



REVIEW

of the submitted works for participation in a competition for the academic position of ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR in professional field 3.5. Public Communications and Information Sciences (Theory and History of Advertising), announced by Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" in SJ, issue 55 dated 28.06.2024

Reviewer: Associate Professor Kristian Postadzhyan, PhD, New Bulgarian University (8.4.)

Candidate (s): Nikola Liubomirov Vangelov

I. Summary of applicant (research, teaching and a ka demichna activity)

Nikola Vangelov has a dissertation on "Marketing communications in social networks - communicative and semiotic aspects" in 2016.

His experience as a lecturer and scientist is closely related to the field of marketing communications, and this is evident both from the defended dissertation and from other publications and appearances of the candidate for the academic position of associate professor. Dr. Vangelov has participated in a number of national and international conferences and projects closely related to this academic field. Among them are "Round table PR - professional challenges and trends in the 21st century", International conference on "Communications, media and education in the paradigm of new technologies and artificial intelligence", project "Digital marketing business communications - challenges, trends and innovations" , International Conference on "Media and Communication: Transformations and Development in the Digital Age" and others.

The Mentor of the Year certificate in the "Like Bernays" competition 2018 also makes an impression. I would also like to commend the organization of the "Art of Advertising" festival. The presence of dozens of publications that are focused in Dr. Vangelov's research field are also a testimony to his expertise in the field of advertising communications.

A closer follow-up of his publication activity reveals a significant number of publications that are inextricably linked to the topic of the monographic work with which Dr. Vangelov applied for the academic position of "associate professor". From this it can be concluded that the topic is the subject of discussion in a number of his works, it has been traced and analyzed in detail in different contexts. I find this particularly helpful since few researchers address the roots of advertising. For much of our modern society, advertising is a modern tool associated with good business practices, but little is known about its roots in the past. The works of Nikola Vangelov give the significance of advertising and open many doors to its past, which built the rules by which it works and shaped its modern image.



As can be seen from the references and evidence provided, Dr. Vangelov leads a significant volume of classroom courses, which again include topics related to the history of advertising.

II. Characteristics of the scientific and scientific-applied production of the candidate

It is clear from the submitted documents that the candidate in the announced competition Nikola Vangelov, assistant professor, PhD, meets all the requirements for holding the academic position of "associate professor", according to the Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria:

- He has an educational and scientific degree "doctor";
- He held an academic position senior assistant professor for not less than two years;
- He submitted a published monographic work that does not repeat the submitted works for receiving the ESD "Doctor". Has presented other original scientific research works and publications that do not repeat the presented works for receiving the ESD "Doctor";
- Has fulfilled the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b of Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

From the presented "reference on the implementation of the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b of Law on the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria for scientific field 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional direction 3.5 Public communications and information sciences" it is clear that the candidate in the competition corresponds (indicators A and V) or exceeds (indicators G and D) the minimum national requirements for occupying an academic position "associate professor". Quantitatively, the candidate has achieved 850 points from indicators A, V, G and D, with a total of 400 required in these categories, i.e. more than twice the statutory minimum.

The publication activity of the candidate is distinguished by its diversity and depth. At the outset, I would like to highlight something that I find specific to the candidate for the academic position of "associate professor". Although the focus of his work is the roots of advertising, Dr. Vangelov has numerous publications and research that are related to contemporary trends in advertising communications. For example, in his monograph "Facebook and Instagram Advertising Campaigns" there are many similar examples, as well as in "Digital User Research in Marketing and Advertising" and "Digital Marketing Communications in Tourism". I think that such a movement between past and future is very helpful and valuable, as well as a prerequisite for doing specific studies and analyzes that look for and find connections between different periods of the development of advertising.

In his monograph, with which he applied for the academic position of "associate professor", Dr. Nikola Vangelov traces the development and characteristics of print advertising during the period of socialism in Bulgaria (1944-1989). Object of study of the printed periodicals – Otechestven Front, Evening News, Health, Tourist. And although the topic focuses on print advertising, in separate parts of the work attention is also paid to other media channels, such as television and radio. Many materials were examined within the framework of the habilitation work. The author's research thesis is that print advertising during socialism in Bulgaria developed and in the last two decades (the 70s and 80s of the 20th century) is almost not inferior to Western advertising in terms of its content and formal characteristics.



The monograph can be highly appreciated - it contains a complete and comprehensive exposition on the basis of a clearly defined problem. This is not the only scientific work of Dr. Vangelov on this topic, from the attached references it is clear that the author researches this topic systematically in various of his materials. Among the merits of the monograph, the practical significance should be emphasized; correctly developed and applied methodological apparatus; logical and coherent structure; thoroughness of the analysis, correctness and argumentation of the conclusions drawn, the impressive bibliography in its volume and content. Dr. Vangelov demonstrates an ability to write about serious issues in an understandable and engaging manner. The monograph contains various illustrative materials that support the developed theses and illustrate them. There is also the necessary scientific correctness when referring and quoting.

Based on various analyzed definitions, the author offers his own definition of socialist internal trade print advertising "Printed information about goods or services, as well as their characteristics, with the aim of informing or influencing consumers by an established advertiser, which may also contain party ideology".

