DEVELOPMNENT OF A MODEL TO ENHANCE EFFECTIVE CHANGE MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS: A CASE STUDY IN *CAN THO* UNIVERSITY, VIETNAM

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Abstract. Change management (management of change), is known to be a significant model based on theories and practices from educational experts, educators, professors, school administrators and even scientists. Like other higher education institutions in Vietnam, Can Tho University (CTU) is a change management type organization. Its educational decentralization from the Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training has allowed step-by-step management of change implementation but is not yet effective. And it is likely that CTU organizational change with participation of change agents really may need new ingredients. In this research a model is proposed to enhance the effectiveness of change management in a higher education institution, particularly in CTU, Can Tho City, South Vietnam: Where the change process has been implemented for about 10 years. This is in the context of wider change following on 30 years after the Vietnam War conclusion in 1975. Thus, the paper aims (1) to construct a hypothetical model for enhancing effective change management in universities, (2) to verify the model for enhancing effective change management in universities, and (3) to propose the model towards the effectiveness of change management in CTU, Vietnam. The findings of this paper utilized a mixed method (qualitative and quantitative) - through documents, email discussions, self-made questionnaires, structured interviews, and observations from the international experts (5 from Thailand, 5 from Asia and 5 from Europe and North America), CTU administrators (70), teachers (70), office staff (30) and students (30). The evaluation of the applicability of the model was judged by experts using a focus group of 11 members from CTU, Vietnam. In addition, there were descriptive reports and data collection that were analyzed using descriptive statistics, mean and standard deviation tools. The concepts brought forth and feasibility of this study could bring those interested in change management to have a better understanding regarding change management theories: Especially models implemented in higher education institutions around the world including CTU regarding ways of practicing change management. Moreover, it would be a useful reference for educational administrators and a strong impetus for researchers to engage in a comparative study among levels of education beyond ones borders in the regionally and globally sensitized educational environment.
Keywords: Change Management, Educational Administration, Effectiveness and Higher Education

Introduction and Background

Universities as well as schools must be continuously taking part in the process of change or they will not be successful with their students given the ever-changing needs of society (Speck, 1999). In addition, change in schools gets the whole community involved in its processes, as Hall et al (2001, p. 14) states: "Change processes are easier and chances of sustained success are increased as the school staff understands more about how to use external resources and as those external to the school recognize the importance of their roles in facilitating each school in achieving change success."

Also, when discussing change beyond the school, Fullan (2003) expressed that the school environment cannot be improved from the top. The top can supply a vision, policy incentives, and mechanisms for interaction, coordination and monitoring, but to recognize this vision requires full participation from all levels. There must be lateral development. He adds that people at one's own level give and receive so as to, in effect, build capacity and shared commitment across schools.

Meanwhile, when change process is in the process of being carried out, the roles of the leaders are recognized. Hall et al (2001) stated,

> "Change is not only, however, about the implementers – those who will change their practices- but also about those who will facilitate the implementers in doing so. And in order to get change done, change processes need to have action plans, inspection, control, and even evaluation because when there is careful consideration of the possible components, variations and clusters from the beginning, the process will be more efficient and effective "(p.27).

One can take a look at some models and practices at the university level. First, in the case of Chinese educational settings, Ma wan-hua (2007), cited in (Herschock et al 2007: 164) expresses, "The changes China has undergone over the past three decades are so fundamental that virtually no aspect of social life has remained unaffected. Higher education is no exception." He adds that at system level, Chinese higher education has experienced changes with respect to expansion, diversification, massification and commercialization. Also, according to Ma Wan-hua, recently the Chinese Ministry of Education held two Chinese and foreign university president conferences for more awareness of the interplay of local, national, regional and global forces and issues in decision-making for institutional change and development.

Muongmee Suchinda (2007), poses the needs for educational reforms in Thailand. He states that educational reform is, among other things, seen as a crucial ingredient for building a nation of wealth, stability and dignity, and the capability to compete with others in the age of globalization. He also notes some indicators, which need to be put in play, as follows: (1) strong leadership with clear vision and understanding of the mission of education, (2) control of the politics influencing education, (3) a duty of the government to solve any educational problems, (4) reduction of the gap between academics and the general public in the process of educational reform, (5) the main issues of educational reform – change in mentality, behaviour and work culture in education, (6) parents' thoughts about traditional education needed to be reformed, and (7) students' points of view need to be considered.

