Evaluation of the Hungarian accounting regulation considering the development of the reporting system of the management accounting

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Pénzügyi és Számviteli Intézet

Az iskolavezető jóváhagyása

A témavezető jóváhagyása
1. Introduction

The second half of the 80’s and the first half of the 90’s can be considered as a transition period for the Hungarian economy from many aspects. The changes in the economy had continuous effects on the fields of accounting regulations. As a consequence of the rising globalization we can mention the ever accelerating capital flow, the widening of the scope of relationships, the multinationals’ increased capital needs and share in the world market, appearance of new financial instruments and none the less the ever increasing competition. The importance of the national borders is gradually fading and the big groups of enterprises create financial statements about their investments and subsidiaries based on different principles, rules and regulations in the different countries and the comparison of those require significant extra costs. For reliable management decisions of course the investors also need comparable information. To be able to compare the demands and possibilities both of the investors and the enterprises independently of their geographical locations there would be a need for the harmonization of the accounting policies and regulations.

In the past decades due to the continuous changes in the world economy and the spreading of multinationals there has been an increased demand for the harmonization of the accounting rules in different countries. In the European Union the law harmonization began from the 70’s and still in progress causing more and more debates and conflict. As a result the European Union accepted the IAS and IFRS directives (see abbr. on page 3.) and made compulsory for the member states to issue consolidated disclosure statements according to the accepted International Accounting Standards.

During the process of harmonization most of the debates arose from the question of real value evaluation since the introduction of this method can be considered even as a paradigm change however the professional debates have not been moderated even after the acceptance of the standards IAS 32 and 39.

In my research I put emphasis on the examination of cost accounting and the regulation system of reporting. The basis of our reporting system dates back to a long past so it is opportune to revise and rethink the completion of the balance sheet and profit and loss statement from articulation and classification point of view.

The harmonization of the international accounting standards and the coordination with the EU accounting directives can be considered as a positive process both at local and in international relation but our national economy can be part only of an evolving and changing accounting regulation policy. The acceleration of the globalization and the capital flow could trigger the standardization of the accounting regulations, the development of a standardized system for asset evaluation and pricing and the modernization of the reporting regulations both inland and internationally. The difference in the order of magnitude of the different enterprises defines serious differences in the field of information demand. The problem of extra charges given by the administration which can decrease the competitiveness of the smaller companies mainly, should be handled with special care.

Further more an other current problem or task is the coordination and monitoring of the increased harmonization of our accounting and taxation system, plus the creation of the possibility of a multilevel regulation at both fields mentioned before.
Based on my professional experience taken during the past years, my professional presentations and consultations held I believe I have formulated a point of view which appropriates several changes in our reporting system at both the balance sheet and profit and loss statement since those reports do not give fully correct information for the participants of the market.

2. Topicalness and the background of the subject

The background of my research has been determined by the fact that from 1995 until 2004 I was lecturing and training several related professional subjects at courses for chartered accountants, taxation consultants, financial consultants, financial assistants and chartered auditors. I participated in the preparation for examinations and later I tested as well average 50-60 hours a week and I was dealing with more than 30 educational institutions including some colleges and the faculty of social sciences at the Gödöllő University.

In 2002 I graduated at the economic and social science department of the Szent István University at financial and accountancy specification as an agrarian economist then in 2005 I took a degree also at the economic and social science department of the Szent István University at financial and accountancy specification as a chartered economist.

Besides managing my enterprise which is specialized in audit and taxation consultancy I have been lecturing and posting articles continuously. Since 2003 I have been lecturing at courses for chartered accountants in several educational institutes regularly. Also I make presentations in many places in the country at conferences specialized in taxation regulation. Directly or indirectly I have been in a daily contact with shareholders and top managers of numerous SMEs and foreign owned big enterprises.

The actuality of my research is justified by the process of the modernization and revision of the accounting directives nr. 4 and 7 in the EU, which is still an open issue. Cardinal problem is the special Hungarian entrepreneurial structure, since the SMEs differ significantly both in magnitude and business figures from the enterprises in the EU. Due to the EU harmonization which influences mostly our local accounting regulations, the process helps primarily the big size companies so giving unfortunately significant extra administration charges to the SMEs.

