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**The Balanced Scorecard in the Netherlands;  
An analysis of its evolution using print-media  
indicators**

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## **Abstract**

Despite the fact that since its launch by Kaplan and Norton (1992) professional and academic discourse on the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) is intense, it is not clear to what extent organizational changes are induced by and associated with this discourse. An intensive BSC-discourse may not be equated with a large amount of actual changes within organizations. This paper's aim is to contribute to understanding the production and diffusion of the BSC. Drawing on the literature on organization concepts we analyze the reception pattern of the BSC in the Netherlands, i.e. the accumulation of ways the BSC has been received in different subsets within the media and its incidence of use in these different groups.

Our results show, amongst others, that despite the fact that BSC discourse is intensive, its actual use in praxis is moderate and lags intended use at strategic performance management. In addition, discourse is loosely coupled to organizational praxis: publications on the BSC may affect organizational behaviour but also reflect that behaviour. Consultants are the leading BSC disseminators, while on the 'consumption side' the BSC tends to be interpreted differently in varying professional communities. We discuss these findings and their implications.

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## **1. Introduction**

Since its launch by Kaplan and Norton (1992) the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) has enjoyed considerable attention in literature from practitioners and academics alike. In the Dutch media statements such as "a self-respecting organization apparently can no longer do without the Balanced Scorecard" (Van den Heuvel and Broekman, 1998: 23), or qualifying the Balanced Score card (BSC) as "a real trend" (Koning and Conijn, 1997: 36) or having "a fad-like impression" (Du Mée, 1996: 21) and being "a true hype" (Hers, 1998: 19) suggest that the BSC is an important administrative innovation that has become widely diffused and brought about many changes in a variety of organizations in The Netherlands during the late 1990s. However, an intensive discourse may not be equated with a large amount of actual changes within organizations. It is not clear how this relationship takes shape (Abrahamson and Fairchild, 1999; Nijholt and Benders, 2007).

Initially the BSC was developed as a comprehensive performance measurement system encompassing a coherent set of financial and non-financial performance measures covering different perspectives of the organization (Kaplan and Norton, 1992). Later Kaplan and Norton transformed it into a strategic management system describing management processes and principles to develop and implement a strategy-focused and aligned management system build on sound, formal accounting principles (1996; 2001). However, insight into BSC's actual evolution in discourse and praxis is limited. Studies suggest that the BSC was received and developed in various ways (Malmi, 2001; Speckbacher, Bischof and Pfeiffer, 2003; Van der Meer-Kooistra and Vosselman, 2004; Ax and Bjørnerak, 2005; Madsen and Windlin, 2006). Academically, such a development pattern is interesting as it gives insight into the drivers behind the dissemination, and possibly institutionalization of a concept. Practitioners may be more interested what interpretations and manners of use occur, so that they may reflect on how to use the BSC themselves.

This paper aims to contribute to understanding the BSC by analyzing the popularity and reception pattern of the BSC in the Netherlands. The reception pattern refers to the ways the BSC has been received in (managerial) discourse and organizational praxis. As a framework we draw on the evolving literature on (the use of) organization concepts and management fashions (Eccles and Nohria, 1992; Gill and

Whittle, 1993; Huczynski, 1993; Fincham, 1995; Shapiro, 1995; Abrahamson, 1996; Staute, 1996; Kieser, 1997; Ramsay, 1998; Van der Wiele, Dale and Williams, 2000; Staw and Epstein, 2000; Benders and Van Veen, 2001; Fincham and Roslender, 2003; Clark, 2004; Swan, 2004; David and Strang, 2006). This literature offers a frame to improve understanding the dynamics of the evolution of particular organization concepts, thereby making a distinction between discourse and praxis. To disclose the reception pattern of the BSC in the Netherlands, we use Print-Media Indicators (PMI) (Benders, Nijholt and Heusinkveld, 2007). PMI provide us a method to analyze the popularity of an organization concept in the management discourse and praxis. Our results, amongst others, show that the label BSC encompasses a large variety of different interpretations and suggest that the organizational changes related to this concept lag its discourse.

