

From strategic management accounting to double-hybrid management accounting: a research note

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Abstract:

Strategic management accounting (SMA) has been developed by the management accounting professional bodies and academic community since the early 80s in response to the needs for relevant management accounting practices in the real world of management activities. A review of its literature reveals a number of theoretical and application concerns and issues. This paper examines specifically these SMA concerns and issues. The concerns raised in the SMA literature are loosely illuminated in the Facebook-based survey findings from the writer. It is argued in the paper that SMA needs to embrace double-hybrid management accounting so as to more effectively address its key concerns. At the same time, there is a need to conduct more research on double-hybrid management accounting, which remains at the present moment only a notion grounded in critical systems thinking and creative holism.

Key words: strategic management accounting, strategic management accounting concerns, Facebook-based questionnaire survey, double-hybrid management accounting

Introduction

Modern management accountants, no longer as “mere scorekeepers of past performance” with strong manufacturing

and administrative orientation (Sunarni, 2013), are involved in corporate strategic planning process (Vedd and Kouchy, 2005), internal consultancy and team leadership, etc. (Xydias-Lobo *et al.*, 2004). Contemporary management accounting (MA) is also clearly defined in management accounting textbooks. For instance, “Management accounting is the application of the principles of accounting and financial management to create, protect, preserve and increase value for the stakeholders of for-profit and not-for-profit enterprises... It requires the identification, generation, presentation and use of relevant information to: inform strategic decisions and formulate business strategy.....” (CIMA, 2007). Similarly, Bhimani *et al.* (2012) observe that “..The trend for professional institutes of management accounting is to reorient the field towards strategic management information preparation and analysis and the actual participation of management accountants in such activities.” As a reflection of the adoption of a proactive stance by the management accounting professionals to support strategic management, the subject of strategic management accounting (SMA) has been developed in the management accounting field since the 1980s. Another closely related management accounting research tradition is strategy and management control systems inter-relationships (Cuganesan, Dunford and Palmer, 2012). Nevertheless, the present SMA practices and theoretical foundations are still being challenged in the academic management accounting literature. This paper reviews the main SMA concerns and issues based on the writer’s literature review and a recently conducted Facebook-based questionnaire survey. It then argues why it is theoretically attractive for SMA to embrace double-hybrid management accounting, a notion proposed by this writer (Ho, 2014a, 2014b). Such a review should inform further theoretical development of SMA theories and practices.

The vision and techniques of strategic management accounting

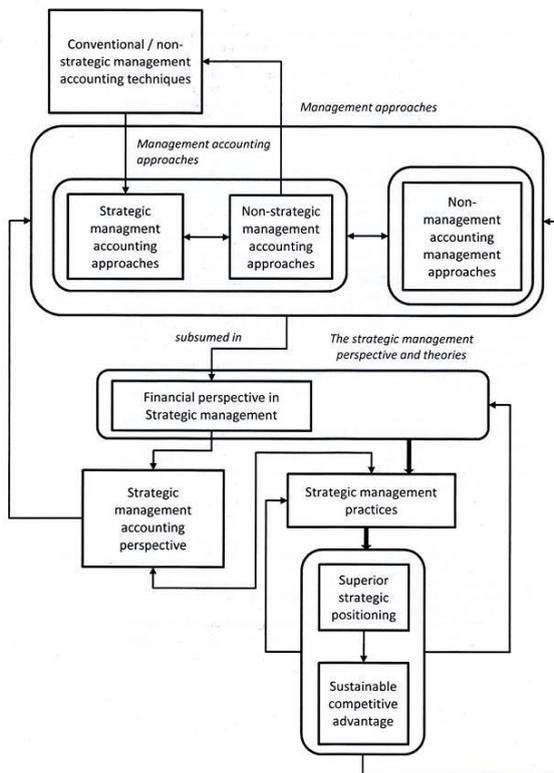
SMA was one of the approaches “designed to restore the lost relevance of management accounting” in the late 1980s. (Roslender and Hart, 2003). The phrase “relevance lost” was popularized by Johnson and Kaplan (1987)’s book *Relevance Lost*, which reviewed this professional crisis facing the Management Accounting profession at that time. The subject of SMA itself was first proposed by Simmonds (1981), to “identify an externally oriented approach that entailed collecting and analyzing data on cost, prices, sales volumes, market shares, cash flows and resource utilization, for both a business and its competitors...” (Roslender and Hart, 2003). For Roslender and Hart (2003), SMA can be tersely stated as a generic approach to “accounting for strategic positioning” by attempting to integrate insight from management accounting and marketing management within a strategic management framework. Others, such as Tayles *et al.* (2002), point out that (i) some SMA approaches focus on the role of cost information, (ii) some SMA approaches pay their main attention on the final goods markets and (iii) the overall focus is, as compared with conventional management accounting, more outward- and forward-looking. Increasingly, it is pursued “in an interdisciplinary manner” by incorporating ideas from other management disciplines, such as Human Resource Management (Vedd and Kouchy, 2001) and Knowledge Management (especially in Intellectual Capital accounting). By contrast, conventional management accounting is mainly tactical, not strategic in orientation (Guilding, Cravens and Tayles, 2000). Management Accountants make use of SMA techniques, very often with other people in various functional areas, to fulfill their business functions in scorekeeping, attention-directing and problem solving with regard to corporate strategic management.

