Abstract

This study analyses and enhances how “kontroling-controllership” as whole package or only a word for management accounting is born and evaluate in Slovenian scholar theory in universities and in business practice. The purpose of this study is to discuss the theoretical and practical underpinnings of the Slovenian term “kontroling” referring to the concepts of controllership and the thereto related activities. The research method used to answer the research questions was content analysis. The two datasets under investigation consisted of bibliographic records by Slovenian authors on “kontroling-controllership” in the COBIB Slovenia catalogue and of advertisements for jobs for controller published in the Slovenian daily newspaper Delo. The research highlights important differences of the term “kontroling” in theory and practice. These differences seem to be such that in Slovenia, exist two opposing ‘factions’ or groups that conceptualize the term quite differently. One group equals “kontroling” to management accounting and does not support the use of the term “kontroling”. While the other group understand “kontroling” completely different, as a whole package, “kontroling” is represents as a total of information-providing activities in an organization, which is indicative of, at the same time, a business philosophy and a special style of management. In conclusion of the paper, the authors propose a new conceptualisation of the term to bridge the gap between theoretical and practical aspects of the practice of “kontroling-controllership” in Slovenia.

Key words: controlling/controllership, controller, Slovenia, controlling theory, controlling practice

JEL classification: M10, M21, M40
1. Introduction

It has been over 28 years since the first mention of the Slovenian term “kontroling” (Koletnik, 1988). How and in what ways has the understanding of the term changed in Slovenia from that period until today? How unified are, in this respect, the views of theoreticians and practitioners? Their opinions seem to be quite divided on the issue. At the same time, an interesting question pertains to later developments in the area of “kontroling-controllership” in Slovenia and their details. The present article explores the understanding of the concept in Slovenia and the related activities. The notion is investigated as it has been used by different authors and practitioners in a period covering over a quarter of a century. By providing a clearer picture of controllership as an activity, we hope to counter criticisms of the increasing gap between theory and practice.

The modern lives of people and organisations are filled with risks, and consequently control is becoming increasingly formalised (Nixon and Burns, 2005). Also increasing is the degree of consistency among different internal controls in a growing number of areas of business operations (ibid). Controllerships gaining ground and have become a substantial element of support to management (Weber, 2011). Controllers’ roles, which once included offering static support (Horvath, 1978 and Weber, 2011: 26), have shifted from »bean counters« to »business partners« (Baldvinsdottir et al., 2009 and Weber, 2011). Researchers have confirmed the influence of controllership on management decisions and thus indirectly on organisation’s operations (Weissenberger and Angelkont, 2011).

However, in spite of its development and the increasingly important role it is assuming, few studies have addressed the understanding of the concept of controllership in different environments. Weber (2011) was the only author to address the different tasks of controllers in the contemporary German economy in 2011. Other studies of understanding of controllership exist mostly in Germany, first attention was given in 80’ by Weber and Bültel (1992) or later Goretzki, Strauss and Weber (2013). Similar research works with focus of understanding of controllership (germanControlling) in some countries (Japan, Canada, Brazil, India, etc.) was collected in Goretzki and Strauss (ed.) (2018) book. For Slovenia this kind of research of understanding of controllership has never been done, so this provided the starting point for us to formulate our fundamental research questions, followed by an extensive literature review and the empirical study.

- Research Question 1: “In Slovenia, in what ways do views on the term kontroling (eg controllership) differ between theory and practice?” and
- Research Question 2: »In Slovenia, in what ways do views differ in respect to kontroling activities?”

To answer the research questions, the article starts by presenting the theoretical definition of the terms, followed by the explanation of the empirical research design and its implementation. The implementation is based on content analysis, which was used as a first step to analyse texts by Slovene authors in order to examine different conceptualisations of the term in theory. To analyse the understanding of the term “kontroling-controllership” in practice, in a second step content analysis was used to examine controller job advertisements in the Slovenian daily newspaper Delo. The findings are presented and interpreted based on conclusions of comparative analysis to provide the answers to research questions and their implications. Limitations of research are must, so that we can finish our research, to get answer to our two research question, we have set limitation. Our major limitations oftthe analysis of advertisements for controller jobs over a long period of time that not include analysis of functions that controllers must fulfil varies over time, second we focus on Slovenian development of understanding controllership and not how was develop understanding controllership in other countries.
2. The Definition of the Term and the Development of Controllership as an Activity in Slovenia

The terms *kontroling* in Slovenian, *controlling* and *controllership* in English and *Controlling* in German may represent different concepts; thus, they need to be terminologically clarified and defined. The English noun term *controlling* is derived from the verb *to control*, and is usually translated in Slovenian as “management”, “regulation” and “exercising influence” (Hočevar 1995). In English-speaking countries, the term *controlling* is used to describe a supervisory or control function of management used to regulate the organisation’s operations (Morse, Davis and Hartgraves, 2000; Korošec, 2000; Melavc and Novak, 2007). In non-English-speaking world, above all in German-speaking countries, the term *Controlling* is usually used to refer to information-providing activities that support management and the decision-making processes in an organisation (Turk, 2004; http://www.thefreedictionary.com/controllership; Korošec, 2000; Melavc and Novak, 2007). A term related to the German *Controlling* is the English *controllership* (Korošec 2000, Melavc and Novak 2007). A term similar to the English word *controller* is *comptroller* (frequently used in state/public institutions), which refers to a person responsible for supervising accounting and financial reporting (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comptroller, Korošec, 2000 and Turk, 2004) and sometimes also for managing (deciding on) an organisation’s operations.

