

REVIEW

By Assoc. Prof. Stefan Dimitrov Serezliev, Ph.D., University of Veliko Turnovo "St. Cyril and St. Methodius", Department of Journalism and Public Relations – Professional field 3.5. public communications and information sciences (Integrated Marketing Communications and Branding), Member of the Academic Jury appointed by Rector's Order 69/16.08.2024 with candidate ass. Justine Toms Jadala Maria - for participation in the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor / Department Media and Communication, NBU.

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

When reviewing the documents for participation in the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor, submitted by candidate Justine Toms Jadala Maria, I found that they are in full compliance with the scientific-metric indicators (975 points) on the relevant groups of indicators, according to the Law on the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as in the Regulations for its Implementation and the Regulation on the Development of Academic Staff of the NBU and are significantly above the minimum required for participation in the announced competition.

II. Research (creative) activity and results

1. Evaluation of the monographic work, creative performances or other publications corresponding in volume and completeness to a monographic work, including an evaluation of the scientific and applied contributions of the author.

The candidate, Justine Toms Jadala Maria, presents her monograph on the competition, "Podcasts—the voice of the Internet," published by Roy Communication, 2022, ISBN 978-954-9335-50-7. The monograph is 167 pages long and contains 67 sources, 48 of which are in Bulgarian and 19 in English. The sources are relevant and significant, carefully selected and researched.

The monograph's structure is well-optimised, allowing for a coherent and well-argued development of the critical aspects and highlights related to podcasts—undoubtedly, a topical and significant topic not only in communication and media practice but also with increasing importance and influence in various fields and industries.

The research register in the monograph is wide-ranging yet very well-balanced. It allows for the necessary academic approach to be applied to podcasts in the context of relevant case studies supported by the required research, hypotheses, and arguments. Undoubtedly, the author embraces the multi- and interdisciplinary challenges in this ever-expanding field, thus categorically enriching the complex approach to reach the necessary relevant conclusions and results.

Along these lines, I am personally impressed by the resolution of issues in the podcasts at two difficult-to-explore borderline levels, managerial and creative, as they correspond in aspects of academic theory and high professional practice within historical frameworks and current development perspectives.



At the same time, it is worth noting the text's good readability and the skilful presentation of the different points of interest in the general course of the development of the individual themes, which is a deficit in scientific monographs. In this way, the reader is drawn into the different levels of the issues without losing initiative in using his critical thinking.

The monograph has ample examples, research and data, and these are organically and argumentatively linked across the different research and practice-application levels: historical, marketing, creative, and communication. In this way, the research does not remain only within our digital existence but opens new and different valences to border areas and audience preferences. In this sense, I have a note-question for the author: does the research field that opens different but comprehensive perspectives to the reader need to be brought into a stronger focus, or to continue developing the individual aspects in subsequent monographs over time? What can be observed in the attached publications gives me reason to expect further steps precisely in the direction of further monographs. In this sense, I take the author's scientific work as the beginning of an undoubtedly expected series on podcasts.

2. Evaluation of the contributions in the other attached publications (creative appearances) made after the appointment to the academic position of "Assistant Professor" or the academic position of "Associate Professor" (in the case of candidates for professor). It shall also include an assessment of the peer-review requirement.

The candidate shall provide information on sufficient publications and creative output, separate from the monograph and after appointment to the academic post of assistant professor.

The publications shall be in reputable scientific journals, results of participation in various thematic conferences and summer schools with papers, as well as in thematic blogs, conferences, etc.

Many articles and reports have been published in scientific journals, are refereed, and are indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information.

I note the author's substantial contribution, which is a chapter in the collective monograph Leaders for a New Beginning, ISBN 9786190107576, 2020.

What is remarkable is the candidate's sustained motivation to consistently take on different challenges in the scientific and professional field of the complex and multi-layered media and communication puzzle, resonating in the publications with an appropriate and adequate scientific and practical-applied approach. This way, the necessary complex research interest is maintained, and opportunities for relevant media and communication practice approbations are opened.

The publications presented by the candidate confirm my conclusions about their scientific merits and the high degree of their practical professional applicability.

3. Quoting from other authors.

Citations from other authors are in accordance with the necessary requirements of the competition.



The candidate is a sought-after, desirable and cited author in publications with a broad academic and professional perimeter, but also with a strong focus in media and communications, especially in the context and challenges of the Internet space.

From the reference of citations in the scientific documentation provided by the candidate, it is found that they are respectively: one in a monograph indexed in a world-renowned database of scientific information; 36 citations in peer-reviewed monographs and collective volumes and 5 peer-reviewed citations in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals.

1. Evaluation of the results of participation in research and creative projects and application of the results in practice. The applicant provides information on successful participation in one international project related to research and professional interests: Information Matters, Horisont 2020, Global libraries, 2022-2024.

III. Teaching and Learning

1. Auditorium and non-auditorium employment, work in the electronic learning module "MOODLE—NBU," provide student internships and placements, and work with undergraduate and postgraduate students. Information is provided on active academic and non-academic employment.

In the e-learning module "Moodle - NBU" are available seven author's teaching materials for digital marketing, social media, content creation and public relations courses. The collaboration with students is pro-active and consistent, respectively:

- Creative Debates project for journalism students, NBU 2015;
- Created and conducted internships at BNR and other media outlets between 2012 and 2020 for students of the BA Journalism programme.
- Secured employment for students from the Department's Bachelor and Master programmes.

IV. Administrative and public activities

1. Participation in collective management bodies of the NBU.
Participation in the Programme Council of the Department of Mass Communications of the NBU in the years in which he/she is a lecturer in the role of an expert in practice.

2. Public activity.

Strong, sustainable and effective public activity of candidate Justine Toms in a broad social, scientific and professional perimeter that is publicly cantered with high value criteria towards different audiences and actors.

2. Engaging students in the program.

Candidate Justine Toms Jadala Maria with her teaching and professional activism engages and attracts students to the undergraduate and graduate programs of the Department of Media and Communication.

V. Personal impressions of the candidate (if any)

My personal impressions of candidate Justine Toms Jadala Maria over the years have been decidedly positive, both scientifically and professionally. At the same time, I am pleased to note that Justine Toms is a highly engaged bright public personality with a strong civic stance - we have participated together in projects with causes that have a significant impact in public life (e.g. participation in the jury of the Social Future Foundation's Agent of Change project).



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

My opinion of the candidate is entirely positive.

I do not have any critical remarks on the activities and achievements; instead, I support and encourage Justine Toms Jadala Maria to continue to develop her knowledge, skills, and competencies in the areas where she has established herself as a scholar and professional. Conclusion with a formulated positive or negative evaluation of the candidate's academic performance and a proposal for their admission or non-admission to election by the Academic Board.

Based on the preceding, with deep justification and complete conviction, without any doubts, I positively evaluate the teaching, scientific and applied activities of the candidate Justine Toms Jadala Maria and propose to the esteemed Scientific Jury to vote positively for the election to the academic post of "Assoc. Professor" in the professional field 3.5. Public Communications and Information Sciences (Digital Communications), Department of Media and Communication and admission to election by the Academic Board.

November 26th, 2024,

With respect

/Assoc. Prof. Stefan Dimitrov Serezliev, Ph.D./