Guilding, Cravens and Tayles (2000) were able to identify a quite substantial literature on SMA by 2000. From it, they identified 12 SMA practices, including attribute costing, brand value budgeting and monitoring, competitor cost assessment, life cycle costing, quality costing, target costing and value chain costing (Guilding, Cravens and Tayles, 2000). Similarly, Nixon and Burns (2012b) grouped these SMA techniques into five categories: (i) costing, (ii) planning, control and performance measurement, (iii) strategic decision making, (iv) competitor accounting and (v) customer accounting while Cinquini and Tenucci (2007) grouped them into four categories, i.e., (i) competitor-oriented techniques, (ii) long-term/ future-oriented techniques, (iii) process/ activity oriented techniques, and (iv) customer-oriented techniques. Bjørnenak and Olson (1999) recommend us to study SMA systems, e.g. strategic cost management of Shank and Govindarajan (1993), as new management accounting models with a set of design characteristics, e.g. cost objects types and data types. These SMA models are different from those of traditional management accounting models (Bjørnenak and Olson, 1999). Doing so on a SMA system as these writers recommend enables us to better appreciate the essence of such a new management accounting model, including its degree of innovativeness.

There have been two special issues on strategic management accounting from *Management Accounting Research*, one in 1996 and the other one in 2012. Also, there is a MSc Degree in Strategic Management Accounting, offered by UCD Michael Smurfit Graduate Business School, Ireland (Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, 2014). The MSc Degree course website states that the course “provides students with a systematic and rigorous postgraduate specialisation in management accounting within the context of strategic management”. Very often, SMA is considered as advanced management accounting, as reflected in the subject description of advanced management accounting (B392) offered

by the Open University of UK: “Advanced management accounting concepts and techniques are organised around a focus on strategy to enable you contribute to an organisations’ successful navigation of mid-to long-term challenges” (Open university, 2014). Ho (2011) depicts the subject of SMA in the form of a diagram, which is refined and presented in Figure 1. Figure 1 can be viewed as a rough theoretical skeleton picture on SMA to inform students new to the subject. It recognizes a number of key topics, e.g. purposes, key orientation and management theories employed, etc., that are discussed in the SMA literature. Some of these topics have been briefly introduced in the previous sections of this paper.

Figure 1: An overview on Strategic Management Accounting



Key SMA concerns and issues over time

The writer takes three SMA works, namely, Johnson and Kaplan (1987), Tomkins and Carr (1996) and Nixon and Burns (2012a) as representative ones that capture the SMA concerns at the time of their publications. By exhibiting concerns raised by these writers at different publication times, a picture of evolving SMA concerns is revealed. The key SMA concerns as identified in these SMA works are summarized as follows:

Period 1- Johnson and Kaplan (1987): management accounting information was not timely, too aggregated, too distorted for supporting management planning and control and did not encourage management to adopt appropriate planning horizons for strategic planning.

Period 2 - Tomkins and Carr (1996): there was no agreement on a comprehensive conceptual framework for SMA and the SMA literature was largely stuck at the conceptual level; moreover, SMA, as a subject, also needed to offer more ideas on internal analysis to help management to formulate new strategies.

Period 3 - Nixon and Burns (2012a): the SMA literature was unclear “who strategy is for”; there remained no agreement on a definition of SMA; the SMA literature did not pay sufficient attention to the internal processes of strategy formulation and implementation; finally, the SMA literature needed to also direct more attention to the stakeholder perspective.

