

## ABSTRACT

Continuous changes in the environment force universities to adapt their orientation and common activities in order to meet the requirements of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The movement towards commercial business practice and the usage of economic methods for performance evaluation seem to represent the most important challenges nowadays. An efficient utilization of resources, a continuous surveillance and improvement of performance as well as creating a sustainable competitive advantage is in the focus of university's management activities.

This master thesis shall provide an overview of the implementation of Management Accounting at Northern European universities. Literature concerning this topic is rare; especially the limitation to Northern Europe (eight countries) led to difficulties during research for the meta-analysis. The focus of this examination was on the methods of Management Accounting, the motivation for their usage and the experiences that could have been gained after implementation.

Results show that some universities already use Management Accounting. Especially Performance Measurement, evaluation and improvement of quality as well as knowledge management are of particular importance for Northern European universities. The motivation for the implementation of new methods is often found in the surrounding of the university. It is mostly based on legal regulations of national governments or guidelines of the European Union. Traditional structures and behaviour hinder the implementation and foster great defence on part of the employees. Additional costs and increased administrative efforts are mainly referred to as points of criticism. It was not possible to create a geographical trend for the implementation of Management Accounting by means of the meta-analysis. Expectations towards Northern European countries were high but could not be proved in the amount expected. It remains unclear if the problem was the actual application of Management Accounting or just the lack of scientific publications concerning this topic. Future implementation of Management Accounting methods at universities seems to be essential. Increasing pressure from competitors as well as prevalent influences from the surrounding shapes professional management as a prerequisite for sustainable success.