The paper is organized as follows. First we discuss the theoretical background focusing on the literature of organization concepts. Next, the research method and the data are described, which is followed by a presentation of the reception pattern of the BSC in the Netherlands. Finally, we draw conclusions and discuss the findings, implications and limitations of our study.

## **2. Conceptual background: organizational concepts**

As prescriptive, more or less coherent views on management, organizational concepts (OCs) may play an important role in shaping contemporary organizational processes, structures and organizational behavior. Numerous managers seem to be influenced by concepts like Business Process Reengineering, Total Quality Management and Lean Production that are produced by management knowledge suppliers. A concept's chances to gain widespread attention from managers increase if it contains the following elements (Kieser, 1997; Røvik, 2002):

- a catchy title, both for the OC as well as the publication;
- the presentation of the concept as timely, innovative and future-oriented with promises of, preferably substantial, performance enhancement and the threat of bankruptcy in case of non-adoption;
- stress on the concept's universal applicability;
- examples of well-known and successful cases of users;

- interpretative viability, i.e. the OC leaves a certain room for interpretation.

The prescriptions on organizing may be produced by academics, gurus or consultants, and are meant to be used or ‘consumed’ by managers. For practical reasons these prescriptions are simplified, but at the same time often they are unspecific and have a certain degree of vagueness. As a consequence, they lend themselves for a wide variety of interpretations (cf. Ortmann, 1995; Benders and Van Veen, 2001; Giroux, 2006). This interpretative viability is not a coincidence but by many considered a precondition for ideas to ‘flow’ (Røvik, 2002) and become popular among managers (Brunsson, 1993; Abrahamson, 1996; Kieser, 1997). The supply side of the diffusion process may use the concept’s interpretative viability to shape a concept in different ways and in various contexts to get attention from different intended audiences. Different kinds of authors with varying agendas may thus use discourse as an active participant in the construction and reconstruction of the concept (Chen and Meindl, 1991; Shoemaker and Reese, 1996). Interpretative viability may also provide the demand side opportunities to eclectically select ‘elements that appeal to them [...], or that they opportunistically select as suitable for their purposes’ (Benders and Van Veen, 2001: 37-38). Variation in interpretations may arise intentionally or unintentionally, i.e. those who enact an OC may or may not be aware that they are actively shaping and therewith changing its contents. A consequence of this shaping by OC-users is that what happens under a label's guise may be loosely coupled to the contents which its launchers had in mind. Consumers’ and producers’ interpretations thus shape the actions undertaken under a particular label and vice versa. Labels and actions may become ‘loosely coupled’.

Yet no matter how well a text may be well geared towards this target audience, as holds for any other products, OCs’ market successes and failures cannot be predicted with certainty. One may sense ‘incipient preferences’ of prospective followers and succeed in articulating these in powerful language, but an OC’s success also depends on other factors such as the economic circumstances under which it is launched (Abrahamson, 1996). If an OC receives considerable attention in the management press and induces a substantial number of change projects, one can speak of a ‘management fashion’ (Gill and Whittle, 1993; Abrahamson, 1996; Kieser, 1997; Benders and Van Veen, 2001).

For understanding the dynamics of the evolution of a particular OC, it is important to assess whether such a concept could be characterized as a ‘management fashion’. Management fashions trigger their own social dynamics: bandwagon effects occur among fashion consumers, i.e. managers, and fashion producers, mostly consultants. Managers fear missing the boat, leading to similar concerns among consultants. The demand and supply sides reinforce each other in an autocatalytic process, until the decline sets in. This decline may be caused by changing socio-economic conditions, boredom among consumers when a concept’s novelty has worn off, negative epiphenomena such as employee resistance and/or widespread disappointment when highly raised expectations are not met (Huczynski, 1993; Kieser, 1997; Benders and Van Veen, 2001; Hislop, 2002; Swan, 2004). Empirically the intensity of the (public) discourse that initially grows fast, but fades out later, is an indicator for these waves in the popularity of particular concepts among managers. Graphically, this results in bell-shaped curves of PMI illustrating swings in the popularity of an OC (Gill and Whittle, 1993; Abrahamson and Fairchild, 1999; Heusinkveld and Benders, 2001; Green, 2004).