Overall, progress has been made in the development and empirical reviews of SMA theories and practices as reflected in the works of Johnson and Kaplan (1987), Tomkins and Carr (1996) and Nixon and Burns (2012a). Still, there are key SMA concerns which also evolve over time. Apparently, some of the SMA concerns raised in 80s and 90s have been alleviated to some extent via theoretical development in SMA. Based on Johnson and Kaplan (1987), Tomkins and Carr (1996), Nixon

and Burns (2012a; 2012b), and Cuganesan, Dunford and Palmer (2012), the writer comes up with five SMA concerns:

SMA concern 1: improvement of management accounting relevance

SMA concern 2: the definition of SMA

SMA concern 3: development of sound SMA techniques

SMA concern 4: SMA research methods used

SMA concern 5: the theoretical foundation of SMA

The nature of these concerns can be better comprehended by referring to the relevant SMA writings. For instances,

- (i) Dent (1996) suggests that the adoption of a transnational form of organization to cope with global competition requires management accounting to address five challenges: (i) “legitimizing and balancing multiple perspectives”, (ii) “coordinating complexity”, (iii) “competitor analysis”, (iv) “resource allocation” and (v) “overcoming centrifugal tendencies”. (*SMA concerns 1, 3 and 5*)
- (ii) Dixon (1998) states that there is “a paucity of research.... To test the practical application” of the SMA concept. (*SMA concerns 3 and 4*)
- (iii) Nixon and Burns (2012b) state that “SMA techniques have not been adopted widely”. (*SMA concern 3*)
- (iv) “Empirical strategic management accounting (SMA) research has paid insufficient attention to the practices through which strategizing occurs..” (Cuganesan, Dunford and Palmer, 2012). (*SMA concerns 1, 4 and 5*)
- (v) SMA is based on “a narrow, first era view of the SM (strategic management) literature that reached maturity with Michael Porter’s industry analysis model and generic competitive strategies” (Nixon and Burns, 2012b). (*SMA concerns 1, 3 and 5*)
- (vi) Andrikopoulos (2010) examines a number of reasons why intellectual capital accounting, a SMA technique,

- “has yet to establish itself as the dominant system for the valuation, measurement, and reporting of knowledge-related intangible assets”. (*SMA concern 3*)
- (vii) SMA literature neglects the “evolutionist, processualist and systemic perspectives” (Nixon and Burns, 2012b). (*SMA concerns 1, 3 and 5*)
- (viii) Bhimani *et al.* (2012, p. 7) provide a list of “present-day key influences on changes in accounting information”, e.g. “the need to recognize intellectual capital”, “more complex business transactions” and “shorter product life cycles”, etc., as well as four key MA themes, namely (i) “customer focus”, (ii) “value-chain and supply-chain analysis”, (iii) “key success factors”, and (iv) “continuous improvement and benchmarking”. (*SMA concern 1*)

Furthermore, the writer has reviewed the articles in the *Harvard Business Review* over the last three years to come up with seven current strategic management-related “how-to” themes that are likely to underline contemporary enterprises’ strategic issues. Thus they are important contemporary issues SMA has to deal with:

- *Issue 1*: how to compete in today’s hyperconnected business world (Sargut and McGrath, 2011), guarded globalization (Bremmer, 2014) and high-velocity industries (McGrath, 2013).
- *Issue 2*: how to implement sound sustainable business practices (Chouinard, Ellison and Ridgeway, 2011; Winston, 2014).
- *Issue 3*: how to pursue and manage corporate innovations, including business model innovations (Nagji and Tuff, 2012; Downes and Nunes, 2013, Girotra and Netessine, 2014; Casadesus-Masanell and Ricart, 2011; Gilbert, Eyring and Foster, 2012)
- *Issue 4*: how to manage strategic risk (Kaplan and Mikes, 2012; Courtney, Lovallo and Clarke, 2013).

