

OPINION

by Ivanka Milkova Kostova, PhD
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on the materials submitted for participation in a competition
for the academic position of "professor"
at Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski"

in: field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences
professional field 3.8. Economics (Marketing)

In the competition for "professor", announced in the State Gazette, issue 96/11.11.2025 and on the website of Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski" for the needs of the Department of "Marketing and International Economic Relations" at the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences, Assoc. Prof. Teofana Valentinova Dimitrova-Staneva, PhD, from Plovdiv University, Department of "Marketing and International Economic Relations" participated as the only candidate.

1. General presentation of the procedure and the candidate

By order No. PD-22-44 of 09.01.2026 of the Rector of Plovdiv University "Paisiy Hilendarski" (PU), I have been appointed as a member of the scientific jury of a competition for the academic position of 'professor' at PU in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.8. Economics (Marketing), announced for the needs of the Department of "Marketing and International Economic Relations" at the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences.

Only one candidate has submitted documents for participation in the announced competition: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Teofana Valentinova Dimitrova-Staneva from Plovdiv University, Department of "Marketing and International Economic Relations".

The set of materials presented by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Teofana Valentinova Dimitrova-Staneva is in accordance with the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff of the University of Plovdiv and includes the following documents, numbered according to the sample application to the rector for admission to participate in the competition:

1. sample application to the rector for admission to participate in the competition;
2. European-format CV;
3. higher education diploma with an acquired educational and qualification degree "Master" with an appendix;
4. diploma for an educational and scientific degree "Doctor";
5. diploma (certificate) for the academic position of associate professor;
7. list of scientific works;
8. scientific works (copies of publications);
9. certificate of compliance with the minimum national and additional faculty requirements;
10. declaration of originality and authenticity of the attached documents;
11. annotations of the materials under Art. 76. from the PRASPU (in Bulgarian and foreign languages);
12. self-assessment of contributions;
13. list of citations;
14. separation protocols;
15. document (certificate) of work experience;
16. documents for academic work;
17. documents for scientific research work;

19. documents in accordance with the additional requirements of the respective faculty;
20. other documents;
22. set of documents from item 1 to item 20 on electronic media.

In the competition for the academic position of "professor", a total of 35 publications are taken into account, including:

- 1 monograph - habilitation thesis;
- 2 monographs that are not presented as the main habilitation thesis;
- 1 book developed on the basis of a defended dissertation for the award of the ONS "doctor";
- 8 studies published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in Scopus and/or Web of Science;
- 4 studies in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or in edited collective volumes;
- 4 articles and 1 report published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in Scopus and/or Web of Science;
- 9 articles and 4 reports in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or in edited collective volumes;
- as well as 1 university textbook.

Twenty-seven of the papers are co-authored (Publications: 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33), and eight are independent (Publications: 1, 4, 20, 22, 27, 29, 34, 35). In fifteen of the co-authored papers (57.69%), the candidate participates as the first author (6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 21, 25).

The language distribution of all publications is as follows: 23 (65.71%) in English and 12 (34.29%) in Bulgarian.

The candidate's entry in the Scopus database is ID: 57200270351, with the Hirsch index $h = 3$ and includes nine scientific publications published since 2017. As of 05.01.2026, a total of 55 citations are reported for six of them, all realized after 2014, i.e. after the competition for the academic position of "associate professor". Of the nine publications indexed in Scopus, eight are in publications with a certain quartile, as follows: six in Q2 (Publications: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12), one in Q3 (Publication 11) and one in Q4 (Publication 21).

The participant's entry in the current procedure in the Web of Science database is ID: ONJ-8440-2025, with the Hirsch index $h = 3$ and includes nine scientific publications from 2019 to date. Four of them do not duplicate the documents reported in Scopus (Publications: 10, 18, 19, 20). They were implemented in publications indexed in ESCI.

Participation in a total of seven research projects is reported.