OCs are shaped and disseminated by ‘management intellectuals’, i.e. all those who write about management (Guillén, 1994). In the course of the past decade, consultants appear to have become more important in this respect (Fincham and Evans, 1999; Creplet, Dupouet, Kern, Mehmanpazir and Munier, 2001; Faust, 2002: 150). Consultancies have a vested interest in being associated with popular concepts, as this offers a market potential. They tend to ‘hitch-hike on the hype’ (Benders, Van den Berg, and Van Bijsterveld, 1998), and publishing articles in the management press is an important means for signaling market presence. To get managerial attention they play a different language game than academics (Astley and Zammuto, 1992; Kieser, 2002). Where academic publication criteria stress precision requiring a set of well-defined constructs, consultants may use a totally different style and jargon in which exaggeration and raising customer expectations are key (Kieser, 1997).

The extent and ways concepts are received may be highly context-specific (Mazza and Alvarez, 2000; Rüling, 2005). Historical analyses suggests that different concept discourses co-exist with different ‘speech communities’ (Raub and Rüling, 2001) and reveals the way a concept has been taken up is largely impelled through the actions of

specific professional subgroups (Shenhav, 1999). Common backgrounds of individuals, for instance their professional origins (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Heusinkveld and Benders, 2001; Scarbrough and Swan, 2001) are likely to influence the specific ways how they interpret a particular concept. Individuals who share a common background often make similar interpretations, which differ from individuals belonging to other groups. Such interpretations, which are displayed in specific professional discourses, shape how they translate the abstract notions contained in a concept into actions (Zbaracki, 1998), i.e. the concepts takes shape in particular forms when it is transferred across different contexts.

For understanding the evolution of the BSC, this discussion raises some questions:

- can the BSC be called a ‘fashion’?;
- who are its main propagators?;
- what dominant interpretations of these propagators and other disseminators have come into being?; and
- what experiences have been gained in organizational praxis?

Next we empirically address these questions for the BSC in the Netherlands.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Methods**

Quantitative empirical research into OCs/management fashions is dominated by studies using print media indicators (Abrahamson and Fairchild, 1999; Carson, Lanier, Carson and Guidry, 2000; Dale, Elkjaer, Van der Wiele and Williams, 2001; Heusinkveld and Benders, 2001; Benders et al., 2007; Giroux, 2006). By retrieving publications from bibliographic databases, insight is gained into the development of the intensity of published discourse. As printed texts are immune for retrospective modifications, they offer a reliable window to study the development of managerial discourse (Furusten, 1999; Raub and Ruling, 2001).

The development of published discourse must be distinguished from the actual use of concepts in praxis. However, PMI may be a useful starting point to get insight into



actual use of a particular concept as the publications found can be further examined by content analysis. Content analysis, or ‘any systematic procedure devised to examine the content of recorded information’ (Gunter, 2000: 56), can give indications about the disciplines and/or sectors in which a concept enjoyed popularity and may reveal ways in which the concept has been received in these different populations. In addition, the texts found may also contain empirical data such as survey and case studies that can give indication about how and how many organizations used the concept studied. In sum, PMI supplemented by content analysis of the corresponding articles may generate ‘windows on praxis’.

### **3.2 Data**

When using PMI, it is essential to consider the specific composition of databases that were used. In this study we used the OnLine Contents bibliographic database as a starting point and major source of empirical data. Online Contents (OLC) is a database that contains the tables of content of some 15,000 periodicals from a large variety of different disciplinary areas. Around 2 million bibliographic entries are added annually. OLC contains periodical in multiples languages. Some 1,100 out of the 15,000 periodicals are in Dutch, while the largest portion of the remaining periodicals is in English, followed by German and French. OLC covers both professional and academic journals.