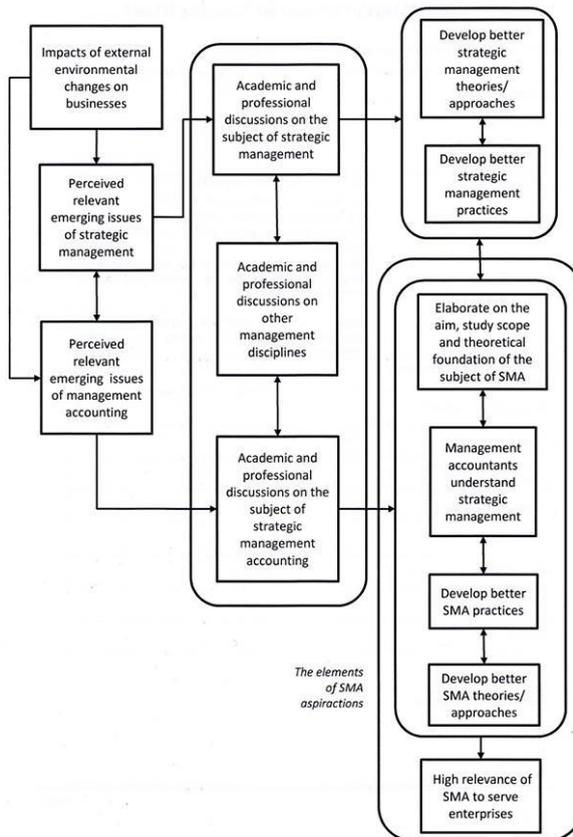
- *Issue 5*: how to manage big data to improve business performance (McAfee and Brynjolfsson, 2012; Davenport, 2013).
- *Issue 6*: how to transform a company into a great company (Kanter, 2011; Raynor and Ahmed, 2013).
- *Issue 7*: how to shift a company's strategy downstream (Dawar, 2013)

These seven issues as identified from a review of the recent *Harvard Business Review* articles by the writer, together with the five SMA concerns, indicate the prevailing challenges facing the development of SMA theories and practices. They need to be responded to in order to maintain SMA relevance in the business world (SMA concern 1). Drawing on Bihimani *et al.* (2012) and the ideas covered in this section, the writer constructs Figure 2 to capture the main factors underlying the development of the SMA subject. It portrays SMA as an interdisciplinary subject whose development efforts are directed at addressing perceived vital strategic management (SM) and SMA issues. These SM/SMA issues can be comprehended by studying the impacts of external environmental changes on businesses, which shape the formation of these issues. Figure 2 also recognizes the pivotal roles played by the academic and professional communities in the SM/SMA fields and other management disciplines in contributing to the development of SMA theories and techniques. In addition, the figure recognizes the primary objective of the SMA intellectual venture to achieve high SMA relevance to serve commercial and non-commercial organizations. High SMA relevance is vital for securing esteemed professional status for professional management accountants.

SM/ SMA concerns and issues evolve over time but will never be eliminated completely. For one thing, when discussing the various schools of strategic management, Elfring and Volberda (2014) remind us that “the field of strategic

management is extremely fragmented” such that “to provide an unequivocal definition [on strategic management] would mean ignoring the versatility of strategic management”. This writer would argue that their advice inevitably applies to SMA as SMA is done within SM frameworks. Their revelatory message is: *it is not totally undesirable that these SMA concerns and issues exist*. In short, Figure 2 helps us to further grasp the key SMA concerns from a broader context perspective of the subject.

Figure 2: Factors that influence the aspiration of SMA development



Findings from a Facebook-based questionnaire survey on SMA

An online survey on SMA was conducted by the writer in August, 2014 on his Facebook, with 135 respondents, most of whom are the writer's students located in Hong Kong. Many of them are part-time accounting students or accounting graduates. Some of the respondents have educational backgrounds in computing science, mechanical engineering and business administration. Most of these respondents have received the writer's email invitations to participate in the Facebook-based questionnaire survey. This Facebook-based questionnaire survey method has been examined in Ho (2014c). This survey method is useful for exploratory research purpose though the quality of the data so gathered has much validity weakness. The main findings on perceptions on SMA, based on an interactive query on the survey data with Excel, are provided as follows (see Appendix for the survey details):

Finding 1: 102 respondents (76.7%) have some ideas or are quite familiar with what a management accountant does.

Finding 2: 107 respondents (79.3%) have heard about, have studied or are currently studying the subject of SMA.

Finding 3: 59 respondents (44%) are aware that their companies have been using SMA practices and systems.

Finding 4: 29 respondents (21%) feel that their companies will adopt more SMA practices and systems within the next three years.

Finding 5: 46 respondents (34.1%) perceive the external environment facing their companies now as quite complex, competitive and dynamic. For this group of respondents, 20 of them (43% of these 46 respondents) reported that their companies have adopted some SMA practices or are serious users of SMA systems.

Finding 6: 17 respondents consider the external environment facing their companies now as quite complex,

competitive and dynamic and their management is quite willing to learn and apply new management ideas; for these respondents, 9 (52.9% out of 17 respondents) reported that their companies have adopted some SMA practices or are serious users of SMA systems.