Management accounting, has an increasingly important role within contemporary management (Anthony and Govindarajan, 2004; Roehl-Anderson and Bragg, 2004 as cited in Weissenberger and Angelkont 2011). In German-speaking countries, on the other hand, *Controllers*, who are specialised in decision-making accounting, leave the tasks of financial accounting and reporting to other supporting services, primarily to the financial accounting department (Weber and Schäffer, 2008 as cited in Weissenberger and Angelkont, 2011). This is also the reason why in German-speaking countries the concept and the tasks of *Controlling* are sometimes understood differently than elsewhere. The conceptual differences in the understanding of the term *controlling* between English and the non-English-speaking countries and the thereto related terminology problems may be attributed to a flawed transmission of the originally English term *controllership*, referring to the tasks of performed by a *Controller*, in German-speaking countries (Korošec, 2000; Melavc and Novak, 2007; and Novak, 1999). Indeed, this flaw is admitted by German authors themselves (Scoepner, 1998; Weissenberger and Angelkont 2011), and other does not agree with that (Schaffer, 2013).

For the purposes of this present study, the Slovenian term *kontroling* is understood and used to refer to the activities of information-providing services in an organisation employed to direct and regulate the organisation’s operations to reach its objectives, unless explicitly stated otherwise. The term is so understood as the total of activities performed by a *kontroler*. In the continuation of the article, *kontroling* will be used either in its original Slovene orthography or as the English translation equivalent *controlling* and not *controllership*, which is owed to the fact that this has been and still is its most frequent English translation.

Etymologically, the term *controller* (or *comptroller*) evolved from the medieval Latin phrase *contra rolatus*, which referred to an additional or ‘spare’ written proof of goods and money given and received that was used for control purposes (Horvath, 1994). In 1778, the US Congress established the offices of comptroller, auditor, treasurer, and six commissioners of accounts who were authorised to manage public accounts and to keep oversight over the allocation of public monies (Peemöller, 1992). This was the very first appointment of a *controller* in US history. The first *controllers* exercising *controlling* activities were thus civil servants in public administration charged with overseeing cash flow into the Treasury (Bramsemann, 1987). The first *controller* in the US private sector was appointed in 1892 by the General Electric Company (ibid).

It was not until the 1920s that US businesses started to introduce controlling activities into their operations more frequently to counter macroeconomic turbulences, i.e. increased operational risks and high inflation. Managers started to feel the need to employ experts who would provide information to
help them direct and regulate the organisation’s operations. The focus of information-providing activity shifted from the monitoring of past events and conditions to the development of objectives and tasks for their future achievement. At the same time the need arose to assess the achievement of the set objectives (Hočevar, 1995). The creation of the Controller's Institute of America in 1931 provided a further push for the development of controlling as an activity. The organisation changed its name to Financial Executives Institute in 1962. Shortly thereafter, The Controller newspaper was started, and the Controllership Foundation was established. In 1969 they changed their names to The Financial Executive newspaper and the International Association of Financial Executives Institutes respectively. In 1976, the Association had some 9,300 members employed by most leading US companies (Hočevar, 1995). Today, this international non-profit organisation is almost 11,000 members strong.

In Europe, primarily in Germany, the need for controlling activities was first recognised in the second half of the 1950s. German companies followed the example of their US counterparts that started introducing controlling activities into their German subsidiaries. The first German professional association of controllers, the Gesellschaft für Finanzwirtschaft in der Unternehmensführung V. Frankfurt, was created in 1969. It was quickly followed by others, among them the notable Controller-Akademie, established in 1971 (Peemöller, 1992). The role of controlling came to the fore most notably in the early 1980s when the German economy was hit by a major wave of insolvency, calling for the employment of critical expert advisers to remedy the situation (Peemöller, 1992). The role and tasks of controlling in today’s Europe are changing (Weber, 2011).

Let us now turn to Slovenia. The first service by the name of “kontroling-controllership” in a Slovenian organisation was created in the early 1960s by the furniture production company Meblo from Nova Gorica (Križaj, 2004). Thus, according to official records this term has been in existence in Slovenia for over 50 years now. However, the first academic article on “kontroling-controllership” by a Slovenian author did not appear until 1988 when the Croatian journal Računovodstvo i financije published the article by professor Franc Koletnik of the University of Maribor. In his article, Koletnik (1988) established “kontroling-controllership” as an expert service to support decision makers in an organisation with information. He wrote, “kontroling-controllership” is a tool to direct and control an organisation’s operations in short- and long-term periods (ibid). “Controlling activities are exercised by controllers. They are as follows: preparation of expert information bases to formulate (direct) and achieve (coordinate) business objectives” (ibid). The article (ibid) further listed the skills of controllers: they should be proficient in accounting and foreign languages, creative, communicative and able to pass on information; they should have graduated from college or a similar higher education institution and should have at least five years of relevant experience. It also identified the activities of controlling as a service within an organisation (ibid):

- Strategic and operational planning of the operations of an organisation,
- Assessment (control) of the operations of an organisation, and
- Provision of business information.

