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The resistance in management accounting practices towards a neoliberal economy

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The Resistance in Management Accounting Practices (MAPs) towards a Neoliberal Economy: A case of Vietnam

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1

THE RESISTANCE IN MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTING PRACTICES TOWARDS A NEOLIBERAL ECONOMY: A CASE OF VIETNAM

SỰ ĐỐI KHÁNG TRONG THỰC TIỄN QUẢN LÝ KẾ TOÁN ĐỐI VỚI NỀN KINH TẾ TÂN TỰ DO: MỘT TRƯỜNG HỢP CỦA VIỆT NAM

Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to investigate the resistance in management accounting practices (MAPs) in a developing economy in the manufacturing and service sectors in Vietnam.

Design/methodology/approach: Data collection is carried out using qualitative survey questionnaires in Vietnamese language. The questionnaires were distributed to selected respondents from the manufacturing and service organisations in Vietnam. Textual structuralism was used to analyse different categories of data, i.e. qualitative survey questionnaires, photos and qualitative texts obtained from the literature.

Findings: The findings indicate that the usage of MAPs is more prevalent in the manufacturing sector than in the service sector. In addition, various traditional and contemporary MAPs are being used concurrently in Vietnam, which challenges the classical twofold dichotomy between mere socialism and mere neoliberalism.

Practical implications: MAPs can be implemented in economic systems ranging from command to capitalist systems. Although most countries in the world follow a mixed economic system, specific MAPs could be designed for a transitional economic system such as that of Vietnam. This affects both theorists and practitioners in Vietnam applying sustainable MAPs to boost a country's competitiveness during transition.

Originality/value: This study expands our understanding of the conformity of MAPs in relation to economic systems under the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) – the ruling party of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. Understanding the differences in the way these MAPs are utilised constitutes an essential area of the accounting discipline to advance MAPs in Vietnamese enterprises and progress theoretical development of sustainable MAPs.

Keywords:

2

1. Introduction

The different roles of management accounting practices (MAPs) in enterprises involve determining and reducing costs, increasing the profitability of organisational activities and optimising productive efficiency and entrepreneurial practices based on cost capability (Datar and Rajan, 2017; Bhimani, 2015; Ahrens and Chapman, 2007). In a capitalist economy, where supply and demand regulate a country's production, resource allocation and resource distribution, MAPs play a critical role in informing management about how to make efficient and profitable decisions.

Many of today's enterprises employ more advanced MAPs such as Activity Based Costing or ABC (which assigns costs through activities) in order to enhance competitiveness by eliminating unnecessary costs and inefficient products and activities and allocating resources to profitable products and activities (Plowman, 2017; Abdel-Kader and Luther, 2006). Hence, efficiency and competitiveness are paramount in the decision-making process in a capitalist economic system (Sinaga *et al*., 2019; Wan Zakaria *et al*., 2017). Correspondingly, the research question is how the use of MAPs is different in a communist economic system, which exhibits differences in production, resource allocation and commodity distribution. For example: in Vietnam, the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV) (Đảng Cộng Sản Việt Nam) controls resource allocation and manages inefficient enterprises (Nghia, 2016). This is the motivation of this paper: to investigate resistance in the use of MAPs in Vietnam, which is governed by the CPV.

There are four dominant economic systems, namely the command, the traditional, the market and the mixed systems (Rosefielde, 2002; Naggar and Naggar, 2005; Gregory and Stuart, 2003). A command economic system is common in communist and socialist countries and involves governmental control and regulation of the national production (by way of capital, labour, information and entrepreneurs), resource allocation and commodity distribution to the public. Scholarly work on economic systems (Conklin, 1991; Carson, 1997) mentions the former USSR and North Korea as examples of command economic systems. A traditional economic system, by contrast, is a system in which traditions and customs shape the country's simplistic production, resource allocation and distribution are included in this category, traditional countries that are rural and farm-based such as Bhutan (Samarasinghe, 1990). In a capitalist economic system, the government does not intervene in the country's production, resource allocation or distribution; instead, all entrepreneurial behaviours and practices are driven by market mechanisms and the interaction between demand and supply (Carson, 1997). Sweden and the USA are examples of such economies. Most of today's countries are based on mixed economic systems, which combine the above systems (Rosefielde. 2002; Gregory and Stuart, 2003).

Vietnam was unified in 1975 under a one-party system controlled by the CPV. Before 1975, the country experienced stagnant economic growth under the centrally planned economic regime (Dapice, 2005; Adams and Linh, 2003). As a result of the Sixth Party Congress in 1986 (Thayer, 1987), Vietnam has been developing its economy toward a more capitalist economic

system in order to develop the country's economic infrastructure (Yang et al., 2015). This transition involved economic development (sự phát triển kinh tế) towards capitalism, privatisation, deregulation, free trade and an intensification of the roles of the commercial sectors. However, at the same time, the CPV regulates resource allocation and manages inefficient enterprises as well as producing a communist propaganda (Davies, 2017; Nghia, 2016). Therefore, the aim of this study is to expand the understanding of the resistance to the use of MAPs in Vietnam, a country governed by the CPV and going through a transition between two opposing economic systems i.e. capitalism with efficiency and free-market mechanisms and communist economy with a command economic system and an autocratic structure.

This paper is divided into seven parts. Part 1 introduces Vietnam and the motivation of the study. Part 2 provides a discussion of the background to the study. Part 3 discusses the empirical background of MAPs, which involves a discussion of the types of MAPs along with relevant empirical literature. Parts 4 and 5 discuss the triangulation methodology used to collect the data. Part 6 presents the findings and a discussion of the discourse on MAPs in Vietnam. Finally, Part 7 provides a discussion of the key contribution and implications of the study as well as some limitations and future research avenues.

2. Background to the study

Within a capitalistic economy, such as the United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK), Germany, Canada and other countries, most commercial companies employ superior and advanced accounting practices (Abdel-Kader and Luther, 2006; Plowman, 2017) to estimate a more accurate cost per unit. A superior MAP is driven towards efficient production and competitive pricing to earn the maximum profit in a highly competitive environment (Khataie and Bulgak, 2013; Rundora *et al*, 2013).

This study is considered distinct and original because it evaluates MAPs in Vietnam during the transitional period, in which the country has been influenced by socialist, communist and capitalist systems such as France, the US, the former Soviet Union and China (Lin, 2017; Nguyen and Gong, 2012; Phuong, 2017). This system may create inconsistencies because a superior MAPs may not be required as the communist government and state-owned enterprises must produce commodities, regardless of whether they are efficient.

The Vietnamese economy is fast moving from a less developed one with a communist system since 1986 towards a more developed economy with a capitalist system since the introduction of *đổi mới* (the Open Door Policy) by the Communist Party. During this time, the country has undergone significant trade liberalisation, globalisation, and free-market orientation, including the country's recent involvement in the ASEAN, AFTA, and APEC agreements as well as the more recent US-led Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement in 2016 (Davies, 2017; Lin, 2017). The above phenomena have considerably influenced the country's MAPs (Nguyen, 2019; Phuong, 2017; Phuong and Nguyen, 2012). For instance, in 1945 the country started following

the French style of accounting practice, adopting the Soviet-style accounting practice in 1957. In 1996, the country implemented a capitalist MAP by adopting the uniform accounting system (UAS), contributing to the global harmonisation of accounting practices (Phuong, 2017). In 2006, Vietnam started following International Accounting Standards (IAS) by introducing the Vietnamese Accounting Standards (VAS) to further harmonise MAPs with those of other nations (Anh Tuan and Guangming, 2014; Phuong, 2017). More recently, in 2015 the country passed the Law on Enterprises, meaning all companies had to adopt MAPs that followed both the VAS and the UAS (Phuong, 2017).

Additionally, in a command economy such as Vietnam, many inefficient large enterprises and state-owned companies do not generate optimal profits and are subsidised by the government (Nghia, 2016). Accordingly, the application of efficiency concepts may not function properly within a command economy. This dichotomy is the rationale for undertaking this study, which investigates the resistance to the application of MAPs in Vietnam, a country is developing from a command or communist economic system to a laissez-faire or capitalist economic system.

Although abundant literature exists on the Vietnamese transitional economic systems (inter alia, Adams and Linh, 2003; Doan, Duc-Tho and Lokman, 2011; Phuong and Richard, 2011), there is a lack of literature on MAPs within a command economy and a transitional economy; moving from a command towards a free market economy. In order to compete successfully with worldwide competitors, businesses in Vietnam have to adopt sustainable MAPs. More innovative MAPs have been actively adopted in the wake of international convergence and harmonisation (Doan *et al*., 2011; Fung, 2012; Jandl, 2013; Sakata, 2013; Viere *et al*., 2007).

As a result, within the last two decades, the country has witnessed considerable changes in its use of MAPs (Adams and Linh, 2003; Doan *et al*., 2011; Sakata, 2013; Viere *et al*., 2007). Alongside the changes, there has been a lack of knowledge on the current state of MAPs in Vietnam. However, this lack of knowledge is perceived not only in Vietnam, but also in other developing economies (Alawattage *et al*., 2007; Haldma and Laats, 2002; Joshi, 2001; Waweru *et al*., 2004). These changes have also been reflected in all kinds of enterprises across the world, from developing to developed economies (Zabri and Ahmad, 2015; Abdel-Kader and Luther, 2008, 2006; Fung, 2012; Zyznarska-Dworczak, 2018).

3. Empirical background of MAPs

Most MAPs literature suggests the existence of two types of MAPs: 'conventional' and 'modern' (Kumarasiri and Jubb, 2017; Lucas and Lowth, 2013; Malmmose, 2012; Sulaiman *et al*., 2008, 2004). These concepts are differentiated in terms of their calculative practices. In terms of the classification of traditional and contemporary MAPs, relevant literature (Cuzdriorean, 2017; Sulaiman, *et al*., 2008, 2004) have stated that conventional MAPs include budgeting and budgetary control analysis, cost-volume-profit (CVP) analysis, cash flow analysis, marginal costing, variance analysis, ratio analysis and standard costing. In contrast, the newly developed or so-called contemporary MAPs consist ABC, total quality management

(TQM), just-in-time (JIT), process reengineering, theory of constraints (TOC) and balanced scorecard (BSC).