Examining this subject we have to admit that there would be a need for such a modernization and development which could help the operation of the SMEs as well. When evaluating the adaptability, the quality and usefulness of an accounting system it is necessary to examine it from classification and articulation point of view as well. After joining the EU there has been regulations aiming at simplifications in the administration of the SMEs but those changes have not made any significant facilitation in practice. It could be a help if the enactment as a framework could stand apart from the detailed regulation of the accounting system which requires special methods and scope of duties. There has been attempts to introduce a two level accounting regulation during the planning of introduction of the Hungarian accounting standards between 2004-2006, but it is still an open question generating significant problems between the enactment and its practical applicability.

The base of the background of my research contained the followings: academic and practical critics in connection with the numeric structure of the disclosure statement – balance sheet and profit and loss statement- , professional problems of the determination of the usual
market price, demand for decreasing the excess administrational charges (including the field of taxation too) on the SMEs, actuality of the necessity of modifying the local accounting regulation system. In my dissertation with detailed literature revision I introduce the theories and scientific attitudes related to my proposals then by evaluating the questionnaires and by mathematical modeling and case studies of the examined specialty I intend to confirm my hypotheses.

3. The aims of my research

Through my enquiries and researches I was intent on reaching the following aims:

1. Relying on professional literature sources I intend to evaluate the different levels of the accountancy regulation in both local and international context. I would like to demonstrate with emphasis the history of the development of the Hungarian accountancy regulation in the past years by brief evaluating of the empirical experiences and assumed problems. Through my researches comparing the assumptions - found in my professional literature sources – to the empirical results, my aim is to set up a new regulation model in which the outputs of the theoretical and functional levels of the regulation system are higher harmonized than the current level.

2. I intend to systematize the classification of the SMEs in local and international context, the accordances, differences and coherences between the two qualifications, furthermore I try to demonstrate the comments and problems in connection with the administration charges and the relevant regulation system of reporting by evaluating the special value and structure of the Hungarian SMEs. My aim is to emphasize the steps made in the local regulation system for simplification of the administration than draw the conclusions. With the results of my researches I would like to prove that it is necessary to abolish partly the text parts under a certain value limit that could significantly decrease the administration charges of the SMEs. My further aim is to reveal the practical adaptability and shortcomings deriving from the regulation of the determination of the ruling market values, and as a result verifying the necessity of the appearing modifications – confirming empirically as well.

3. In my primary aims I intend to analyse the structure of the yearly disclosure statement – balance sheet and profit and loss statement - of the Hungarian reporting system in the sense of articulation and classification, analyzing the linking between the lines, and determining the usefulness of the lines and the main lines as information carriers.

I intend to reveal the logic system and contradictions of the relations and conformity of the lines and the groups. The aim of my analysis is a more effective and transparent presentation of the data of the disclosure statement and decreasing the differences between the information supplied by the management and those of obligatory prescribed. My aim is to compose a modern regulation structure of reporting in which the transparency and the communication of the information of the data are of a higher standard of logic than the current one.
4. Carrying on my researches I intend to reveal basic coherences and relations of the cost accounting systems and I intend to analyze the conformity of the costs and the expenditures with the profit and loss statement. My aim is to define the cost accounting systems currently in force then drawing conclusions I intend to set up the structures of a new type of profit and loss statement.

5. As part of my research –based on the questionnaire survey – for demonstrating a more reliable and clear operational result I plan to optimize the composition and classification - and filter out the deriving distortions - of the direct and indirect costs of the “cost of sales method” based profit and loss statement. The distortions deriving from the false structures of the costs I intend to confirm by effect tests as well.

4. The hypotheses of the research

Proving the basic hypotheses of my research, on the one hand I was trying to reveal the importance of the modification of our accountancy regulation system currently, taking into consideration the practical problems of the financial reporting, on the other hand I was searching for confirmation to my acquired practical experiences that I have supported with researches.

Hypothesis (1):

There is a need for working out a two levelled accountancy regulator system in which the logic of the regulation system of reporting deviates from the current law regulation because our accountancy law in some sense is over detailed and on the other hand it informs the user groups only in a general way. The single levelled legal regulation -because of its bureaucratic character- is not able to manage and modify effectively the critics and feedbacks of the practical application.

Hypothesis (2):

In case of SME-s there would be a need for further simplification for decreasing the administration charges both on the field of taxation and accountancy. Under a certain income limit –the limit for compulsory auditing-the legal regulations for making and depositing of the notes to the financial statement should be abolished. There would be a need for developing a specific regulator system for the determination of the regular market values, which could ease to work out the balance sheet values and the different transaction fees.