In the era of globalization Vietnamese education is being influenced, as are other developing countries in the world. National education reforms since the early 1990s have seen many major changes (Mac Cargo, 2003). The country is also facing challenges and opportunities. Regarding challenges, Mac Cargo (2003) states that the reforms have resulted in a rapid increase in numbers of students, numbers and types of educational institutions and courses of studies at all levels of education. He adds that; however, the national education system seems to be facing deterioration in quality. With respect to opportunities in the higher education environment, when being asked by Viet Nam News on May 31, 2006, Deputy Minister of Vietnamese Education and Training, Banh Tien Long stated that the overall objective of tertiary reform in the next 15 years (the country's global integration plan for education from 2006 to 2020) would be to achieve basic changes in the quality and scope of the system so that it could respond to the socio-economic development and the people's demands for further studies.

By the same token, Luu Nguyen Quoc Hung (2007), conveys five challenges, which include: the comparability of quality and standards; the multi-nationalization of higher education; the problem of brain drain; the problem of intellectual property; and maintaining a university as a learning organization. Regarding roles of leaders in the transformation of Vietnamese higher education, Hung (2007) suggests that Vietnamese universities need radical transformation to improve the quality and effectiveness of education in order to meet the diversified demands for human resources. In the context of Can Tho University (CTU), Vietnam, Hung (2007) also puts out his suggestions on this matter that CTU leaders, in spite of following the directions from the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training, need to empower practices of educational decentralization at departmental levels in terms of vision sharing. CTU is on the way to change management at the present time. However, the decentralization has to be effected in a step-by-step manner. The university needs a planned sequential path: The management of change needs to be taken into account and upgraded in the whole process of change.

Statement of the Problem
Recently, Speck (1999) in the change process model, proposes stresses involvement of all the stakeholders in the learning community. This process starts with shared vision, managing the transition in individuals from the organization with skills/capacities, incentives/motivation, resources, time, and politics (school board, teachers, and classified unions). The process emphasizes the results of collaborative efforts and leadership team coordination. Next are derivation of action plans. The evaluation is the end of this process. Lunenburg et al (2001) picture the fundamental principles and concepts in the development of administrative theory, administrative processes, and structural frameworks for education. Meanwhile, Hoy et al (2001) pose an "Integrated Model of Organizational Effectiveness" relating to inputs, throughputs and outputs criteria. In 2001, in implementing change, Hall et al posited the concerns-based adoption model, referring to diagnostic tools: stages of concerns, levels of use and innovation configuration. Briefly, the present-day models are just independent parts in the whole of change implementation. It is necessary for a university to have a model for its change management performance.

CTU's organizational change with effective leadership actually needs new ingredients. Accordingly, in this study, the researcher derived a model that can be employed in higher education at

varied levels globally by linking parts of the change management processes. A survey regarding how the administration was carried out; what the needs for change management are; and how effective the change management was in CTU; where change management process has been in use; including the full process over the last 10 years, was conducted. Furthermore, there was also an in-depth judgment of concepts between the global and national change management model in choosing a suitable one for its implementation in CTU, Vietnam. This revealed a solid base, helping to construct a model to enhance effective change management performance in the long run. In short, the study investigated the questions (1) what is the present state of administration and the needs for change in universities? (2) what is the effective change management model for universities?, and (3) what model is appropriate and practical to Can Tho University, Vietnam?

Objectives of the Study
The general purpose was to propose a model to enhance the effectiveness of change management in a higher education institution in Vietnam, particularly in CTU. Therefore, specifically aims, are as follows (*1) to construct a hypothetical model for enhancing effective change management in universities, (2) to verify the model for enhancing effective change management in universities, and (3) to propose the model towards the effectiveness of change management in Can Tho University, Vietnam.*
Significance of the Study
 This study may bring benefits to all those interested in change management issues. As a result of the research, firstly**,** there may be an opportunity to better understand CTU, Vietnam and its practices of change management since the 1990s Further, to obtain some information about the current path of CTU, embarking on implementing change management since the War. This research may be a useful reference to the university administrators, office staff, teachers and students elsewhere, when they need to look for additional information regarding change management issues. After reviewing this research, the chance to evolve a new venue for cooperation in the long run for the administrative fields and other related issues within educational circle, especially with CTU, Vietnam, may be available. From taking an interest in learning new models, implementing them and creating others, the researchers may see an impetus to engage in a comparative study among levels of education beyond one border in the regional and global environment.
        For other universities in Vietnam and on a global scale, a channel and venue to get experiences about the practices of change management, may result from this research.

