

INSTITUTIONAL THEORY APPLIED TO MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTING: ANALYSIS OF THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTION OF INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATIONS OCCURRED IN THE 2006-2015 PERIOD

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to analyze the approaches and methodologies used in international research, which used the Institutional Theory to evaluate aspects of changes in the use of management accounting practices in the period 2006-2015. The study is characterized as descriptive with quantitative approach. It uses a structured process of literature review through research in EBSCO databases, EMERALD, SCOPUS, SCIELO WEB OF SCIENCE, where 21 articles were identified in the period 2006-2015 which are aligned to the axes of the survey "Institutional Theory" and "Management Accounting". A bibliometric research was carried out in order to identify the annual distribution of articles into periodicals, nature of the objectives, the number of authors for journals, theoretical approach, problem approach, research techniques, technical information collection. The results revealed that the approach of the New Institutional Sociology dominated the study setting on changes in management accounting. All the three institutional isomorphism processes seem to shape the organizational field of accounting research. A small number of research using the approach of Old Institutional Economics was identified and no research used the approach of the New Institutional Economics. Even though they were few, a growing number of research using the approach of Old Institutional Economics and which evaluate the changes in management accounting from the organization's point of view were found.

Keywords: *Institutional Theory. Accounting. Management Accounting.*

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1 INTRODUCTION

The competitiveness scenario, the economic changes, the emergence of new products and the change in consumer desire are some of the aspects that make companies have to be constantly evolving. For this, they have at their disposal tools, techniques and management tools that aid in the decision making process.

In this sense, Reis (2011) states that the emergence and the consequent dissemination of new management techniques to support the decision-making process end up causing the breaking of old paradigms, in view of the permanent way in which these factors occur.

However, the implementation of new accounting techniques does not only depend on the organization's willingness, but also on the ability of the people who belong to it to implement the tools into their work routine. "Routines" are personal habits and can involve groups. As such, they are the components of institutions. In other words, routines are formalized or habits are institutionalized. "Institutions" can be considered as imposing social form and coherence on human activity, in part through continuous production and reproduction of habits of thought and action. (Scapens, 1994; Burns & Scapens, 2000).

Within the context of what institutions are, it will be possible to understand the context of organizations, considering that "the concept of institutions is not unique and depends on which theoretical aspect is used" (Frezatti, Rocha, Nascimento & Junqueira, 2009, 227). In addition, Frezatti *et al.* (2009) state that Institutional Theory is used to understand accounting within a specific context, as well as to show that this science cannot be analyzed as a mere isolated technical instrument, displaced from its operating environment.

The study of the Institutional Theory has aroused the interest in the area of social sciences and of the diverse approaches provided for in the literature of studies organizations. However, three possible approaches to this theory have been used in the accounting research: New Institutional Economics, Old Institutional Economics and New Institutional Sociology (Burns & Scapens, 2000; Guerreiro, Frezatti, Lopes & Pereira, 2005; Reis, 2011).

According to Guerreiro *et al.* (2005), the subject of stability and change in management accounting systems has been little explored in research in Brazil. On the other hand, it is a relevant subject of academic research abroad, mainly in Europe. According to the same author, the use of the Institutional Theory to explain the phenomena of stability and change in the management accounting systems, has been one of the approaches to be used.

The main studies related to the Institutional Theory are related to the New Institutional Sociology. According to Frezatti *et al.* (2009), based on a survey conducted in the period from 1997 to 2007, 77% of the studies were related to the New Institutional Sociology (NSI). However, the studies on the Old Institutional Economics (VEI) or New Institutional Economics (NEI) represented 9% and 8% of the studies of the subject, respectively.

Therefore, due to the importance of the subject to evaluate the changes in management accounting, is that the following research problem emerges: **What is the theoretical and methodological approach on Institutional Theory applied in Management Accounting most used in scientific research in international journals in the last 10 years?**

The purpose of this study is to analyze the approaches and methodologies of international research that have used the Institutional Theory to evaluate the changes in the use of Management Accounting in the period from 2006 to 2015.

This study is justified due to the need to identify the several researches that used the Institutional Theory to relate it to the practices of Management Accounting, aiming to explain the use of tools within the organizations, thus making it possible to identify the contributions of Institutional Theory in researches.