Apart from above classifications, MAPs could also be divided into three main categories: qualitative, quantitative and mixed MAPs. On the one hand, quantitative MAPs consist of budgetary control analysis, variance analysis, CVP, financial statement analysis, cash flow statement analysis, ABC, variable costing analysis, target-costing analysis, segment-reporting analysis and responsibility accounting analysis. On the other hand, qualitative MAPs include BSC analysis, management by exception (MBE) analysis and TQM. Meanwhile, TOC analysis functions within both quantitative and qualitative techniques (Nuhu *et al*., 2016; Yeshmin and Fowzia 2010; Kaplan and Norton, 1996).

Another type of classification has been drawn by Zabri and Ahmad (2012), who identified MAPs into costing systems, budgeting systems, performance evaluation systems, decision support and strategic management accounting systems. However, Sulaiman *et al*. (2004) stated that conventional MAPs such as variance analysis, CVP analysis, traditional budgeting and standard costing were no longer adequate for modern manufacturing environment as tools for planning and controlling. Nonetheless, Abdel-Kader and Luther (2006) found that various MAPs were employed by enterprises surveyed in the UK. For example, direct costing analysis was widely used and perceived important by the UK enterprises. Much of the research carried out relating to MAPs (Helden and Bogt 2012; Loo, *et al*. 2011; Albelda 2011; Hussain, 2005) indicated that most traditional MAPs were still being used effectively by companies. For example, Hussain (2005) demonstrated the trends of using MAPs at financial institutions in Sweden, where it pays more attention in Sweden to measuring financial performance more than to measuring non-financial performance. In addition, Doan *et al*. (2011) indicated that the three most perceived beneficial traditional MAPs in Finland were variable costing analysis, divisional profit in performance evaluation and budgeting for controlling costs.

Today's organisations have undergone significant changes (Nuhu *et al*., 2016; Islam *et al*., 2011; Bjøornenak and Olson 1999) in various areas such as the design of organisational structure, the nature of rivalry and competition, the aspects of volatile environment and the application of technology. In response to these various changes, organisations could choose between different MAPs to achieve continuous effectiveness whilst attempting to face the challenges of embarking on a change in management path (Nuhu *et al*., 2016; Waldron, 2005). In addition, Mohammed's findings (2010) indicate that the application of MAPs in Nigeria has been driven by a new institutional sociology, the existence of the regulatory environment and the social and cultural environment. Other leading issues were investigated by Diab (2016) and Islam *et al*. (2011), the findings reveal a significant influence of institutional complexity, such as sociological, political and economic development as well as local cultures and workers' resistance to employing MAPs.

Zabri and Ahmad (2015) investigate the factors influencing the use of MAPs in 110 Malaysian firms in the manufacturing sector. Their findings indicate that firm size, intensity of competition, owner or manager commitment and technological capacity have all influenced the

use of MAPs. The findings of their research support the contingency theory regarding the usage of MAPs among small- to medium-sized firms. Similarly, Ding and McKinstry (2013) studied the operational development of MAPs in UK companies from a historical perspective from 1779 to 1965, a period spanning more than 150 years. Their research also indicates that the usage of MAPs follows the contingency theory. In this context, MAPs are thought to be contingent upon internal and external environmental factors, such as internal managerial and cultural influences (Wickramasinghe *et al.*, 2007) as well as the commercial pressures of external competition.

Both internal and external pressures have led practitioners to employ more effective MAPs within their organisations. Analogously, Fung's (2012) research into MAPs in Vietnam provides evidence for a positive association between external regulatory changes and the development of MAPs; in this case, the positive usage of MAPs is associated with stronger regulatory changes. In addition, a more recent historical study conducted by Zyznarska-Dworczak (2018) investigates the development of sustainable MAPs in central and eastern European countries between 1945 and 2017 using bibliometric analysis. The findings lend significant support to the contingency theory that future MAPs are expected to develop into more sustainable MAPs by adapting to the sociocultural and environmental development in these European countries.

Earlier literature (Sulaiman *et al.*, 2008, 2004; Van Triest and Elshahat, 2007; Haldma and Laats, 2002; Joshi, 2001) reveals that the use of more sophisticated MAPs in developing nations remains inconclusive: while some studies indicate that sophisticated MAPs have been used in developing countries, the results of other studies disagree with these findings, suggesting that a gradual evolution in the application of MAPs in developing economies is not the answer (Teerooven and Bhagtaraj, 2008).

4. Methodology

The literature on qualitative research (Patton, 1999; Silverman, 2000) has identified four types of triangulation: method, investigator, theory and data source. This research employs data source triangulation. Multiple sources of data are used to develop comprehensive insight into MAPs in Vietnam. Triangulation methodology is well documented in the literature as a research strategy to enhance credibility and validity through the convergence of multiple sources (Denzin, 1978; Silverman, 2000). The sources include survey questionnaires, photographic evidence and qualitative texts from the literature. The data sources were examined using textual structuralism within contextual MAPs in Vietnam.

The structuralism theory considers interviews, qualitative survey questionnaires, photographs, and video evidence as communicated texts because they communicate the phenomenon with its relevant content and structure (Benton, 1984; Berman, 1988). There are several approaches to structuralism, namely semiotics, deep structures, and Marxist structuralism (Hawkes, 2003; Östman and Verschueren, 2006). This research focuses on deep textual structuralism by

looking at the relationship between the elements and their underlying structure under the CPV and providing a deeper analysis of how and why economic agents and entrepreneurs in Vietnam are using MAPs. Furthermore, it does not consider a research phenomenon in isolation. Instead, it views each research phenomenon and its interrelationship with relevant authority and culture (the CPV in this case) as a broad structure, both in its elemental functionality and cause and effect relationship (Foucault, 1970; Hawkes, 2003). Because it refers to functionality and causality, the development of structuralism has also been linked with the philosophy of positivism and functionalism forms, such as the Durkheimian theory (Durkheim, 2009; Jones, 1986; Scholes, 2009), which focuses on the shift in society from a simple society to a more complex one. The Durkheimian theory argues that simpler societies comprise homogenous economic agents, which are simpler in terms of labour, values, technology, poverty, and simple calculative practice (simpler MAPs). In contrast, more advanced societies are made up of a complex division of a variety of economic agents and labour with complex calculative practice (superior MAPs).

While, structuralism considers the conventional interpretation of absolute certainty and total truth, deep structuralism on photography believes that certainty and truth can be conditional. It opens it to deeper interpretation, which accentuates 'photographic meaning through plurality' depending on contextual dimensions (Angermuller, 2014; Lewis, 1982). Correspondingly, the meaning of portraits can be interpreted plurally according to contextual dimensions such as knowledge, experience, habitual practice and culture and how a particular photo relates contextually to the bigger description of reality relating to *what is the real portrait* and *what is the idea behind the portrait*.

In addition to the photographic documents and qualitative texts, this research employed fourteen selected MAPs to answer the research objective and investigate the resistance to or liberation from the application of MAPs in Vietnam during a transitional economy under three main categories (namely: qualitative MAPs, quantitative MAPs, and both qualitative and quantitative MAPs). The quantitative category consists of budgetary control analysis, variance analysis, cost–volume profit (CVP), financial statement analysis, cash flow statement analysis, ABC analysis, variable costing analysis, target costing analysis, segment reporting analysis, and responsibility accounting analysis. The qualitative category includes a balanced scorecard analysis, management by exception analysis, and total quality management (TQM) analysis. Theory of constraints analysis (TOC) is a representative of both quantitative and quantitative techniques (Yeshmin and Fowzia, 2010). The justification for selecting the fourteen MAPs is that they cover the majority of MAPs used in both developing and developed countries (Abdel-Kader and Luther, 2008). Additionally, they have also been employed in previous similar research such as Albelda (2011), Bontis (1998), Fanning (2000), Hope and Fraser (1997), Hopwood (1973), Irani *et al*. (1998), Reeds (2000), Segelod (2000) and Usoff *et al*. (2002). These MAPs were also classified in the areas of reporting and decisions, performance measurement, accounting style, budgetary control and capital budgeting (Tayles *et al*., 2007).

The surveys were distributed to selected respondents from the manufacturing and service organisations in Vietnam using a purposive sampling technique, in which the respondents to

be included in the samples are based on their specialist knowledge of the MAPs and willingness to participate in the research. The justification of using the sampling technique was to enable the researcher to reach a group of theoretical respondents such as the company's chartered accountants, chief executive officers, managers, auditors, financial analysts and chief financial officers, who had optimal knowledge on the use of MAPs. In order to optimise the responses rates, the survey questionnaires were designed as simply as possible in the Vietnamese language with a persuasive cover letter (Appendix).

Moreover, by purposefully selecting the respondents from companies with various numbers of employees (ranging from fewer than ten staff to more than 100), it was hoped that sampling diversity would be achieved (Table 1). There are several types of purposive sampling such as quota, convenience and maximum variation sampling (MVS) techniques (Lewis-Beck *et al*, 2004; Van Hoeven *et al*., 2015). This study used MVS, which is a purposive sampling technique used to capture a variety of respondents relating to the research questions, as indicated in Table 1. The questionnaire was based on the five-point Likert scale to measure the usage level of MAPs following the earlier studies on MAPs (refer to Section 3). After invalid and incomplete answers were removed, 113 usable questionnaires remained.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Less than 10	16	14.2	14.2
From 10 to 50	32	28.3	42.5
From 51 to 100	32	28.3	70.8
More than 100	33	29.2	100.0
Total	113	100.0	

Table 1 reveals that most of the respondents come from relatively large enterprises with 10-50 staff (28.3%), 51-100 staff (28.3%), while many of the largest enterprises have more than 100 staff (29.2%). Meanwhile, only 14.2% of small businesses and survivalist enterprises have participated in the research. This all indicates that the opinions of the respondents from relatively large enterprises will dominate the findings. Overall, the data were obtained from 113 manufacturing and service companies that fully participated in the qualitative survey.

In summary, the use of triangulation through multiple sources of data was justified to achieve the research objective (namely, to investigate the resistance in MAPs in Vietnam from several different angles) because the objective could not have been achieved without using data source triangulation as follows:
- The questionnaires were intended to gauge the companies' profiles relating to the use of MAPs. This provides useful information regarding the promotion or resistance in MAPs in Vietnam.