### **3.3 Data gathering and analysis**

The empirical work was conducted in two steps. First, OLC was consulted by using three key words: Balanced Scorecard, Score Card and BSC. We conducted searches for the years 1992-2004 and recorded the bibliographic data of the articles received. For each keyword the outcomes were checked and redundancies and false hits were eliminated. The searches resulted in a total of 772 hits. The records that were found were classified according to publication year and language.

Secondly, the Dutch publications were distilled from the total amount of BSC related records. This resulted in a sample of 227 articles from 64 different Dutch journals. We analyzed the content and background of these articles in quantitative and qualitative

terms. We collected quantitative data about actual use of the BSC in organizational praxis and the professional backgrounds of the authors of the Dutch-language publications.

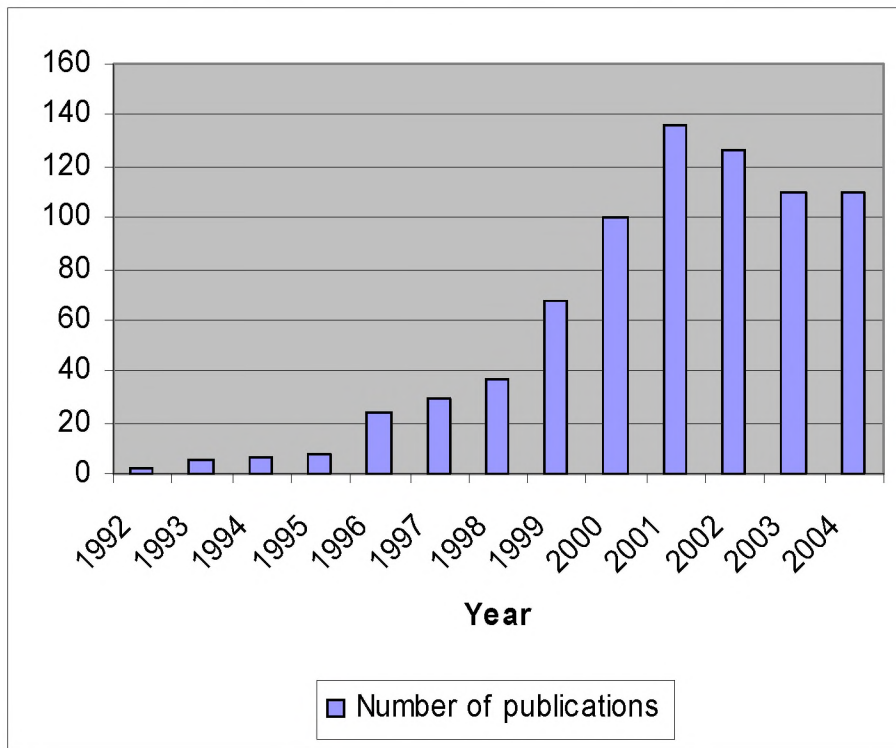
Next, two raters examined the content of the articles in qualitative terms following established techniques of analyzing qualitative data (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). This entire analysis followed an inductive approach: all final coding categories were developed from a preliminary, exploratory coding of data. The final coding makes a distinction between journal affiliation and ways of BSC use. Journal affiliation was designed for identifying different disciplines because many journals seem to support a particular interpretation of the underlying concept. They thus play an important role in shaping collective beliefs about an OC serving particular types of audience (Raub and Ruling, 2001). The articles were classified by journal. The journals were classified as either ‘professional’ or ‘academic’. Professional journals were further divided into the disciplines Accounting, Management, IT, HRM and Other, using their titles and profile descriptions. To investigate how the BSC is interpreted and used, each article was coded according to the central functions that emerged from the selected discourse, i.e. the BSC used as comprehensive performance measurement and reporting tool, evaluation and rewarding tool and strategic management system tool to guide change processes. These functions are not mutually exclusive, i.e. one article might impute the BSC more than one function. Finally we analyzed the different ways the BSC has been received in relation to the disciplines distinguished using nonparametric tests to find whether and how different interpretations are related to specific audiences, i.e. particular types of journals.

## **4. Empirical results**

### **4.1 Intensity of BSC-discourse**

Figure 1 shows the number of publications on the BSC in Dutch discourse over the period 1992-2004.

