

APPLYING INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC INSTITUTIONS TO IMPROVE UNIVERSITY GOVERNANCE: THE CASE OF CAN THO UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

The theory of Inclusive Economic Institution (IEIs) is not only applied in the field of economics or social management but also the area of education because it ensures the right of broad accessing to education, promotes innovation and develops talent. Thanks to the above advantages, the managers in higher education institutions have always been attracted by IEIs. In order to clarify the effectiveness of IEIs, the article focuses on analyzing the basic content of the theory and evaluating the results of applying IEIs at Can Tho University of Technology (CTUT). By doing so, the paper points out the pros and cons in applying IEIs in CTUT and make certain recommendations to complete CTUT's operation according to educational core value: "Quality - Creativity - Dynamism - Development".

1. INTRODUCTION

Resolution No. 29 of the 11th Central Steering Committee sets out the requirement to *"fundamental and comprehensive innovation in education and training in the direction of taking quality and efficiency as a measure with the goal of comprehensively developing human resource in associated with arising aspirations, self-reliance, national pride and cultural values, and Vietnamese in the new era."* [1] Thus, the improvement of institutions and policies to enhance the quality of education and training, including university education, is one of the most important tasks that the Party and State pay special attention to during the current period. CTUT was been established under Decision number 249/QĐ-TTg dated 29th January, 2013 by the Prime Minister, based on upgrading the Can Tho In-service University Center established in 1981. Currently, CTUT is an exclusive university that belongs to the People's Committee of Can Tho City aiming to train human resources who possess not only professional expertise but also scientific research ability. After more than 10

years of establishment and development, CTUT has constantly strived to improve the quality of education. As a result, CTUT was recognized as meeting educational quality standards in January 2021 [2]. It proves that the school is qualified for autonomy and self-responsibility in educating technical, technological and managerial human resources. Currently, the School is applying autonomy in the field of organization, finance and education in accordance with laws and regulations of the Ministry of Education and Training.

In order to earn the achievements in educational activities and successfully implement the school's development orientation in the coming time, it is necessary to establish an appropriated institution in the School's organization and operation according to the direction of university autonomy that the State has set out. Unless appropriate institution is created, motivation development would be prevented. Therefore, the improvement of institutions is one of the requirements to increase social resources to invest in education and training development in the period of

2019-2025. Due to the important role of institution, it is asserted that researching and applying appropriated institutions at CTUT is extremely necessary because it not only creates an order that binds individuals together, cuts costs, creates trust and cohesion in the organization, but also promotes creativity in the production process. As a result, it improves the educational quality of university according to the School's orientation.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

2.1. Theoretical basis

There are many viewpoints about the term "institution". It means: *"rules have been made by humans that constrain casual and opportunistic behavior in human interactions. Institutions are shared within the community and are imposed by some kind of sanction"* [3]. There are two groups of institutions. Firstly, external institutions are impacted through a number of rules which are systematically imposed power by representatives that are independent of managed people's will. These institutions are guaranteed to be enforced by specific sanctions with each corresponding penalty and supervised by a system of competence agencies on behalf of the state, which is the military police force. Secondly, internal institutions include customs, ethical norms, good manners and conventions in trade, as well as natural law in Anglo-Saxon society [4]. Unlike external institutions, violations of this institution are often punished by informal measures such as condemnation by public opinion, alienation from the community or isolation from the group. In other words, internal institutions are the cultural glue of a social community group or an organization. In particular, the institution means: *"human created constraints that structure human-to-human interactions about politics, economy, and society (1991, 1997). Institutions include formal rules (constitutions, laws, and property rights), informal constraints (those recognized and prohibited by custom, tradition, and ethics like the king's rules were inferior to the village*

rules in the past), and the characteristics of their implementation" [5]. As can be seen that institutions appear in any area, namely politics, economy, and society and there are different kinds of institutions. In contrast, institutions are defined as *"including regulations, laws, and organizations and their people."* [6]. Similar to Douglas C. North and Geoffrey Hodgson's viewpoints, Phan (2012) says: *"Institutions are a broad concept which means as formal or informal rules of the game that repeatedly shape human behavior. Formal institutions include the Constitution, laws, property right, basic law of contracts, freedom of competition, public organization, especially the institutions of law enforcement and the controlling processes of public power which are carried out by objective mechanisms doesn't depend on personal relationships. Informal institutions include endless unwritten rules, norms, and taboos that are observed in relations between groups of people."*[7] DC North (2003) says: *"Institutions are made up of formal rules, informal constraints and their enforcement characteristics. Formal rules, of course, are very straightforward. They are rules put into place; they are laws, constitutions, regulations, whatever, that have the character of being specific and being defined precisely"* [5].