9

- The questionnaires were triangulated with the photographs and qualitative texts, which portray the use of MAPs in both highly developed economies and resourceless local economies in Vietnam.
- The survey questionnaires helped building a relationship between the respondents and the researchers. As a result, respondents helped with the collection of photographic evidence to support the analysis of MAPs in Vietnam – this is referred to in the literature as complementary evidence (Eckerdal and Hagström, 2017). Accordingly, by allowing us to examine multiple sources of data, triangulation provided multiple points of view and multiple contexts to enrich our understanding of the application of MAPs in Vietnam.

5. Theoretical Background

Due to the existence of multiple systems, this research employs multiple theoretical underpinnings in a single study of accounting practices, such as the theories of structuralism, institutionalism and developmentality. The use of the institutionalism theory is justified because the theory has been widely used in the literature to analyse social structure, including accounting practices and regulation, as they become progressively established as the authoritative guidelines for institutions in a single economic system (Meyer, 1979; Fennell, 1980). Most of the literature focuses on the theory of institutional homogeneity to facilitate the adoption of MAPs (Meyer and Rowan, 1977; Carpenter and Feroz, 2001; Hyndman and Connolly, 2011; Adhikari *et al*., 2013) as well as the recent theory of institutional heterogeneity (Läpple, 2015; Naranjo-Gil *et al*., 2008; Golden and Zajac, 2001; Jarzabkowski and Searle, 2005).The theory of homogeneous and heterogeneous isomorphism is concerned with the development of, or changes in the level of resources and infrastructure, as it concerns organisational strategic direction (Ashworth *et al*., 2009; Poole and van de Ven, 2004; Dacin *et al*., 2002; Greenwood and Hinings, 1988; DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). Hence, the theories were employed to uncover how institutions govern their calculative practice to apply MAPs, while facing the CPV.

However, institutionalism is relatively ineffectual to explain the retrogression of accounting practices due to the existence of different economic systems in Vietnam. For example, modernisation and the international harmonisation of accounting practices in Vietnam towards a capitalist and free-market system has influenced the entrepreneurs to use a sophisticated MAPs. The practice is necessary to produce the required institution's financial statements to follow international practices. Conversely, the existence of an inefficient state-owned enterprises operation, which is backed by the Communist Party of Vietnam, contradicts the progressive development of MAPs. Correspondingly, to overcome this constraint, the theory of developmentality (Alawattage and Wickramasinghe, 2019; Ilcan and Philips, 2010) was applied to complement the institutionalism theory. It explained the existence of both the development and retrogression accounting practices under two different systems, which has created an anomaly in MAPs in Vietnam. The developmentality theory is originated by Ilcan and Philips (2010), which is also called 'strategizing development' by Alawattage and

10

Wickramasinghe (2019, p. 342). The theory reveals that MAPs evolve gradually towards more sophisticated MAPs related to resources, infrastructure, and stages of economic development, information technology, and resources.

In terms of *developmentality*, a country can be classified according to its gross national income (GNI) per capita, i.e. high income, upper-middle income, lower-middle income, or low income. Vietnam is categorised as a lower-middle-income country with a less developed economy under the regime of the CPV (United Nations, 2014; World Bank, 2018). While generic discourse of developmentality was proposed by Ilcan and Phillips (2010), specific discourse of developmentality in the context of MAPs has been discussed in the literature (Alawattage *et al.*, 2007; Alawattage and Wickramasinghe, 2019; Hopper *et al.*, 2017; Uddin and Hopper, 2001; Wickramasinghe *et al.*, 2004). The literature demonstrates that in order to understand MAPs in the context of economic and political development, strategic changes are becoming increasingly recognised in MAPs research. The literature indicates that the use of MAPs depends on *the developmentality within a biopolitical realm*, which can be implicitly defined in Vietnam by Foucault (1970, 1991, 1988) as the exercise of organised political power (the CPV) to facilitate the active willingness of economic agents to adopt MAPs to achieve higher levels of competitiveness. Correspondingly, given the existence of this anecdotal evidence, which combines earlier and more recent findings, the present research is paramount for progressing theoretical development of sustainable MAPs.

Accordingly, by relating the usage of MAPs (minimal, conventional and contemporary MAPs on the vertical axis – Figure 1) and a country-level of developmentality from the angles of social, economic and technological advancement, a J-shaped curve can be observed where a dotted line was initially horizontal starting at a vicious cycle of poverty, then the curve steeply rises above Quadrant 1.

Figure 1 relates to the term 'development in accounting' as discussed by Hopper, Lassou and Soobaroyen (2017), Hopper, Tsamenyi, Uddin and Wickramasinghe (2009) and Alawattage and Wickramasinghe (2019). In terms of developmentality, a country can be classified as least-developed, developing, or developed, in terms of a country's social, economic and technological development. For example, entrepreneurs and firms in North Korea (Quadrant 1) have a tendency to apply minimal MAPs.

Figure 1 – J-shaped curve on the usage MAPs
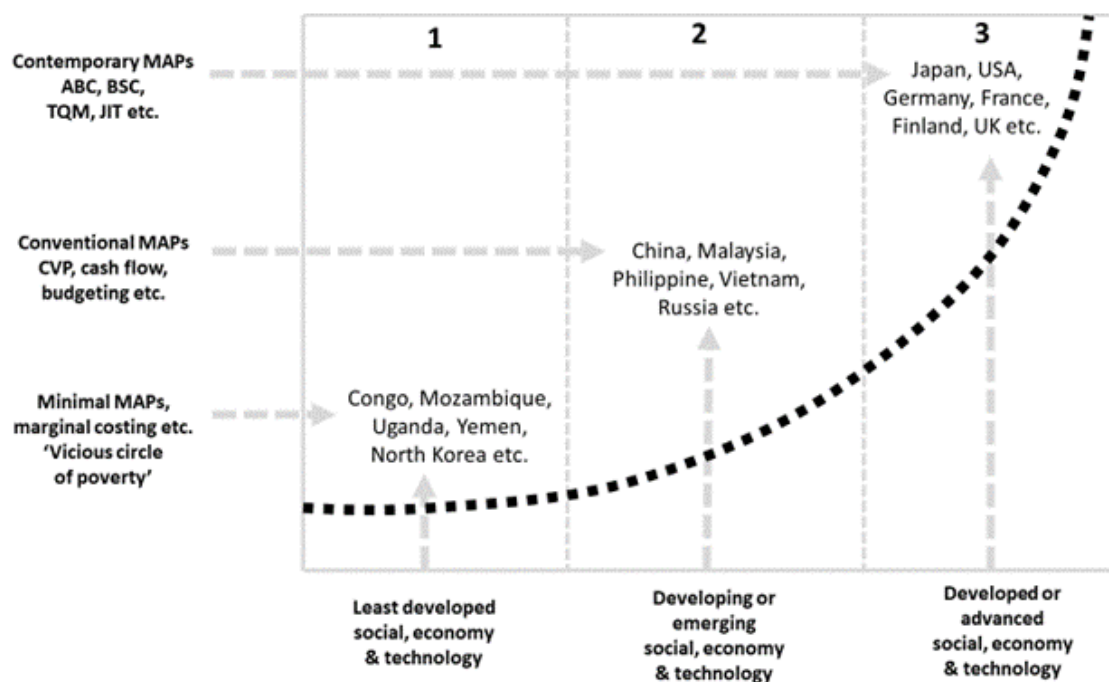
The corporations and entrepreneurs in Vietnam, as an emerging economy (Quadrant 2), typically incline to employ conventional MAPs. Because of the existence of a dualistic economy in Vietnam, there are two separate economies with different levels of social, economic and technological development (Boeke, 1953; Lewis, 1954; Singer, 2008; Todaro and Smith, 2014). On the other side, entrepreneurs and multinational corporations in the USA, located in Quadrant 3, incline to employ more sophisticated MAPs in order to lead the market, facing a highly competitive environment. However, recent research on the application of MAPs in the USA as a developed nation (McLellan, 2014) indicates that both manufacturing and service organisations also seem to employ more traditional MAPs, irrespective of the size of the companies involved because of the existence of a dualistic economy. Similarly, Abdel-Kader and Luther (2008; 2006) found that various traditional and modern MAPs are nonetheless employed by enterprises in the UK.

By linking the usage of MAPs and a country's developmentality, a convex of a J-shaped curve can be drawn accordingly. The curve is convex because of the rigidity of the application of MAPs in which, if a country develops economically from Quadrant 1 to 2, entrepreneurs and corporations in the country tend to use the same MAPs *rigidly* before adopting contemporary MAPs due to costing issues, resistance to change, and persistent habit of calculative practice. However, although the literature (Alawattage and Wickramasinghe, 2019; Hopper *et al*., 2009, 2017) discussed in detail a country's economic development (such as least developed – Quadrant 1, developing – Quadrant 2 or developed economy – Quadrant 3), the literature never mentioned anything about a country's economic system (such as free market economy or a

12

command economy). The literature discusses MAPs in a free market economy, where firms and households act in self-interest to determine how resources get allocated, what commodities are produced and which MAPs are employed. On the contrary, in a command economy, the majority of economic activity, including calculative practice or MAPs, is controlled by a centralised power of a central communist party.

Accordingly, to complement the theories of institutionalism and developmentality, the MAPs anomaly was further investigated using the structuralism theory (Angermuller, 2014; Berman, 1988; Canagarajah, 2017; Hawkes, 2003; Lewis, 1982; Östman and Verschueren, 2006; Scholes, 2009) to explore the existence of a dualistic economy, including the income inequality and digital divide in Vietnam, using qualitative evidence, such as qualitative texts, photographic documents and qualitative surveys.

In summary, the use of multiple theories corresponds with the pluralist theories, which supports William James's pragmatism theory regarding utility (Ayer, 1968; Bybee, 1984). It refers to how limited but useful a particular theory is when explaining a research phenomenon compared to other theories. Accordingly, the use of multiple theories is required to comprehensively grasp the nature of accounting practices in Vietnam because each theory has its own limited discourse and assumptions. Therefore, using multiple theories can complement different concepts to explain research phenomena more effectively.