**Figure 1** Frequencies of BSC-publications for the years 1992-2004



The curve shows that the number of articles was very limited until 1995. 1996 showed a strong increase but there is only moderate growth in the years 1997 and 1998. After 1998 and up to 2001 the number of PMI grows by about 50 per cent annually. After 2001 the number of publications decreases slowly. Thus, after a four-year ‘incubation period’ the number of publications started to grow more quickly but hardly declined after 2001. Although the period studied is relatively large, the curve in Figure 1 is not clearly bell-shaped as a held to be typical for management fashions such as Business Process Reengineering (Heusinkveld and Benders, 2001) or Quality Circles (Abrahamson and Fairchild, 1999). Thus, the opinions of Dutch authors quoted in the introduction of the BSC being a management fashions in The Netherlands could not be corroborated.

#### **4.2 BSC-disseminators**

The professional backgrounds of the authors of Dutch-language publications were researched to assess whether consultants have become the dominant BSC-disseminators.

**Table 1 Professional** backgrounds of authors of BSC publications

<i>Professional background</i>	<i>Number of authors</i>	<i>Percentage of total</i>
Consultancy*	157	47,5
Academic**	63	19,0
Business (including auditing)	47	14,2
Journalism	20	6,1
Consultancy & academic***	6	1,8
Consultancy & business*	12	3,6
Academic & business**	10	3,0
Unknown	16	4,8
Total	331	100,00

\* Consultancy related authors

\*\* Academic related authors

Table 1 demonstrates that consultants turn out to be about 50 per cent of the authors in professional media. This suggests a significant role of consultants in disseminating the concept. Most of their publications are purely conceptual, relating for instance to what the BSC is, illustrating how it can be used, and what pitfalls might be encountered when implementing it. By drawing on previous implementation experiences, consultancies may give a concept their own stamps and gain attention for their product offerings and company. For this reason, in publications, which can be seen as disguised advertisements or advertorials, they appear to be ‘inventors’ of ‘new’ applications and interpretations of the concept. As a consequence, for analyzing the content of the BSC-discourse it is important to take into account the influence of consultants on the interpretation variety of the BSC.

### 4.3 Context-related interpretations of the BSC

To assess whether dominant interpretations about a concept vary across different professional communities, Table 2 shows the distribution of Dutch publications over different disciplines.

**Table 2 Journal affiliation: classification of BSC articles**

<i>Nature of journal</i>	<i>Discipline</i>	<i>Number of journals</i>	<i>Number of articles</i>	<i>As percentage of the total</i>	<i>Average number of articles per journal</i>
Professional	Accounting	13	96	42,3	7,4
	Management	15	35	15,4	2,3
	IT	10	20	8,8	2,0
	HRM	5	13	5,7	2,6
	Other	15	38	16,8	2,5
Academic		6	25	11,0	4,2
Total		64	227	100,0	3,5

Perhaps unsurprisingly given the background of BSC-initiators Kaplan and Norton, the BSC got substantial coverage within Dutch accounting magazines: more than 40 per cent of the Dutch-language publications appeared in professional magazines on accounting. Although the number of magazines is relatively large (thirteen), the average number of BSC-articles is 7.4, which is high compared with the figures of the other disciplines. The journals in the category ‘management’ are heterogeneous and include about 15 per cent. The number of journals is large, and the average number of articles per journal is 2.3. Given the availability of BSC-related IT-tools, few IT-articles have been published. This may be a sign that the Dutch market for BSC-related IT-tools was rather small. In the category HRM, in which only five journals were found, the average number of articles per journal is 2.6, which is partly caused by series of specials in two magazines.

Table 3 shows the distribution of the functional BSC perceptions over the different disciplines, i.e. BSC as performance measurement system, as evaluation and compensation system and as strategic management system.

