

OPINION

For the teaching and research production of Chief Assistant Dr Milen Nikolaev Filipov, a participant in the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" at Burgas Free University, in the professional field 3.5. Public Communications and Information Sciences (Journalism and Public Relations - Strategic Public Relations and Planned Events), announced in the State Gazette, Issue 25/26. March 2021

1. Personal and professional information about the candidate

Chief Assistant Professor Dr Milen Filipov has defended his dissertation in the field of "Public Communications and Information Sciences" at the Faculty of Journalism and Mass Communications, Sofia University "St. Kl. Ohridski" (2015). In the period 2007-2021, he was a lecturer at the Center for Humanities at BSU, and since 2017 he has been teaching at KIMEP University, Almaty, Kazakhstan. At BFU, Dr Filipov teaches five courses in the field of HE and Journalism: "Event Management", "Theory of Communications", "Practicum of Public Relations Part I and Part II", "Project on Public Communications and Social Psychology". At KIMEP University, he has a high annual teaching load of 1215 hours with ten lecture courses taught in English: "Persuasive Communication", "PR Campaigns", "Introduction to Public Relations, "Crisis Communication", "Special Event Management and Design".

Dr M. Filipov has extensive organizational and communication experience working with students and faculty in national and international intercultural academia at KIMEP University, where he works with students and colleagues from 49 countries in Central Asia, Europe and South Korea. I have excellent impressions of his work as a manager and supervisor of the student PR agency PRACTA at BFU, which implements events and campaigns for both Burgas Free University (Media World) and external clients for ten years. In addition, he coordinates the participation of guest speakers in the master's program Strategic Communications and Media Management. To his administrative experience, I add the management of the master's program International Journalism with two majors Media Management and Public Relations and Advertising and the management of the Department of Media and Communications research activity and other positions held at KIMEP University (Kazakhstan).

The upgrading training in prestigious American universities in the last year in the field of design of quality research and methods, conducting high-quality research in business and economics and publishing it in high-ranking journals, and training for an online teaching certificate for the professional development of Dr M. Filipov. The candidate also has excellent skills in methodological tools, working with software such as ATLAS TI, SPSS and others.

2. Evaluation of the scientific production according to the Law on Academic Staff Development in the Republic of Bulgaria (LASD) for holding the academic position "Associate Professor"

Dr M. Filipov presents one monograph - habilitation dissertation Filipov, M. (2020) to participate in the competition (Pseudo)event: theory and practice. Ed. "EX-Press", Gabrovo and two collective monographs, in which he has independent chapters: Filipov, M., Aleksieva, M., Popova D. (2017). School Public Relations. Burgas Free University and Authors' Team (2013). Ethnopsycholinguistic and sociolinguistic aspects of the language of newspapers in Bulgaria, ed. EX-PRESS, Gabrovo. Twelve individual publications are presented separately, one of which is in world-referenced and indexed databases (Filipov, M. (2019). Who Buys Amsterdam Dance Event? International Journal of Event Management, 23 (6), pp. 953-958), 8 co-authored publications, two studies and another chapter in a collective monograph, a total of 23 publications. Almost half of these publications are in English and, although non-refereed, have been published in journals and peer-reviewed journals. In addition, there are 14 citations of his publications, almost all in scientific journals in English. The volume of the scientific production and the mentioned citations fully covers the requirements of the LASD for the position "Associate Professor".

3. Evaluation of the scientific contributions of the candidate

3.1. In the field of strategic public relations and journalism

In the monograph "(Pseudo) event: theory and practice," an analysis of the planned events is made - a special event, media event, an event for the media, and pseudo-event. Special attention is paid to the nature, functions and dimensions of the pseudo-event. It is seen as an essential multifunctional tool - a strategy for manipulating public opinion and exercising communication power. The pseudo-event is defined as "an action and communication strategy that has clearly defined goals and segmented audiences", and mediatization and publicity are seen as the basis for pseudo-events in a political context. Using a combination of methods: media content analysis, descriptive survey, case analysis and critical discourse analysis, the author reveals the main characteristics of the pseudo-event.

The analysis through a quantitative study of the Amsterdam Dance Event, published in the *International Journal of Event Management*, is defined as an applied contribution in the field of the characteristics of the planned event. The main reasons young people attend an international festival are the opportunities to experience electronic music, self-expression and empathy in the company of friends and like-minded people.

To this area, I also refer the publications "Strategic PR as a system for anticipatory and protective reputational communication" in the journal of Contemporary Humanitaristics, where the conclusion is drawn about "strategic public relations as a management system for anticipatory (proactive) and protective (reactive) communication, especially in conditions of incidents and crises; "Media Release: Main Genre in PR" published in Contemporary Humanitaristics (co-authored with G. Hristozova); the publication "Green CSR initiatives and peculiarities in their coverage in the electronic media" in the journal Rhetoric and Communications (co-authored with R. Ralcheva), where the conclusion is made about the partial and superficiality of the media coverage of corporate campaigns; the publication "The approach of involvement from the point of view of PR" in the Annual of BFU, where involvement is considered as a strategy for building trust and understanding between the organization and stakeholders; "The media and political image in Bulgaria", in Proceedings from the scientific-practical conference dedicated to the centenary of Alash-Orda, which reveals the links of influence between politicians and media uses.