Finding 7: 36 respondents (26%) feel that the internal operations and organizational structures of their companies are quite complex. Among these 36 respondents, 18 of them (50%) reported that their companies have adopted some SMA practices or are serious users of SMA systems.

Finding 8: 12 respondents feel that the internal operations and organizational structures of their companies are quite complex and that their management is quite willing to learn and apply new management ideas; for these 12 respondents, 8 of them (66.7% out of 12 respondents) have adopted some SMA practices or are serious users of SMA systems.

Finding 9: 8 respondents (5%) reported that both the external environment and internal company's set-up now are quite complex. All of these 8 respondents (100% out of these 8 respondents) reported that their companies have adopted some SMA practices or are serious users of SMA systems.

Finding 10: 16 respondents reported that the external environment facing their companies now are quite complex, competitive and dynamic and will become more so in 3 years' time. And all of them (100%) reported that their companies have adopted some SMA practices or are serious users of SMA systems.

Finding 11: 9 respondents (6%) feel that the internal operations and organizational structures of their companies are quite complex and will become more so in three years' time. 4 of them (44% of these 9 respondents) reported that their companies have adopted some SMA practices or are serious users of SMA systems.

Finding 12: 5 respondents (3%) reported that they are graduates/ postgraduates in non-business-related fields solely; and 4 of them (80% out of 5 respondents) have heard of SMA or have studied the subject in the past.

Finding 13: 38 respondents (28%) reported that their companies' management are quite willing to learn and apply new management ideas. Out of these 38 respondents, 5 of them (13% of these 38 respondents) are serious users of SMA systems and practices. 3 of them (60%) reported that their companies are very likely to adopt SMA systems and practices in three years' time.

Finding 14: 67 respondents (49%) reported that their companies serve many markets, both domestic and overseas; they are truly global. Among them, only 5 respondents (7% of the 67 respondents) are serious users of SMA systems and practices.

Although there are data quality problems, e.g., low external validity, with the findings based on the Facebook-based questionnaire survey research method (Ho, 2014c), the fourteen findings still have some reference value for our discussion. These findings reveal that the overall adoption status of SMA from this survey is largely satisfactory. Specifically, (i) many of the respondents (bearing in mind that many of them were the writer's students of SMA) have heard about SMA (Finding 2) though the adoption rate of SMA is still not perceived as pervasive (Finding 3), (ii) many companies are perceived to be keen on adopting more SMA practices in the near future (Finding 4); (iii) the relevance of SMA for companies to cope with a more complex and competitive external environment is perceived to be quite positive (Finding 10) though its value to support the management of complex internal operation is perceived to be less vital compared with the external environmental factors (Findings 7 and 11). In general, the role of MA, the SMA brand and their relevance to the world of management practices are reasonably recognized

by the respondents. Obviously, the MA academic and professional communities cannot afford to be complacent; they need to keep striving hard to respond to evolving SMA concerns and issues in a fast changing world with improvement in SMA theories and practices in order to maintain the prominent status of professional management accountants.