2 INSTITUTIONAL THEORY

Burns and Scapens (2000) suggest that the environment in which management accounting is practiced certainly seems to have changed, with advances in information technology, more competitive markets, different organizational structures, and new

management practices. Similarly, Reis (2011) states that in the current business environment, where one of the main characteristics is the high competitiveness among organizations, the emergence and the consequent dissemination of new management techniques to support the decision-making process, which eventually causes the breaking of old paradigms.

In this context of paradigm breaks, the dissemination of techniques of management accounting, which had been the subject of academic studies and practical applications in only a few companies, occurred. "This process of change in Management Accounting was the object of considerable academic studies from the 1990s on with the interest of research being directed to explore subjects related to accounting systems, accounting techniques and the role of the accountant" (Reis, 2011, p. 332).

Little attention has been paid to research to understand the processes through which these new systems and practices of management accounting have been incorporated or not into the routine of companies over time. However, Scapens (1994) and Guerreiro *et al.* (2005) state that theoretical knowledge within the management accounting is strongly guided by the neoclassical theory of the firm, but this theory does not constitute adequate theoretical framework to explain the development of management accounting systems.

In order to help researchers to find a way to better understand the changes that have occurred in the context of management accounting and which cannot be answered by neoclassical economic theory, the Institutional Theory arose (Scapens, 1994; Guerreiro *et al.*, 2005). For a better understanding of the use of Institutional Theory and aspects of change, the study of Veblen (1898) was sought, which discarded the idea that the actions of the individual are fully explicable in terms of socioeconomic circumstances, suggesting that humans are shaped by circumstances, as well as circumstances are shaped by individuals. Reis (2011) states that the analysis of any theory must be guided by historical and cultural characteristics. "The classical theory, originating from the early twentieth century and with an emphasis on the tasks, provided a solid understanding of how the organizational structure was organized and how it developed within strictly mechanistic analyzes" (Reis, 2011, p. 332).

According to Hogdson (1998), instead of a passive and substantially inert and immutable human nature, Veblen saw instincts and habits as the dynamic bases of intention and action. In addition, Veblen (1898) states that the theory of an institution can be expressed in the usual way life is performed, in which the individual tends to maintain normal equilibrium even over new formulated and required conditions. Thus, the changes that affect individuals derive from assigned values and characteristics understood by the environment.

Cultural aspects are also taken into account within an institution, as they may reflect directly on the processes of change. Veblen (1898) further states that an evolutionary economics must be the theory of a process of cultural growth, as determined by economic interest, a theory of a cumulative sequence of economic institutions expressed in terms of the process itself.

Thus, Management Accounting, under this aspect, which will be called Institutional, is now understood as a social process, whose research must analyze how social values are linked to economic actions, since many of the actions adopted in Accounting are implicit and difficult to detect by traditional methodologies (Reis, 2011).

Therefore, the Institutional Theory comprises a set of theoretical constructs coming mainly from economics, sociology and political science. Its three fundamental currents are the Old Institutional Economics (VEI), the New Institutional Economics (NEI) and the New Institutional Sociology (NSI). (Burns & Scapens, 2000; Guerreiro *et al.*, 2005; Frezatti *et al.*, 2009; Reis, 2011).

When analyzing the aspects of previous studies that have made a survey of the international journals, referred to in the subject Institutional Theory, highlighting the studies of Pereira (2012) and Cunha, Santos and Beuren (2015). The study of Pereira (2012) raised 37 articles in the period from 2006 to 2012, researched through the bases Science Direct, Emerald, Wiley Online Library, Mandelley, Oxford Journals, JSTOR. Of the total of articles surveyed, 56.76% of studies used the Old Institutional Economics approach, 21.62% used the New Institutional Sociology and 21.62% used both approaches.

However, the studies of Cunha, Santos and Beuren (2015), only researched the Science Direct database until the year 2010. They identified 21 articles referred to in their subject of

Institutional Theory. In the study presented, the authors identified that 52.3% used the New Institutional Sociology approach, while 33.3% used VEI, 4.8% the New Institutional Economics (NEI) and 9.6% used both VEI and NSI. Following the main concepts on Institutional Theory will be addressed, in the three aspects used, to study the aspects related to the change in management accounting.

2.1 Old Institutional Economics

The purpose of the Old Institutional Economics (VEI) is the so-called "micro institutions". Studies are performed on the relationships between individuals within organizations. The purpose of this is to analyze the behaviors that produce a new social reality that after a process of change can be considered as institutionalized (Reis, 2011).