As we can see, there are three aspects related to the definition of institutions, namely: the rules (formal and informal), enforcement mechanisms and institutions (associated with their behavior) [6]. In addition, reducing costs in searching for knowledge is one of the most priority concerns of economics that is effectively implemented through institutions as a social supporting tool. This can be done by an appropriate institution because it brings many benefits and good conditions to promote talent and creation to serve manufacturing activities fostering economic development [8]. As a result, the advantage of effective institutions may increase profit by risk managements as we carry out transactions in the market

through three functions of institutions, namely (i) the ability to provide information about market condition, products and partners; (ii) identifying and implementing ownership and signed contract; (iii) changing competitive level in the market and supporting economic growth and reducing poverty. In essence, there are two types of institutions. First of all, extractive institutions mean: “*an institution in which only one segment of the population is given more favorable conditions to access society's resources. Such the institution allows one group of people to take possession of income and wealth from another in order to benefit themselves.*” [4]

Secondly, Acemoglu and Robinson (2012) state that “*Inclusive institutions are the main reason for success in developed countries, and they are also a fundamental factor in maintaining prosperity in these countries. In their theory, these scholars have defined inclusive institutions as institutions that encourage and allow the participation of the majority of the population in state governance and economic activities to utilize best their talents and qualifications. In addition, the institutions also help individuals to complete their own desires*” [9]. Technology and education are the outstanding advantages of inclusive institutions as the foundation and prerequisites for prosperous development. Inclusive institutions include inclusive political institutions and inclusive economic institutions. Adding to that, Inclusive economic institutions can promote education and technological innovation because “*it has the ability to create an equality of opportunity for all members in society that extractive institutions cannot do.*”

By analyzing the theories of “*institutions*”, “*inclusive institutions*”, and “*inclusive economic institutions*”, it is said that solving the relationship between competent agencies and universities through the application of inclusive institutions in general or inclusive economic institutions, in particular, is very

necessary. The reason is that it not only allows the division of power to be transferred from centralization (extractive institutions) to autonomous and self-responsible (inclusive institutions) but also ensures the State's supervision in implementing the functions of macro-management [10]. Besides, the above institutions are still ensuring the autonomy of university institutions to release potential capacity to help universities to become more and more developed. The main purpose of delegating the right of self-control to the universities is to help them proactively and effectively operate to meet the requirements of society. The higher of the institutional autonomy is, the more successful university reforms will be. Especially, it changes to diversify and effectively utilize the organization's resources. The increasing sense of responsibility of university establishments is the result of applying the autonomy right at a higher level and getting more participation in the management of their own organizations. As a result, the above application is an effective monitoring method to minimize opportunism, corruption and ineffective expenses during operations that contribute to enhancing competition and improving the educational quality of the universities in an equal playing [7]. Ha-Joon Chang (2010) says: “*The currently dominant view is that institutions are the ultimate determinants of economic performance*”. [9]

Article 4 of the Law on Higher Education (2025) it is generally said that “*Ensuring the autonomy, self-responsibility, and accountability of higher education institutions.*” The term “*Autonomy of higher education institutions*” [11] means universities are autonomous following the provisions of law Universities, associated with self-responsibility and partially institutionalized in each field of operation at higher education institutions. Thus, the inclusive institution through the autonomy and self-responsibility mechanism of CTUT has been built and effectively applied to create

trust and cohesion in the organization which promotes creativity and innovation in the process of formation and development of the school that will be analyzed in the paper.

From the important role of institutions in economic growth, it can be asserted that institutional research and application in the field of higher education is essential. The reason is that it not only creates an order that helps bind individuals together to cut costs and create trust and cohesion in the organization but also promotes creativity in the production process. As a result, it will improve the quality of higher education according to the orientation.

2.2. Research methods

The application of economically inclusive institutions in organizational activities is the research object of this paper. There are various methods which have been used to analyze the topic, including:

Synthesis and analysis: the authors use this method to analyze legal documents and related documents.

Historical method: the method is employed to present the formation and development process of Can Tho University of Engineering and Technology. By doing so, the paper will evaluate how much success the economic inclusive institutions have been applied in CTUT's management.

To evaluate the current situation and results achieved from the application of the EIs at CTUT, the paper use data from several reports summarizing the School's operation every years and statistics of CTUT's activities from 2022 up to now through observation, document synthesis, and actual description methods.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1. Current Status of Institutional Autonomy in Training and Quality Assurance

One of the priority requirements is training and educational quality assurance. The Party