Hypothesis (3):

In the domestic regulation-system of reporting both the balance sheet and the profit and loss statement should be modernized both in the sense of articulation and classification because the structure of the current schemas prescribed by the law in force are conservative in a sense and some lines/main lines –taking into consideration several aspects- contain distorted data too. The reformation of the reporting system could ease the job of the authority control in the sense of the quality of data supply and the communication of information as well.
Hypothesis (4):

The systems of cost accounting should be partly modified so that further two new type of profit and loss statements could be added to the financial reporting system. Almost all the enterprises complete “total cost method” profit and loss statement therefore there would be a need for having a type of profit and loss statement which reflects sales approach but not manufacturing based. Furthermore there would be a need of a gross approach – total cost method – profit and loss statement schema detailing both the cost bearer and the activated own performance.

Hypothesis (5):

In the “cost of sales method” profit and loss statement the administrative and other general costs should be altered in structure because the costs in their composition might contain such items which can distort the presentation of the clear operational result. In the “cost of sales method” profit and loss statement the items besides the sales and distributing indirect costs can be connected not only to the sales but to the values of the activated own performances as well.

5. Material and method

5.1. Setting up the data base

In the research the questionnaire approach was given a determining role. When setting up the questionnaire I aimed to collect demonstrative information to proof – or disproof – the hypothesis I formulated. Creating the 37 questions I paid attention to the feedbacks and at the closed questions on the multiple choices. The questionnaires have been filled in with the help of random sampling.

For data recording the forms has been sent out by fax by e-mail and by post and collecting them took place in the same way. The cover letter can be found in the attachment no. 15. The target groups were foreign owned big enterprises, Hungarian micro-, small and medium size enterprises, financial service companies, liquidators, broker firms and other enterprises. The number of the sent out and returned questionnaires are detailed in the illustration no.13

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Illustration no.13, The number of the sent out and returned questionnaires
The period of data recording was: 2009. April 21 – 2010. February 8. Number of questionnaires sent out: 750. Number of returned questionnaires: 324. The questionnaire can be found in the appendix nr. 16. Before starting the analysis of the received data with the help of the SPSS 16.0 program I created a database. In the database by duplicating the questions of the questionnaires I created 37 pieces of variables and for indicating them I used the ordinal numbers of the questions. Regarding the questions where more answers could be given, with the help of the Multiple Response command I created a data structure similar to the questionnaires. In accordance with the number of the questionnaires returned 324 cases got in the database.

5.2. Statistic methods used through the analysis

For the examination of the hypotheses I used statistical processes with one- and more variables. For the analysis of the completed database I also used the SPSS 16.0 program. The illustrations made through the analysis were converted from the output file of this program. The diagrams – for having a better overview – were completed in Microsoft Excel 2007 software based on the tables of the SPSS output file. The analysis consisted of two main parts. Firstly, all the variables put in the data base I have analyzed with descriptive statistical methods. Given by the specialty of the questionnaire majority of the variables has been low level, nominal variables. For that, in the descriptive statistic method part I examined the distribution of the given answers by each variables, paying special attention to the surpassingly frequent answers. In the second part of the analysis I used cross tables for testing the hypotheses. When comparing the value of the variables - noticed in different samplings - I used statistical trials developed for analyzing the difference of the two expected values.

For testing the significant difference I used X-quadrate trial, and the significance was determined by the generally approved P=5% limit. For the scale of strength and tightness of the connections I used the X quadrat based Cramer’s rule. As I have already mentioned above, most of the variables are nominal variables. I used the Cramer rule because this is the most ideal for measuring the strength of the connection between two nominal variables. In this way I examined my hypotheses based on the variables showing coherency between each other.

5.3. Other methods used through the analysis

With my novel mathematical modelings I revealed and systematized the logical relationships and basic matchings of the cost accounting systems and the related profit and loss statements.

In my case studies of accountancy the newly modeled profit and loss statements and its matching with or differences from the current versions has been confirmed by impact assessments as well. With further impact assessments I pointed out the distortion effects of the non allocated indirect costs –management and other general expenses- in the “cost of sales” method profit and loss statements and through that I revealed the necessity of the partial regrouping of the expenses. For the rearrangement of the expenses I worked out specific practical methods.
6. Novel scientific results

1. There is a need for working out a two levelled accountancy regulator system in which the logic of the regulation system of reporting deviates from the current law regulation because our accountancy law in some sense is over detailed and on the other hand it informs the user groups only in a general way. The single levelled legal regulation -because of its bureaucratic character- is not able to manage and modify effectively the critics and feedbacks of the practical application.