6. Findings and Discussion

Management Accounting Practices in Vietnam

The findings indicate that budgetary control analysis, variance analysis and cost-volume-profit analysis are mainly practiced in the manufacturing sector, but their practice in the service sector is limited. Irrespective of the sector, the use of these MAPs increases fundamentally along with an increase in the size of the companies. These findings are in alignment with the literature on the practice of budgetary control analysis in manufacturing (Siyanbola, 2013; Periasamy, 2010). Meanwhile, variance analysis is effectively employed for larger and complex manufacturing businesses. Similarly, it was observed that cost-volume-profit analysis is more frequently practiced in the manufacturing industry than in service industries. The findings also indicate that financial statement analysis and cash flow statement analysis have been jointly employed by both manufacturing companies and service companies, with larger companies employing financial statement analysis more often. In addition, the larger a company's size, the more they use financial statement and cash flow analyses. Variable costing analysis is principally employed to calculate the cost of products to determine which products to continue or discontinue (Yeshmin and Hossan, 2011; Periasamy, 2010; Drury, 2001). These findings are consistent with the nature of manufacturing operations but not with those of service operations, with manufacturing managers using variable costing analysis to more accurately determine production costs and pricing.

13

Target costing analysis, as a contemporary MAP, prevailed within the manufacturing sector because the majority of the respondent companies (28.3% and 29.2%) (see Table 1) were relatively large companies with more than 51 staff and 29.2% of the respondent companies have more than 100 staff. These resourceful manufacturing companies tend to use more advanced MAPs such as target costing. Most of them are located in metropolitan industrial clusters. The findings also indicate a positive association between company size and usage levels.

The practice of segment reporting analysis is extremely low in both manufacturing and service companies, because, first, a lack of accountancy expertise exists in Vietnam (Lin, 2017). Second, most Vietnamese enterprises are small- to medium-sized companies, and segment reporting analysis is more suited to large enterprises with several operating divisions. Analogous to the segment reporting analysis, the use of responsibility accounting analysis was also found to be relatively low in both sectors. This low application of responsibility accounting implies that most companies in Vietnam do not possess a robust control and performance accountability system.

Balanced scorecard (BSC) analysis is not being widely used in the manufacturing sector. BSC analysis, as a strategic management system, improves internal and external communications by monitoring institutional performance according to corporate goals (Muralidharan, 2004; Kaplan and Norton, 1996). BSC analysis is used by larger service companies at a relatively moderate level. Most of the larger service companies in Vietnam operate globally as multinational enterprises. BSC analysis is more suitable for multinationals since its implementation requires the active involvement of the CEO and resource commitment in order to be successful.

Management by exception (MBE) is a managerial practice that only involves managers when there are significant deviances from planned outcomes. This practice is occasionally used in both the manufacturing sector and the service sector, with larger companies employing it more frequently. This finding is logical because, first, the budget of most Vietnamese enterprises is not robust enough to apply MBE. Correspondingly, there can be many large variances between financial results and planned outcomes. Second, since MBE requires accounting professionals to submit variance summaries, resources are required for MBE to function properly. Hence, this may not be feasible in Vietnam due to limited corporate resources (Phuong, 2017).

Total quality management (TQM) has been found to be beneficial for large companies in the manufacturing sector in Vietnam. The theory of constraints (TOC) is another effective MAP. It stresses the importance of the effective management of a company's constraints as the key to success. The results reveal moderate use of TOC by manufacturing and larger service companies. This could be seen as evidence that most companies in Vietnam overlook a MAP designed to overcome limitations in operations and to improve organisational performance.

Overall, manufacturing organisations tend to use MAPs and the size of an organisation can also be a factor influencing the usage of MAPs. This is in line with the current literature (Bui *et al.*,

2020), which notes that the application of MAPs is dependent on a company's size, with smaller companies using traditional MAPs and larger companies using contemporary MAPs, and that the application of contemporary MAPs is still at a relatively low level.

Neoliberalism and Developmentality on MAPs

The literature (Ahmad and Zabri, 2015; Ding and McKinstry, 2013) reveals that within free-market economies, entrepreneurs employ contemporary MAPs to calculate costs for determining maximum profit. However, MAPs in a command economy is dissimilar, in which all aspects of costing are carried out by the CPV to control what is produced, including the national distribution, pricing and use of resources. State-owned enterprises undertake the production of goods and services based on the communist system. Hence, economic activity is organised by the central authority, which is not associated with sustainable MAPs as indicated by qualitative texts (Table 2), showing inefficiencies and subsidies in state-owned enterprises and a large group of businesses.

Table 2 – Inefficiency costs

1	" ….. The public sector, mainly controlled by about 6,000 state-owned companies (SOC), was highly inefficient, and numerous large state business groups, notably the Vietnam Shipbuilding Industry, became insolvent ….." (Source: Nghia, 2016, p. 270)

The Vietnamese government does not presently follow the full doctrine of communism in a command economy (Nguyen and Chen, 2016; Nguyen *et al*., 2018). Literature on the accounting practices in Vietnam (Ling, 2017; Phuong, 2017) indicates that during the earlier period of 1945 to 1956, the country was governed by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. From 1957 to 1995, a Soviet-style accounting practice was used in Vietnam. From 1995 to the present, a transitional style of accounting practice was implemented in Vietnam CPV (Table 4). These systems have driven the economy towards a transitional period and have moved in pendulum between the socialist, communist and capitalist economic systems. The literature (Campbell, 2009) reveals the following differences between communism and socialism: the socialist economic systems are less strict in the sense that a socialist government aims to socialise production, whereas in the communist economic systems, a communist government socialises both production and consumption. Socialising production means that the government-subsidised, state-owned enterprises allocate resources in the economy, whereas socialising consumption means that the government controls the public's access to goods. For example, rationing can be used to limit consumption, as rationing refers to an artificial control of the supply and demand of commodities to the public by the communist government. Despite the theoretical differences, the literature on economic systems (Fforde and Homutova, 2017) reveals that the Vietnamese government follows the Soviet formal structures. As such, the country's economic system has undergone a transition, which affects its MAPs as indicated in Table 3 and 4 below.

Table 3

The challenges of MAPs differential in both <u>extreme</u> communist and capitalist countries.

Accounting Practices	Capitalist systems	Communist systems
MAPs—Ownership and legal structure	Enterprises and MAP reporting standards are owned and managed by the private sector.	Enterprises and MAP reporting standards are owned and managed by the communist government.
MAPs—Profit determination	Profit motive acts as an incentive for improving quality and charging competitive prices (based on the market mechanism).	Profit motive does not act as an incentive. Quality is not prioritised. Pricing will be charged according to the party's price control.
MAPs—Price determination	Prices are determined by the market force (i.e. supply and demand).	Prices are determined by the government (i.e. price control).
MAPs—Efficiency determination	More incentives exist to cut costs, sell, and make the enterprises more profitable.	Few or no incentives exist to cut costs and less incentives to make the enterprise profitable.
MAPS—Overall aims	The aims of MAPs are minimising costs and maximising profits.	The aims of MAPs are minimising activity disruption and maximising social welfare.

Table 4

Chronological Challenges of MAPs across Economic Systems in Vietnam
(Based on the Findings and Relevant Literature)

Period	Management Accounting Practices (MAPs)
1945 to 1956 **French-style accounting practices**	• The Socialist Republic of Vietnam implemented French-style accounting practices (Phuong, 2017). • Camffermann and Detzen (2018) identifies stages that influenced the development of this approach. First, French regulations, which appeared in the seventeenth century, served as a basis for the Code de Commerce of 1808. This addressed the liability, management, and governance aspects of an enterprise (Mikol, 1993). Second, Bocqueraz (2010) shows that during this time, government authorisation was not required to start an enterprise; however, the enterprise was required to publish a company financial statement to be made available for an auditor. Detailed tax rules were finally approved in 1942 (Frydlender and Pham, 1996). Fortin (1991) indicates that the 'plan comptable' became the main source of

	accounting regulation relating to recording, valuation, and classification procedures (Fortin, 1991).
	• The French style of accounting concentrates on balance sheets and inventory valuation, rather than on profit determination or cash flow (Nioche and Pesqueux, 1997). In addition, guidelines developed in French financial reporting contained detailed rules, with little room for discretion on the part of the accountant and with conservative reporting as opposed to transparency, developed (Baydoun, 1995; Berland and Chiapello, 2009)
	• In summary, during the time, MAPs focused more on financial reporting (with a lack of transparency) rather than optimising profit and efficiency.
1957 to 1995 **Soviet-style accounting practices**	• Vietnam followed the Soviet command economic system (Phuong, 2017), in which the country employed Soviet-style accounting practices. • The communist government took extreme measures to adapt to the crisis during and after World War II, including adapting its standardised accounting and reporting systems to simplify operational procedures (Kashaev and Shein, 1985). • The war led to many drastic changes in principles of MAPs and taxation, procurement of raw materials, inventories, and transactions with suppliers and buyers. The historical literature (Alexandre, 2013; Campbell, 1958; Djatej and Sarikas, 2009) indicates that the Soviet method of accounting had been developed to follow Lenin's doctrine as part of a national economic system. Since Russia followed a command system, the communist government owned the means of production including resource allocation, distribution and managed enterprises, in which private ownership is non-existent. Hence, Soviet accounting, including MAPs and reporting, did not belong to individual commercial companies (unlike today's accounting); it belonged to the communist government. • In the years after 1965, considerable emphasis was also placed on Lenin's twin concepts of accounting and control ('uchet and kontrol'), which was interpreted as the measurement, recording and verification of economic activities (Alexandre, 2013). Furthermore, there was a long-standing tradition of following autocratic instructions as the Ministry of Finance's privileged role was to issue these instructions and expect others to follow. The literature pointed out difficulties and tensions for accountants and MAPs because the role involved maintaining loyalty to the communist party, which included reporting any financial irregularity, whilst remaining respectful to the local superior.