Double-hybrid management accounting for strategic management accounting

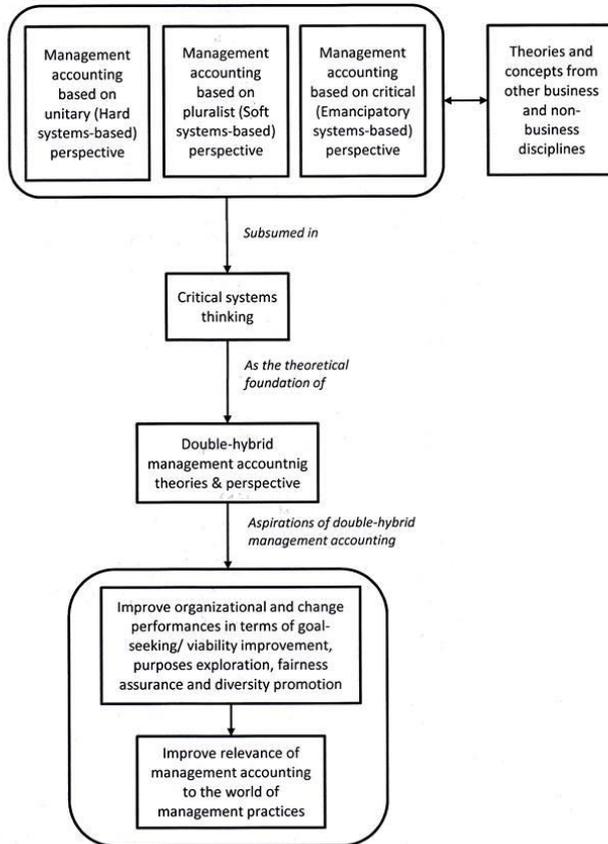
These days, accountants, e.g. management accountants, need to be more hybrid in business skills (Ho, 2014a; 2014b). As Starovic and Marr (2003) state: “accountants will have to combine the knowledge and understanding of “traditional” financial information within their control with more sophisticated interpretation techniques. This means ensuring that they develop greater commercial awareness, including fostering better links with other departments and appreciating how their role contributes to the strategic direction of their companies”. As to SMA, to be resourceful and comprehensive, SMA theories and techniques need to be more receptive to a broad range of strategic management theories, of which Michael Porter’s works represents one school of strategic management thinking (Opentuition, 2014; Elfring and Volberda, 2014; Kotelnikov, 2014), among others. Moreover, further development of SMA also needs to consider a diversity of theoretical perspectives in order to address effectively all the five SMA concerns. Such a need has been noted, though not expressed sufficiently cogently in the SMA literature. To quote from Nixon and Burns (2012b) again, the SMA literature neglects the “evolutionist, processualist and systemic perspectives”. It is clear that the academic management accounting literature has regular published works that apply objective, subjective and critical perspectives for a long time, e.g. in *Accounting, Organizations and Society* (Elsevier) and

Critical Perspectives on Accounting (Elsevier). Moreover, as early as 1996, Roslender (1996) has already pointed out that: “Concerns about the relevance of management accounting in the face of the demands of the global marketplace quickly gave way to the making of a new project, that of accounting for strategic positioning.... At the same time management accounting has been the site of many of the major developments in critical accounting project...”

The recommended theoretical stance on SMA to be multi-perspective is sensitive to the basic MA idea that “the functioning of management accounting systems is affected as much by behavioural and social factors as by technical ones” (Bhimani *et al.*, 2012). Recently, the need to adopt multiple theoretical perspectives in Management Accounting study has been argued by Ho (2014a, 2014b) who maintains that, for SMA to embrace double-hybrid management accounting, it should be multiple in orientation at the theoretical/ research philosophy level and business disciplines level. The concepts of double-hybrid management accounting and double-hybrid management accountant have been elaborated on and justified in Ho (2014a, 2014b). Both SMA and double-hybrid management accounting downplay the relevance of functionally oriented management accountants for supporting strategic decision-making while favoring the profile of the hybrid management accountants (Ho, 2014a). Nonetheless, to become double-hybrid management accountants demands management accountants to be also hybrid at the theoretical level by embracing critical systems thinking, triple loop learning and creative holism (Ho, 2014a; 2014b). All in all, double-hybrid management accounting is also a form of advanced management accounting. The main ideas underlying the double-hybrid management accounting notion are summarized in Figure 3 and explained in Ho (2014a, 2014b). While the MA literature does cover the objective (unitary), subjective (pluralist) and critical (emancipatory) perspectives, it pays

scant attention to the hard systems, soft systems, emancipatory systems and critical systems thinking.

Figure 3: An overview on double-hybrid management accounting



In a nutshell, current MA literature is able to inform multi-perspective thinking but is not enthusiastic in multi-perspective, systems-based thinking that buttresses the double-hybrid management accounting notion. Meanwhile, discussion of pluralism in the management accounting literature, such as Hoque *et al.* (2013) and Xydias-Lobo *et al.* (2004), has been rare. By endorsing critical systems thinking, double-hybrid

management accounting *should* be capable of dealing effectively with strategic issues in enterprises and strategic decision-making processes that inevitably are full of soft complexity. Besides, double-hybrid management accounting *should* also be highly relevant for supporting contemporary management accountants' roles as internal consultants and managers of complexity (Xydias-Lobo *et al.*, 2004). [The writer uses the word "should" instead of "is" because double-hybrid management accounting is only a theoretical notion at this stage. Because of that, the justification of the writer's viewpoints is purely theoretical.] Thus, double-hybrid management accounting, when applied in SMA, should be much more capable to address the key SMA concerns and issues¹. As SMA is supportive of an integrated way to assist management in strategic decision making (Vedd and Kouthy, 2001), it should be receptive to systems thinking whose core concept of holism is compatible with the integrated orientation of SMA. This claimed desirability to endorse double-hybrid management accounting-based SMA, however, is based solely on the contemporary literature in SMA and systems thinking without direct empirical data support at this stage.