2. In case of SME-s there would be a need for further simplification for decreasing the administration charges both on the field of taxation and accountancy. Under a certain income limit –the limit for compulsory auditing-the legal regulations for making and depositing of the notes to the financial statement should be abolished. There would be a need for developing a specific regulator system for the determination of the regular market values, which could ease to work out the balance sheet values and the different transaction fees.

3. In the domestic regulation-system of reporting both the balance sheet and the profit and loss statement should be modernized both in the sense of articulation and classification, because the structure of the current schemas prescribed by the law in force are conservative in a sense and some lines/main lines –taking into consideration several aspects- contain distorted data too. The reformation of the reporting system could ease the job of the authority control in the sense of the quality of data supply and the communication of information as well.

4. The systems of cost accounting should be partly modified so that further two new type of profit and loss statements could be added to the financial reporting system. Almost all the enterprises complete “total cost method” profit and loss statement therefore there would be a need for having a type of profit and loss statement which reflects sales approach but not manufacturing based. Further more there would be a need of a gross approach - total cost method – profit and loss statement schema detailing both the cost bearer and the activated own performance.

5. In the “cost of sales method” profit and loss statement the administrative and other general costs should be altered in structure because the costs in their composition might contain such items which can distort the presentation of the clear operational result. In the “cost of sales method” profit and loss statement the items besides the sales and distributing indirect costs can be connected not only to the sales but to the values of the activated own performances as well.
7. Conclusions and suggestions

Summarizing the results of my research it can be stated that the modernization of the structure-articulation and classification of the disclosure statement is as important as the introduction of a two levelled regulation system. There is a need to work out such a two levelled accountancy regulation system in which the accountancy regulation has a higher rank and the reporting system is built on a more sophisticated logic.

The results proved that both on the field of taxation and accountancy the administration charges of the SMEs should be decreased and in context with this regarding the usual market values a more detailed regulation system would be topical to be developed.

In the main group of the Assets two groups should be created, one should be the “assets aiming at the business target” and the other should be the group of “assets not related to the business target”. In the main group of the assets in the category of tangible assets the obligatory statement of the Farm Animals group should be abolished. In the tangible assets group moreover the accountancy classification of the „technical devices, equipments, vehicles” and the „other devices, equipments, vehicles” should not be necessary to divide, but the group of „non business aiming assets” should be separated from that. The social facilities and the similar accountancy items should be relocated into the main group of the “assets not related to the business target”. The value of the automobiles used by the CEOs should be classified into the group of the “assets aiming at the business target”. The liabilities and equity side just like the assets’ side should be categorized. Especially the liabilities main group should be striped like the others above. Similarly to the financial instruments the conditions of reclassification between the “assets aiming at the business target” and the “assets not related to the business target” should be regulated. Related to this, the audit activity should be restricted too.

In the profit and loss statement the categories of the „other incomes” and „other expenditures” should be moved from the „business activity result” to the „additional result”. The depreciation as a cost category should be divided into amortisations of „business” and „non-business” related assets. The amortisation of the „non-business” related assets would modify the “additional result”. The denomination of “result of the financial activities” category should be abolished and its elements should be distributed in logical order between the „business result” and the „additional result”. The realized exchange rate profit and the payable interest on business investments should be relocated from the “result on financial activities” to the main group of the „business results”. I propose to abolish the denomination of the „usual enterprise result”. The category of „extraordinary profit” should also be abolished and its items should be moved into the „additional result”.

Similarly to the “total costs method” profit and loss statement, the structure of the “cost of sales method” profit and loss statement should also be restructured. The profit accounting logics of the cost accounting concept according to the cost centre/cost bearer should partly be modified. The usefulness of the information content of the type of costs in the “total costs method” profit and loss statements is not adequate to the practical demands so it should also be modified.

The introduction of the „new type” profit and loss statement schema would be necessary because some costs that are not included in the currently used schemas could also be introduced bringing the shareholders’ and the management’s information demand closer to
each other. The cost accounting systems should be partly modified so that two new types of profit and loss statement could be added to the reporting system. I propose to modify the indirect cost structure of the “cost of sales method” profit and loss statement which from methodology point of view belongs to the cost centre/ cost bearer based cost accounting system.

Regarding the cost of sales process the indirect costs of the activated own performance would not be presented so this way the cost of sales can only contain costs distributable solely to the sales. For this the management and other general costs cannot be allocated unequivocally to the indirect cost of sales so the denomination of this type of profit and loss statement is also not completely appropriate. The management and other general costs should be proportionately distributed between the costs of sales and the values of the activated own performance.