Koletnik’s understanding of “kontroling-controllership” was thus very close to that (1988) used by the German authors, e.g. Weber (2011).

3. Methodology
The aim of this present article is to analyse the different conceptualisations and understandings of the term “kontroling-controllership” in Slovenia. In the research we conducted, a qualitative approach was used to identify the meanings, concepts, features, descriptions and the essence of the term as suggested by Berg (2006). The meaning of the term “kontroling-controllership” was analysed from theoretical-as evidenced by bibliographical entries of Slovenian authors obtained via the Cobiss platform—and practical perspectives—as evidenced by controlling job ads in a selected Slovenian newspaper. The content analysis method was used to analyse the content of the existing (secondary) material.
Content analysis is typically used to systematically analyse material to uncover patterns, content relations and meanings (Berg, 2006). Because it can be used to analyse extensive data, determine the frequency of predefined categories (content) and carry out quantitative (statistical) analyses, some authors consider content analysis to be a combined qualitative-quantitative method. Content analysis is used to draw reproducible and meaningful conclusions based on data in context (Krippendorf, 2004 as cited in Meijer, 2011). The method of content analysis was chosen because it allowed us to effectively categorize large volumes of qualitative data that contained explanations of the concepts under investigation (Lajili and Zagehal, 2005 as cited in Meijer, 2011). To ensure the reliability of the findings relative to the analysed content, a systematic approach to coding was applied. Content analysis is usually based on the assumption that the coded contents are valid and reliably determined and identified, so coding and/or decision-making rules should be clearly and precisely defined in advance (Linsley and Shrives, 2006). In our case, we used keyword coding methods (as evident from Key to Tables 1 and 2 below) combined with key element analysis (e.g. reporting on performance).

The (initial) analysis of theoretical contributions was limited to semantic analyses of the conceptualisations of the Slovenian terms “kontroliing-controllership” and “controlling activities”. The enquiry into the theoretical understanding of controlling was based on content analysis of bibliographic records from the CobibSlovenija catalogue via the Cobiss online platform accessible at http://www.cobiss.net/platforma_cobiss.htm, which were obtained by conducting title searches for the term kontroliing or its derivatives. Entries that related to kontroliing in terms of technical features of controls and/or oversight of product compliance with technical rules and standards were omitted. Relevant keywords and content (i.e. meaningful definitions) were determined according to keyword and content methods and later searched for in texts. Our analysis and decisions were governed by the following rules:

- A pre-designed and pre-verified code table was used to classify all subject records;
- If there was a keyword that could be assigned to a record in more than one category, the keyword was assigned to records in all possible categories;
- Repeat records of an author or an ad were analysed independently for each separate repeat record and assigned to all corresponding categories;
- If a record and/or an ad was not sufficiently clear or understandable, it was assigned to the category of “Other” and was dealt with separately and with particular attention.

The data for the study were collected in three separate periods: at the end of 2007, at the end of 2012, and in June 2016. This ensured a further verification of the data and the reliability of the findings.

The (second) analysis explored the practical aspects of controlling in Slovenia. Our dataset was limited to job advertisements published in the Slovenian daily Delo by organisations that were advertising a vacancy for a member of staff to perform controlling activities. An ad was included in our survey on condition that its text explicitly mentioned the word kontroliing or its derivatives. The sample for the collection of practice records consisted of all ads by Slovenian companies in the period selected, which complied with the conditions and limitations of the research. The time period for the collection of data from ads was 1 January 2002 to 31 December 2015. All advertisements were reviewed that were published in the daily Delo in that period; 234 of them advertised controller jobs. Our data were collected from the print edition of Delo. Each relevant ad was copied and analysed by way of content

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3 Code tables are explained in more detail in the continuation of the article.
analysis based on the pre-prepared code table; the contents were appropriately assigned to pre-designed categories.

Our analysis explored how organisations conceptualise the terms controlling and controlling activities, what skills and personality traits they expect from controllers, and what titles they use for controlling jobs. According to Malhotra (2004), such exploratory research has notable advantages, i.e. better understanding of data, easier coding and use of data, substantially reduced possibility of data misinterpretation, and increased data credibility. However, such data collection is also more time-consuming compared to conducting a survey. To interpret the results, we used structural percentage values and corresponding nonparametric statistical tests.