Committee and the Board of Directors of the University always focus on and seriously implement the policy of the Ministry of Education and Training on ensuring the quality of education; and carry out quality inspection. The University issued Decision No. 66/QĐ-ĐHKTCN on 20th February, 2020 promulgates the Strategic Plan to ensure the quality of education of Can Tho University of Technology in the period of 2020 -2025 oriented to 2030. In 2021, the University was recognized and granted a Certificate of quality standards for educational institutions and quality assessment by the "Educational Quality Accreditation Centre University of Da Nang" which successfully assessed six training programs in 2024. Besides, in accordance with the Scheme of the University Establishment, the University developed policies, strategies and orientations to improve quality, such as establishing a Self-Assessment Council and setting a self-assessment plan for higher education institutions in the period 2015-2019; setting a quality assurance plan for the period of 2018-2020 and the period of 2020-2025; developing and promulgating quality assurance policies, internal quality assurance systems; developing a plan to review and improve quality assurance activities in training, scientific research and community service. In particular, in 2025, the quality inspection of 08 training programs is being completed that increases the total number of training programs reaching over 90.9% of the school's training programs meeting the National Quality Assurance standards. Thanks to focusing on quality assurance in the school's autonomous orientation, Vietnam's University Rankings (VNUR) ranked CTUT in the top 100 prestigious universities in Vietnam, ranked 4th in the Mekong Delta and ranked 3rd in Can Tho City (after CTU, CTUMP), in 2025. In 2023, the school enrolled 22 regular university majors, with 1,583 out of 1,620 candidates admitted, achieving an admission rate of 97.72%.

Through the mechanism of implementing autonomous institutions, self-responsible to ensure the quality of training at CTUT, the following advantages and disadvantages have been identified. In terms of advantages, the number of party members and officials are young, highly qualified lecturers who are dedicated to their profession, career passion, and highly awareness in determining training program accreditation. They always unite to complete the tasks. Close attention and timely guidance from the School Party Committee throughout the process of implementing the task of evaluating and certifying the training program were another benefit.

It is asserted that taking advantage of the mechanism of autonomy and self-responsibility in building institutions which strictly ensure training quality. From these policies, the School has fulfilled the commitments to society regarding to the quality of education. In order to achieve the mentioned target, it requires the School's team-work of lecturers, staffs and workers constantly strive to improve their own qualifications, responsibility to coordinate and unite continuously to complete the mission.

3.2. Current Status of Institutional Autonomy in Staff development and Welfare

The human resource is one of the most

important factors contributing to the successful implementation of mentioned target. The creation of an informal institution through the policies of human resource development in recent times, the School has focused on developing the teaching staff and improved the quality of teaching and scientific research. In particular, the School has paid attention to recruit senior lecturers with high professional qualifications, and created conditions for them and students to access new learning methods, modern technologies which were applied in training and scientific research at the same time. The school issued an annual training plan to improve the quality of staff and attracted high quality human resources with doctoral degrees to work at the school. Furthermore, there were a number of recruitment exams which were organized to employ leaders and faculty managers. Moreover, remuneration policy for respected lecturers to encourage them completing postgraduate programs were implemented. Currently, there are 271 lecturers at CTUT, including: 04 grade I lecturers, 15 grade II lecturers and equivalent, 233 grade III lecturers and equivalent according to professional title. In terms of professional qualifications, there are 04 Associate Professors, 52 PhDs, 189 Masters, 21 Bachelor degrees.

Table 1. Scientific Research Statistics (2022-2024) [12], [13]

Research activities	From 2022-2023	From 2023-2024
School-level scientific reports	9	15
Textbooks	10	4
Lecture books	31	32
Domestic articles	73	121
International articles	12	40
Institutional-level research projects	24	19

From 2023 - 2024, it can be seen that the number of textbooks and Institutional-level research projects slightly decreased, but the quality and quantity of scientific publications significantly increased compared to previous years. Specifically, there were 04 accepted textbooks, including 02 published textbooks. The number of lecture book slightly increased by 3%, from 31 to 32. On school-level scientific reports, it sharply increased about 67%. Especially, the number of domestic articles highly increased by 66%, from 73 to 121 articles. On international articles, it increased around 23%, from 12 to 40 articles, in which many articles are highly ranked in the SCImago ranking system, belonging to groups Q1 and Q3. It is said that thanks to the application of EIIs at CTUT, the creativity among lecturers was encouraged which contributed to the educational quality of the School.

Besides, the grassroots trade union institution is the place which most clearly demonstrates the codes of conduct that form the unique culture of CTUT. Thus, it creates trust and solidarity among the staff and workers. Grassroots trade unions coordinated with the government to perform the function of representing and protecting the legal and legitimate interests of officers. The School Council has organized regular salary increasing reviews, seniority allowances for teachers, and considering early salary-increase reviews. Regular salary increases for officers and employees carried out in accordance with Government Decrees and guiding documents. The authority to decide on regular salary increases was implemented according to the management decentralization of the City People's Committee. The grassroots trade union supervised the settlement of policies for retired and resigned officers, monitored the implementation of social insurance and health insurance regimes for teachers and employees, and the implementation of seniority allowances according to regulations. The

School regularly supervises the implementation of the Labor Law, Trade Union Law, Civil Servants Law, etc. to ensure the legitimate rights and interests of union members and employees.

