of the Law for Academic Staff Development (groups A-D), the candidate for this competition, Dr. Dimitar Trendafilov, meets the minimum requirements of this Law and the requirements of the New Bulgarian University, and in some indicators there is a certain excess (according to the information provided in table 1 in the materials, for indicators 4 to 13 the excess is 115 points, and for indicators 14 to 21 the excess is 130 points) which is a positive side of the competition participant.

III. Evaluation of the educational and teaching activity of the candidate for the competition Dr. D. Trendafilov

According to the submitted reference, the candidate for the competition has delivered lectures and seminars in 11 disciplines in the last 3 academic years - 4 of them in English and the others in Bulgarian, in both educational degrees - bachelor's and master's. Among them, the main ones are Brand Management, Marketing Management, Branding, Fundamentals of Marketing, Brand Strategies and Retail Management. The auditor employment of Dr. D. Trendafilov during the 3 years is as follows: 2021-2022 - Auditor employment - 362 hours, non-auditor employment - 521 hours; 2022-2023 - Auditor employment - 378 hours, non-auditor employment - 565 hours; 2023-2024 - Auditor employment - 244 hours, non-auditor employment - 555 hours. From the reference, it is clear that the candidate for the competition has enough classroom employment to occupy the academic position of "associate professor" at the New Bulgarian University. He also participated in a program improvement and course development of programs and more precisely: Bachelor' Program "Marketing" - regular and distance learning and in the Master's program "Brand Management" (in English) - regular learning.

From the autobiographical data, it is clear that the candidate for the competition is active not only in the educational process, but also in various other academic and organisational activities, which also determines his contribution to the development and establishment of the faculty and the department in the community of academic institutions. In the period of Oct. 2015 – Sept. 2017, Dr. Dimitar Trendafilov is a program consultant for the regular BP "Marketing" and MP "Marketing Management" programs, and from the autumn semester of the academic year 2018/19 he is included in the teaching staff of the joint programs with the University of Sheffield (from 2021 - W. York).

For a period of 8 years, Dr. D. Trendafilov has carried out a total of 88 scientific supervisions of Faculty graduates on topics from the disciplines he teaches, which

contributes to the successful graduation and the entry of young people into the labor market.

IV. Review and evaluation of the applicant's administrative and public activities

In the period April 2018 - February 2024, Dr. D. Trendafilov was part of the vice-rector's team as responsible for international activities, including strategic and infrastructural partnerships with foreign universities and consortia, during which he was a member of the Commission for the Development of the Academic Staff, the Rector's and Academic Councils of the NBU. In addition, the candidate in the competition represented the NBU in the Management Board of the joint programs with York/City College-Thessaloniki, as well as represented the Commission for the Recognition of Academic Degrees Acquired Abroad of the NBU.

It is extremely important for any university teacher to build good professional relations with students in various forms and to pass on his experience to them. The reference submitted by the candidate for the competition also indicates that Dr. D. Trendafilov works actively with the students, having provided and guided students in creative performances outside the NBU - in national and international competitions/Olympics, national and international scientific forums. In the last 5 years, the candidate has prepared and organized the participation of 3 student teams in the National Marketing Olympiad hosted by UNSS and VII-Varna. During the period 2016-2019, he also organized an interesting and unique event, namely the Early-Autumn School of Semiotics, NBU, Sozopol.

Dr. Dimitar Trendafilov is also a member of 2 professional organizations: the Bulgarian Semiotic Society, 2014-2016 and the Southeast European Center for Semiotic Research - NBU, 2010-2016.

V. Personal impressions of the candidate (if any)

VI.

I do not know Dr. Dimitar Trendafilov personally and do not have personal impressions of his personality, since in Bulgaria, apart from my university, I have taught for 5 years as a part-time lecturer only in the University of National and World Economy (UNSS)-Department of "Marketing and Strategic Planning".

VI. Critical notes and recommendations to the candidate

After sharing my opinion and assessment regarding the overall teaching, research and administrative activity of ch. Assistant professor Dr. D. Trendafilov, I have no serious critical remarks, but I would send him a well-intentioned recommendation:

- It would be better for his portfolio of publications if the candidate publishes one independent study on some of the branding topics, as well as reports in English for major international conferences abroad.

At the meeting, I propose that the candidate in the competition answer the following question: "*In which product categories on the market, according to Dr. D. Trendafilov, are there the most established Bulgarian brands with a strong emotional connection with consumers?*"

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the candidate for the competition, Dr. D. Trendafilov, fully meets the conditions of art. 24, paragraph 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 of the Law for Academic Staff Development in Bulgaria and the Additional requirements of New Bulgarian University for the terms and conditions for holding an academic position "associate professor". The presented and evaluated educational, research, etc. academic activity of the candidate and his professional expertise in the scientific field he teaches and writes, give me grounds to vote for Dr. Dimitar Ivanov Trendafilov to be appointed as an Associate Professor in professional direction 3.8. Economics, scientific specialty Marketing - Brand Management.

27.10.2024 г.
Burgas

Signature:.....

Assoc. Prof. Lina Anastassova PhD