Considering Institutional Theory, according to VEI point of view, Institution is the main object of analysis and no longer the rational and maximizing behavior of decision-making individuals, as accepted by neoclassical theory. Thus, the concept of institution is relevant, although there is no simple and widely accepted definition (Reis, 2011). However, a definition of Institution given by Veblen (1919) is: a certain way of thinking common to a group of people.

In the evaluation of Burns and Scapens (2000), the institutions themselves evolve through a process of routinization of human activity. Thus, there is a duality between action (human activity) and the institutions that structure this activity. The same authors also state that organizational routines play an important role in the relationship between actions and institutions.

VEI sees individual behavior as an important part of the institutions. It strongly directs social and organizational life (Reis, 2011). The actions of the organization's individuals, shaped by rules and routines, over time, cause sedimented institutions to emerge. Individuals acting under (and sharing) rules and accounting routines make the institutions crystallized and referenced as socially adequate (Burns & Scapens, 2000; Guerreiro *et al.*, 2005; Frezatti *et al.*, 2009).

The process of management change in general and management accounting change specifically require a broad understanding of the context in which the organization is inserted, with an emphasis on established routines and institutions (Reis, 2011). In the context of management accounting, the rules comprise the formal management accounting systems, according to what is defined in the procedures manuals. Therefore, considering routines are the accounting practices actually in use, there will be a relationship between the rules and routines, but it is important not to confuse the two (Burns & Scapens, 2000).

In the context of the Old Institutional Economics, Burns and Scapens (2000) presented an institutionalization process model, represented by Figure 1, composed of the following steps: 1. Codification; 2 Incorporation; 3 Reproduction; 4 Institutionalization.

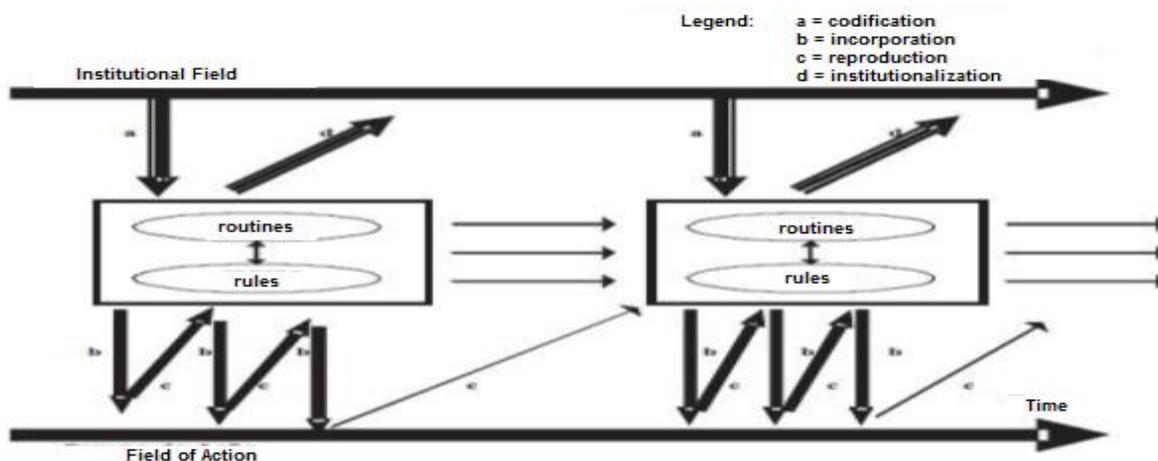


Figure 1

Organizational change model

Source: Guerreiro, Pereira e Frezatti (2008, p. 49) translated from Burns, J., & Scapens, R. W. (2000).

Conceptualizing management accounting change: an institutional framework. *Management Accounting Research*, 11, 3-25.

According to the authors, the process of institutionalization follows the following phases:

1. According to Figure 1, Burns and Scapens (2000) present the first process (arrow a) that implies in the codification of institutional principles in rules and routines. This process of codification is based on presuppositions of understanding the institutional principles through the creation of new meanings, values and powers;
2. The second process (arrow b) involves the actors articulated to the routines (and rules) that modify the institutional principles; Burns and Scapens (2000); Guerreiro *et al.* (2005) state that the incorporation process may involve conscious choice, but it is usually the result of reflexive monitoring and the application of tacit knowledge about how things are to be done;
3. The third process (arrow c) occurs as a repeated behavior, which leads to a reproduction of the routines. This reproduction may involve conscious or unconscious change, as discussed above;
4. The fourth and final process (arrow d) is the institutionalization of rules and routines that have been reproduced through the behavior of the individual actors. It is a dissociation of the patterns of behavior from their particular historical circumstances, so that rules and routines assume a normative and factual quality, which obscures their relation to the interests of the different actors.