2. General characteristics of the candidate's activity

Fulfillment of the requirements for holding the academic position

Fulfillment of the quantitative requirements

The candidate meets all mandatory conditions of the Law on the State Academic Staff of the Republic of Bulgaria and the additional requirements of the PSU.

Regarding the requirement for an acquired ONS "Doctor" - in 2013, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Teofana Dimitrova defended a dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor".

Regarding the requirement for minimum academic experience - the total work experience of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dimitrova as a lecturer is over 20 years. Apparently, the candidate fully covers the legal requirement for minimum academic experience.

Regarding the requirement for a published monographic work - the candidate has submitted 1 monograph - habilitation work: Dimitrova, T. (2025). Sustainable consumer behavior: From global evidence to local insights among Generation Z in Bulgaria. Plovdiv University Press. ISBN 978-619-281-106-8, (209 p.) and 2 monographs that are not presented as the main habilitation work;

The work was reviewed by two reviewers, published in 2025. The topic of the monographic work, the object, the subject and the time period to which it refers, do not imply overlap with the candidate's dissertation work and the materials for associate professor, which meets the legal requirement of Art. 24, para. 1, item 3 of the Law on the Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Regarding the requirement to meet the relevant minimum national criteria - the candidate has achieved a total of 1084.16 points (from indicators: A- 50 points; B-100 points; D-599.16 points; D-150 points, E- 185 points), which significantly exceeds the required threshold of 550 points. This is evidenced by the reference "National Minimum Requirements according to the Law on the Protection of Scientific Research and Development of the Republic of Bulgaria".

Regarding the requirement that there is no plagiarism proven in accordance with the statutory procedure in scientific works (Article 53. Paragraph 5 of the Law on the Protection of Scientific Research and Development of the Republic of Bulgaria) - none has been established.

Regarding the additional requirements of the University of Sofia - Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dimitrova-Staneva has fulfilled all of them:

1. To have an independent course of lectures. 3 courses have been developed for the Bachelor's and Master's degree programs (Appendices 16.4, 16.5 and 16.6): 1) "Brand Management", 2) "Marketing Management", 3) "Marketing Research".

2. To have supervised at least one successfully defended doctoral student. 1 successfully defended doctoral student is reported (Appendix 16.2).

3. To have participated in research projects, of which at least one was a leader or coordinator. Participations have been realized in 7 research projects (Appendix 17.1), of which in 1 with a role of leader (Appendix 19.1) and in 1 with a role of coordinator (Appendix 19.2).

4. To participate in the competition with publications in specialized scientific publications in the scientific specialty of the competition: studies or scientific articles and scientific reports. 34 scientific publications in the scientific specialty of the competition are reported, including 1 habilitation work - monograph; 2 published monographs that are not presented as the main habilitation work; 1 published book based on a defended dissertation work for the award of the educational and scientific degree "doctor"; 8 studies in Scopus and/or Web of Science; 4 studies published in non-refereed journals with scientific review or published in edited collective volumes; 5 articles and reports in Scopus and/or Web of Science; 9 articles published in non-refereed journals with scientific review or published in edited collective volumes and 4 reports published in non-refereed journals with scientific review or published in edited collective volumes (Appendix 8-Publications).

5. To participate in the competition with at least two publications in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in the world-renowned databases with scientific information (Scopus and Web of Science) in the scientific specialty of the competition. 13 publications in Scopus and/or Web of Science are taken into account (Appendix 8-Publications).

Additional indicators that may participate in the formation of the overall assessment (in aggregate) of the candidate for "professor" under equal other conditions.

1. Have more than one successfully defended doctoral thesis. No activity is reported.
2. Have led or participated in the development of new educational programs. He is the head of 2 master's programs at the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences at PU "P. Hilendarski": "Marketing" (Appendix 19.3 - discontinued) and "Marketing and Sales" (Appendix 19.4 - active).
3. Have organizational and administrative experience. He was the head of the Department of "Marketing and MIE" at the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences at PU "P. Hilendarski" for the period 2015 - 2023 (Appendix 19.5).

