

# The Evolution of Management Accounting Practices in Vietnam : Empirical Evidence from Vietnamese food & Beverage Enterprises

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Since the Doi Moi, Vietnamese Government has encouraged the development of non state-owned enterprises, foreign-invested companies, and all other kinds of enterprises. This open-door policy makes Vietnamese domestic market become more competitive than before. In order to survive in competitive markets, both state-owned and non state-owned enterprises have to build management accounting systems. It is assumed that management accounting systems emerged in Vietnamese enterprises after the country undertook critical reforms of accounting regulations in the 1990s. A definition of management accounting system was officially issued in Accounting Law 2003. However, it is difficult to find systematic studies in either Vietnamese or English languages about the evolution of management accounting practices in Vietnamese enterprises at present.

Vietnam has the aim to become an industrialized country by 2020. Manufacturing industry is considered as one of the most vital sectors in Vietnamese economy. There are many sectors in the Vietnamese manufacturing industry. Food and beverage enterprises have been considered as the largest manufacturing sector for many years based on the criteria of their net turnover and gross output. This sector is also an appropriate field that reflects the main characteristics of the Vietnamese economy. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to investigate the evolution of management accounting practices in Vietnamese food and beverage enterprises. I pursue to answer the following research questions (*RQ*):

*RQ 1:* What is the current evolutionary stage of management accounting practices in Vietnamese food and beverage enterprises?

*RQ 2:* Which traditional and modern management accounting practices are widely adopted in Vietnamese food and beverage enterprises?

*RQ 3:* What are the main characteristics of costing, budgeting, and product pricing systems in Vietnamese food and beverage enterprises?

*RQ 4:* What are the factors influencing the evolution of management accounting practices in Vietnamese food and beverage enterprises?

The significant contribution of my study is that it reveals empirical evidence on the evolution of management accounting practices in Vietnamese food and beverage enterprises under the light of international view. In addition, I explore internal and external factors which significantly influence the evolution of management accounting practices in the Vietnamese enterprises. My study especially helps to cover the severe lack of studies about management accounting practices in Vietnamese manufacturing enterprises, particularly, Vietnamese food and beverage enterprises.

This thesis abstract consists of five sections. Section 1 provides the background, significance, objectives, and contribution of the research. Section 2 describes management accounting evolution models and prior research on the evolution of management accounting practices in other countries and in Vietnam. In Section 3, I explain the data collection method and the main characteristics of the sample. This section reveals empirical evidence on the evolutionary stages of management accounting

practices and main characteristics of costing, budgeting, and pricing systems in the Vietnamese food and beverage enterprises. It provides comparisons on the adoption rates of management accounting practices between the Vietnamese enterprises and those in other countries. It also describes the needs of enhancing management accounting and product pricing systems in the enterprises. Section 4 analyzes internal and external factors influencing the evolution of management accounting practices in Vietnamese food and beverage enterprises. The final section, section 5, summarizes the results, denotes the limitations of this research, and states possibilities for future research.

## **2. Literature review**

I analyze two popular management accounting practices evolution models which are proposed respectively by the IFAC (1998) and Nishimura (2003). Both the two models describe the evolution of management accounting practices as a four-stage framework. The IFAC model depicts general characteristics of each evolutionary stage. The Nishimura model provides more details about specific management accounting practices and concepts of control which are widely adopted in each stage of the evolution. In addition, Nishimura model, which is built based on management accounting practices in Japan, may explain Asian countries' management accounting practices more persuasively than IFAC model. Therefore, I use the model proposed by Nishimura (2003) as a theoretical framework for my study.

I review related studies using these models to investigate the evolution of management accounting practices and factors influencing the evolution in developed and developing countries. I also attempt to analyze previous studies about management accounting practices in Vietnam and the economic context of Vietnamese food and beverage enterprises. In Vietnam, food and beverage enterprises are considered as the largest manufacturing sector based on the criteria of their net turnover and gross output in many years. Their long-term potential growth has been expected. However, the enterprises have to cope with severe competition in not only domestic but also international markets in the future. Till now, little is known about management accounting practices in Vietnamese food and beverage enterprises. It is rather difficult to find systematic research on the evolution of management accounting practices in this sector.