In the process of incorporating and reproducing emerging routines, the intended rules can be modified as acceptable forms of behavior. What is considered acceptable will be influenced by the meanings and rules embedded in the ongoing routines. Also the powers of individual actors; all that will be shaped by existing institutions (Burns & Scapens, 2000))

Thus, change management in general, and management accounting change, in particular, requires a deep understanding of the organization's current context, especially its routines and institutions (Burns & Scapens, 2000). Therefore, VEI can contribute to the understanding of the process of institutionalization of rules and routines within the management accounting.

2.2 New Institutional Economics

Guerreiro *et al.* (2005) describe Coase (1937), North (1992) and Williamson (1992) as the main theorists within the New Institutional Economics. The New Institutional Economics (NIS) states that methodologically the individual is rational, however, with restricted cognitive ability. These individuals act under economic institutions that structure their behavior (Frezatti *et al.*, 2009, p. 231).

In general, Coase's followers see transaction costs, which are less noticeable than production costs, as an important factor for decision making in companies (Guerreiro *et al.*, 2005; Reis, 2011). The total costs, therefore, would be composed of production costs and transaction costs. However, it is common for conventional analyzes to focus only on production costs, which are easier to determine (Reis, 2011).

This is the first approach of Institutional Theory, which focuses on transaction costs, and performs an institutional analysis of how agents behave, institutionally, in relation to the environment in which it is inserted, once this environment is permeated of market imperfections (Reis, 2011).

In the design of the NEI, the transaction cost is the main reason for the existence of companies. "There are only companies because it is cheaper to carry out transactions from organizations than with people acting individually" (Frezatti *et al.*, 2009, p. 232). The instruments of this theoretical approach are the institutional arrangements of contracts and organizations in a competitive environment, whose management of firms is disciplined by the competitive pressure of markets (of assets, labor, etc.) (Guerreiro *et al.*, 2005).

Guerreiro *et al.* (2005) state that the NEI focuses on the institutional environment as a set of social, legal and political rules that establish the basis of production, exchange and distribution, exerting a great influence on the behavior of economic organizations. Economic

organizations are a group of individuals engaged in a common purpose of achieving their objectives through market transactions.

Therefore, the costs of measuring the multiple dimensions of products and services exchanged or of measuring the agents' performances, as well as the costs of promoting agreements characterize transaction costs (Guerrero *et al.*, 2005). Another very important point is the observation of economic activity made by Furubotn (2001). He suggests that positive transaction costs are omnipresent and unavoidable, and that decision makers are, by their very nature, very limited in their ability to acquire, store, retrieve, and process information.

As for the studies of Williamson (1992), Vandenberg (2002), state that the company is an institution in the sense that the transactions between divisions represent the interaction between these separable interfaces. Between producing or buying, decision making is the key and, in fact, virtually the only problem in Williamson's work (1992), and it is analyzed with reference to a limited number of well-specified concepts (limited rationality, opportunism, and asset specificity).

As for the study of North (1992), it is broader. According to Vandenberg (2002), it includes political decision-making and activities in civil society, as well as changes that take place over long periods of history, encompassing intra-organizational and inter-organizational private relations, as well as the development of the legal-environmental regulatory relationship that requires an understanding of the political system. In addition, it includes cultural, social, and cognitive processes that provide a structured rule and therefore also guide human interaction.

2.3 New Institutional Sociology

Structural changes in organizations appear to be less and less driven by competition or the need for efficiency. Instead, bureaucratization and other forms of organizational change occur as the result of processes that make organizations more similar, without, however, making them more efficient (Dimaggio & Powell, 1983).

Thus, the New Institutional Sociology (NSI) studies how the institutional environment, composed of rules, beliefs, traditions and the need for legitimacy, affects the behavior of organizations (Dimaggio & Powell, 1983; Frezatti, *et al.*, 2009). The main NSI concept relevant to management accounting is the notion of isomorphism. This phenomenon corresponds to the tendency that organizations have in resembling, due to pressures related to the external environment, thus creating an organizational similarity (Frezatti, *et al.*, 2009). At the population level, Isomorphism suggests that organizational characteristics are modified in order to increase compatibility with environmental characteristics; the number of organizations in a population is a function of the environmental support capacity; and the diversity of organizational forms is isomorphic to environmental diversity (Dimaggio & Powell, 1983)

Therefore, this approach has as a unit of analysis the organizations. It studies changes in relation to institutionalized formal practices, which seek external legitimacy, contributing to the relationship between organizational structures and the environment in which they are inserted (Reis, 2011).