Fulfillment of quality requirements

With her active research activities, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Teofana Dimitrova-Staneva demonstrates herself as a serious researcher.

Demonstrates dignified academic behavior, ethics and tolerance in expressing her opinion. It is important to note that Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dimitrova-Staneva also has proven practical experience, which strengthens the connection "research - business - university".

The candidate has also contributed to the educational and pedagogical development of PU. She is the author of a textbook: Dimitrova, T. (2018). Marketing Management, Part One. UI "P. Hilendarski". ISBN 978-619-202-333- 1, (198 p.).

Based on all of the above, regarding the diverse and in-depth teaching and research work of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dimitrova-Staneva, I believe that she fully meets the quantitative and qualitative requirements for holding the academic position of "professor" at Plovdiv University.

Assessment of teaching and learning activities

Assoc. Prof. Dr. T. Dimitrova-Staneva is already an established lecturer in a number of disciplines at Plovdiv University. The reported classroom workload (CL) of Assoc. Prof. Dimitrova for the period 2020/2021 - 2024/2025 academic year amounts to a total of 2266 hours of classes - for the disciplines Marketing and Marketing Management. The implementation of CL for each of the indicated academic years exceeds the accepted norm of 300 hours for full-time lecturers at Plovdiv University "P. Hilendarski".

The references show that in recent academic years her classroom workload has exceeded the mandatory minimum, which proves the department's need for a habilitated lecturer in the field of the announced competition.

The high workload gives reason to conclude that Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dimitrova has acquired sufficient experience and routine and evidence of professionalism in her teaching work.

The teaching and teaching activities of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dimitrova as a lecturer, author of teaching aids and curricula, fully comply with the requirements for holding the academic position of "professor" at the University of Plovdiv.

Brief description of the submitted scientific works/publications

A careful acquaintance with the scientific production gives me reason for the following conclusions and generalizations:

First, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dimitrova-Staneva participates in the current competition with sufficient scientific production. The candidate for professor possesses not only a clearly expressed ability for independent expression, but also undeniable skills for working in a team.

Secondly, the publications of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dimitrova-Staneva reveal her ambition to explore current, complex and significant problems for modern science and business practice. The monograph deserves high praise from both a theoretical and a practical point of view. It concerns a topic and problems directly related to the subject of the announced competition. The work is distinguished by a good scientific style, clarity and comprehensibility of the presentation. The relevance of the researched issues is based primarily on its intensive development by a large number of authoritative foreign scientists, as well as by prominent Bulgarian researchers.

The scientific work of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dimitrova-Staneva has the features of an extremely meaningful and in-depth critical study. Some of the ideas developed there can claim originality.

In addition, the candidate has provided two more monographs and a book based on a dissertation for the purposes of the competition.

The textbook is developed, in accordance with the relevant curriculum, in a language accessible to students, supplemented with many practical examples and case studies, covering modern requirements.

The analysis of the publications presented in this procedure shows that they are distinguished by both relevance and originality, as well as a clear methodological framework and professional interpretation of the empirical results. They do not repeat publications related to previous competitions. Taken together, these scientific works reveal a deep scientific interest of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dimitrova-Staneva in the thematic area of the competition.

The presented publications attest Assoc. Prof. Dr. Dimitrova as a serious, conscientious, thorough and promising researcher.

Contributions (scientific, applied science, applied) and citations

The publications contain a number of scientific and applied science of varying degrees of significance for economic science. I accept the reference for the candidate's contributions.