4. Findings of the Research into Theoretical Aspects of the Conceptualisation of Kontroling in Slovenia

Since the first written mention of the term “kontroling-controllership” in Slovenia over 28 years ago, there have been 191 Cobiss records having the word “kontroling” or its derivatives in the title (Source: http://www.cobiss.si/). They constituted our sample. Such sample size was dictated by the limitations of our research; by adopting any other approach we saw ourselves unable to complete the study. In our case, there probably exist other records on “kontroling-controllership” in Slovenia that were not included in our sample. Fifty-one of a total of 191 Cobiss records or 26.7% were attributed to Franc Koletnik of the University of Maribor’s Faculty of Economics and Business. Koletnik, i.e. his definitions of “kontroling-controllership”, was further cited in at least 92 diploma theses. By the end of 2015, a total of 52 Slovenian authors were writing about controlling in the observed manner. The theoretical conceptualisations of “kontroling-controllership” were investigated based on their publications.

Koletnik is, in our opinion, the first, most important and most influential Slovenian academic writing about “kontroling-controllership”. Over the past 28 years, he has somewhat revised his perspective on this subject, which he now defines as: “...a business philosophy, a special style of management, and a decision-oriented information-providing activity. “Kontroling” is the engine and the rudder of an organisation and of its management (Koletnik and Kolar, 2016)”. This definition is clearly systemic. The aspect of business philosophy implies that all employees in an organisation maintain firm internal business discipline and follow clearly specified objectives and tasks (ibid: 10). The second aspect that he emphasises is the understanding of “kontroling” as a special decentralised style of management, i.e. a decentralised system of business operations (ibid: 12). His third aspect establishes “kontroling” as a contemporary information-providing activity of an organisation equivalent to decision-oriented accounting and other information systems an organisation has in place to support its decisions. Koletnik’s view on (1988) skills of controllers did not change much over the years.

A second important Slovenian author on “kontroling-controllership” is Ivan Turk of the Faculty of Economics at the University of Ljubljana. He, too, assigns the Slovenian term “kontroling” multiple meanings (2005: 32-34). He defines it as “controlling mentality, management, and information, and as decision-oriented accounting paired with the provision of a financial and accounting service (ibid)”.

Such multifaceted interpretation of the term, if considered as a whole, i.e. all five aspects combined, is very close to Koletnik’s systemic definition (2007: 8-15).

Another noteworthy Slovenian author who has written quite extensively on the subject of “kontroling” (23 or 12% of the total records) is Marko Hočevar of the University of Ljubljana’s Faculty of Economics. Hočevar (1995: 43) defines “kontroling” as an information-providing activity in the form of management-oriented accounting, which is very close to how “kontroling-controllership” is conceptualised in Anglo-American literature and in Western theory (see e.g. Morse, Davis and Hartgraves, 2000). Hočevar (1995: 43) defines the activities of controllers as the following:

- Planning and control,
• Reporting and explaining,
• Assessment and consulting,
• Tax consulting,
• Reporting to the government, and
• Economic analysis.

Following Hočevar we can say that a controller unites in one person the offices of a Chief Management Accountant and a Financial Accountant, the former preparing information for internal users and the later for external users. This position may thus be called Head of the Accounting Department. Novak (1999) and Kaligaro (2005) support the same opinion.

Based on the review of bibliographic records from Cobib/Cobiss system, we can thus conclude that the two most prolific Slovenian authors on “kontroling-controllership” conceptualise the underlying term quite differently. Is this typical of the theoretical understanding of controlling in Slovenia across the table? To be able to provide an answer to this question, further research into other available records on “kontroling-controllership” by Slovenian authors was required. Its results are concisely and transparently presented in tables below. Table 1 presents the key characteristics of theoretical conceptualisations of “kontroling-controllership” by individual other authors. The data for Table 1 was compiled by way of the qualitative content analysis method. Again, we made use of the pre-prepared code tables, and we also followed the same rationale. Table 1 and the Key present summarised versions of our keyword code table. Based on the analysis of words used to define “kontroling”, controlling activities and the related job titles, the records were coded and classified into pre-specified categories.