		• Accordingly, MAPs at the time focused on achieving the communist national plan rather than reaching an economic efficiency level within all enterprises from bottom to top (Campbell, 1958). To emphasise this, the Soviet achievements of World War II, and the superiority of Russia in the manufacture of tanks and artillery during this period, were never linked to any MAPs (Djatej and Sarikas, 2009).
• In summary, apart from being state-focused, MAPs were directed to follow communist bureaucracy, which diminished the role of an accountant to a clerical one rather than one of an internal control. MAPs at the time was not considered professional compared to the present, in which today's MAPs have a code of practice that includes integrity, objectivity, transparency etc.
	1995 to the present time

A transitional style of accounting practices | Vietnam has followed a transitional style of accounting under the Communist Party of Vietnam. The findings and relevant literature indicates major challenges to implementing sustainable MAPs in Vietnam as follows
• Using a triangulation methodology, the results indicate a dualistic economy in relation to the use of MAPs due to extreme income equality, the digital divide, and the infrastructure differential. This has caused a usage gap in MAPs in which resourceful enterprises and multinationals employ superior MAPs compared to the survivalist entrepreneurs who use simple MAPs.
• The literature (Phuong, 2012) indicates standardisation towards international accounting harmonisation (such as IAS and IFRS) is considered too difficult for accounting practitioners to follow since international standards have a contrasting framework from existing Vietnamese systems (Table 3). During the earlier period, the country followed Russian-style accounting practices with less emphasis on economic efficiency and more on a command economy under the CPV. The change of direction towards international standards would be considered extreme in terms of MAPs. In addition, the lack of professional bodies in the country makes the transfer of accounting knowledge problematic.
• The literature also reveals the existence of many state-owned enterprises and large entrepreneurial groups, which were subsidised by the CPV, has created major difficulties for applying superior MAPs to adopt international harmonisation because most of the accountants lack training, competence, and experience including the lack of accounting professionalism and professional bodies (Mai, 2001 in Phuong, 2017).
• The literature reveals that the concurrence of the Vietnamese Accounting Standards (VAS) and the Uniform Accounting System |

	(UAS) leads to a MAP anomaly (Phuong, 2017). For example, some of the VAS have not been revised, resulting in several differences including the application of fair value accounting between the VAS and the UAS. In addition, the application of the VAS, which requires a high degree of accounting practice professionalism, has been limited by government regulations, so the enforcement of MAP compliance has been lessened. • In summary, a transitional-style has created a considerable challenge regarding the application of MAPs since the blending of the communist system with the capitalist system does not produce convergence (Table 3). For example, the capitalist systems that have a market mechanism boost economic efficiency whilst minimising the cost. They achieve this by using a more advanced MAPs to generate competitive pricing to achieve the maximum profit. Conversely, the communist systems facilitate production regardless productive efficiency (state-owned companies under the CPV). This has negated the efficiency orientation towards the retrogression of MAPs.

In 2013, the constitution moved Vietnam towards a neoliberal economy by accepting the role of the private sector and a free market mechanism. The constitution also allowed for the communist state to play a leading role. Since then, this contrast between private sector neoliberalism and communist state dominance has resulted in *autocratic capitalism* in Vietnam, as implied by the qualitative texts (Table 5).

Table 5 – Autocratic capitalism

1	" ….. The domestic private sector comprising nearly half a million private companies has been shrinking, with an alarming number of enterprises closing ….." (Source: Nghia *et al*., 2013, p. 71)
2	" ….. a hybridized 'market socialism' that has been dubbed 'autocratic capitalism' with 'improper' state 'meddling' ….." (Source: Schwenkel and Leshkowich, 2012, p. 379)
3	" ….. Domestic firms could not develop in size; they remained as very small family businesses, and failed to become value-added businesses in the global value chain (Source: Vu-Thanh, 2014, p.32)
4	" ….. the 2013 Constitution reaffirms the dominance of the public sector and the leading role of state-owned enterprises, and preserves the ambiguous 'ownership

> of the entire Vietnamese people of land and natural resources'. Due to this ambiguity, the 2013 Constitution fails to lay down the foundations for far-reaching comprehensive institutional reforms that Vietnam urgently requires ….." (Source: Nghia, 2016, p. 263).

Overall, Vietnam's desire to become an economic power in South East Asia has encountered neoliberal resistance in social and economic affairs, accounting practice and well-being, particularly in rural areas. Most of the poverty in Vietnam is located in villages, where the majority of poor people and destitute entrepreneurs are clustered among ethnic Vietnamese (Anh, 2015; Duong, 2016; Diem and Hoang, 2018; IMF, 2017, p.22). Although Vietnam has implemented poverty-reduction strategies through a combination of economic growth and delivery of basic services, unfortunately, survivalist entrepreneurs and poor families have become trapped in a vicious cycle of poverty. These poor families and destitute entrepreneurs do not have sufficient resources and are unable to undertake investment for future generations. This is contrary to the CPV propaganda (Tables 2, 5). Consequently, they have regressed into generational poverty, struggling to survive in a highly disruptive and competitive environment (Anh, 2015; Lam Bui, 2014; Pillay-van Wyk and Bradshaw, 2017).

Relevant literature (Janvry and Sadoulet, 2015; Lewis, 2003; Todaro and Smith, 2014) shows that the above two extremes (the resourceful multinational industrial zones vis a vis the resourceless or survivalist entrepreneurs) relate to the existence of a dualistic economy operating in a country with contrasting infrastructure and development. Apart from the dualistic economy, the gap between developed and underdeveloped areas has widened over the years as the wealthiest entrepreneurs have become more affluent, while less wealthy entrepreneurs have become more destitute (Anh, 2015) as indicated by the qualitative texts below:

"… however, the absolute gap in per capita income has been widening ... " (Anh, 2015, p. 32)

In addition, to analyse portraits of both poor and rich entrepreneurs in Vietnam, a deeper structuralist review of the photographs reveals contrasting economic agents from two different groups (*the poor and the rich*) in Vietnam were presented. As such one part of Vietnam are classified as less developed, low-income areas, which are characterised by low income per capita, widespread poverty, survivalists and destitute entrepreneurs. Thus, although Vietnam can be classed as an emerging economy, some areas of Vietnam are considered as having both less developed and highly advanced economies. Therefore, poor were the resourceless economic agents who kept getting poorer. Most economic agents and entrepreneurs in this category live in deprived villages working in the informal, peasant, or agricultural sector of an economy and suburban areas of the metropolitan cities (Photos no. 1 and 2). The resourceless entrepreneurs can be called as *a simple society with simpler calculative practice* according the Durkheimian theory (Durkheim, 2009) (simpler MAPs in this case).

Hence, searching for the meaning and message of the photographs, it shows the existence of *a dual economy* in Vietnam. It is the existence of two contrasting economic sectors within one country, divided by different levels of development, technology, and economy. The first sector

belongs to the *resourceful entrepreneurs* (Photos no. 3 and 4), while the other sector belongs to the *resourceless entrepreneurs* (Photos no. 1 and 2). The photographic findings also emphasise the photo composition in terms of the focal points of the research phenomena, namely, resourceless and resourceful economic agents in Vietnam. In addition, no techniques were used to fabricate the image. The photos used natural light (outdoor environment) without flash. The photographic structuralism conveys a clearer meaning of the dichotomy between the resourceless and resourceful economic agents along with widening the income gap (Table 4) in Vietnam under the CPV's propaganda, complementing the findings of the qualitative survey of a dualistic economy reality.

Photo No.1 – A Resourceless Agriculture Peasant Farming (Lao Chai Village)

Source: Authors (copyright) (2019)

Photo No. 2 – A Destitute Barbershop Business (Binh Ning village)

Source: Authors (copyright) (2018)

Contrastingly, the rich were resourceful economic agents operating in the metropolitan cities in Vietnam such as Hanoi, as well as in the surrounding industrial zones, which were created as an extensive investment destination for multinational businesses (Photos no. 3 and 4).

Photo No. 3 – Resourceful Entrepreneurs - Taxi and Chauffeur Businesses (Hanoi)

Source: Authors (copyright) (2018)

Photo No. 4 - Resourceful Entrepreneurs – Real-Estate and Golf Businesses (Hanoi)

Source: Authors (copyright) (2019)

Most of the qualitative texts and portraits that have been collected lead to the conclusion that this type of the economic agents and entrepreneurs in Vietnam have a higher-level spending power and higher resource levels (refer to Table 2), as the structuralist methods consider structural similarities within various qualitative texts in the literature and photographic documents. This cohort of Vietnamese society can be called *the rich or the resourceful or more advanced society* (Durkheim, 2009). Most of the resourceful entrepreneurs or economic agents operate in the metropolitan cities such as Ha Noi, Ho Chi Minh City, Hai Phong, Can Tho, Bien Hoa, Da Nang etc. as well as operating in the main industrial hub in North Vietnam for the heavy industry and electronic multinationals such as Samsung, Canon, and Foxconn. This type of entrepreneur operates competitively in the industry by using more advanced MAPs to provide invaluable information, such as costing details, to company decision-makers (e.g. managers and chief executive officers). This finding is in line with the previous literature where Bui *et al* (2020) have identified that organisations in the North of Vietnam have been frequently applying the superior MAPs.

On the contrary, the other cohort was resourceless entrepreneurs or poor economic agents, who do not have enough resources and raw material possessions. They were in the absolute lowest poverty levels of economic development. Correspondingly, they lack the means necessary to meet both basic personal and entrepreneurial needs to expand their businesses. This can be shown from the textual information (Table 3 and 4) and photographic documents (Photo no. 1 and 2). This limited resource for entrepreneurship has been cited in the literature (Arasti, 2011; Ihua, 2009; Titus, 2008) as the main reason for business stationary and discontinuity (not able to develop further) because the business keeps running by breaking even, without receiving any profit for financing a firm's development.

Resistance to the usage of MAPs

Since Vietnam has followed a centrally-planned economy for a considerable amount of time, managers might be more familiar with the tasks and routines that need to be carried out within these systems (Table 3). Hence, these managers may tend to have a relatively higher level of resistance to change and might not welcome deviations due to their lower level of knowledge concerning MAPs (Wu and Boateng, 2010). This resistance to change has been identified as a significant barrier for the adoption of contemporary MAPs (Scapens and Roberts, 1993; Walley *et al.*, 1994). This has been apparent within Vietnam through the use of contemporary MAPs such as ABC, which has been used in large-sized companies and especially in manufacturing companies. The findings also indicated an association between the company's size and the usage levels of ABC. The findings were reasonable because, firstly, the practice of ABC is essentially designed to deal with the allocation of overhead costs for determining a pricing strategy in complex manufacturing operations (Khataie and Bulgak, 2013; Rundora *et al,* 2013). Secondly, the implementation of ABC requires financial expertise, an expert resource that was difficult to sustain in Vietnam. The finding is in line with Wu and Boateng (2010).

