Article

Performance Evaluation Optimization for Journal Editorial Departments: A Balanced Scorecard Approach

Ran Li, Rozaini Rosli[*]

School of Business and Management, Lincoln University College, Petaling Jaya 47301, Malaysia.

[*]**Corresponding author:** Rozaini Rosli, rozaini@lincoln.edu.my.

Abstract: In order to provide a comprehensive study tool for managing school publishing, the research focused on developing a balanced scorecard work checking system for magazine editing teams. To build a dynamic measuring tool, researchers integrated book reading and professional interviews within a balanced scorecard approach. In order to develop an inclusive model of 16 significant measures in four categories—finance, customers, internal processes, and employee learning and growth—researchers utilized a weighing system called AHP to assist in establishing the extent to which each measure is weighed. At 76.8, the actual test brought to light that magazine editorial teams excelled over other teams when it came to managing customers. Scoring lowest at 68.2, the employee learning and growth segment brought to light some very critical problems. Processes within were found to have the most improvement potential even though they scored the lowest at 18.5. There was variation in performance between various groups of magazine editors, with leading magazines recording a combined score of 81.4, and small magazines only 63.8. The study confirmed that the balanced scorecard system is ideal for knowledge firms and provides a good research foundation on enhancing magazine editing team performance as well as on guiding management choice. It has important practical value for helping current management in the academic publishing industry.

Keywords: balanced scorecard; journal editorial department; performance evaluation; optimization strategy; academic publishing

1. Introduction

With computer changes and growing hard school competition, magazine editing groups, as the key part of school publishing, are dealing with new work management challenges. The difficulty of the school publishing business needs editing groups to not only watch old money measures, but also to fully think about many-sided things such as writer happiness, expert check quality, inside work speed, and team growth abilities (An et al., 2024). The current performance evaluation system of journal editorial departments generally has the problem of single indicators and lack of systematic integration, which makes it difficult to fully reflect the comprehensive operating status of the editorial department.

As a mature strategic performance management tool, the balanced scorecard has been widely used and verified worldwide after more than 30 years of development and evolution (Tawse & Tabesh, 2023). Existing research shows that the balanced scorecard can effectively integrate financial and non-financial indicators, achieve visual management of strategic goals (Madsen, 2025), and show stronger adaptability in the digital environment (Cosa & Torelli, 2024). The performance management practice of academic institutions has proved that the multi-dimensional evaluation system can better balance the needs of different stakeholders and promote the sustainable development of institutions (Rossi et al., 2022).

However, research on the application of the balanced scorecard in the performance evaluation of journal editorial departments is relatively scarce, especially the research on adaptive transformation for the special operating environment of the editorial department is still insufficient (Kumar et al., 2024). Existing literature mainly focuses on the general application of the balanced scorecard and the overall performance management of higher education institutions, but lacks in-depth discussion on the specific organizational form of journal editorial departments. Journal editorial departments are characterized by knowledge-intensiveness, complex processes, and multiple stakeholders, and require the construction of a specialized performance evaluation framework that conforms to their operational characteristics

(Nishikawa-Pacher et al., 2023). Existing performance management systems often lack an effective link between strategy formulation and the use of performance information (Johnsen et al., 2024).

The breakthrough contribution of this study lies in the deep integration of the balanced scorecard theory with the organizational characteristics of journal editorial departments, and the construction of a balanced scorecard performance evaluation system dedicated to journal editorial departments. Through full theory building and real testing, this study looks for good ways to make the work of magazine editing teams better, builds a work checking system with strong flexibility and easy use, and gives helpful choosing facts for the planning control and work improvement of magazine editing teams. This study not only adds to the use ideas of the balanced scorecard in the area of school publishing, but also gives a working performance management tool for magazine management work, which has important theory worth and real meaning.