Table 1: An overview of conceptualisations of “kontroling” and its activities by Slovenian authors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>A. Conceptualisation of “kontroling-controllership”</th>
<th>B. Controlling activities</th>
<th>C. Job title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Koletnik, Franc (1988, 2007) and Kolar (2007, 2002); Koletnik and Kolar (2007, 2011, 2016)</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
<td>2, 3, 4, 5, 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hočevar (1995), Režek and Hočevar (2007), and Hočevar (2007)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaligaro (2005)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2, 3, 5, 6, 7</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Melavc (1991), Melavc and Novak (2007), and Novak (1999)</td>
<td>1, 4</td>
<td>2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10</td>
<td>1, 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kokošar (2004, 2005)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2, 3</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marn (1995)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2, 3</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Petrovčič (1998)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mayr (2003)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2, 3, 5, 6</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kolar (2003)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2, 3, 8</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knez-Riedl (2000, 2001)</td>
<td>1, 4</td>
<td>3, 6, 8, 11</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Verbič (1992)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1, 2, 8</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Glogovšek (1995)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belič (2004)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3, 6, 8</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pogačnik (1997) and Križaj, F. (1997, 1999)</td>
<td>2, 4</td>
<td>3, 8, 11</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OsmanagićBedenik (1998)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2, 7, 9, 11</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delidžakova-Drenik (1998)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1, 7</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karpe (2001)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1, 8, 11</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Železnikar (1999) and Železnikar (2007)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6, 11</td>
<td>1, 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Križaj, M. (2004)</td>
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<td>2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11</td>
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<td>Debeljak (1998)</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Korošec (1993)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2, 3, 5, 6</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turk (2004 and 2005)</td>
<td>2, 3, 4</td>
<td>2, 3, 5, 6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivanuša and Robnik (2015)</td>
<td>4, 5</td>
<td>1, 7, 9, 12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The authors NidžaroOsmanagićBedenik and VinkoBelak are of Croatian descent; they have been included in this study due to frequent citations of their articles by Slovenian authors on controlling.
The Evolution of Understanding “Kontroling-Controllership” – The Case of Slovenia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>A. Conceptualisation of “kontroling-controllership”</th>
<th>B. Controlling activities</th>
<th>C. Job title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Glogovšek (2014)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BezjakIvanuša (2012)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2, 3, 12</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Šrekl (2009)</td>
<td>1, 5</td>
<td>2, 3, 5, 6, 7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jagodnik and Bojnec (2010)</td>
<td>1, 4</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 7</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dvoršak (2010)</td>
<td>1, 4</td>
<td>2, 3, 4, 5, 6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belak (2008)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8, 12</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own research

Key to Table 1 columns:
A. Conceptualisations of “kontroling-controllership”
1-information-providing activities, 2-business philosophy, 3-decentralised style of management, 4-information activity – decision-oriented accounting, 5-independent business function

B. Controlling activities
1-cash management, 2-analysis and operational control, 3-strategic and operational business planning, 4-monitoring of internal controls, 5-reporting on efficiency, 6-reporting on effectiveness, 7-managing financial accounting, 8-expert support to corporate governance, 9-reporting to the government, 10-tax consulting, 11-cost management and control

C. Job titles of the person performing controlling activities: 1-Controller, 2-Head of Finance, 3-Financial Controller, 4-Financial Analyst, 5-Head of Planning, Reporting and Controlling, 6-Coordinator of Financial Management and Controlling, 7-Head of Accounting 8-Other

The analysis of different conceptualisations of “kontroling-controllership” in Slovenian theory (see Table 1) points to the expected conclusion that in our sample there exist two powerful groups with two different understandings of controlling. The findings of the analysis are based on the difference in structural percentage values, which are presented in Figure 1. One large group--30% of authors in the sample--address “kontroling-controllership” as a total of information-providing activities in an organisation. The second large group--46% of authors in the sample--interpret the term as a single information-providing service in the form of the decision-oriented accounting of an organisation. 8% of authors define “kontroling-controllership” as business philosophy, and 5% as a decentralised style of management or an independent business function in an organisation. Only four authors try to provide an all-encompassing definition and to address the term “kontroling-controllership” from several different angles.

Based on the analysis of records on “kontroling-controllership” in our selected sample, we conclude that there exist two different groups of authors who define the concept of controlling in two different ways. In one group, there are the advocates of controlling as a total of information-providing activities in an organisation (62.5%), while the other group is comprised of authors who conceptualise controlling as a form of decision-oriented accounting (37.5%). It needs to be added that Slovenian authors increasingly tend to conceptualise controlling as an independent business function or as a total of information-providing activities in an organisation; in the period 2008-2015 the ratio of representative authors amounted to 75% (previous period: 50%). However, we must not forget that there probably exist records on controlling that were not considered in our study due to its limitations. It may well be that if considered these records would offer an even more diversified picture of the conceptualisation of controlling in Slovenia.
We used the one-sample Chi-square test to assess whether the differences in structural percentage values between prevalent conceptualisations of “kontroling” in theory are statistically significant. We concluded that the differences in structural percentages are statistically significant (p < 0.001; $\chi^2 = 61.361; \text{df}=4$). Based on the test of differences in structural percentages and the conducted content analysis of definitions of “kontroling-controllership” performed on a sample of papers by Slovenian authors, we can accept the hypothesis that the authors who were included in our research support different conceptualisations of the term “kontroling-controllership”. This is in line with our assumption that some Slovenian authors favour the Anglo-American conceptualisation of the term while others follow the concept as defined by Franco-German writers.