I admire the introduction of such a working definition, I think it gives a better perspective to the research problem. At the same time, however, I would like to make a note - in the definition, the words "information" and "impact" are opposed and presented as alternatives to each other, measuring the result of advertising impact. I believe that regardless of the period of its development, advertising has always pursued a clear hierarchy of its effect, at the beginning of which is awareness (information), upgraded in the course of communication to a specific impact (like, preference, etc.). Of course, this small detail does not detract from the applied analysis by Dr. Vangelov, on the contrary - inciting a discussion is only and only in favor of the scientific debate on the thesis.

A question arises here that I would like to ask Dr. Vangelov. On page 26 of his work he says "Each individual commercial enterprise has only to judge what funds to devote to advertising and how to use them most effectively. Advertising should serve buyers by guiding, facilitating and assisting them. This shows more of the informational nature of the ad. In this way, it can help to refine demand versus supply, taking into account the volume and structure of demand, and thus help to establish market equilibrium." Whether, to what extent and how is the effectiveness of advertising communication measured in current practice? Even in relation to the stated goal, related to the informational nature of the advertisement in the then context.

I believe that within the framework of his monographic work, Dr. Vangelov has researched a significant volume of materials, which he has subjected to the necessary analysis in a structured manner. Conclusions and conclusions are logically and consistently strung. Numerous data are provided, on the basis of which the author's thesis is built.

Here I will allow myself another question (p. 47) - where and what is the place of advertisements with emotional appeals, compared to those with rational appeals, in the context in which advertising developed during socialism. I make the clarification that further in the text there are many analyzes and comments of the author on the subject, but I consider that this is really interesting material for analysis and discussion.

The author brings out the so-called principles of advertising from this period. I consider them to be helpful in so far as any analysis of advertising communication from this period should be done on the basis of these principles and in the context of their significance. What's more, as a result of these principles, the role of advertising communication in those times was set, which far exceeded only an informative or even a sales function and passed into the realm of ideology. The author draws parallels between socialist and capitalist advertising.



In this part of his work, Dr. Vangelov also reflects on the public function of advertising. I will quote a specific text "Unlike capitalist advertising, its (socialist advertising) action force must be in the interest of society, not the competitive struggle." I believe that this line of reasoning can give many and varied directions for subsequent analyzes and discussions in general about the role of advertising communication and its reflection and significance for society and people's lives.

I find it to be a mark of quality in a monographic work its ability to provoke subsequent discussions and to provide a starting point for reflections that bear on large and significant topics. In this case, I believe that this is a thesis that can provoke many and various subsequent discussions, and I would be very happy to meet Dr. Vangelov's subsequent reflections on the subject in future scientific works. Nowadays, for example, the topic of regulation and self-regulation in advertising is so important and essential for the industry, even more so in the era of advertising of various products and services, the benefit of which to society is, to put it mildly, controversial (for example, gambling), that is why some an initial discussion about the role of advertising for society and how this industry develops society would in itself be a huge contribution to change its positioning in public consciousness. I fully understand that this is far beyond the specifics of a monographic work, but after all, why study the past if it cannot help us better understand the present and the future?

Within the framework of his monographic work, Dr. Vangelov presents many such considerations and reveals important and significant micro-themes that can provoke subsequent discussions and analyses. I consider this important not only for the applicant for the academic position of "associate professor" himself, but also especially important for anyone in the field of "scientific advertising". This is an area on which little is written, and the tendency to ignore the industry's past and to look for an explanation of its growth only in the present and only through technology often leads to a complete misunderstanding of the functions and significance of this industry. That is why I find it important that this monograph presents many and various important micro-topics that are good to be discussed and analyzed by the scientific community. This, of course, is a contribution and demonstrates the quality not only of the work, but also of Dr. Vangelov's general scientific activity. I am convinced that in the first part of the presented monographic work there are many similar judgments, around which many discussions, conferences, publications and even friendly disputes can follow, and this is the mark of a well-presented and thought-provoking text.

I fully accept the tasks of the conducted empirical research in the second part of the monograph. The sample that was studied implies a qualitative analysis. The formulated hypotheses are clearly described and imply a clear plan and direction in the researcher's work. In the course of the research, the dynamics in the obtained results were noted, trends and facts that deserve attention were highlighted. The breakdown of the study by periods implies not only the drawing of general conclusions for the entire investigated time period covered by the monograph, but also additional analyzes related to observations and reflections on specific time segments. I consider this important, inasmuch as within the period of socialism thus formulated there are separate decades which for one reason or another are distinguished by political, economic and external factors. This approach allows deriving dependencies between different phenomena and processes.

The author presents summarized data from his research in tabular form, graphically, with the necessary detail.

Although quantitative analysis is done in many places in this part of the work, it should be emphasized that the author seeks explanation and draws clear and unambiguous conclusions and defines reasons. The facts presented in this way are not just numbers, they are presented in



meaningful harmony with an analysis that explains and shows their meaning. Thus, at first reading, small details gain meaning and significance.