The main contributions are expressed in:

I. Scientific contributions

1. Synthesis and expansion of scientific knowledge on sustainable consumer behavior. The leading theoretical frameworks, main determinants and barriers, dominant thematic directions and behavioral results in the scientific literature on sustainable consumption and consumer behavior have been established. (Publications: 1, 9, 13, 24)

2. Enrichment of marketing theory in the higher education sector. The role of the marketing concept, marketing communications, the quality of the educational product, the public image and the competitiveness of higher education institutions, as well as the main approaches, tools and indicators for their management and evaluation in the conditions of increased competition and market orientation of the higher education system, have been systematized and conceptually understood. (Publications: 2, 3, 11, 16, 19, 20, 22, 28, 32, 33, 34)

3. Further development of scientific knowledge on educational branding. It has been established that brand image, brand associations, perceived quality, satisfaction and engagement function as key

factors for forming loyalty and word-of-mouth communication in the educational sphere (Publications: 6, 10, 25)

II. Scientific and applied contributions

1. A methodology for studying sustainable clothing purchasing behavior among Generation Z has been developed and tested. The methodology includes modeling and assessment of the direct and indirect effects of key environmental, social and personal factors on purchase intention and actual sustainable consumer behavior. (Publication 1).

2. Development, empirical testing and validation of psychometric models for measuring consumer behavior in the Bulgarian context. Complex causal relationships between latent constructs, including direct, indirect and moderating effects, have been analyzed, taking into account the specific characteristics of Bulgarian research participants. (Publications: 6, 7, 8, 9, 13, 17)

3. Expansion of the scientific and applied aspects of marketing management. Analytical and hybrid management tools (SWOT-AHP-TOWS, SPACE analysis) have been developed, integrated and tested. Key management opportunities and challenges in various sectors (healthcare, finance, telecommunications, wine industry) have been identified, supporting strategic decision-making and building sustainable competitive advantages. (Publications: 5, 12, 14, 15, 18, 21, 23, 26, 29, 30, 31, 35)

For participation in the competition, 10 citations (150 points) in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in the world databases of scientific information Scopus and WOS are submitted.

Assessment of the candidate's personal contribution

The candidate's personal contribution to scientific works is undeniable. It is noteworthy that Assoc. Prof. Dr. T. Dimitrova-Staneva is the author/co-author of publications dedicated to significant topics in marketing science and practice. The scientific works have been cited many times, which confirms their value. This speaks of the candidate's recognition by scientific circles in our country and abroad. The formulated contributions and obtained results are the personal merit of the candidate.

3. Critical remarks and recommendations

I have no critical remarks about the candidate.

CONCLUSION

The documents and materials presented by Assoc. Prof. Teofana Valentinova Dimitrova-Staneva, PhD meet all the requirements of the Act on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria (ADSRB), the Regulations for the Implementation of the ADSRB and the relevant Regulations of the University of Paisiy Hilendarski.

The candidate in the competition has presented a sufficient number of scientific works published after the materials used in the defense of the ONS "doctor" and associate professor. The candidate's works contain scientific and applied contributions that have received international recognition, as a representative part of them have been published in journals and scientific collections published by international academic publishing houses. Her theoretical developments have practical applicability, as some of them are directly oriented towards academic work. The scientific and teaching qualifications of Assoc. Prof. Dimitrova-Staneva, PhD are undoubted.

The results achieved by Assoc. Prof. Teofana Dimitrova-Staneva, PhD in academic and research activities fully comply with the minimum national and additional requirements of the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences, adopted in connection with the Regulations of the University of Sofia for the implementation of the Law on the Promotion of Higher Education and Research in Bulgaria.

After reviewing the materials and scientific papers presented in the competition, analyzing their significance and the scientific, applied and applied contributions contained therein, I find it reasonable to give my positive assessment and recommend to the Scientific Jury to prepare a report-proposal to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Economic and Social Sciences for the election of Assoc. Prof. Teofana Valentinova Dimitrova-Staneva, PhD to the academic position of "professor" at the "Paisiy Hilendarski" University in: field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional field 3.8. Economics (Marketing).

01.03.2026

I\, Prepared the opinion:

(Prof. Ivanka Kostova, PhD)