3.2 In the field of public relations as strategic communication in Bulgaria, primary, secondary and higher education.

The importance of school public relations as a strategic tool for relating educational institutions in organizational relations is empirically substantiated. The communication challenges that educational institutions (kindergartens and schools) face are presented. The textbook belongs to this area: Filipov, M., M. Aleksieva, D. Popova (2017) School public relations, which is used in training courses on HE and public communications at BSU and the publications: Filipov, M., Alexieva M., Popova, D. (2016) Do Bulgarian Schools Effectively Communicate with their School Communities, Journal of School Public Relations; Popova, D, Filipov, M. (2016) Co-Teaching - An Effective Approach in Erasmus + Teaching Mobilities in the Proceedings of the Jubilee Scientific Conference with International Participation "The New Idea in Education"; Aleksieva, M., Popova, D., Filipov M. (2015) Effective communication of state educational institutions with their communities, Pedagogical Almanac; Filipov,

M. (2015) "PR as a technology for the development of relationships with the school community" in Proceedings of a scientific conference, Veliko Tarnovo. In the study (2019) "Characteristics of the communication style of the Bulgarian University on Facebook", Annual of BFU, the author analyzes the Facebook pages of 3 universities and summarizes that universities' communication is news, monologue and distance. The recommendation is for a Bulgarian university to rethink its communication on social networks to be competitive in the global market. It includes the publication "Style of communication and tone of the brand voice in social media" in the magazine Contemporary Humanities, where it is concluded that the application of brand PR communication, using the strategy of dialogue with carefully selected style and tone of communication, would improve the image positioning of Bulgarian universities. Regarding the school institution, the author concludes that Bulgarian educational institutions are primarily closed systems and their communication with internal and external audiences have a very narrow focus. Therefore, the recommendations are to diversify school PR strategies for liaising with the diverse stakeholders in the school community to expand and strengthen school responsibility.

3.4 Analysis of media language

In the collective monograph "Ethnopsycholinguistic and sociolinguistic aspects of the language of newspapers in Bulgaria", the language of newspapers is considered a specific but also typical linguistic mental-psychological world with a peculiar code of ethics and speech behaviour. Furthermore, it includes the publication "Bulgarian language in social media: opinions of journalists from Burgas media" is a collection of reports from a scientific conference on "Digital Transformations, Media and Public Inclusion", which concludes for violating certain norms of the Standard of the Bulgarian Language, mostly spelling, which has an impact on the literacy of young people in Bulgaria.

3.5 Problems related to media marketing and journalism in Kazakhstan

These include the publications: "Social Media Marketing For Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in Kazakhstan", Central Asian Journal of Innovations on Tourism Management And Finance, where through thematic analysis, the conclusion is drawn about the marketing targeting of small and medium enterprises in social media; the publication "Online personal brand in the Kazakhstani HR Context" in the International Scientific-Analytical Journal of Public Administration and Public Service, in which by consulting HR specialists the conclusion is made about the personal online brand of the candidate, which is used in pre-selection decisions; senior management positions;

The publication "Forces Affecting Kazakhstani Journalists' Objectivity: A Narrative Literature Review" in Yessenov Science Journal (co-authored with Zharylkassyn Aida) concludes that the objectivity of journalism in Kazakhstan faces intense pressure from legal, governmental and business forces. In another publication from the conference "Country Image of Kazakhstan in Two Western Media Articles. In: Proceedings of the International Scientific and Practical Conference, Dr Filipov examines articles about Kazakhstan in the Western press that present the country as a kleptocracy with minimal freedom of speech. In the next article, "Challenges for Private Media in Kazakhstan" in VIII International Scientific and Practical Conference Science and Practice: Implementation to Modern Society (co-authored with Temirkhanova, Leila), through media content analysis, the conclusion is made to patronize certain "obedient" media by the government and how state information bids influence media content;

4. Conclusion

The scientific production of Dr Milen Filipov fully covers the requirements of the Law on Academic Staff Development in the Republic of Bulgaria as a volume and as a scientific contribution, based on the application of a wide range of quantitative and qualitative methods. His many years of teaching experience with students in a national and multicultural environment is an essential tool for his further academic and teaching career. Therefore, I am confidently voting for the award of the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the professional field 3.5. Public Communications and Information Sciences (Journalism and Public Relations - Strategic Public Relations and Planned Events).

Professor Dr Tatyana Kotseva

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