2. Data and Methods

2.1. Research Design and Data Collection

This study uses a work checking system based on the balanced scorecard idea, looking for ways to make magazine editing work better through a research plan that mixes theory building with real testing. The balanced scorecard idea stresses the building of a complete work checking system covering four areas: money, customers, inside steps, and learning and growth. This well balances short-term money goals with long-term planning development needs. This compound rating method is very appropriate to knowledge-based companies like magazine editing teams, and other value-creation activities and their harder issues are well illustrated. The research approach utilized was mixed strategy comprising descriptive research and numerically based analysis. The descriptive research part utilized literature review and expert interviews to construct a balanced scorecard framework usable by magazine editing teams. Quantitative analysis utilized the ranking method (AHP) to apply weighting for indicators and utilized full fuzzy assessment in performance testing. The method utilized the strength of different study approaches in ensuring credibility and accuracy in evidence. Sampling was done on accessibility and representativeness levels on
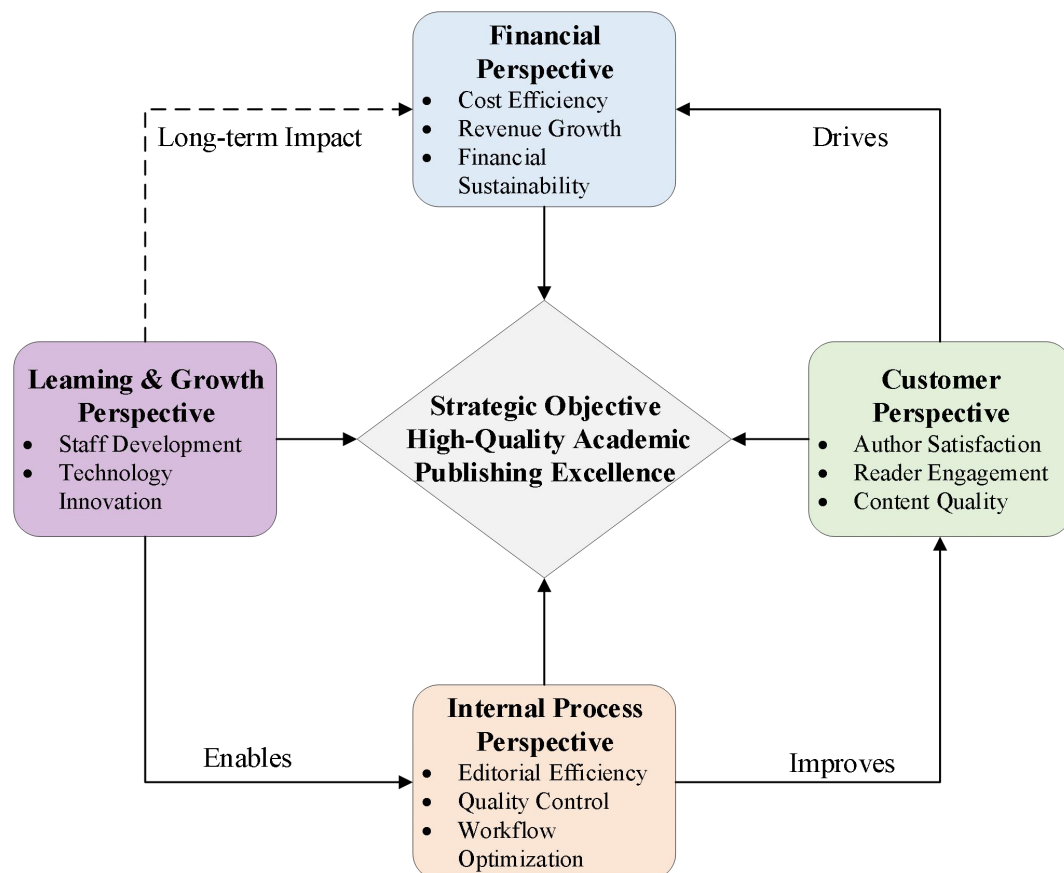
editing departments of renowned international and local academic journals. Data sources included yearly magazine reports, internal editorial staff data, writer satisfaction surveys, expert review history, and corresponding financial data. To ensure data quality, the study created a multiple checking system to improve the correctness and completeness of the data through cross-checking and expert review.