## **3. The evolution of management accounting practices in Vietnamese food and beverage enterprises**

Regarding the data collection process, I examine the advantages and disadvantages of questionnaire survey. I find that there were numerous prior studies which successfully applied mail questionnaire surveys to study management accounting practices in other countries. Therefore, I adopt the mail questionnaire survey to collect data for my research. However, before employing a large-scale survey, I conducted preliminary interviews and a pilot survey with three companies in Hanoi, one of the two biggest manufacturing centers of Vietnam.

The enterprises were selected from the following sources: the Vietnamese General Statistics Office, the Catalog of enterprises listed in the Hanoi stock market, the Ho Chi Minh stock market

and the List of the Vietnam top 500 largest enterprises ranked by revenue published by the Vietnam Report Joint Stock Company. There are three criteria of choosing sampled enterprises in this research. First, the companies listed in the stock markets and have large revenues are in first priority of the selection. Second, non-state owned enterprises are preferred because some researchers find that the adoption rates of management accounting practices in these enterprises are higher than state-owned ones. Third, every answer has to be officially stamped by the company, namely, authorized by companies to assure the reliability of data. I select 145 companies from four cities based on these criteria. The cities are Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City (the two biggest manufacturing centers in Vietnam), Haiphong (a northern major city), and Dongnai (a southern major city). All these cities have well-developed manufacturing infrastructure.

By the end of February 2012, I received a total of 54 questionnaires which were officially authorized by enterprises. This denotes the usable response rate of 37.2%. Majority of respondents (72.2%) are from the accounting departments and 24.1% are from the boards of directors. This information is regarded as a significant point to evaluate the quality of the responses. 31.5 % enterprises are large enterprises and 16.7% are medium enterprises. Half of the enterprises (51.8%) are small enterprises. Majority of sampled enterprises (94.6%) are non-state owned. Most of the enterprises have accounting departments and apply IT in their accounting works.

With regard to the Research Question 1, I find that majority of the SMEs are in the initial stages of the evolution of management accounting practices. However, several large enterprises have already reached the highest stage of the evolution of management accounting practices. There is a clear difference on the evolutionary stages of management accounting practices between the large enterprises and the SMEs.

Regarding the Research Question 2, I find that traditional management accounting practices are more widely adopted than modern practices in the enterprises even the large enterprises. Majority of the enterprises adopt absorption costing to calculate product cost. The other modern costing practices, i.e., ABC or target costing are used by some large enterprises at very low rates. Especially, there is no enterprise even the large ones which adopts kaizen costing. Regarding traditional decision support practices, CVP analysis and product profitability analysis are adopted at very modest rates. Meanwhile, modern decision support practices such as ABC and ABM, benchmarking, or customer profitability analysis are adopted by a few large enterprises. Regarding performance evaluation and strategic analysis practices, financial ratios analysis has the highest adoption rate of 18.5%. No enterprise, even large ones, adopts modern strategic analysis practices such as value chain analysis, Balanced Scorecard and so on.

Concerning Research Question 3, I find the main characteristics of costing, budgeting, and product pricing systems in the Vietnamese food and beverage enterprises. I summarize significant findings as follows. On the topic of costing system, direct material cost is the largest cost item.

Following are direct labor cost, manufacturing overhead cost, administration cost, and selling cost. The smallest cost items are customer service cost and R&D cost. Absorption costing is used by most of the enterprises (83.3%). The other costing methods are also used but at very low rates. On the topic of budgeting system, simple traditional budgeting is adopted by 100% of the enterprises. This budgeting practice is applied only for some items such as sales budget, cost budget and so on. On the topic of product pricing system, traditional pricing approach “cost-plus pricing” is widely adopted in the enterprises. The modern pricing approach “target costing” is adopted at very low rate.

I also provide an international view for the evolutionary stages of management accounting practices in the Vietnamese food and beverage enterprises by comparing them with those of other countries. It is found that the adoption rates of both traditional and modern management accounting practices in the Vietnamese food and beverage enterprises are much lower than the other countries.