Concluding remarks

It is clear that the management accounting (MA) profession has been a highly esteemed accounting and finance profession in the commercial and non-commercial sectors. It has also been maintained that the recent economic crisis has the impact of further strengthening the position of management accountants "within corporate decision-making processes and improving the "image of management accountants" (Endenich, 2014). Development of the SMA subject is also a very natural

¹ The contemporary systems thinking literature, e.g. Jackson (2000; 2003), is quite informative on topics such as methodology formulation and evaluation, management research philosophies and theory-driven management practices. These topics are relevant for addressing the key SMA concerns.

intellectual response for the MA professional and academic community to take, just like in the Marketing field, there is a subject of strategic marketing and in the Human Resource Management field, there is a subject of strategic human resource management, etc.. Nevertheless, so far, the theoretical development of the subject of SMA has been somewhat conservative and narrow in theoretical perspective, leading to difficulties in SMA practices and theoretical development. Recently, new SMA articles have been published, showing more diverse research efforts and research perspectives adopted to address the various SMA concerns and issues. For examples, Hutaibat, Alberti-Alhtaybat and Al-Alhtaybat (2011) adopts an interpretive stance to study the strategizing mindset, and Ma and Tayles (2009) focuses on accounting change and the “role for management accountants in informing strategic-decision-making” using institutional theory. In this paper, the writer maintains that, by embracing double-hybrid management accounting, SMA should be capable to respond to its key concerns and issues more effectively. However, the topic of double-hybrid management accounting is still very much a theoretical notion at this stage.

What is clear is that the notion of double-hybrid management accounting is grounded on the Multi-perspective, Systems-based Research of Ho (2014c), albeit contemporary systems thinking-based strategic management accounting theories, such as Soft systems-based SMA, Emancipatory systems-based SMA, and Critical systems-based SMA, do not exist in the existing academic literature on management accounting. For this reason, a lot of research works need to be carried out on SMA, double-hybrid management accounting and double-hybrid management accounting-based SMA. At the same time, there is a need to develop double-hybrid management accountants. In the writer’s view, the double-hybrid management accounting research is a very stimulating

intellectual venture and it also promises to have very high academic and practical values.

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Appendix – Facebook-based survey details on strategic management accounting

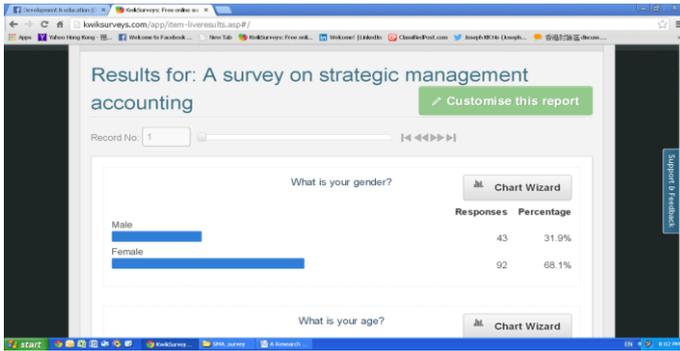
Appendix 1: Survey questions and responses

<i>Survey questions</i>	<i>Survey statistics</i>
Question 1: What is your gender?	Male: 47 (31.9%) Female: 92 (68.1%)
Question 2: What is your age?	18 to 24: 3 (2.2%) 25-31: 37 (27.6%) 32-38: 48 (35.8%) 39-45: 29 (21.6%) 46-52: 17 (12.7%) 53-59: 0 (0%) 60 or above: 0 (0%)
Question 3: What is your education background?	Not yet a degree-holder: 14 (10.4%) Undergraduate in business-related field (non-accounting): 26 (19.3%) Undergraduate in accounting field: 42 (31.1%) Post-graduate in business-related field (non-accounting): 20 (14.8%) Post-graduate in accounting field: 21 (15.6%) Undergraduate/ post-graduate in non-business-related fields: 5 (3.7%) Have formal tertiary education in accounting and non-accounting fields: 7 (5.2%)
Question 4: Are you a full member of professional accounting body (or more than one body), e.g. ACCA, HKICPA, CIMA, AIA, etc.?”	Yes: 9 (6.7%) No: 126 (93.3%)
Question 5: What is your employment status?	I have a full-time permanent job: 126 (93.3%) I am a freelancer/ self-employed: 3 (2.2%) I am an active job-seeker, currently unemployed: 3 (2.2%) I am not an active-job seeker, e.g. retired, a housewife or a full-time student: 3 (2.2%)
Question 6: What is your company’s general profile?	Serve domestic market only: 30 (22.6%) Serve domestic market, plus a few overseas markets: 36 (27.1%) Serve many markets, domestic and overseas; truly global: 67 (50.4%)
Question 7: How would you	Simple and predictable: 21 (15.6%)