2.2. Balanced Scorecard Adaptation for Editorial Departments

As the main part of the school publishing system, magazine editing groups have special group features and working ways, needing careful changes of the old balanced scorecard setup. As shown in **Figure 1**, the balanced scorecard setup for magazine editing groups made in this study puts planning goals at center, carefully mixing four key parts around the main work of "helping high-quality school publishing and making magazine influence bigger."

Figure 1

Adapted Balanced Scorecard Framework for Journal Editorial Departments

The money part focuses on cost saving and income growth, focusing on controlling editing work costs, increasing subscription money, and money lasting

under the free access way. The customer part puts first two main groups: writers and readers, making customer worth biggest by making the sending experience better, making the publishing time shorter, and making content good better. The inside process part stresses making editing steps better, making expert check speed biggest, and making quality control ways better to make sure the scientific and careful nature of school publishing. The learning and growth part stresses building editing team abilities, making tech systems better, and building group culture, giving inside push for the magazine's long-time growth. These four parts are connected through a cause chain, making a closed circle planning control system.

2.3. Performance Evaluation System and Analysis Methods

Based on the group and work features of magazine editing teams, this study made a complete checking system built of four parts and 16 main work measures. The picking of main work measures followed the rules of scientific, workable, and complete, making sure that they not only show the main work results of the editing team but also have strong measuring and comparing. As shown in **Table 1**, each part has four main measures, covering both number and story measures, making a varied checking system.

Table 1

Key Performance Indicators System for Editorial Department BSC

BSC Dimension	Key Performance Indicator	Measurement Unit	Weight (%)
Financial Perspective	Editorial Cost per Article	USD/Article	7
	Subscription Revenue Growth Rate	Percentage	8
	Open Access Revenue Ratio	Percentage	5
	Cost-to-Impact Ratio	USD/IF Point	5
Customer Perspective	Author Satisfaction Score	Scale (1-10)	9
	Average Time to Publication	Days	8
	Article Download Rate	Downloads/Article	7
	Citation Impact Index	Citations/Article	6
Internal Process Perspective	Peer Review Cycle Time	Days	8
	Manuscript Acceptance Rate	Percentage	6
	Editorial Processing Efficiency	Articles/Staff	6
	Inter-reviewer Agreement Rate	Percentage	5
Learning & Growth Perspective	Editor Training Hours per Year	Hours/Editor	5
	Digital System Utilization Rate	Percentage	5
	Editorial Board Diversity Index	Percentage	5

| Staff Retention Rate | Percentage | 5 |

The measures' weights were established by combining the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) with expert opinion. We established a rating system and utilized comparison matrices to ascertain the value that each measure held. We requested that editors of publications, publishing experts, and business researchers review the weightings to ensure they were reasonable and well-justified. The customer division was given the highest weightage (30%), which indicated the amount of priority placed on readers and writers being made the number one priority by the magazine team. The internal working and finance departments were each awarded 25%, to have a good balance between making money and doing well enough. Learning and growth department received 20%, which is the priority placed on long-term skills. Number analysis utilized fuzzy evaluation method, which can handle the fuzzy and subjective parameters when measuring performance. Descriptive analysis included basic statistics, relationship analysis, and total evaluation calculation. SPSS 26.0 and MATLAB software were used to process the data. The fuzzy evaluation table was developed to calculate the performance score of every section and overall performance score. Sensitivity test was conducted to realize the level of reliability of the findings.

3. Results

3.1. Descriptive Analysis of Editorial Department Performance

By an in-built balanced scorecard measurement system, this research did have performance checking of sample magazine editing teams. The sampling was conducted across editing teams by subject matter and impact factors to provide common and reliable results. Simple number statistics indicated noteworthy differences in the four areas of performance among magazine editing teams, where overall levels of performance were at the upper-middle level.