Taking into account the pressures represented in the current competitive environment, previously described, it can be considered that the conditions for institutional isomorphism are favorable. There is a degree of dependence between companies, which, coupled with the rapidity of change, leads to uncertainties and the high degree of connectivity of global information systems and their resulting complexity. They force organizations to become increasingly similar (Reis, 2011).

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) identified three mechanisms of isomorphisms, of which institutional changes occur, as shown in Table 1:

Table 1
Forms of institutional isomorphism

Isomorfism	Definition
Coercive	Results of coercive formal and informal pressures exerted on organizations by other organizations of which they are dependent and by cultural expectations of the society in which organizations function. Such pressures can be felt as force, persuasion, or as invitations to participate in collusion. In some circumstances, organizational change is a direct response to the government's mandate.

Continue

Table 1 (continuation)

Isomorfism	Definition
Mimetic	It derives from uncertainty and a powerful force that encourages imitation, because when organizational technologies are poorly understood, the objectives are ambiguous, or when the environment generates symbolic uncertainties, organizations model themselves over other organizations.
Normative	It results mainly from professionalization. Two aspects are important sources of isomorphism: one is the use of formal education and legitimation on a cognitive basis produced by university experts; the second is the growth and development of professional networks that extend through organizations and through which the new models spread rapidly. In addition, in many cases, professional power is attributed by the State as in the case of the activities of liberal professionals.

Note. Source: adapted from DiMaggio, P. J., & Powell, W. W. (1983). The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields. *American Sociological Review*, 48, 147-160.

Table 1 concisely reveals the concept of each Isomorphism identified by the authors. According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983), in the Coercive Isomorphism can be given as an example the manufacturers adopt new rules against pollution by government determination, non-profit entities that must have formal accounting for compliance. Therefore, for example, the hand of the state in social organization, in view of the regulation of rules for better common life, can be seen in the Coercive Isomorphism.

Regarding Mimetic Isomorphism, DiMaggio and Powell (1983) presented as example American corporations that are implementing Japanese models to deal with personal productivity and also to solve major problems in their own companies. The rapid proliferation of the quality management process and quality of work and personal life issues in American companies is, at least in part, an attempt to model Japanese and European successes.

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) consider as important mechanism to encourage normative isomorphism the filtering of employees. Within many organizational fields, filtering occurs through the hiring of individuals from companies of the same sector, through the recruitment of employees from a narrow range of training institutions through common promotion practices for hiring senior executives from financial or legal departments and from skill level requirements to specific jobs.

3 METHODOLOGY

It is a descriptive research for describing characteristics of a particular population or phenomenon or establishing relations between variables. (Richardson, 1999; Beuren, 2014). In addition, the present research has a quantitative approach, since it is characterized by the use of statistical instruments, both in data collection and processing (Beuren, 2014). This type of study should be performed when the researcher wants to get a better understanding of the behavior of several factors and elements that influence a certain phenomenon (Richardson, 1999).

In relation to the operational procedures of survey data collection, a structured process was used in 5 databases of international scientific papers: *EBSCO*, *EMERALD*, *SCOPUS*, *SCIELO*, *WEB OF SCIENCE*.

Two axes of the survey were used: Institutional Theory and Management Accounting. And the period of analysis corresponds to the years 2006 to 2015. For the axis of Research Theory, the following keywords were used: Institutional Theory, Old Institutional Economics, New Institutional Economics, New Institutional Sociology. For the axis of Management Accounting Research, the following keywords were used: Accounting, Management Accounting, Management accounting change. The search for the articles was done through the mentioned keywords identified in the title, abstract and keywords of the articles available in the databases selected for this research.

After the consultation in the 05 bases, a result of 1,783 articles that were later exported to the software Endnote X7, excluding duplicate articles, remaining 1,362 articles. The next step was to exclude articles with titles that were not aligned with the subject. A total of 1,327 non-aligned articles were excluded, according to the researcher's perception, leaving 35 potential

articles with aligned titles remaining.

For the final stage, the articles were aligned and freely available in the databases used in the present study. Thus, 21 articles remained for analysis.