The resistance to the usage of MAPs in Vietnam has happened for several reasons. The first reason is compatibility issues between entrepreneurial and institutional practice (Table 3). The

existence of a dualistic economy has caused certain areas of Vietnam to become destitute and resourceless. For example, a barber shop business in Bing Ning village (Photo No.2) is required to use a simple MAP, such as a breakeven calculation or marginal costing, in its running. The resourceless entrepreneurs below the level of the barber shop business do not use MAPs at all, as people living in poverty tend to ignore costing issues because they do not know how to solve the problems of a vicious circle of poverty. These poverty phenomena can also be explained by using the Durkheimian theory, in which Durkheim identified two types of social integration, namely 'mechanical' and 'organic'. Organic integration relates to specialisation and interdependence, which is relevant to MAPs in Vietnam in this case, while mechanical integration relates more to common belief. The Durkheimian theory implies that modern and resourceful entrepreneurs, such as real estate and taxi businesses (Photo No. 3 and 4), differ considerably from simpler entrepreneurs, such as peasant and barbershop businesses (Photo No. 1 and 2), because of an anomie differential. Anomie is caused by the division of labour and rapid social transformation from traditional to modern society (DiCristina, 2016; Macionis and Gerber, 2010; McCloskey, 1976). The theory further implies that an anomie differential is caused by the fact that the society or the entrepreneurial infrastructure has developed towards complexity. Consequently, as the solidarity, division of labour and specialisation increases, there is more complex calculative practice – MAPs in this case, such as BSC, because BSC includes customers' opinions about the taxi business. For example, in terms of a taxi business, the most recent and advanced technology is required, such as sophisticated apps in order to compete with Uber, GPS tracking systems and its GIS (Geographical Information Systems), and fraud detection machine learning. In addition, a local discrimination model should be used with regard to local regulations, pricing, and types of vehicles, coverage, profit-sharing systems or other. In the case of a simple barbershop business, a calculative practice (MAP in this case) is not even required: because the barber employs his own house, which is considered as sunk costs, he is not required to complete a tax return because of the low-income threshold for tax.

The second issue relates to state-owned companies (SOCs). This ownership indicates that the CPV does not fully leave the free market to operate on its own (Table 5). Earlier studies (Schwenkel and Leshkowich, 2012) indicate that SOCs had crowded out private companies. In addition, there are the inefficiency costs of SOCs (Table 2). The government has to subsidise these companies to maintain their survival. These subsidies have allowed inefficient SOCs to continue without addressing their inefficiency costs. Hence, it can be implied here that costing (MAPs in this case) is neither required nor relevant, because accurate costing practice is not required to generate profits for making strategic decisions (Table 3). Correspondingly, resistance to MAPs has happened as a result of the governmental (CPV) policy. The dominance of state power in the free market economy is omnipresent as predicted by the Foucault's theory (Foucault, 2002, 1991, 1988, 1970) that it is produced every moment as shown in the communist propagandas (Ban Tuyên Giáo Trung Ương, 2018).

" ….. Nhà nước đóng vai trò định hướng, xây dựng và hoàn thiện thể chế kinh tế, tạo môi trường cạnh tranh bình đẳng, minh bạch và lành mạnh; sử dụng các công cụ, chính sách và nguồn lực của Nhà nước để định hướng và điều tiết nền kinh tế, thúc đẩy sức sản xuất kinh doanh và bảo vệ môi trường ….." (The state plays a role in orientation, building and improving

economic institutions, creating a fair, transparent and conducive environment. It uses policies and resources to regulate the economy, promote production and business and protect the environment)

Although, the development in Vietnam has progressed (Atkinson, 2014; Dixon, 2003) under the continuation of the CPV with high levels of state intervention through centralised planning systems as indicated by the above propagandas by protecting a major part of the domestic economy and reluctance to privatise the state owned companies (SOC) (công ty nhà nước), this have caused neoliberal criticism because of inefficiency costs, corruption and not-transparent MAPs.

The findings of this research indicate the complexities of MAPs in the context of a developing country such as Vietnam. Previous empirical studies indicate that developing nations utilise more simplistic and conventional MAPs (Joshi, 2001; Sulaiman *et al*., 2004; Nimtrakoon, 2009) although those countries may employ more sophisticated MAPs due to joint ventures (Alnamri, 1993; Wu *et al*., 2007) as well. Similarly, the present research suggests the concurrent use of traditional and contemporary MAPs, regardless of the company's size and the country's stage of economic development. Although, it is envisaged that simpler and conventional MAPs would be favoured in less developed economies over more sophisticated approaches. These mixed results could be explained through the institutional homogeneity and heterogeneity as well. That is, in order to survive in the competitive environment, organisations may require to follow and imitate aiming for a homogeneous system and structures.

On this regard, the liberation in MAPs can be elucidated by using institutional theories, such as the long-established theory of institutional isomorphism (consisting of mimetic, normative and coercive pressures) and the more recent theory of institutional heterogeneity. Isomorphism can be defined as being identical or similar [in] structure' (Webster, 2018), and this can be applied to the usage of MAPs. These theories can be considered as facilitators, promoting the usage of more contemporary MAPs in Vietnam such as Activity Based Costing (ABC), Balance Scorecard (BCS), Total Quality Management (TQM) and other modern MAPs. There are prosperous entrepreneurs and multinational corporations in Vietnam such as those listed in Vietnam's top 50 by Forbes in 2018, which account for 70.8 per cent of total market capitalisation on the Ho Chi Minh and Hanoi stock exchanges (Forbes, 2018). The multinational firm with the highest revenue listed was the Vietnam National Petroleum Group (Petrolimex) with VND153.7 trillion (USD6.6 billion). Correspondingly, the existence of affluent multinational corporations and resourceful entrepreneurs can be explained by the earlier institutional isomorphism theorists of homogeneity, who explain why many multinational corporations are achieving similar advanced practices (Meyer, 1979; Fennell, 1980; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983).

Firstly, the initial institutional isomorphism theory is known as mimetic isomorphism (Hawley, 1968; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983). It describes mimetic isomorphism coercion that encourages one entrepreneur to resemble or imitate others who are facing the same set of

uncertainty, competition and environmental pressures. Secondly, apart from mimetic isomorphism, normative isomorphism is analogously similar, in which entrepreneurs resemble or imitate others because of the pressure from professionalisation, which controls an occupational autonomy (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Larson, 1977; Collins, 1979). For example, each multinational corporation has its own accountants with ACCA or CIMA qualifications. ACCA and CIMA set standards that need to be followed in using MAPs such as ABC, TQM or BSC. Thirdly, coercive isomorphism stems from political influence, and is often conveyed through law and regulation to employ standard practice and others. For example, entrepreneurs and multinational corporations are faced with pressure from the government or the CPV – the founding and ruling party of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam – in this case with regard to their MAPs, in relation to corporate disclosure, auditing practice, environmental reports and other aspects. The theories of homogeneous isomorphism have been successfully employed in illuminating changes in organisations (Ashworth *et al.*, 2009; Poole and van de Ven, 2004; Dacin *et al.*, 2002; Greenwood and Hinings, 1988; DiMaggio and Powell, 1991), including adopting more contemporary and innovative MAPs in an accounting context (Burns and Scapens, 2000).

However, organisations may create barriers to imitate due to their superior structurers and organisational identities (Hooley and Greenley, 2005; Thornton, 2002; Winter, 2003). Therefore, recent theoretical and empirical studies have emerged such as the theory of institutional heterogeneity, which indicates that recent empirical phenomena have not fully reflected homogeneity. Instead, they show heterogeneous logics (Friedland and Alford, 1991; Lounsbury, 2007), in which organisations successfully create 'barrier to imitation' mechanisms to protect their superior systems and structures by property rights (Hooley and Greenley, 2005; Winter, 2003). This reinforces superior organisational identities (Thornton, 2002) and organisations' specific systems and capabilities are valuable and difficult to imitate as a result of the collection of strategic decisions made in the face of hyper competition (Dierickx and Cool, 1989; Pettus, 2001).

However, this is not the case, and the study found that both traditional and modern MAPs were being employed concurrently in Vietnam. Finally, the overall findings reveal that *the resistance of the application of MAPs* because of material inequality. This inequality causes political privilege and the existence of a dualistic economy, in which Vietnam is divided into two levels of sociological and technological development. Additionally, Vietnam is surrounded by destitution, primitive economies underprivileged entrepreneurs living with a very low wage and truncated social profits, and lack both technology and capital development. *The promotion of the application of MAPs* because developed regions in Vietnam (e.g., the cities of Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City) boast a highly advanced digital economy, higher levels of technological infrastructure and luxurious spending power. Many multinational companies operate within these privileged areas.

Several theories here utilised in this research (such as the theory of structuralism, the theory of developmentality and the theory of institutional homogeneity and heterogeneity) to elucidate the phenomenon of neoliberalism in Vietnam relating to the application of MAPs. In a nutshell,

26

using the theory of structuralism, the overall findings in Vietnam can be explained thematically with the aid of Figure 2.

Figure 2 – The resistance and promotion MAPs in Vietnam
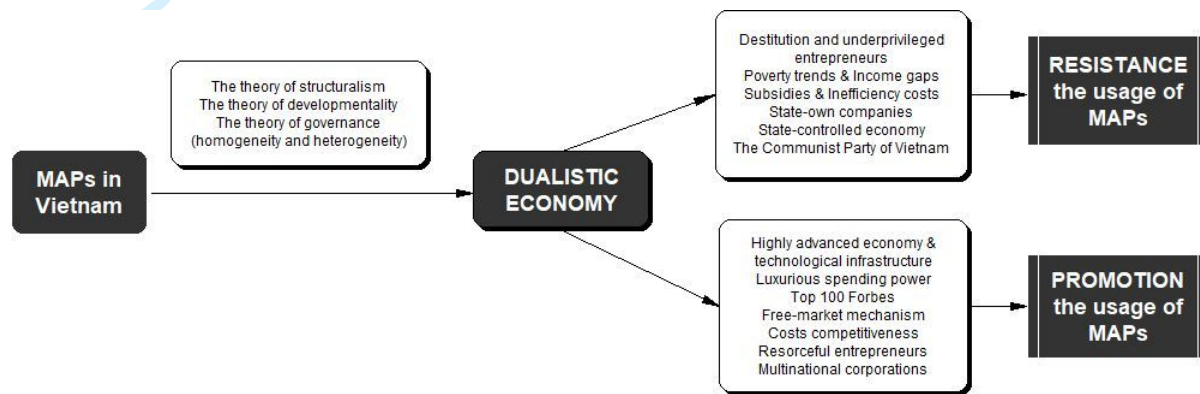
Therefore, the overall findings indicate the adoption of both traditional and contemporary MAPs in Vietnam irrespective of the size of the companies involved. This has confirmed the gap, which existed between the accounting theory and the operational use of MAPs in relation to a country's stages of social, economic and technological development and their state governance.