For the financial factor, magazine editing teams' average score was 72.4 (SD = 8.6), scoring well on money management, yet low on the adaptation process of income models in the transition to open access. The customer factor scored best with an average of 76.8 (SD = 7.2), reflecting the high level of interest of magazine editing teams in author service quality and readers' satisfaction. The work component at the
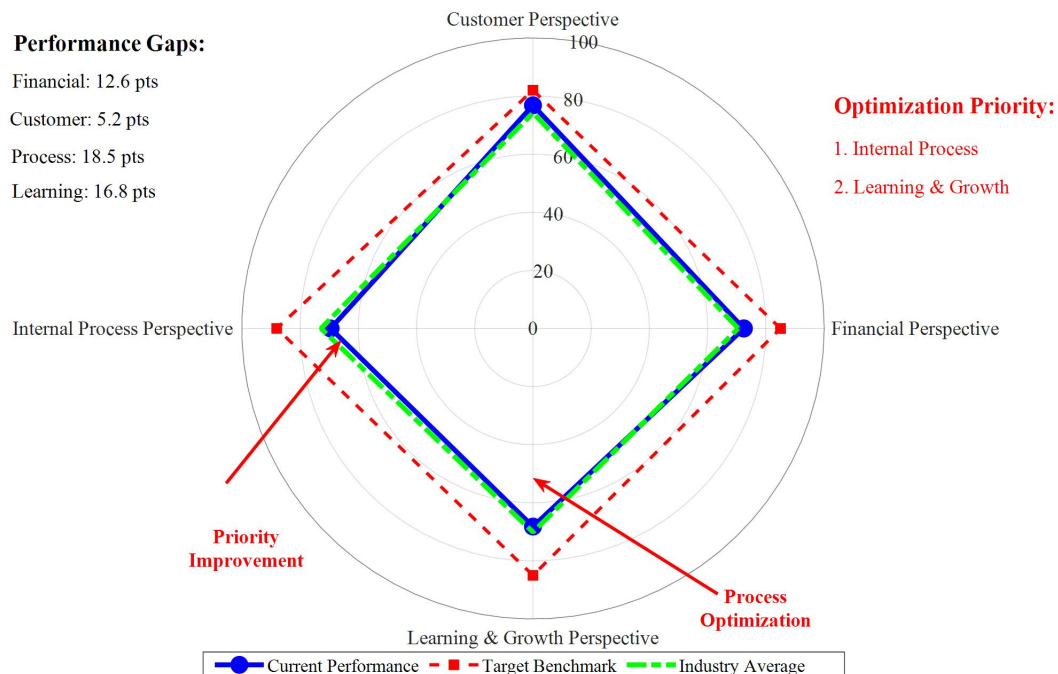
internal level in the company was an average of 69.5 (SD = 9.1), with a lot of opportunity for improvement in the quality of editing and processes of quality control. The learning and growth component was an average of 68.2 (SD = 8.8), showing that there is still some space for investment in staff development, technical improvement, and firm competencies for the editing teams. Overall, performance differences between different components are large. Customer-oriented management style has developed to a great extent, but work and skill internal productivity in development must be enhanced sooner.

3.2. BSC Results and Optimization Potential

Under the balanced scorecard grading system, this study gathered overall performance grades from each magazine editing team. As indicated in **Figure 2**, the radar chart can effectively demonstrate the disparity between their actual scores and target goals, serving as a handy visual reference in identifying areas of improvement.

Figure 2

BSC Performance Results and Optimization Potential Analysis

The results show the biggest deviation (18.5 points) from the target in the internal process area, so it is one of the most important areas for improvement. It has problems with such critical factors as peer review time and editing rate, which directly influence the publishing rate of the magazine and authors' satisfaction. Next is the

growth and learning section that has space for improvement of 16.8 points, mainly in areas like training digital competences for the editing team, improving technology systems, and expanding international outreach. Although the money section operates well today, it still needs 12.6 points of improvement to reach stable long-term form under the open access transformation. The customer area is functioning quite effectively with a marginal increase of 5.2 points.

Opportunity for improvement study shows open avenues for improvement. Through process improvement getting better should engage in streamlining editorial work flows to become normal, in making management systems of expert review enhanced, and enhancing quality control means. Getting better in the learning and growth part should focus on job growth of editing staff, use of computer publishing tech, and world reach of the editing board. Through the BSC cause chain way, getting better in inside processes and the learning and growth part will push working together getting better in customer happiness and money results, reaching complete getting better of the magazine's overall editing work.