In terms of educational propagandizing, listening and understanding the opinions and aspirations of officers and students, The Party Secretary - Principal has a weekly schedule to meet them in order to directly address their concerns and questions every Monday afternoon. Thereby, recommendations on the implementation of school policies and officer's aspirations have been promptly considered and satisfactorily resolved which has created trust in the Party's policies and guidelines. Therefore, the correctness of the mentioned policies has been applied at the School which has helped the officers satisfying their expectations thanks to a secure job.

However, there are still some limitations such as a shortage of budget for the Union's activities. Therefore, it is difficult to organize regular movements that require large financial investments. Some departments changed the Union Leader which affected the overall operation of their unit. The increase in the number of officers and employees of the School leads to other expenses rising. Due to union officials' retirement, taking maternity leave or changing work units, it is necessary to organize the election of new personnel. From the specific activities mentioned above, it can be seen that the school leaders have built a democratic institution. Progress not only cares for material life but also improves the collective spiritual life of officials and workers. The rights, voices and contributions of staff, workers and students are always promptly addressed by the school's leaders. When material and spiritual life is guaranteed, respected opinions are the premise to motivate employees to work with peace of mind, and promote enthusiasm to contribute to the common development of CTUT.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The article has analyzed in depth the theories of institutions, inclusive institutions and economic inclusive institutions serving as a theoretical background for evaluating the results of EIIs implementation through the mechanism of autonomy and self-responsibility at CTUT. Accordingly, it can be affirmed that the autonomous and self-responsible institution which the School has chosen is completely consistent with the general trend of society. This has been demonstrated through two institutional aspects. *Firstly*, it is the mechanism for implementing autonomous and self-responsible institutions related to training quality assurance activities to build the reputation of the School as well as increase CTUT's competitiveness in the field of education. *Secondly*, it is the establishment of codes of conduct through the activities of the School Union that creates CTUT's own culture.

However, during the implementation process, there are also certain limitations. Firstly, it has not really formed a "quality assurance culture" for the school's staff. The reason is that the managers of department, faculty and centers are not uniform in their awareness of educational quality assurance related to the school's fields of operation. Therefore, the meaning of the above activity has not been extensively communicated to the School's staff. To deal with the above limitations, it is necessary to have a strategy bonding the quality with the interests of organizations and individuals, collaborating and learning from other higher education institutions, incorporating quality into daily working culture.

Secondly, to handle with the difficulties of the School's staff quality meeting the regulated requirements, besides improving the quality of recruitment, planning, training, appointment, evaluation, and mobilization, a professional and convenience working environment should be done by simplifying administrative procedures so that lecturers have enough time to focus on researching and

teaching activities. In addition, the lecturers exchange programs with prestigious universities, academic organizations, scientific associations should be concerned in order to connect and sharing academic experiences among scholars.

In conclusion, based on the association between theoretical foundations of IEs and specific practices in the context of CTUT, the research results contributes to systematize the outstanding achievements as well as limitations related to the autonomous and self-responsible mechanism of CTUT. By doing so, the School's staffs are correctly and objectively aware of the CTUT's operation and orientation that help them to understand and unite overcoming the challenges ahead due to the sustainable development of CTUT in the future.

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VẬN DỤNG THỂ CHẾ KINH TẾ DUNG HỢP NHẪM CẢI TIẾN QUẢN TRỊ ĐẠI HỌC: THỰC TIỄN TẠI TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC KỸ THUẬT - CÔNG NGHỆ CẦN THƠ

TÓM TẮT

Lý thuyết về thể chế kinh tế dung hợp (IEIs) được vận dụng không chỉ trong hoạt động quản lý kinh tế mà còn được ứng dụng trong lĩnh vực giáo dục nhờ vào việc bảo đảm quyền tiếp cận thông tin rộng rãi, thúc đẩy sáng tạo và phát triển nhân tài. Từ những ưu điểm trên mà việc vận dụng thể chế kinh tế dung hợp vào hoạt động của cơ sở giáo dục đại học luôn thu hút được sự quan tâm của các nhà quản lý. Nhằm làm rõ hiệu quả mà thể chế này mang lại, bài viết tập trung phân tích những nội dung cơ bản của IEIs và đánh giá kết quả vận dụng IEIs tại Trường Đại học Kỹ Thuật - Công nghệ Cần Thơ (CTUT). Qua đó, chỉ ra những hạn chế bất cập và đề xuất kiến nghị hoàn thiện hoạt động của CTUT theo định hướng giá trị giáo dục cốt lõi đã đề ra: “Chất lượng - Sáng tạo - Năng động - Phát triển.”

Từ khoá: *Giáo dục, thể chế kinh tế dung hợp, Trường Đại học Kỹ thuật - Công nghệ Cần Thơ*