**Table 3 Perceived BSC functions**

<i>Nature of journal</i>	<i>Discipline</i>	<i>Perceived BSC functions</i>		
		Performance measurement system	Evaluation and compensation system	Strategic Management System
Professional	Accounting	72	15	47
	Management	26	5	21
	IT	16	3	6
	HRM	9	8	2
	Other	26	6	5
Academic		21	3	9
Total number of articles		170	40	90

Consistent with Kaplan and Norton (1992), the BSC is associated with a performance measurement system in about 75 per cent of the 227 Dutch publications. The papers describe a scale of methods and techniques directed at measuring and reporting a coherent set of financial and nonfinancial performance measures covering different perspectives that were identified by Kaplan and Norton (1992), i.e. financial, customer, internal-business-process, and learning and growth orientation.

In about 18 per cent of the publications, the BSC is interpreted as an evaluation and compensation system. Consistent with Kaplan and Norton (1996: 217-222; 2001: 253-271) these articles describe the BSC as framework to measure financial and nonfinancial performance of individuals and teams, and link these scorecard measures to individual and collective rewards. The linkage between the BSC and incentive pay should help to increase managers' and employees' motivation and commitment, and increase

their awareness how they can create value for the organization. To emphasize the importance of human capital, several authors argue to include an additional HR perspective (f.i. Van der Lee, 1998; Houtzagers and Jonkeren, 2000; Smits and Von Sahrer, 2004).

Finally, consistent with Kaplan and Norton (1996; 2001) the BSC is perceived as a strategic management system in 40 per cent of the publications. These articles characterize the BSC as a concept for managing strategy. They describe the BSC as ‘a philosophy to initiate discussions about connections between strategy and management control’ (Du Mée, 1996: 20) and a framework to guide strategy-focused and aligned organizational and behavioral change processes. Management processes, principles and techniques should help to develop and implement a strategy-focused organization supported by an aligned management system build on sound and integrated accounting principles.

To test whether dominant interpretations about a concept may vary across different professional communities, we use chi-square tests. Most publications describing the BSC as comprehensive measurement and reporting tool emerge in the accounting discipline. However, our results do not show significant differences between this discipline and the other disciplines (chi-square 2, 45; df 5;  $p > 0.05$ ). On the other hand, when the BSC is perceived as evaluation and compensation system and as strategic management system our results show significant differences between the disciplines. Particularly the HRM discipline interprets the BSC as an evaluation control instrument for human capital (chi-square 18,53; df 5;  $p < 0.05$ ), while especially the disciplines Accounting and Management perceive the BSC as strategic management system (chi-square 24,79; df 5;  $p < 0.01$ ). Thus, partial support is found for the assumption that dominant interpretations can be related to differences in professional background.

#### **4.4 Windows on BSC-praxis**

Data about the actual use of the BSC are scarce in the Dutch-language publications. The print-media indicators contained references to two surveys, eighteen longer case descriptions and to 38 short case illustrations. In a survey conducted by a consultancy in 1999 on 120 managing directors of predominantly large manufacturing companies, only

19 per cent of the respondents said their organizations used the BSC, 29 per cent had plans to start using it, 21 per cent felt that the existing systems were adequate while 31 per cent was not sufficiently aware of its existence. The respondents were also asked for the reasons to use the BSC: some 90 per cent mentioned 'performance measurement' and 80 per cent 'monitoring', whereas less than 40 per cent claimed to have used the BSC to clarify and update their organization's strategy. In addition, 50 to 70 per cent of all users are held to be not or not fully satisfied with BSC (Oh and Haverhals, 2000). In a survey conducted by another consultancy in 2001 on 80 Dutch multinationals 31 per cent of the respondents said they used the BSC, while 23 per cent intends to implement a BSC or similar measurement and management tool in the future (Van Leeuwen and Wemmenhove, 2001: 222).