Analogous to our above findings, the analysis of theoretical conceptualisations of controlling activities provided a similarly dispersed pattern. Figure 2 shows the ratios between different controlling activities as identified by Slovenian authors in our sample. In this context we observed that the listed activities varied significantly from one author to another. The most frequently identified activities were analysis (control) of an organisation’s operations, and strategic and operational planning. Each accounted for some 18% of identified cases. Analysis (control) and operational planning are mentioned by 36% of authors in our sample. These data suggest that most significance is attributed to strategic and operational business planning, and to analysis and operational control. This resembles the view on controlling activities as presented by the German authors (e.g. Weissenberger and Angelkont 2011: 167).
From among the identified controlling activities, the authors quite frequently mention reporting on efficiency and effectiveness, cost management and cost control, and offering expert support to corporate governance. The Chi-square test showed the distribution of the mentioned controlling activities by individual authors to be statistically significant ($p < 0.001; \chi^2 = 43.41; df=11$). Based on content analysis and calculated Chi-square statistics for structural percentage values of identified controlling activities in the sample of texts by Slovenian authors, we can assume that the definition of controlling activities they use is not uniform. Thus, it can be concluded that Slovenian authors differently identify controlling activities. Content analysis, which focused in the period 1988-2015, showed a growing emphasis on cash flow management and a constant addition of new functions. These changes may be, for the most part, attributed to advances in business information technology. In the second period under investigation (particularly after 2012), the authors seem to put more emphasis on knowledge and the use of business intelligence applications, and the development of business and financial prediction models (e.g. Koletnik and Kolar, 2016). The German authors (e.g. Spatz, 2008 as cited in Weber, 2011: 33; and Weber, 2011: 38), too, observe that controlling activities seem to have advanced from mere “information production” to more challenging tasks, which include research into information needs, crafting of innovative presentation design, elaborating specialised and custom-made analyses and predictions—i.e. they say that controllers have become “salesmen of information and advice”. The results of content analysis show that Slovenian authors have yet to recognise the need to streamline controlling activities to different life cycles in an organisation’s existence. Recently, this aspect has been given much attention by researchers (e.g. Granlund and Taipaleenmaki, 2005).

Additionally, we investigated different job titles used for controlling professionals in Slovenia. Some 50% of authors in our sample used the title of Controller. Another group of authors, accounting for 22%, used Head of Accounting, while 10% of authors referred to Financial Controller and 8% to Head of Planning, Reporting and Controlling. The latter title, in particular, suggests that some Slovenian authors have still not grasped the full meaning of key controlling activities, since the title is most likely a tautology. In sum we may conclude that in Slovenian theory, as evidenced by publications of the authors in our sample, the term controlling is used and conceptualised differently, which is also...
true for the definitions of key controlling activities. In the continuation, the article will address practical aspects on how controlling is conceptualized in Slovenia, followed by conclusions.

5. Findings of the Research into Practical Aspects of the Conceptualisation of “Kontroling-Controllership” in Slovenia

Based on the findings of the research into theoretical conceptualisations of the Slovenian term “kontroling-controllership” and the subsequent analysis of advertisements, we prepared a new code table to code the ad text data. This is presented summatively in Table 2, which also gives a concise overview of the obtained results. The results in Table 2 are classified according to the frequency of occurrence of words in ad texts, in the order from the most to the least frequent. Unexpected elements in ads were classified as “Other” and dealt with separately and with extra care.

The analysis and interpretation of the first research variable related to the job title for a person performing controlling activities (see Table 2). In line with our previous research into theoretical conceptualisations of “kontroling-controllership” and the investigation of ads, we identified nine job titles, which are based on a thorough analysis of ad elements and contents, as determined by the content analysis (Berg, 2006).

Table 2: Results of the controller job ads analysis in Slovenia in the period from 1 January 2002 to 31 December 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The research dimension of “kontroling-controllership”</th>
<th>Classification of answers based on frequency of occurrence in ad texts – results are presented in percent points (N = 234 ads)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job title of the person performing controlling activities in an organisation</td>
<td>Controlling Associate – 21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlling activities in an organisation</td>
<td>Cash flow management – 17.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required level of education</td>
<td>Level 7 – 74.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required study programme</td>
<td>General Economics – 62.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desired skills and knowledge</td>
<td>Foreign languages – 35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desired personality traits</td>
<td>Sense of initiative – 15.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required work experience</td>
<td>More than 3 years – 47.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other requirements: in 26.9% of the ads of which:</td>
<td>Experience in an international organisation – 51.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own research
The data we collected showed that the most commonly used title for a person performing controlling activities in an organisation in our sample was Controlling Associate. This title was found in 21% of ads, followed by the title of a Head of Controlling, which was found in 14% of ads. The mentioned titles together accounted for 35% of all titles used for a person performing controlling activities in our sample of Slovenian organisations. Representative organisations in our sample suggest, based on their published ads, that some still experience difficulty conceptualising controlling activities. This can be deduced from the fact that other job titles were also mentioned to highlight specific activities involved in the activities of a controller. In 8.5% of ads, the person performing controlling activities was called a Financial Controller. 13.7% of ads mentioned the title of Financial Analyst, 11.1% the title Head of Finance and Accounting, and 5.1% the title of a Head of Financial Management and Controlling.