Moreover, I find that the needs of enhancing management accounting and product pricing systems exist in the Vietnamese food and beverage enterprises at present. Majority of the large enterprises would like to enhance their management accounting and product pricing systems, however, few SMEs consider these needs.

#### **4. Factors influencing the evolution of management accounting practices in Vietnamese food and beverage enterprises**

Regarding Research Question 4, I analyze internal and external factors influencing the evolution of management accounting practices in Vietnamese food and beverage enterprises. To explore internal factors, I use statistical analyses to examine the data obtained from the questionnaire survey. To find external factors, I use secondary source data such as books, Vietnamese laws and regulations on accounting, previous related studies and so on.

The internal factors are size of enterprises, age of enterprises and the attributes of management accounting innovations. First, I explore that large enterprises adopt more management accounting practices than SMEs. Large enterprises have more tendencies to use some specific traditional and modern management accounting practices than SMEs. Second, age of enterprises is a significant factor affecting the adoption of management accounting practices. The older enterprises tend to apply more management accounting practices than the younger ones. Third, I analyze that attributes of management accounting innovations are associated with the adoption of them in the Vietnamese food and beverage enterprises.

I also find external factors which influence the evolution of management accounting practices in Vietnamese food and beverage enterprises. The changes in political, social, and economic environment of Vietnam have a significant impact on the formation and development of Vietnamese management accounting system. In the period from 1954 to 1986, there is no term equivalent to management accounting in Vietnamese enterprises. Accounting was considered as bookkeeping under

the centrally planned economy. It was just a tool of the Government and tax authorities to control all enterprises in the economy. After the Doi Moi in 1986 and the globally economic integration since the 1990s, a socialist-oriented market economy and competitive markets were established in Vietnam. In this period, enterprises need correct and relevant accounting information for making decisions because they have to compete in not only the Vietnamese market but also international markets. These are the main conditions for the emergence and development of management accounting in Vietnam from the mid of 1990s.

The milestone of the evolution of management accounting practices in Vietnam is Accounting Law 2003 which officially provides a definition of management accounting and considers it as an official part in an accounting system. However, the development of management accounting in Vietnam is strongly affected by the Government. They promulgated laws, VASs and UAS which mainly serve the needs of governmental and tax agencies rather than those of enterprises. Meanwhile, Vietnamese enterprises have had a tradition of obeying the rigid UAS since the era of centrally planned economy. Majority of accountants do not have experiences in choosing management accounting practices by themselves. Their knowledge in management accounting is still limited. All the above mentioned characteristics of the political, social, and economic environment of Vietnam can explain the existing low evolutionary stages of management accounting practices in the Vietnamese food and beverage enterprises.

The history of Vietnamese costing system is also an external factor influencing the existing evolutionary stage of management accounting practices in Vietnamese food and beverage enterprises. In the centrally planned economy, regulations on the costing system were issued by the Governmental agencies. The regulations were very rigid in order to serve solely for the Government's requirements. Enterprises had to apply costing practices allowed by the Government. After Doi Moi in 1986, the regulations on the costing system have become increasingly flexible and suitable with enterprises. Vietnamese enterprises can deliberately apply costing systems which meet their management requirements. However, they have a tradition of rigidly obeying accounting regulations promulgated by the Government and tax authorities. They are not active in adopting new costing practices by themselves. Therefore, the adoption rates of modern costing practices are rather low in Vietnamese food and beverage enterprises.

## **5. Concluding remarks, Limitations and Future research**

My study reveals empirical evidence on the evolution of management accounting practices in Vietnamese food and beverage enterprises. I employ a questionnaire survey to study the evolution of management accounting practices in the enterprises based on Nishimura model. It is found that majority of the SMEs in Vietnam are in the initial stages of the evolution of management accounting practices. However, several large enterprises have already reached the highest stage of the evolution

of management accounting practices. There is a clear difference on the evolutionary stages of management accounting practices between the large enterprises and the SMEs.