Here I would like to ask a question to Dr. Vangelov. On page 151 of his monographic work he speaks of "self-support from advertisements." I am asking my question in general and I realize that the answer depends on many different circumstances, but to what extent the ads of the socialist period have the goal at all to lead to the self-support of the print media from ads and their financial support in general. Isn't their ideological goal and social role more important?

In this part of the monograph, advertisements are also shown that arouse curiosity - for example, the so-called cooperative advertising, in which several businesses advertise together. Examples are also given for auto advertisements. I can't get past the state lottery ads either. And here, as before, I will say that Dr. Vangelov's text raises many and various prerequisites for future analyzes and discussions. Fragments of old newspapers appear as a memory of the distant past, which ignites debate in the present and gives much food for thought. Of course, it is important to interpret every advertisement within the framework of the period in which the communication was born and developed, in this sense, Dr. Vangelov does not allow himself speculation and interpretation in which time and context are mixed. On the contrary, the text is distinguished by a scientific discipline, and regardless of the provocations coming from the messages and images from the old clippings, the author of the text does not allow himself to give free rein to any other interpretation.

The monograph has remarkable archival value - the advertisements collected and displayed are incredibly diverse - from Tina Turner advertising to "Hammer and Sickle" Municipal Corporation and, of course, TZUM. I think this archive is valuable and important, especially presented in this structured and logical way. I can't pass up the Coca Cola ad from 1966 either! Each of these ads can and does tell a story that is important to hear, and for this monograph to gather all of these stories in one place is more than satisfying and valuable.

The presented conclusions from the conducted research on pages 287-291 are correctly presented, with the necessary argumentation and in the necessary scientific format.

Earlier in this review I had the opportunity to point out that what makes an impression is that Dr. Vangelov works excellently in the field of modern advertising as well. This is evidenced by his other monographs and publications, including:

- Advertising campaigns on Facebook and Instagram, 2021.
- The Digital Consumer Survey in Marketing and Advertising, 2020
- Digital advertising in Smart Cities – methods for raising consumer engagement in 2024.
- Efficient communications through Influencer marketing, 2019.
- Consumerism and advertising on social networks, 2022.

I believe that Dr. Vangelov has the potential to do research and publication that bridges the gap between past and future, and I find this distinctive in his work.

III. Major contributions in science, applied science and teaching minute activity of the applicant

I believe that the contributions of Dr. Nikola Vangelov in terms of his scientific, scientific-applied and teaching activities are diverse. I accept and confirm the specified original scientific contributions, indicated in the relevant reference, accompanying the documentation of the competition for the academic position of "associate professor". I would still like to highlight the following main contributions:

- Dr. Nikola Vangelov clearly outlines the role of print advertising in the period 1944-



1989, by proposing and arguing an author's definition of socialist print advertising. The existence of this definition is a prerequisite for a correct scientific analysis of advertising from this period in the development of Bulgaria. I consider this analysis important not only scientifically, but also historically, and I believe that both this definition and the analysis itself are of interest not only and only to colleagues in the scientific community of advertising communication.

- The candidate in the competition for the academic position of "associate professor" traces the historical development of print advertising in Bulgaria during socialism through quantitative and qualitative analysis. An impressive volume of data was analyzed - over 7,000 newspapers and almost 30,000 advertisements. In itself, this archive, collected and cataloged in the structure of a monographic work, is a contribution that has implications for many future studies.

- The presented scientific publications of the candidate correspond thematically to the courses he leads, which increases the quality of the students' education. I am fully convinced that the study of the past of advertising and the presentation of so many examples, both from Bulgaria and worldwide, is important for the correct introduction into the scientific field, and also into the business of advertising, of many new generations of young advertisers.

- In his scientific works, Dr. Vangelov researches methods for increasing the effectiveness of advertising in the online environment, with an emphasis on the role of interactivity in advertising communication. This direction of work is more than important and meaningful for the industry, not only in a scientific, but also mostly in a scientific-applied plan.

IV. Notes and recommendations

Within the framework of my review, I have raised several questions to Dr. Nikola Vangelov, provoked by his monograph. I raise them mainly to generate discussion on topics that I find important and useful to develop within various scientific discussions and forums. I strongly emphasize that these questions are rather oriented towards the future and have the sole purpose of drawing more topics on which to look for the analysis and reasoning of scientists like Dr. Vangelov.

My only recommendation to him is that he look for more bridges between the past and the present of advertising, through concrete research and the resulting publications.

I also believe that the presented archive has its historical and scientific value and I would recommend that consideration be given to where and how it can be presented and preserved.

I would recommend Dr. Vangelov to also seek collaboration with other scientists who are researching the past of advertising, not only in Bulgaria, with the aim of realizing a larger research project.

V. Conclusion

The results achieved in the research and teaching work of Dr. Nikola Lyubomirov Vangelov, senior assistant professor, comply with the legal and internal institutional requirements for holding the academic position "associate professor" at Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski".



This gives me reason to confidently propose Dr. Nikola Lyubomirov Vangelov to take the academic position of "associate professor" in professional field 3.5. Public Communications and Information Sciences (Theory and History of Advertising) at SU "St. Kliment Ohridski".

Reviewer:

Date: October 8th, 2024