All mentioned titles highlight the importance of financial service activities for an organisation. Mixing controlling activities with activities of other services, primarily the financial, shows that organisations represented in the ads sample seem to be conceptualising the terms “kontroling-controllership” and controlling activities differently from theoreticians. This observation is further confirmed by the fact that some Slovenian organisations that were included in our ads sample also use the following titles: Accounting and Controlling Associate (9.4%), and Head of Planning, Reporting and Controlling (12.8%). The title of an associate for accounting AND controlling may indicate, that in (quite!) some organisations accounting activities seem to be demoted to the level of clerical bookkeeping, and other accounting tasks were attributed to controlling. In this case we may assume that they conceptualise controlling activities similarly to the concept used in English-speaking countries. Based on the survey of titles used for a person performing controlling activities in the organisations in our ads sample, we believe that not all organisations are entirely familiarised with the basic controlling activities. It is interesting that in 2.1% of organisations in our ads sample a Controller is appointed as a Board Member for Controlling, which could testify to him or her assuming an important position within the organisational structure on par with management. Classified as “Other titles” are: Business Analyst, Bookkeeping Controller, Associate for Cost Control and Controller of Operations. These titles were infrequent and don’t seem to present a major problem; however, they still testify to a conceptualisation of controlling activities that is different from that shared by most organisations in our ads sample. We suggest that for a person charged with special controlling activities these other organisationsshould use a title such as Controlling Associate.

Based on the survey of job titles used for people performing controlling activities in organisations in our ads sample in the period 1 January 2002–31 December 2015, we believe that only 35% of organisations in our sample use the title according to controlling theory, i.e. they refer to their colleague as Controlling Associate or Head of Controlling. We identify a problem when other services are being mentioned in a controlling job title used by the organisation. This may indicate a potential misconceptualisation of activities, responsibilities and competencies of people performing controlling activities in this organisation. If the same activities are performed by several services in an organisation, this may result in inefficiency. Or, as a Latin proverb says: »A slave with three owners is a freed slave«.

Do the results of the survey of job titles used for people performing controlling activities in Slovenian organisations already provide an answer to our research question related to controlling activities? To answer this question, a separate research variable was used, i.e. descriptions and the relative frequency of identified controlling activities in the sample of Slovenian organisations. The results are presented in Table 2 and Figure 3.
Controlling activities identified by the organisations in our sample were as follows: 17.6% related to cash flow management, and 15.2% to analysis and operational control, which included the analysis of departures from set objectives, and their causes and consequences. Some 13% of controlling activities were further related to budgeting and operational planning, and over 12% of them to reporting on an organisation’s efficiency and effectiveness, followed by accounting management (10.5%) and expert support to corporate governance (4.6%). A very interesting observation is that our sample also included controlling activities associated with monitoring of legislation, which is probably related to the provision of accounting services.

Based on a comparison of structural percentage values of theoretically defined controlling activities and the ratio of these activities in the sample of organisations for the period 1 January 2002-31 December 2015, we can assume that the theory does not match practice with respect to the three most important activities (compare Figures 2 and 3). The theory identifies, as the most important activities, budgeting and operational planning, followed by analysis and operational control, while practice mostly associates controlling with cash flow management. Reporting on effectiveness and efficiency occupy the same positions in theory and in practice. Considerable differences between theory and practice exist also in relation to monitoring of the legislation, which is not mentioned by Slovenian authors on controlling at all. Notable differences exist also in respect to activities related to the provision of expert support to corporate governance. In theory, these activities take on added importance (8%) in relation to the role they actually play in organisations (4%). The shares of other activities may probably be attributed to individual variation of organisations in the sample. However, they should not go unmentioned. They are cooperation with the representatives of the government (patents) and lobbying, and the development of the ERP. They are also inconsistent with controlling theory, where they do not get mentioned at all.

Due to the mention of such new controlling activities in practice, which are not found in theory, we could not use an appropriate statistical test to calculate significant differences between the theoretical and the actual distribution of these activities. Nevertheless, in relation to the research question on the differences between the theory and practice of controlling activities we can assume that differences exist between the expected distribution of activities in theory and the actual controlling activities found in practice. The results of the statistical Chi-square test for those controlling activities that are referred to in controlling theory and practice show a significantly different distribution (p < 0.001; $\chi^2 = 51.875; \text{df}=11$). Based on content analysis and calculated Chi-square statistics for structural percentage values of identified controlling activities in the sample of Slovenian authors and organisations, we can provide an answer to our research question and assume that the conceptualisation of controlling activities in Slovenian organisations differs significantly from theory, i.e. in Slovenia, the authors on controlling conceptualise controlling activities differently from controlling practitioners.

Substantive differences between controlling activities as referred to in theory and as identified in practice by organisations in our sample consist primarily in the fact that the latter integrate a substantial amount of financial activities. It should also be mentioned that, relative to theory, the
organisations in our sample relatively more frequently mention activities related to monitoring of the legislation. If we interpret this difference as related to accounting activities for external reporting purposes, we could assume that organisations specify controlling activities in more detail than the controlling theory. Having analysed the sample of organisations to identify different titles used for people performing controlling activities and the activities themselves, we can conclude that in controlling practice no uniform title is used and the conceptualisations of the activities are different.