However, as literature (Hoque and James, 2000; Speckbacher, Bischof and Pfeiffer, 2003) suggests that larger companies are more likely to use the BSC than smaller firms, and the Dutch surveys were held among such large companies, these indications about BSC use in Dutch praxis might be optimistic. Consequently, the data suggest that for the period up till 2001 the BSC has not succeeded in gaining the considerable popularity in Dutch praxis as suggested by the authors in the introduction. Moreover, in spite of the fact that Kaplan and Norton increasingly emphasize the importance of strategy by gradually moving their focus from comprehensive performance measurement (1992) to strategic management (1996; 2001), our empirical evidence suggests that the actual ways of use lag the authors' intended use aimed at strategic focus and alignment. On the other hand, managers' expectations regarding the BSC and other versions of accounting-based management systems are high. This may explain why managerial and academic interest in this management tool is persistent. 30-50% of the Dutch companies investigated intend to implement BSC type of management systems in the future. However, they are still looking how to implement such systems effectively (Martinus, 1999; Oh and Haverhals, 2000; Van Aalst, Noë and Segers, 2000).

## **5. Conclusion**

This paper sets out to contribute to understanding the evolution of the BSC in the Netherlands. Using PMI our results showed that, despite authors asserting the contrary,



the BSC is a popular concept but can not be characterized as a typical 'management fashion'. The number of publications on the BSC in Dutch discourse over the period 1992-2004 clearly does not show a bell-shaped curve, which is considered to be a key element of management fashions. Moreover, compared to its intensive discourse, actual BSC use in Dutch praxis appears to be limited. The dysfunctional effects of overhastily implementing 'management fashions' do not appear to have arisen. Consultants are the leading BSC disseminators, while on the 'consumption side' the BSC tends to be interpreted differently in varying professional communities propagating the concept. Especially the HRM discipline appears to have been focused on the BSC as an evaluation and compensation system, while the BSC as strategic management system is mainly stressed in the disciplines Accounting and Management.

## **6. Implications**

The findings of our study have several implications for organizational changes associated with the BSC as well as research into the evolution of OCs and the BSC in particular.

Firstly, it is important to take notice of the fact that consultants as main suppliers of the BSC may opportunistically use discourse to promote their own recipes and build up their reputations (Faust, 2002). As a consequence, one must be cautious about the relationship between the BSC-discourse and organizational praxis: publications on the BSC may affect organizational behavior but also reflect that behavior (cf. Barley, Meyer and Gash, 1988; Shoemaker and Reese, 1996; Gunter, 2000; Edenius and Hasselbladh, 2002).

Secondly, consistent with previous research (Heusinkveld and Benders, 2001; Scarbrough, Robertson and Swan, 2005), our findings show that there is not only one BSC-discourse, but that there are different BSC discourses which are related to particular types of journals addressing specific professional audiences. To the extent that these reflect differences in BSC-praxis, the latter may not be considered as homogeneous. Managers might rely on particular discourses as sources of inspiration and legitimization and be influenced by the specific ideas produced by others. This suggests that BSC implementation may become a matter of internal organizational confusion, if not conflict: contrasting yet latent views on what the BSC is may become manifest during its

implementation and use, possibly creating ‘contested zones’: accountants are likely to have other preferences than HR managers, which is likely to affect BSC praxis in an organization. Implementers and users who are aware of such possible contradictions may be able to counter their effects and reconcile different interpretations to align organizational and behavioral change processes. In addition, further research should gain additional insight into ‘consumptism’ of management ideas (Fincham and Roslender, 2003), i.e. focus on the influence of subsets of discourse on the evolution of the BSC in organizational praxis, both in national and international context.

Thirdly, our findings suggest that BSC use lags Kaplan and Norton (1996; 2001)’s intended use aimed at strategic focus and alignment. At the same time research suggests that BSC use that complements corporate strategy positively influences company’s competitive position and company performance, while BSC use that is not related to the strategy may decrease it (Braam and Nijssen, 2004; Davis and Albright, 2004). It is thus important to improve managers’ understanding of conditions facilitating or inhibiting BSC-implementation as a strategic management system. Consequently, further research should examine factors that affect BSC implementation and use as a strategic management system.

Finally, the impressions created in and by much of the BSC-discourse provide indications of BSC use in praxis, but these need to be explored. Further research should use data-gathering techniques such as surveys and/or interviews with experts in the field to increase insight into the variety of ways the BSC is used as organizational change tool and its effect on changes in organizational praxis.

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