The reasons for the low adoption of contemporary MAPs could be rooted in practical, cultural and economic resistance to change within Vietnamese enterprises and the slow pace of economic reform in Vietnam. In addition, the country's limited economics progression has been blocked by communist propaganda, inefficiency costs, corruption, internal opposition, not-transparent governance and the 'trial and error' approaches undertaken by the CPV during the period of economic development (Fforde, 2016; Dixon, 2003; Quan Xuan Dinh, 2000; World Bank, 1998).

Although Vietnamese enterprises have been innovative in recent years by using more contemporary MAPs, the management teams within these enterprises were also influenced by more classic MAPs, which was also revealed previously by Berrell *et al.* (1999). Berrell *et al.*'s study stated that comparatively the Vietnamese were more favourable on hierarchical and formal management structures and less willing to accept changes as Vietnamese managers tend to perceive traditional MAPs as more beneficial than contemporary MAPs. These findings that traditional MAPs are also being used widely in Vietnam are at variance with earlier literature in developing countries (e.g., Sulaiman *et al.*, 2008, 2004) noting that the traditional MAPs were no longer adequate to be used in a modern manufacturing environment. However, these findings are more in line with other studies (Hussain 2005; Albelda 2011; Helden and Bogt 2012; Loo, *et al.,* 2011; Nimtrakoon and Tayles 2010) in that most traditional MAPs were still being used in practice. Similarly, Vietnamese findings seem to be more in agreement with

findings from Pakistan and Bangladesh (Maqbool-ur-Rehman 2011; Yeshmin and Hossan 2011) and in other countries such as Iran and Australia (Ahmad 2012; Chenhall and Langfield-Smith, 1998). As an emerging economy, Vietnam has also faced various difficulties in its attempt to integrate into the global business environment. In terms of MAPs, one of the major obstacles is ambiguity about which new MAPs to use. Additionally, there is still a lack of relevant literature and practical experience regarding how the employment of suitable MAPs in Vietnam (Doan *et al.,* 2011). This knowledge shortfall could be a cause of further confusion for Vietnamese enterprises looking to apply sustainable MAPs.

Similarly, within the service sector financial statement analysis and cash flow statement analysis were the most common MAPs utilised. The next five most common MAPs, such as target costing, budgetary control, variance analysis, variable costing, and CVP, were only used to a moderate degree. Moreover, the finding is in line with the literature (Harris and Durden 2012) on the decreasing emphasis on budgeting research while a significant increase in MAPs surrounding the concept of internationalisation. Meanwhile, the remaining MAPs, such as MBE and BSC analyses, were not implemented at any significant level in the country. To investigate the relationship between the size of the respondent companies and the usage of MAPs, a co-occurence matrix was used qualitatively. The findings revealed that the relationship between company size and use of MAPs was significant for all MAPs except BSC analysis; that is, the larger the company's size, the more likely it would be to use MAPs. This finding also confirms the most recent MAPs research (Lopez and Hiebl, 2015) that smaller enterprises use MAPs differently than that of larger enterprises as such that the aspects of MAPs in smaller enterprises are not yet understood, which requires further research. In summary, if resourceless economic agents in destitute areas in Vietnam are to adopt developed management accounting practices, such as activity-based costing, the implementation of such an approach may not be optimal, due to the less developed infrastructure in the area such as a lower accounting literacy rate, inadequate costing systems, traditional processing, less advanced technology, low adoption of information technologies, economic imperfections, and other social and cultural characteristics (Lyn and Yu, 2002; Carvalho *et al*., 2012).

7. Conclusion

This study critically explores the resistance in MAPs towards a neoliberal economy in Vietnam using qualitative research methodology. This research has four main limitations. *First*, textual and photographic structuralism used in this study to analyse primary data (geography and society, and time) in a static setting. Hence, it does not analyse the research phenomena in a dynamic equilibrium setting to view the development of the research phenomena over time. Further research could expand the data collection to include longitudinal and dynamic settings. *Second*, the analysis of the text and the photos involves a level of individuality and subjectivity, which is inherent in qualitative research. *Third*, the knowledge produced might not be generalisable to other countries, which have different characteristics and demographics. *Fourth*, the sample size; future research avenues could include larger samples from larger companies

such as multinationals and state-owned enterprises in Vietnam. Despite the limitations, however, this study has explored complex issues of MAP adoption within a neoliberal economy in a capitalist country such as Vietnam, which is moving from a communist (planned) economic system towards a capitalist economic system under theCVP.

The findings show that there are various conventional and modern MAPs that have been used simultaneously in Vietnam, and that the use of MAPs among Vietnamese enterprises is associated with the size of the companies involved. These findings are consistent with the existing literature, emphasising that larger companies require more complex accounting information systems. Most traditional MAPs were employed in both the manufacturing and service sectors, but contemporary MAPs were adopted more actively by companies in the manufacturing sector than in the service sector.

The study also notes that institutional complexity, such as sociological, political and economic development, is a significant influence in terms of resistance to employing MAPs. This is due to Vietnam's neoliberal resistance relating to socio-economic, simple calculative (accounting) practice and well-being, particularly in rural and impoverished communities. Most resource-poor entrepreneurs in Vietnam are located in suburbs and villages, where the majority of poor economic agents and impoverished entrepreneurs are clustered among ethnic Vietnamese. Hence, most sophisticated MAPs are not applicable because of poor infrastructure development despite the CPV's propaganda. Contrastingly, superior MAPs are employed by more economic agents, such as multinational companies and resourceful entrepreneurs.

This study will be useful for facilitating theoretical development, particularly the triggers and barriers to adopting MAPs in neoliberal economies. Most innovative MAPs, such as ABC have been designed in advanced countries where they have passed through four stages to reach their current degree of economic development from the earlier stages of traditional society, pre-conditions for take-off, take-off and drive to maturity. Overall, a blend of advanced and traditional economies and an institutional heterogeneity exist in the country under the CPV propaganda. These complex factors could be incorporated with aspects of predictive uncertainty and environment in order to advance theoretical development further towards more sustainable MAPs. This study has confronted the classical twofold dichotomy between mere socialism and mere neoliberalism. This paper is also invaluable for practitioners and policymakers in facilitating the adoption of more modern MAPs to enhance industry's competitive advantage. That is, with proper MAPs implementations in the future, Vietnam could provide a better example for other countries with transitional economies, which will help Vietnam to gain the benefits of strengthening trade relations with other Southeast Asian countries and beyond. Hence, not only the practitioners and policymakers but also academia can contribute greatly in this regard because this research could be used to further explore aspects of the triggers and barriers to adopting innovative MAPs in terms of theoretical development. The qualitative research methodology could provide initial insights into resistance toward the application of MAPs and will assist in developing potential hypotheses to be used for further quantitative research. The quantitative research methodology can be

implemented in subsequent investigations with larger sample sizes, which aim to generalise the framework of the application and resistance of MAPs.

It was intended that this research should contribute by providing further knowledge on aspects of resistance to adopting MAP in organisations, not only in the context of a neoliberal economy but also in Vietnam as a diverse country gaining economic power within the Asia Pacific region. Also, this research is distinctive in respect of its theoretical aspects: structuralism, developmentality, institutional isomorphism and institutional heterogeneity theories were used jointly in this study.

Lastly, a new classification of MAPs could be developed by theorists to a communist or transitional economic system. So far, MAPs have been made and designed in developed nations with capitalist and free market economies (Table 3). New MAPs should be developed to assist communist (and transitional) countries such as Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam, and others by offering a theoretical syllabus, for example, on how to set up costing systems and a price control for certain goods. There are several types of price controls determined by the communist government such as setting a minimum price control, a maximum price control, a direct price setting and others. In addition, the aim of MAPs in a communist or transition economy could be developed on maximising public welfare; not maximising profits (Table 3). However, this requires further research.

30

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45

Appendix

CÂU HỎI KHẢO SÁT
Survey questions

ĐỐI TƯỢNG KHẢO SÁT
Respondent's demographic questions

Anh (Chị) vui lòng đánh dấu (X) bằng một click chuột để trả lời câu hỏi. Kết quả khảo sát chỉ được dùng duy nhất vào mục đích thống kê, phục vụ nghiên cứu.
Please tick (v) to answer the question. The results are used solely for statistical purposes.

1. Giới tính *(What is your gender)*

2. Thời gian công tác của Anh (Chị) tại công ty *(How long have you been working in the company?)*

3. Vị trí công tác của Anh (Chị) trong công ty *(What is your position in the company?)*

4. Trình độ học vấn của Anh (Chị) *(What is your educational qualification?)*

5. Lĩnh vực hoạt động kinh doanh của công ty *(What is your company's scope or size?)*

6. Qui mô về nhân sự và lao động của công ty *(How many staff do you have?)*

CÂU HỎI KHẢO SÁT
Survey questions

Những câu hỏi dưới đây khảo sát mức độ sử dụng các nghiệp vụ kế toán quản trị trong doanh nghiệp.
The questions below will survey how management accounting practices (MAPs) have been used in practice.

a. ☐Luôn luôn   b. ☐Thường xuyên   c. ☐Thỉnh thoảng   d. ☐Hiếm khi   e. ☐Không bao giờ

a. Always b. Usually c. Sometimes d. Rarely e. Never

1. Phân tích kiểm soát ngân sách *(Budgetary control analysis)*

2. Phân tích biến động *(Variance analysis)*

3. Phân tích chi phí - sản lượng - lợi nhuận *(Cost-volume-profit analysis)*

4. Phân tích báo cáo tài chính *(Financial statement analysis)*

5. Phân tích báo cáo lưu chuyển tiền tệ *(Cash flow statement analysis)*

6. Phân tích chi phí dựa trên hoạt động *(Activity-based costing analysis)*

7. Phân tích chi phí khả biến *(Variable costing analysis)*

8. Phân tích chi phí mục tiêu *(Target costing analysis)*

9. Phân tích báo cáo tài chính phân đoạn *(Segment reporting analysis)*

10. Phân tích kế toán trách nhiệm *(Responsibility accounting analysis)*

11. Phân tích thẻ điểm cân bằng *(Balanced scorecard analysis)*

12. Phân tích quản lý bằng ngoại lệ *(Management by exception analysis)*

13. Phân tích quản lý chất lượng toàn diện *(Total quality management analysis)*

14. Phân tích lý thuyết các mặt hạn chế *(Theory of constraints analysis)*

Trân trọng cảm ơn sự giúp đỡ của Anh (Chị).
Thank you for your cooperation.