The collected data on job titles and controlling activities was further analysed by way of content analysis. Based on different conceptualisations of “kontroling-controllership” in theory, we attributed the organisations in our sample to one of two pre-specified groups. These conceptualisations were as follows: controlling as a total of information-providing activities, and controlling as a single information-providing service in the form of the decision-oriented accounting. The first group included organisations which had advertised the job of a controller as comprising of, among others, the following activities: expert support to corporate governance, cash flow and cash management, maintenance of internal controls, and other activities that may not directly be attributed to decision-oriented accounting. The second group included organisations which identified the activities of accounting management and the monitoring of business and tax legislation. In assigning organisations in the sample to both groups, activities were not considered that were common to both groups. Figure 4 presents the findings of the content analysis of ads and the classification of organisations into dominant groups based on their conceptualisation of “kontroling-controllership”; the results are presented separately for theory and practice.

**Figure 4:** The conceptualisations of “kontroling-controllership” in theory and practice in the period 1 January 2002–31 December 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“kontroling-controllership” as a total of information-providing activities; 50.20%</td>
<td>“kontroling-controllership” as a total of information-providing activities; 62.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>decision-oriented accounting; 49.80%</td>
<td>decision-oriented accounting; 37.50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Own research

The conceptualisation of “kontroling-controllership” by organisations in our ads sample does not match the findings of the analysis of conceptualisation in theory. In 37.5% of instances, the theoretical authors referred to “kontroling-controllership” as a single information-providing service in the form of the decision-oriented accounting. In the controlling practice, this conceptualisation takes in an almost 50% share in the organisations in our sample. This also implies that 50% of those organisations that had been advertising controller jobs between 1 January 2002 and 31 December 2015 conceptualised “kontroling-controllership” as a total of information-providing activities. Such findings may be interpreted as such that in Slovenia theorists on “kontroling-controllership” do not have a balanced influence—or no influence at all—on the conceptualisation and performance of controlling activities in organisations, i.e. in practice. Irrespective of which potential answer is closer to the truth, we believe that there is no uniform conceptualisation of “kontroling-controllership” in both Slovenian theory and practice.
We used the Chi-square test to assess whether the differences in structural percentage values attributed to the prevalent conceptualisations of controlling between theory and practice are statistically significant, and concluded that they are \( (p < 0.025; \chi^2 = 6.45; df=4) \).

6. Conclusions
The paper investigates the conceptualisation of the Slovenian terms “kontroling-controllership”, its activities and job titles used for people exercising them in Slovenia. All the above have been compared in both theory and practice. The two research questions find a very similar response, namely that in Slovenia the concepts of “kontroling-controllership” and controlling activities are understood differently in theory and practice. There are fairly significant differences in the conceptualisation of “kontroling-controllership”, both among the authors who write about it and among the organisations where controlling activities are carried out.

What are the reasons behind such differences? Well, they are indeed many. First of all, Slovenes have to deal with the original sin committed by the Germans who inopportune translated ‘controllership’ into ‘controlling’. The mistranslation of the terms from the English-speaking countries to other language areas has an impact on Slovenia, as well. A result thereof is the existence of two groups of theorists and organisations, each with a different understanding of “kontroling-controllership”: the one that preserves the original sense of controlling (the one applied in English-speaking countries) as decision-oriented accounting and the other that models its conceptualisation of controlling after, in particular, German authors. The differences in controlling activities may also be due to different controlling activities being attributed to controllers. In recent years (and in the past as well), Slovenia has been experiencing major financial indiscipline among organisations, growing business problems and ever more challenging demands from the environment which expects more benefits for less money. This may also lead to organisations indicating different activities of the financial service in their advertisements. Along with the multiplication of regulations, especially tax laws, Slovenian controllers have been given additional tasks. Authors who write about “kontroling-controllership”, however, have not detected such problems and thus fail to include them among the controlling activities. As controllers are busy carrying out additional tasks, particularly those associated with financing (which should instead be the task of the organisation’s financial service), their time available is shrinking while their attention is being diverted from the basic tasks of controlling, which again leads to a different indication of controlling activities among organisations. What we also find problematic are the differences in the (mostly insufficient) importance attributed to the controllers’ professional support to the management. We believe that the efficiency (benefits) of controlling and the eligibility of the implementation of controlling activities also depend on the preference given to a strict business economy discipline (in the sense that every sacrifice should bring some benefit) and the philosophy of all employees of an organisation. In this aspect, Slovenian practice still lags far behind theory. Such way of thinking was largely unshared even by the authors, who write about “kontroling-controllership”, which in our view is not right.

It may become useful to managers of organisations to clearly define the concept of “kontroling-controllership” and its basic activities. Yet, only further studies of these issues in Slovenia will contribute to a better common conceptualisation and understanding of the terms “kontroling-controllership” and controlling activities and thereby to improve the level of expectations and benefits from them. Practice, as well as theory of “kontroling-controllership” in Slovenia should take a step forward. This implies, in particular, monitoring and developing new tasks and content of “kontroling-controllership” in accordance with the life cycle of the organisation (more in Weber, 2011; Granlund and Taipaleenmaki, 2005), and increased support in the form of consultation to the management and decision-making.
Reference

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