3.3. Comparative Performance Analysis

Based on a comparing study of magazine types and impact factor levels, this study found big structure differences in the work of magazine editing teams. As shown in **Table 2**, editing teams of leading magazines did much better in all areas, especially in money handling and cost control, with overall performance doing better than average by 6.4 points.

Table 2

Performance Evaluation Results and Comparative Analysis

Editorial Department Type	Overall Score	Best Dimension	Weakest Dimension	Gap vs Benchmark	Performance Level
High-Impact Journals	81.4	Financial (85.2)	Process (78.6)	+6.4	Above Benchmark
Medium-Impact Journals	73.4	Customer (78.2)	Process (69.1)	-1.6	Near Benchmark
Open Access Journals	72.7	Customer (79.1)	Growth (68.8)	-2.3	Near Benchmark
Specialized Journals	68.1	Customer (73.6)	Growth (64.2)	-6.9	Below Benchmark
Regional Journals	63.8	Customer (71.2)	Growth (59.7)	-11.2	Below Benchmark

| Industry Benchmark | 75.0 | - | - | - | - |

The overall performance of middle magazines' editing teams is almost on par with normal levels, and exceptional customer service work. Nevertheless, serious problems with internal work flow are a real challenge to their future growth. Open-access journal editing staff perform customer service very well, with no doubt a transparent reader orientation, but they need to focus more on team building and generation of ideas. Even though specialist magazine editorial teams are highly knowledgeable on certain topics, financial matters keep them behind and push them back in terms of gaining learning and development. All their attempts to turn digital and go global need to be hastened much more.

Regional magazine editing personnel have much room for improvement in every area. While customer service abilities are okay, learning and growth work is worst, needing planned improvements in areas such as worker training, tech new ideas, and group skill building. Comparing study shows that the work gap between different types of magazine editing teams and their industry matches ranges from -11.2 points to +6.4 points, showing a clear layering. By learning from leading practices and optimizing management practices, all types of journal editorial departments have the potential to achieve performance improvement.

4. Discussion

The research applied the theory of Balanced Scorecard (BSC) to the field of academic publishing industry by developing a performance assessment system uniquely for journal editorial departments. The research discovered distinctive dimensional disparity in the performance of the journal editorial departments with comparatively better performance in the customer dimension and ample potential for improvement in the internal process and learning and growth dimensions. Internal process improvement and capacity construction for the organization emerged as prominent avenues for improving performance in the research. The research confirms the efficacy of the causal chain of the Balanced Scorecard in knowledge-intensive organizations and supplies an analytical tool systematically for strategic management and operational optimization of the journal editorial departments.

Based on the evaluation results, different types of journal editorial departments should adopt differentiated optimization strategies: high-impact journals should strengthen innovation and development, medium-impact journals should improve process efficiency, open access journals should balance service and development, and regional journals should strengthen capacity building. This study is limited by the relatively limited sample size and the potential for subjective influence in the indicator weighting. Future research could expand the sample coverage, explore the impact of cultural differences on the applicability of the BSC, and incorporate artificial intelligence technology to develop an intelligent performance monitoring system for journal editorial departments.

5. Conclusion

By constructing a balanced scorecard evaluation system for journal editorial departments, this study revealed the performance characteristics of journal editorial departments. The results showed that editing teams of all types generally did well in customer service, with an average score of 76.8. However, their learning and growth part was fairly weak, at only 68.2 points. Internal process dimension had 18.5 points of potential for improvement with great room for improvement in work speed as well as continuous development. Levels of work also differed greatly between magazine editorial team categories, with impact magazines recording at 81.4 points and area magazines at 63.8.

This research provides magazine editing teams with an all-round work check instrument and reasonable ways to improve, confirms the application of the balanced scorecard idea in knowledge-based teams, and provides valuable concepts to magazine management teams in formulating independent schemes. With the academic publishing market undergoing its Internet revolution, this assessment system must be a powerful tool to raise Chinese magazine editing teams' level of management and global competitiveness.

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