I also find that traditional management accounting practices are more widely adopted than modern ones in the Vietnamese food and beverage enterprises even the large enterprises. I also explore typical characteristics of costing, budgeting, and product pricing systems in the Vietnamese food and beverage enterprises. I make comparisons between the adoption rates of management accounting practices in Vietnamese food and beverage enterprises and those in other countries. I also find that majority of the large enterprises would like to enhance their management accounting and product pricing systems, however, few SMEs consider this issue.

I also explore internal and external factors which influence the evolution of management accounting practices in Vietnamese food and beverage enterprises. I find some significant internal factors, namely, size of enterprises, age of enterprises, and attributes of management accounting innovations. The external factors are the political, social, and economic environment of Vietnam and the history of costing system.

I adopt literature analysis and questionnaire survey in this research and can obtain some useful results about the evolution of management accounting practices in Vietnamese food and beverage enterprises. However, I have to admit that there are some limitations in my study. I would like to solve these limitations in future research.

In conclusion, my study is an exploratory research in providing empirical evidence on the evolution of management accounting practices in Vietnamese food and beverage enterprises. I also explore some factors influencing the evolution. This is a broad and complex topic. Reviewing past studies about the evolution of management accounting practices in Vietnam, I find that there is severe lack of such studies. I focus on examining this perspective in this paper. I think my contribution is here. I indicate that further research on this topic should be a fruitful way in the future.

## 論文審査結果の要旨

本論文は、ベトナムの企業(食品業)で用いられている管理会計システムについて調査を行い、管理会計システムの発展段階を検討している。Chapter1では、本研究の目的と背景、すなわち、経済発展の中途にあるベトナムにおいて管理会計システムの発展段階に焦点を当てることの意義を述べている。

Chapter2では、過去の文献調査を行い、管理会計システムの発展モデル2つ(IFACモデル、西村モデル)を検証し、西村モデルを本論文における分析のフレーム枠として用いる理由、すなわち、このモデルがそれぞれの発展段階と管理会計実務を具体的に結びつけているという点、を明らかにして



いる。

Chapter3ではアンケート調査に関する説明、すなわち、食品業に属する企業を調査対象とした理由(ベトナムにおいて最大の産業である)、調査対象企業の選択基準(上場企業、ベトナムの主要産業地域で活動している企業、私企業)、アンケートの調査方法(データの収集手続等)、アンケートの内容(質問項目)について述べている。アンケートの結果から、調査対象企業が利用している原価計算システム・予算システム・価格決定システムの特徴を明らかにした。さらに、調査したベトナム企業の管理会計システムは、企業の規模によってその発展段階に差があることを見いだした。すなわち、中小企業の多くは、西村モデルにおける初期段階(第1または第2段階)にあるが、大企業の中には発展の高い段階(第3または第4段階)に達している企業が存在することを見いだした。

Chapter4では、アンケート調査データに基づき統計分析を行い、調査対象企業が利用している管理会計実務が企業規模と企業の年齢に関係することを見いだした。すなわち、大企業は中小企業に比べてより先進的な管理会計実務を導入しており、また、企業年齢が高い企業は若い企業に比べてより先進的な管理会計実務を導入している、ことを統計的な分析により明らかにした。さらに、DOI理論(Diffusion of Innovation Theory, Rogers2003)に基づき、様々な管理会計実務の利用が企業内のイノベーションと関連していることを明らかにした。Chapter5では、本論文の要約、分析の限界、今後の研究について述べている。

ベトナムでは、経済改革(ドイ・モイ1986)以後多くの営利企業が生まれ、活発な市場経済を支えてきた。一方、会計に関する研究、特に、管理会計に関する研究は遅れており、今後、ベトナムが経済成長を続けていくためには、企業に管理会計システムを導入し、活用していくことが必要と考えられる。この意味で、ベトナムの企業で実際に利用されている管理会計実務の現状を把握することの意義は大きい。本論文は、ベトナム企業が利用している管理会計実務に関する最初の研究であり、ベトナムにおける管理会計研究に大きな貢献をしていると考えられる。また、本論文で行われた分析は、他の発展途上国における管理会計実務に関する分析を行う際にも適用可能であり、本論文の研究は発展性も有すると考えられる。

以上より、本論文は博士(経営学)論文として「合格」とであると判定する。