In my view the truthfulness and reliability of the accountancy reports has a primary importance for the authorities and the participants of the market to get a true and fair view of the financial position, property and revenues of the business enterprise. The responsibility of bringing decisions – from evaluation point of view- is in the hands of the management but in spite of that the quality of the reporting system can be guaranteed through the regulation of the accountancy policy which is a guaranteed item regarding the accountancy regulation, however it can influence the trust of the investors and moreover provides information for the authorities as well.
8. Summary

Changes in the economic processes has been acting in the area of the regulation of accounting as well. As a consequence of the increasing globalization we can mention the ever accelerating capital flow, the widening of the scope of relationships, the multinationals’ increased capital needs and share in the world market, appearance of new financial instruments and none the less the ever increasing competition. The importance of national borders is gradually fading and the big groups of enterprises create financial statements regarding their investments and subsidiaries based on different rules and regulations in different countries and the comparison of those requires significant extra costs. For reliable management decisions of course the investors need also comparable information.

Those needs have initiated a procedure of harmonization outside the EU internationally, the approach of the systems IAS/IFRS and USGAAP and a process of law harmonization inside the EU which regarding the member states’ regulations resulted in an approximation to the european directives.

Currently the actual open question is the modernization procedures of the nr. 4 and 7 accounting directives of the EU. The aim of the remake of the accounting directives is to help the law-integration of the international and transatlantic regulations. Above mentioned changes also confirmed my right choice of the subject which is supported by more than a 15 years academic and pragmatic experience.

During my research I have learned the whole spectrum and area of the accounting regulation where I touched on the coherence between the systems of reporting and systems of cost accounting. Basically I approached through two methods namely the qualitative and quantitative procedures. In my research I put emphasis on complexity while primarily I dealt with the logical projection of the reporting and cost accounting systems, the usefulness of the examination of information and the real and true introduction of the financial and economic situation of the examined organization. I gave special attention to the regulative alterations aiming simplification of the administration - and so discovering its problems - in the reporting systems of the micro and small size enterprises.

During the analysis of the case studies and of the data by questionnaires I realized that most of the organizations find necessary the modification of the reporting system -profit and loss, balance sheet- from articulation and classification point of view. In the composition of the currently operating system of reporting - dating back to a long past - in certain aspects there are conservative elements, the logic of articulation is not fully standing the demands of the current era. A proposal could be the introduction or follow up of several types of profit and loss accounts which could better satisfy the needs of the investors and all participants of the market.

Additionally it has been proved by the results of the questionnaire analysis and by the numeric coherence and cost analysis of my case studies that the systems of cost accounting require alteration especially in the accounting of direct costs.

As a result of my research by examining the practical problems of the determination of different accounting values, my proposal is to work out a standard - applicable both inland and internationally- for determination of a usual market value. This standard could be even the footstone of a new type of evaluation system built on a more standardized regulation.

In the past years in the accounting regulation of the SME there has been arrangements aiming at the simplification of administration but based on the experience these arrangements have not been significantly perceptible. Though the introduction of an accounting standard-regulation for the small and middle size enterprises and the modernization of the EU accounting directives is a continuously open question, it is
necessary to rethink the further possibilities of decreasing the administrational burden of those organizations inland as well.

Through my empirical research I can prove that both in accounting and tax regulation there would be a need of the establishment of a multi level regulation where the highest body of law making - the Parliament - could file out of the approval of detailed regulations. The detailed rules of the accounting system could be formulated and modified by separate boards and special committees.

On the whole we can declare that in the current period of the regulation of accounting our national economy is part of a transformation procedure. Beyond the efforts aiming at the integration of the international accounting regulation systems there are numerous practical questions and professional problems which require solution as well as modification so that our accounting system can reflect the true, reliable and real picture of assets.
9. List of publications

Learned journal article in Hungarian:

Learned journal article in foreign language:

Presentation at academic conference in foreign language published in full:
3. **György Majoros** - Zoltán Dr. Zéman: Practice of the assets and liabilities’s valuation system. 6th International Conference for Young Researchers, 4-6 October, 2010 Szent Istvan University (Befogadó nyilatkozat mellékelve)

Presentation at academic conference in Hungarian published in full:
1. **Majoros György**: Az IFRS-ek anomáliái a nyilvánosan kibocsátó részvénytársaságok körében. Erdei Ferenc Konferencia, Kecskemét 2005. (poszter)
Other articles:


Notes:

1. **Majoros György**. - Dr. Zéman Z.: Számviteli specialitások. Szent István Egyetem lektorált egyetemi jegyzet, 2002. (p.120.)