Response to Reviewer 1

We thank you for your valuable time and feedback given on this paper, which helped us immensely to improve it further.

1. *Originality: Does the paper contain new and significant information adequate to justify publication? The paper contains significant information and carries academic merit. However its contribution could be more clearly and upfront presented to show why this study is important.*

   The referee's comments have been noted. Please see Sections 1 (Introduction) and 2 (Background to the study) in a different colour (not black).

   As per the reviewer's valuable comment, we have changed these two sections and the discussions to present the importance of this study and have progressed the discussions gradually to link Management Accounting Practices (MAPs) with capitalist and communist economic systems.

   The importance of this study has been spelt out clearly. This study attempts to contribute to the application of MAPs in a communist economic system and a transition economic system.

2. *Relationship to Literature: Does the paper demonstrate an adequate understanding of the relevant literature in the field and cite an appropriate range of literature sources? Is any significant work ignored? The review of past literature is rather comprehensive and appropriate literature has been related to the study.*

   We have also added more literature from some of the following journals: 'Accounting, Organizations and Society'; 'Critical Perspectives on Accounting'; and 'Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal' as well as other journals such as 'Comparative Economic Systems' and 'Asian Accounting Development'.

3. *Methodology: Is the paper's argument built on an appropriate base of theory, concepts, or other ideas? Has the research or equivalent intellectual work on which the paper is based been well designed? Are the methods employed appropriate? While in the current version of the paper the Methodology is much more improved. I still feel that there is room for improvement. The use of qualitative survey questionnaires needs further elaboration and justification in terms why it is suitable in addressing the issues explored in this study, what insights it offers etc.*
   In page 7 it is stated that "In addition to the photographic documents and qualitative texts, this research employed fourteen selected MAPs to answer the research objective and investigate the resistance to or liberation from the application". This needs further clarification and justification in terms of how the survey questionnaire enabled in

2

gaining these insights, for seeing the survey questionnaire I am unclear whether it had sufficient coverage to explore the objective above.

We appreciate this valuable comment and have adopted it as part of our revisions. Hence, we elaborated the triangulation methodology and explained how the survey questionnaires enabled us to gain an insight into this methodology. These were written in a different colour (not black). Please also see below.

The findings of the survey questionnaire indicate that superior MAPs have been widely used in large manufacturing enterprises in Vietnam. In addition, the usage of contemporary MAPs correlates positively with the company size indicating that smaller companies and survivalist entrepreneurs employ simpler MAPs, while multinational and larger enterprises use advanced MAPs.

These finding offer an insight into the presence of a dualistic economy, digital divide, infrastructure differential, and income inequality between resourceful entrepreneurs multinationals in the metropolitan industrial zones (the promotion in MAPs) and resourceless and survivalist entrepreneurs in the villages and peripheral suburban cities (the resistance in superior MAPs). These insights complement the photographic evidence and qualitative texts from the relevant literature.

4. *Results: Are results presented clearly and analysed appropriately? Do the conclusions adequately tie together the other elements of the paper? Flowing from the above, I expect the findings to be better theoretically informed and to carry more depth, while illustrating how these use of these multiple theories are suitable to the study (i.e. how you bring together these multiple theoretical underpinnings in a single study). Further while Table 1 presents the data, more analysis of this data is expected.*

As per the reviewer's valuable comment, we have revised the section for theoretical background and elaborated on the suitability of multiple theories in this study. Additional discussions were also added in this section, which were written in a different colour (not black) in the revised paper. Please see below.

In addition, among more in-depth theoretical implications, there is the belief that a classification of MAPs could be developed by theorists to apply these MAPs to a communist economic system and a transitional economic system. So far, MAPs have been made and designed in developed nations with capitalist and free market economies. New MAPs should be developed to assist communist (and transitional) countries such as Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam, Russia, China and others.

The table below summarises the challenges of MAPs in both extreme communist and capitalist countries.

3

	Capitalist system	Communist system
MAPs—Ownership and legal structure	Enterprises and MAP reporting standard are owned and managed by the private sector.	Enterprises and MAP reporting standard are owned and managed by the communist government.
MAPs—Profit determination	Profit motive acts as an incentive for improving quality and charging competitive prices.	Profit motive does not act as an incentive. Quality is not prioritised. Pricing will be charged according to the price control.
MAPs—Price determination	Prices are determined by the market force (i.e. supply and demand).	Prices are determined by the government (i.e. price control).
MAPs—Efficiency determination	More incentives exist to cut costs, sell, and make the enterprises more profitable.	Few or no incentives exist to cut costs and no incentives to make the enterprise profitable.
MAPS—Overall aims	The aims of MAPs are minimising costs and maximising profits.	The aims of MAPs are minimising activity disruption and maximising social welfare.

5. *Practicality and/or Research implications: Does the paper identify clearly any implications for practice and/or further research? Are these implications consistent with the findings and conclusions of the paper? The paper carries important implications as presented in the write-up.*

Specific MAPs for communist and socialist economies could be designed by offering a theoretical syllabus, for example, on how to set up costing systems and a price control for certain goods. There are several types of price controls determined by the communist government such as setting a minimum price control, a maximum price control, a direct price setting and others. In addition, the aim of MAPs in a communist or transition economy should be focused on maximising public welfare; not maximising profits (see the above table). However, this requires further research.

6. *Quality of Communication: Does the paper clearly express its case, measured against the technical language of the field and the expected knowledge of the journal's readership? Has attention been paid to the clarity of expression and readability, such as sentence structure, jargon use, acronyms, etc.*
   It is still worthwhile to do another round of thorough checking of the entire paper in terms of language and grammar. Furthermore, I mentioned in the earlier version of the paper there is duplication in the presentation of figures as they are included within the text as well as at the end of the paper.

4

The use of language and grammar has been enhanced considerably to follow the reviewer's comments. Also, as per this valuable comment, the duplication has occurred due to separate file attachments (tables and figures) at the time of the paper upload. This time we will avoid attaching separate files and leave the figures and tables within the text.

Repetition and unnecessary words have been reduced to achieve the word limit (16,000 words).

We would like to thank you for your valuable comments, and we have revised the paper accordingly to improve its quality.

1

Response to Reviewer 2

We thank you for your valuable time and feedback given on this paper, which helped us immensely to improve it further.

1. *However, the introduction is quite dense to read and could do with refinement and focus. Further to this, I still doubt, whether the paper is adequately motivated? There are different types of economic situations/ideologies exist around us, and the challenges experienced by MAPs across the global contexts needs attention to complete the core research question. Although authors have added a new section which provides summary findings of many more studies, overall it does not motivate the key research concern. The contextualisation of Vietnam becomes complete in the background of the global challenges experienced by MAPs, beyond the views of 'growing' or market-friendly'. It may be useful to see the development of a table which summarises the nature of MAP related challenges across the economies. Tables 4 and 5 – in the context of revisions, please check again the usefulness of these two tables and discussion.*

   This comment is well noted and the paper was revised to reflect this more especially in Sections 1 and 2. Moreover, we have included new tables (4 and 5) in the Findings and Discussion section to summarise the challenges related to MAPs across different economies but related to Vietnam.

   In the revised paper, we removed previous tables 4 and 5 and instead we used the most relevant quotes for the discussion as because we needed to use some text as evidence to follow the textual structuralism theory.

2. *The paper would benefit from an accessible writing style, and enough room for further proofreading and concise editing to enhance the quality of communication.*

   The use of language and grammar has been enhanced considerably to follow the reviewer's comments.

3. *The research implications are still blurred.*

   The research implications for theoretical development have been rewritten to provide more clarity by relating MAPs to each economic system as follows:

   In addition, among more in-depth theoretical implications, there is the belief that a classification of MAPs could be developed by theorists to apply these MAPs to a communist economic system and a transitional economic system. So far, MAPs have been made and designed in developed nations with capitalist and free market economies. New MAPs should be developed to assist communist (and transitional) countries such as Cuba, North Korea, Vietnam, Russia, China and others. Specific

2

MAPs for communist and socialist economies could be designed by offering a theoretical syllabus, for example, on how to set up costing systems and a price control for certain goods. There are several types of price controls determined by the communist government such as setting a minimum price control, a maximum price control, a direct price setting and others. In addition, the aim of MAPs in a communist or transition economy should be focused on maximising public welfare; not maximising profits Refer to the table below. However, this requires further research.

	Capitalist system	Communist system
MAPs—Ownership and legal structure	Enterprises and MAP reports are owned by the private sector.	Enterprises and MAP reports are owned by the communist government.
MAPs—Profit determination	Profit motive acts as an incentive for improving quality and charging competitive prices.	Profit motive does not act as an incentive. Quality is not prioritised. Pricing will be charged according to the price control.
MAPs—Price determination	Prices are determined by the market force (i.e. supply and demand).	Prices are determined by the government (i.e. price control).
MAPs—Efficiency determination	More incentives exist to cut costs, sell, and make the enterprises more profitable.	Few or no incentives exist to cut costs and no incentives to make the enterprise profitable.
MAPS—Overall aims	The aims of MAPs are minimising costs and maximising profits.	The aims of MAPs are minimising activity disruption and maximising social welfare.

We would like to thank you for your valuable comments, and we have revised the paper accordingly to improve the quality and readability of this paper.