After the selection of the articles that compose the sample of this study, the analysis was carried out to verify: i) Institutional Theory Addressed; ii) Nature of the Purpose; iii) Problem Approach; iv) Technical Procedures; v) Data Collection Techniques.

4 RESULTS

In this section, the relation of the selected articles with their respective periodicals and year of publication are first presented. Afterwards, the Institutional Theory approach, the nature of the objective, the approach to the problem, the technical procedures and the data collection techniques used in the analyzed articles are evidenced. Table 2 presents the selected articles in the databases EBSCO, EMERALD, SCOPUS, SCIELO, WEB OF SCIENCE, identified by the year, title of the article and by the journal in which they were published. It can be noticed that in the analyzed period there was a frequency of publication practically in all the years, except for the year of 2010, when there was no publication. In addition, several journals have published subjects related to management accounting studies that have used some approach to Institutional Theory.

Table 2
Selected articles in databases

Seq	Year	Article Title	Journal
1	2006	Changes in accounting and financial information system in a Spanish electricity company: A new institutional theory analysis	Management Accounting Research
2	2007	Corporatization and accounting change. The role of accounting and accountants in a Malaysian public utility	Management Accounting Research
3	2007	Beyond competition: Institutional isomorphism in U.S. accounting research	Accounting Horizons
4	2008	Structuration theory and mediating concepts: Pitfalls and implications for management accounting research	Critical Perspectives on Accounting
5	2008	Accrual accounting does not necessarily mean accrual accounting: Factors that counteract compliance with accounting standards in Swedish municipal accounting	Scandinavian Journal of Management
6	2009	Explaining the choice of accounting standards in municipal corporations: Positive accounting theory and institutional theory as competitive or concurrent theories	Critical Perspectives on Accounting
7	2011	Routines in management accounting research: Further exploration	Journal of Accounting and Organizational Change
8	2011	The role of consultant-researchers in the design and implementation process of a programme budget in a local government organization	Management Accounting Research
9	2012	Management accounting change and sustainability: An institutional approach	Journal of Accounting and Organizational Change
10	2012	Factors influencing the preparedness of large unlisted companies to implement adapted International Financial Reporting Standards in Portugal	Journal of International Accounting, Auditing and Taxation
11	2012	Contracting out municipal accounting: The role of institutional entrepreneurship	Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal
12	2012	An analysis of the deinstitutionalization of inflation-adjusted accounting practices in Brazilian companies	Revista Contabilidade & Finanças - USP
13	2013	An institutional perspective on the development of Canada's first public accounts	Accounting History

Continue

Table 2 (continuation)

Seq	Year	Article Title	Journal
14	2013	Balanced scorecard adoption in portuguese organizations: Contingent and institutional variables	Intangible Capital
15	2013	The accounting profession's influence on academe: South African evidence	Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal
16	2013	Different scenarios for accounting reform in non-Anglophone contexts: The case of Japanese local governments since the 1990s	Accounting History
17	2013	Management accounting change in an Egyptian organization: An institutional analysis	Journal of Accounting and Organizational Change
18	2014	The development of accounting regulation in iraq and the IFRS adoption decision: An institutional perspective	International Journal of Accounting
19	2014	The reluctance of a developed country to choose International Public Sector Accounting Standards of the IFAC. A critical case study	Critical Perspectives on Accounting
20	2014	Institutional changes in university accounting education in post-revolutionary China: From political orientation to internationalization	Critical Perspectives on Accounting
21	2015	The impact of cultural factors on the implementation of global accounting standards (IFRS) in a developing country	Advances in Accounting

Note. Source: research data.

Table 2 shows the annual distribution of journal articles. As can be observed, the years 2012, 2013 and 2014 were the ones that had the highest number of publications, with 12 works in all. This result is in agreement with the researches of Pereira (2012) and Cunha, Santos and Beuren (2015), who affirmed that there has been an increase in the studies on changes in management accounting using some approach of Institutional Theory as of 2010.

Table 3 also shows that the journal Critical Perspectives on Accounting stands out with the largest number of publications, with 4 articles, representing 19.05% of the total. Following with 3 publications stand out the magazines: Management Accounting Research and Journal of Accounting and Organizational Change. Therefore, 3 journals represented 47.63% of the publications in Institutional Theory applied to research in management accounting. The largest number of researches in these journals is justified because they work on management accounting, human behavior, organizational structures. The research differs slightly from Pereira (2012), which presented the International Business Review with the largest number of publications, and from the Cunha, Santos and Beuren (2015) research, which resulted in Management Accounting Research magazine with the largest number of publications.