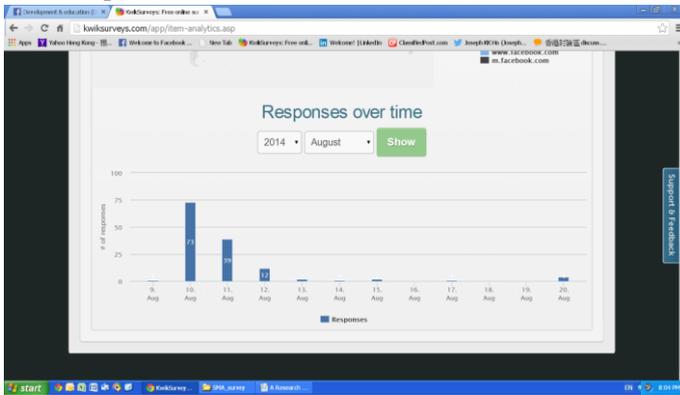
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describe the external environment facing your company now?	Basically complex, competitive and dynamic: 58 (43.0%) Quite complex, competitive and dynamic: 46 (34.1%) No idea: 10 (7.4%)
Question 8: What would you foresee the future external environment facing your company in 3 years' time?	Remains the same: 32 (23.7%) Becomes less complex, competitive and dynamic: 19 (14.1%) Becomes more complex, competitive and dynamic: 76 (56.3%) No idea: 8 (5.9%)
Question 9: How would you describe your company's set-up now?	I feel that the internal operation and organizational structure is not complex at all: 47 (35.6%) I feel that the internal operation and organizational structure is a bit complex: 36 (27.3%) I feel that the internal operation and organizational structure is quite complex: 36 (27.3%) I have no idea on this topic: 13 (9.8%)
Question 10: What would you foresee your company's set-up will be in three years' time?	No idea: 13 (9.6%) Basically no change: 45 (33.3%) Basically less complex: 27 (20.0%) Becomes more complex" 50 (37%)
Question 11: How would you describe your company's management attitude toward new management ideas/ thinking?	Conservative toward new management ideas: 48 (35.8%) Basically receptive to new management ideas: 48 (35.8%) Quite willing to learn and apply new management ideas: 38 (28.4%)
Question 12: Do you know what a management accountant does in an organization?	No idea: 31 (23.3%) Some idea: 72 (54.1%) Quite familiar with what a management accountant does: 30 (22.6%)
Question 13: What do you know about strategic management accounting?	No idea: 28 (20.7%) Have heard about it: 30 (22.2%) Have studied the subject in the past: 74 (54.8%) I am currently studying the subject: 3 (2.2%)
Question 14: Is your company using some systems of strategic management accounting now?	No idea: 36 (26.7%) Yes, some strategic management accounting practices have been carried out: 49 (36.3%) Indeed, my company is a serious user of strategic management accounting systems: 10 (7.4%) No, strategic management accounting practices are not employed in my company at all: 40 (29.6%)
Question 15: Do feel that your company will adopt more strategic management accounting practices/ systems within the next three years?	No idea: 41 (37.8%) Maybe: 55 (40.7%) Likely: 23 (17%) Very likely: 6 (4.4%)

Appendix 2: online survey statistics with charts



Appendix 3: response statistics over time



Appendix 4: exported data for further analysis in Excel with the data-filter function

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
1			Are you a full member of professional accounting body (or more than one body), e.g. ACCA, HKICPA, CIMA, AIA, etc.?	
2	What is your gender?	What is your age?		What is your er
3	Male	46-52	Post-graduate in busi accounting)	No
4	Female	25-31	Undergraduate in ac	Yes
5	Male	46-52	Undergraduate in bu	No
6	Female	32-38	Post-graduate in bus	No
7	Female	25-31	Undergraduate in ac	No
8	Male	39-45	Undergraduate in bu	No
9	Female	39-45	Undergraduate in business-related field (non-accounting)	No