Scope of the Study

Can Tho University (CTU), founded in 1966, is the largest public institution, located in the heart of the lower Mekong Delta area of South Vietnam. The university lies in Can Tho city, dubbed 'capital of Southwest", 150 km west of Ho Chi Minh city (formerly Saigon). CTU is among the leading universities in Vietnam and has become an important centre of learning, research and technology. CTU works closely with provincial authorities, private and public enterprises and farming communities. These essential links enable this university to create teaching and research activities in accordance with the needs of the local community.
        In addition, CTU is a comprehensive university under the jurisdiction of the Vietnamese government and the university rectorate. Its missions are: (1) to offer undergraduate and graduate training programs to meet current and future educational needs of the residents in the Mekong Delta areas, (2) to conduct fundamental scientific research and to develop applications, (3) to directly serve the needs of the community by spreading knowledge of science and technology and transferring technology and (4) to assist in developing the regional economy and local productivity by expanding agriculture and bringing scientific and technological advances to local producers. (*Source at* http://www.ctu.edu.vn *)*

Conceptual Framework and Research Methodology:
This part of the study is aimed at presenting the procedures based upon the research objectives and the research steps as well, as displayed below:
        Phase 1: Constructing a hypothetical model for enhancing effective change management in universities. To develop a model for effective change management in universities globally, there was a document search in higher education settings internationally regarding change management with change implementation and change processes through theories, models and real practices. From this point, a global tentative model for change management was constructed. (Also seen at the result of Phase 1 *at Expected Results of the Study- Figure 2)*

Phase 2: *Verifying the hypothetical model for enhancing effective change management in universities*. Getting the tentative model for effective change management beforehand from Phase 1, the author sent it to an international expert group to be judged. There were 15 experts (5 from Thailand, 5 from other Asian countries and the rest from Europe and North America) in the educational administration field (criteria designed in advance), joining the judgment group toward the tentative model (Also seen *at Expected Results of the Study*-Figure 2). The criteria for experts would was follows: (1) the administrator, who has been working in the higher education level, (2) the administrator, who has known about change management and its related issues for about 5 years, and (3) the educator, teacher, or professor, who has had a lot of experiences of working/teaching/advising in this field for the above listed items.

The tentative change management model was sent to 15 experts by email. The experts put their answers on a rating scale in the questionnaire, gave their feedback through email discussions and interviews. Comments, ideas and suggestions from the international experts in the questionnaire were synthesized. A modified model was then judged. Descriptive reports from email discussions were written. With the questionnaire, there was an analysis looking at mean and standard deviation.

Phase 3: *Proposing the model for enhancing effective management in Can Tho University (CTU), Vietnam.* There would be three sub phase steps:

3.1. Studying the present state of the administration and the needs for change management in CTU, Vietnam. This was a document search. First, there was be a study about Vietnamese higher education settings and ways to improve the educational reform process since the 1990s, especially regarding change management. One had to visualize a national model for change: Also needed was a search of documents about CTU administration and the implementation of change management. In addition, a comparison about change management between CTU and the national and the international contexts was taken into account in order to finalize a model for CTU specific conditions.

3.2. Constructing a CTU model for effective change management. For the sake of finding a suitable model of the current change management performance on site, a new model, called a CTU change management model, was created. First, a careful judgment from the results of the item 3.1 in Phase 3 would be the foundation to help construct a model. Second, there may also be a reference towards the international change model judged from the international expert group from Phase 1. Finally, a CTU model would be constructed.

3.3. Judging the model for enhancing effective management in Can Tho University (CTU), Vietnam. In light of the item 3.2 in early Phase 3, the CTU model may be evaluated by the expert group in CTU, Vietnam for its applicability- feasibility and utilization. 11 experts from CTU, Vietnam would be invited to evaluate the model through delphi techniques. The criteria towards the experts would be supposed as it was done in Phase 1. .A self-made questionnaire through Delphi techniques would be carried out with at least three rounds. The results from the rounds would be collected. The results would be analyzed to measure Median (M) ≥ 3.50 and Interquartile (IR) ≤ 1.50). Finally, the CTU new model would then be set up and proposed to be implemented.

