What a new economic paper on reward and performance should address?

West University of Timisoara, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration

E-mail: oana.bogdan@e-uvt.ro

The reward policy provides the necessary framework for a fair share of the newly created value to go to employees; ensures the coordination of the interests of the social partners; expresses a certain collective, egalitarian or individual philosophy, covering, at the same time, other aspects such as: reward levels, performance remuneration, the ratio between internal and external equity, type of salary structure, flexible approach or flexibility of reward systems, etc. [A. Manolescu, Human Resources Management, Autonomous Printing Office (I. Coresi), Bucharest, 1998, p. 123].

In recent years, the Romanian economic literature has known several works on concepts, methods and procedures dedicated to theory and practice in the field of human resources reward. One of them is the one elaborated by Ionel Bostan, *Reward and performance in the competitive economy*, published at TipoMoldova Publishing House, Iasi, 2010 [1]. It is approached here that wages were not always related to the real efficiency of the

activity submitted by economic agents, which led to the idea that there was "a totally non-stimulating system of egalitarian distribution, with negative consequences on increasing labor productivity and economic efficiency (...)" [1]. However, the firm options for establishing a functioning market economy as evidenced by other works by the author [2-10], and the complexity of subsequent economic problems have

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profoundly influenced the conception and attitude about wages and wage policies. In terms of wage economic theory, the results of research obtained until 10-15 years ago did not provide essential clarifications, "dilemmas and controversies persist: some authors consider the salary a payment for employment or for work, others as a price for the purchase of goods - labor, and others - an amount paid to the one who rents his services" [1]. Right from the beginning of the mentioned work, we notice a persisting idea that the labor force is presented on the labor market as a commodity where it is sold and bought for

a price that is nothing but the salary, established under the action of supply and demand. Throughout the paper it becomes increasingly clear that "the salary is in a

relationship of direct dependence on work and the results obtained being subjected in size to contradictory processes of differentiation and proximity-equalization" [1]. Then it is referred to the fact that the salary is influenced to a decreasing extent by the external factors of the company (salary system of the branch, general evolution of prices and tariffs, evolution of social labor productivity, etc.), expanding internal factors at the company level (turnover, costs, profit, productivity, etc.) which led to what can be called "the tendency to detach the salary from the existing situation on the labor market" [1]. In this context, the impact of the regulatory framework is not negligible and the detachment of the salary from the existing situation on the labor market is associated with another trend, more pronounced in certain sectors namely that of the exceeding of the net salary by salary increases and other wage benefits (until the moment of Romania's accession to the EU). The situation was more present in the non-competitive sector (of autonomous administrations and national companies) and was characterized - until 2020 when national rules were established to correct the situation - by the massive increase of the share of personnel rights in the total payroll. Consequently, until that moment the salary functions could not be characterized by normality in the conditions of its "detachment" from its accessories. Last but not least it must be emphasized that many of these accessories were clearly independent of performance, which moreover did not justify distorted

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salary structures. Regarding the salary policy, the mentioned author highlights the fact that it is a complex activity that requires through rigorous calculations the inclusion of all salary characteristics, its functions, its correlations with various economic and social variables as well as taking into account the implications on various interests, often divergent, of the classic partnership triplet: employees (unions), employers and the state. The analyzes undertaken by the author

partially found in other of his works [11-16] show that for multiple years at the level of companies no policies have been created in terms of labor remuneration, most often being found either the legacy of the bureaucratic style due to the inertia or the misinterpretation of the legislative framework, either transposed to ad litteram copying policies that have been successful in case of other companies. Occasionally the mentioned paper includes landmarks such as: Theoretical foundations regarding the reward of work (Salary: notion, content and functions; Reflection of salary in some theories and economic concepts; Institutional aspects

regarding remuneration; Basic principles regarding remuneration). Forms of pay, special rewards and other facilities granted to employees are further discussed. An important share is held by the Regulation of the main elements of the salary system and the taxation of salaries so that afterwards the Salary Policy and economic performance, the involvement of the public authority in the salary policy and the Protection of employees in case of employer insolvency are addressed. The final part contains: Optimal elements in the salary policy at the company level; The motivational effects of various forms of pay and the incentive values of pay in relation to economic efficiency. The moment when the paper appeared (2010), it seems that its content was then at a satisfactory level; today if the updating efforts were resumed, it would be necessary to add other elements in addressing the issue of reward and performance. And this is possible especially because the author has addressed the issues of the competitive environment and in general those of economics and business in a relatively large number of scientific papers [17-59] in his papers or together with other specialists. We take into account the fact that the Law on unitary remuneration of staff paid from public funds has already been showing its results for a good period of time (No. 284 of December 28, 2010). Therefore, some aspects addressed in the paper mentioned at the beginning of our article are no longer valid today (i.e. the exaggerated exceeding of the pure salary

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by salary increases and additions - these being now capped in the case of the public sector). Considering that the staff in the Romanian public sector has a high share in the total number of employees, it was opportune to establish the mentioned law that aimed to "a) harmonize the salary system of the staff in the budget sector with the importance, responsibility, the complexity of the activity and the level of studies necessary for carrying out the activity; b) establishing the basic salaries and the monthly employment allowances as the main element of the salary gain; c) establishing the hierarchy of basic and basic salaries and of the monthly employment allowances, both between the fields of activity and within the same field after an evaluation of the positions, the differences being made according to the following criteria: knowledge and experience; complexity, creativity and diversity of activities; judgment and impact of decisions; influence, coordination and supervision; contacts and communication; work conditions; incompatibilities and special regimes; d) the transparency of the mechanism for establishing the basic salary and of the monthly employment allowances as well as of the other salary rights, etc.". In 2017, it was adopted the Framework Law no. 153/2017 on the remuneration of staff paid from public funds. That created the legislative framework for: "a) the development of a system for substantiating salary policies in the budgetary sector and for monitoring their application; b) the development of a

system of distribution of budgetary resources allocated for personnel expenses by establishing the basic salaries in the budgetary sector in order to promote the individual performance; c) the remuneration of the persons holding positions of public dignity". Framework law no. 153/2017 on the remuneration of staff paid from public funds redefines the general performance criteria taken into account when promoting staff paid from public funds or in order to award prizes, these being: "a) professional knowledge and skills; b) the quality, operability and efficiency of the activities carried out; c) improvement of professional training; d) ability to work in a team; e) communication; f) discipline; g) resistance to stress; h) the ability to assume responsibility; i) professional ethics".

The consequences of the putting in practice of the respective normative acts, possible difficulties or strengths, etc., we expect to find all these topics addressed in the editorial project referred to in our article. However, to all this it is vital to add and discuss the "up to date" evolution of the issue of pay at the level of private companies approached from the point of view of the employers, the unions or other state institutions.

One suggestion that we make to the researcher is that he should consider some comparative approaches referring to what is happening in other states whose conditions are close to the economic conditions found in Romania from the point of view of the salary phenomenon.

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