Table 3
Annual Distribution of Articles by Journals

JOURNALS	Number of Articles										Total	%
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015		
Critical Perspectives on Accounting			1	1					2		4	19.05
Management Accounting Research	1	1				1					3	14.29
Journal of Accounting and Organizational Change						1	1	1			3	14.29
Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal							1	1			2	9.52
Accounting History								2			2	9.52
Scandinavian Journal of Management			1								1	4.76
Journal of International Accounting, Auditing and Taxation							1				1	4.76

Continue

Table 3 (continuation)

JOURNALS	Number of Articles										Total	%
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015		
Revista Contabilidade & Finanças - USP							1				1	4.76
Intangible Capital								1			1	4.76
International Journal of Accounting									1		1	4.76
Advances in Accounting										1	1	4.76
Total	1	2	2	1	0	2	4	5	3	1	21	100.00

Note. Source: research data.

In Table 4 we sought to analyze the articles regarding the nature of the objectives. It is possible to identify that 62% presented a practical study as nature of the objectives. This result is close to that showed by Pereira (2012), which showed a little more than 50% of practical work. However, it is important to emphasize that the study of the Institutional Theory allows several possibilities for the expansion of theory and also application with respect to the understanding of the phenomena of reality.

Table 4

Nature of the Objectives

Nature of the Objective	Studies	Percentage
Theoretical	8	38%
Practical	13	62%
Total	21	100%

Note. Source: research data.

As for the number of authors per journals, it can be seen in Table 5 that, of the 21 articles surveyed, 8 present at least 2 authors, 6 articles present 3 authors and 5 articles present 1 author only. The articles show that 48 authors participated in the surveys, representing a several number of those who studied or study the subject of changes in management accounting based on the Institutional Theory. The result differs slight from the research by Cunha, Santos and Beuren (2015), in which 52.4% of articles had only 1 author. In addition, Critical Perspectives on Accounting published a publication of 11 different authors, followed by Management Accounting Research, which had a total of 7 authors who published studies on Institutional Theory.

Table 5

Number of authors per journals

JOURNALS	Number of Authors					Total Articles	%	Total Authors
	1	2	3	4	5			
Critical Perspectives on Accounting	1	1	1		1	4	19.05	11
Management Accounting Research		2	1			3	14.29	7
Journal of Accounting and Organizational Change	3					3	14.29	3
Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal		1		1		2	9.52	6
Accounting History		2				2	9.52	4
Accounting Horizons		1				1	4.76	2
Scandinavian Journal of Management		1				1	4.76	2
Journal of International Accounting, Auditing and Taxation			1			1	4.76	3

Continue

Table 5 (continuation)

JOURNALS	Number of Authors					Total Articles	%	Total Authors
	1	2	3	4	5			
Revista Contabilidade & Finanças - USP			1			1	4.76	3
Intangible Capital			1			1	4.76	3
International Journal of Accounting			1			1	4.76	3
Advances in Accounting	1					1	4.76	1
Total	5	8	6	1	1	21	100.00	48

Note. Source: research data.

The articles were also analyzed regarding the theoretical approach used by the authors to determine the Institutional Theory in order to explain changes in management accounting. Table 6 shows that 81% of the articles based the studies on changes in management accounting through the New Institutional Sociology (NSI) aspect. 19% of the articles were based on the Old Institutional Economics (VEI) aspect. No articles were found explaining the change in management accounting through the New Institutional Economics (NEI). This result diverges slight from the Cunha, Santos and Beuren (2015) research, where it was found that 52.3% of the studies on the subject of changes in management accounting are on NSI aspect, 33.3% on the VEI aspect and only 4.8% used the NEI aspect. However, Pereira (2012) research diverges both from the results of this research and from the results presented by Cunha, Santos and Beuren (2015), of which 56.76% used VEI and 21.62% used NSI.

Table 6

Theoretical Approach Used

Theoretical Approach Used	Studies	Percentage
New Institutional Economics - NEI	0	0%
Old Institutional Economics - VEI	4	19%
New Institutional Sociology - NSI	17	81%
Total	21	100%

Note. Source: research data.

Regarding the problem approach, 76% of the articles are qualitative, 19% quantitative and 5% use both approaches. Therefore, the predominance of qualitative studies is shown in Table 7, considering that in the qualitative research, because it is inductive, the authors sought to bring studies that could help to create a theory about changes in the field of management accounting. The Pereira (2012) and Cunha, Santos and Beuren (2015) researches did not present results on this subject.