Expected Results of the Study

First, since the study remains *in progress*, the following represents just the initial result from Phase 1 of document analysis towards a tentative change model in universities globally.
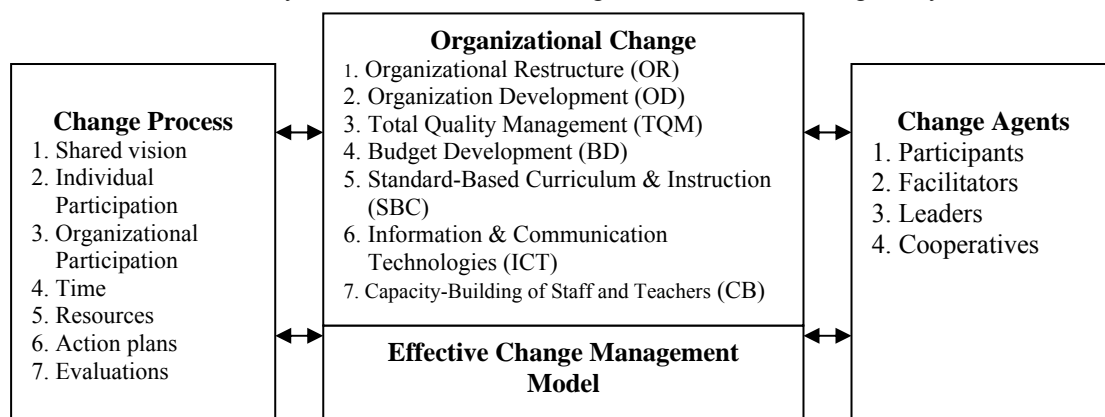

Figure 2 The Tentative Effective Change Management Model in Universities

Second, for Phase 2, there may be a table (Table 1) from the results of the questionnaire referring to the tentative model through Mean (X) and Standard Deviation (SD). Third, for Phase 3, in this section, there might be another table (Table 2) in the first sub-phase, calculating the results of the questionnaire about CTU administration and the needs for change with Mean (X) and Standard Deviation (SD) as well. Also, content analysis on the interviews and observations would be presented in terms of descriptive reports in the second sub phase. Especially, CTU change management model would be presented. And, in the third sub-phase, Table 3 would measure Median (M) ≥ 3.50 and Interquartile (IR) ≤ 1.50) as the results of the rounds used with Delphi techniques towards CTU model.

Limitations

The limitations of the study reveal two things. First, the population focused on the leaders of each group- administrators, teachers, office staff and students. It may need more respondents to prove more reliable. Second, it is a proposed model, so R&D (Research & Development) in this sense is just at the second step. It would be a need to have a follow-up study towards the model implemented and evaluated to make sure about its applicability in different setting.

Discussions and Suggestions

Since two-thirds of the study is underway, the following are just the researcher's partial ideas. First, despite rather significant initial results of change management implementation from the tentative model compared with a would-be CTU one, CTU needs educational decentralization from the Vietnamese Ministry of Education and Training in terms of full implementation of the spirit of a School-Based Management (SBM). Second, CTU surely needs the new ingredients via applying Organizational Restructure (OR), Organizational Development (OD), Total Quality Management (TQM), Capacity-Building of Staff and Teachers (CB), Standard-Based Curriculum& Instructions (SBC), Knowledge-Based Management (KM) and Information & Communication Technologies (ICT). What's more, Naresuan University, Thailand, where the researcher is pursuing this study, may be supposed as a useful reference model for change management to CTU, Vietnam. Third, the model above itself comes from the theories and practices about change management in general. Accordingly, it is necessary to do a survey at a specific educational institution in order to find a suitable model. Finally, the judgment from the experts towards the new model is certainly a reliable channel to take into account, but through the real implementation at the spot, the model will be readjusted and readapted.

Conclusions

The concepts and feasibility about a new model for enhancing effective change management in a school climate have emerged so far: since the educational reforms at any levels worldwide were evident and since globalization touched the educational process. In particular, Can Tho University (CTU), Vietnam needs a new model for developing its change management process; so as to fulfill its educational roles in the Vietnamese learning environment; and in the lower Mekong Delta regions as well: This will allow its next logical steps to be put in place for integrating into the Asian and global education environment. The model proposed is the right one for CTU, which is a leading public university that will be likely to play a crucial role in the drive for further development. Meanwhile, it is certain that any educational institution in a country may choose its most suitable model to apply, manage and develop change management process; for the sake of its educational goals.

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