Table 7

Problem Approach

Problem Approach	Studies	Percentage
Qualitative	16	76%
Quantitative	4	19%
Qualitative/Quantitative	1	5%
Total	21	100%

Note. Source: research data.

Regarding the analysis of research technique, Table 8 shows that 38% of the articles used the Bibliographic Research and 33% the Survey technique, as well as that there were still 14% of researches related to case studies. In addition, the techniques of documentary search, ethnographic study and also action research were used pro 5% each. Pereira (2012) research

presented some slight divergent results, since 29.73% of the studies used a theoretical essay, 18.91% a literature review and 16.22% a documentary search and interview, or a survey or case study.

Table 8
Research Technique

Technique	Studies	Percentage
Bibliographic research	8	38%
Documentary Search	1	5%
Survey	7	33%
Case study	3	14%
Ethnographic Study	1	5%
Action Research	1	5%
Total	21	100%

Note. Source: research data.

Table 9 shows the information collection techniques used by the authors. The technique can be: observation, observation-participant, documentary search, interview or questionnaire.

Table 9
Information collection technique

Information collection	Studies	Percentage
Observation	1	3%
Observation Participant	1	3%
Documentary Search	11	35%
Interview	7	23%
Questionnaire	7	23%
Without identification	4	13%
Total	31	100%

Note. Source: research data.

Therefore, it can be observed in Table 9 that 35% of the researches used the technique of collecting information, a documentary search. 23% also used the interview and questionnaires for data collection. However, in 13% of the articles it was not possible to identify the information collection technique used. The Pereira (2012) and Cunha, Santos and Beuren (2015) researches did not present any results regarding this question.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study is to analyze the methodological approach and the theoretical approach addressed in articles published in international journals from 2006 to 2015. For this, an exploratory-descriptive research was carried out, with a quantitative approach.

In this period, 21 articles were identified in international journals that used the Institutional Theory to explain changes in management accounting. The years 2012, 2013 and 2014 have concentrated most of the publications, showing that there is a growth in research related to the subject as proven by Pereira (2012) and Cunha, Santos and Beuren (2015).

The study also showed that the subject is published by several different journals, with emphasis on Critical Perspectives Accounting, Management Accounting Research and Journal of Accounting and Organizational Change, for presenting subjects related to the research line of such journals. The r Pereira (2012) research presented a greater number of publications in the journal Management Accounting Research, which confirms the tendency of this journal in the

publication of the subject.

Research also analyzed the nature of the objectives. It can be identified that 62% of the articles had a practical nature, a total of 48 authors for the 21 articles. Most articles have 1 to 3 authors, which to a certain extent confirms Cunha, Santos and Beuren (2015) research, who presented for the majority of articles 1 author only.

With respect to the approach of the Institutional Theory used, 81% of these articles approach the New Institutional Sociology to explain the changes in management accounting. It differs slight from the results presented by Cunha, Santos and Beuren (2015). Therefore, this research showed that the New Institutional Sociology approach dominated the scenario of the study on changes in accounting. The focus on Normative, Coercive and Mimetic Institutional Isomorphism had the purpose of seeking legitimacy through social expectations. Other studies, when applying Institutional Theory in the field of management accounting research, have proposed that institutional influences, rather than competitive forces, represent the current exclusion of non-financial accounting topics. All three processes of institutional isomorphism seem to shape the organizational field of research in management accounting.

However, the approach of Institutional Theory in the Old Institutional Economics (VEI) aspect has been gaining field to explain the changes in management accounting. It was observed in 4 studies that the process of institutionalization proposed by Burns and Scapens (2000) can explain the factors for the implementation of new processes or tools in the organizations, through the introduction of control rules, with the direct participation of the actors responsible for the execution of these processes (Englund & Gerdin, 2008, Bogt & Helden, 2011 Youssef, 2013).

There is a research gap for studies that include Management Accounting and Institutional Theory. The aspect of the Old Institutional Economics and the New Institutional Economics is still incipient in research on the subject. There are also few studies that jointly analyze the types of institutional approaches. The Institutional Theory has proved useful to explain aspects of changes in management accounting, with a view to making management tools can be institutionalized within organizations.

For future researches, studies may be carried out on a national basis, in comparison to surveys on international basis, in addition to the exploration of its contents, in order to identify in which circumstances the Institutional Theory is used to explain changes in management accounting.

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