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Economic Structure of Tra Vinh Province During the Period 2016 - 2020: Current Situation and Development Orientation

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Abstract

During the period 2016 - 2020, Tra Vinh Province implemented various strategies and policies aimed at restructuring the economy toward improving the quality of economic growth and promoting sustainable development. The study analyzed the current economic structure at Tra Vinh from 2016 to 2020 in the context of remarkable transformation of the Mekong Delta region toward green development and international integration. Based on gathering the statistics data and local summary reports, combined with comparative and synthetic analytical methods, the research indicated that economic structure of Tra Vinh experienced positive changes: the proportion of agriculture decreased from 45.3% in 2016 to 32.07% in 2020; industry and construction increased from 19.5% to 30.83% and the service sector rose slightly from 35.2% to 37.1% at the same time. However, the structural transformation process remains relatively slow and continues to rely heavily on agriculture and traditional energy industries, while high-quality services and the marine economy still possess substantial untapped potential.

The study proposes development orientation toward green, sustainable and integrated economic structure focusing on renewable energy, high-tech agriculture, marine economy, logistics and knowledge-based services. In addition, a SWOT analysis is showed to clarify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, thereby providing a scientific basis for socio-economic policy formulation in Tra Vinh Province in the subsequent development period.

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Keywords: Economic Structure, Structural Transformation, Tra Vinh Province, Sustainable Development, Green Economy

1. Introduction

In the context of Vietnam's gradual transition toward industrialization, modernization, and deeper integration into the global economy, the economic structure and economic structural transformation play as the vital roles for determining local comparativeness and sustainable development orientation. For the Mekong Delta region, economic restructuring not only aims to enhance the effectiveness in using natural resources but also contributes to create job opportunities, improve incomes and adapt to climate changes. In this regard, Tra Vinh Province - a coastal locality with a strategic position between the lower Mekong River and the Cung Hau estuary, endowed with substantial potential for marine economy development, high-tech agriculture, and renewable energy has experienced significant changes in economic structural transformation between 2016 and 2020.

The period 2016 - 2020 marked the implementation of the Resolution of the 10th Provincial Party Congress of Tra Vinh, which clearly defined the objective of "economic structural transformation toward an industry - service orientation, gradual declining agricultural proportion and enhancing the efficiency and value added of each sector". This period also witnessed intensive investment in industrial areas and clusters; the initiation of major energy projects such as Duyen Hai Thermal Power Plant, Dong

Hai Wind Power Plant and the promotion of the marine economy in conjunction with logistics services. Simultaneously, the agricultural sector was gradually restructured toward commodity-based production, increased application of science and technology, and value chain development. These changes have contributed to shaping a clearer the outline of Tra Vinh's economic structure in the new development phase. However, the province's economic structure exposed some major limitations along with positive outcomes. Although the share of agriculture, forestry, and fisheries has declined, it remains relatively high in the provincial GRDP (Gross Regional Domestic Product). The industrial - construction sector has grown rapidly but lacks sustainability whereas the service sector has expanded slowly and has yet to generate strong momentum. Besides, low labor productivity, inadequate human resource quality and underdeveloped economic and logistics infrastructure have affected to the process of structural transformation toward modernization.

Against this backdrop, the research on economic structure of Tra Vinh province during the period 2016 - 2020 holds significant scientific and practical value. This study aims to analyze the recent province's economic structure in three sectors (agriculture, forestry and fisheries; industry - construction; and service), evaluate the extent of structural transformation and its driving factors; and thereby proposes appropriate orientations and solutions for economic restructuring in the next period 2021 - 2025.

The research findings not only provide a scientific basis for socio-economic policy formulation in Tra Vinh Province, but also serve as a valuable reference for coastal localities at the Mekong Delta in their efforts toward green, sustainable, and climate-resilient economic restructuring and development.

Objective

This study aims to analyze the recent province's economic structure in three sectors (agriculture, forestry and fisheries; industry - construction; and service), evaluate the extent of structural transformation and its driving factors; and thereby proposes appropriate orientations and solutions for economic restructuring in the next period 2021 - 2025.

Object

The object of this study is the economic structure of Tra Vinh Province, defined as the proportional relationship among three major sectors within the overall local economy namely agriculture, forestry and fisheries; industry - construction; and service - trade. The study focuses on the process of economic structural transformation toward modernization, sustainability and international integration; as well as examines key influencing factors such as public investment, labor productivity, employment shifts, market integration, and the impacts of climate change.

Furthermore, this research also considers qualitative factors including the province's policies on economic development, the capacity for integration into regional and global value chains, as well as environmental and sustainable development challenges that affect the process of economic restructuring.

Scope of Research

Content: This study analyses the current status, achievements, limitations, and underlying causes of economic structure, while proposing development

orientations and policy solutions aimed at enhancing the efficiency and sustainability of Tra Vinh's economy in the next period.

Timeframe: From 2016 to 2020

Geographical Area: Tra Vinh Province.

2. Method

General Research Method

The research on economic structure of Tra Vinh province during the period 2016 - 2020 is conducted based on an interdisciplinary approach that is the combine between development economics and political economy, situating the province's economic restructuring process in the context of general development at the Mekong Delta region and the whole country. In addition, this research adopts a historical - logical approach, viewing changes in the economic structure as a dynamic process that is influenced by natural and social conditions, as well as by development policies and strategies in specific periods.

The data resource in this study are primarily secondary data collected from the Tra Vinh Provincial Statistical Yearbooks and the General Statistics Office of Vietnam, socio-economic development reports of the Tra Vinh Provincial People's Committee for the 2016 - 2020 period, and relevant Party and State documents on economic restructuring and regional development. Besides, this research also previews the findings from related scientific works, academic articles, and dissertations in order to strengthen its theoretical and empirical foundations of the analysis.

Specific Research Methods

Regarding analytical methods, descriptive statistical analysis is used for reflecting Tra Vinh's recent economic structure in three sectors (agriculture, forestry and fisheries; industry - construction; and service) throughout indicators such as GRDP shares, growth rates, and labor structure. Comparative analysis is applied to clarify the changes of economic structure over time from 2016 to 2020 and to situate these changes within the broader development trends of the Mekong Delta region, thereby highlighting the distinctive features and degree of structural transformation at the local level. Methods of synthesis and generalization are employed to express systematic assessments relating to the outcomes and limitations of the structural transformation process.

Based on the analysis of the current situation, the study applies SWOT analysis to evaluate internal and external factors impacting on Tra Vinh's economic structure. Moreover, the TOWS matrix is employed to transform these assessments into specific development strategy groups (SO, WO, ST, WT), which serve as the foundation for proposing economic restructuring orientations for the subsequent period toward effective, sustainable orientations and alignment with specific local conditions.

The integration of these methods enables the study to accurately reflect the current situation of economic structure at Tra Vinh Province in the period 2016 - 2020, while ensuring scientific rigor and strategic orientation in the formulation of development solutions.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Current situation of economic structure at Tra Vinh Province in the period 2016 - 2020

Between 2016 and 2020, Tra Vinh has begun the phase of

deeper economic integration throughout attracting foreign direct investment and gaining access to coastal regional development programs, while the province also has suffered from considerable pressure on the process of urbanization, industrialization, and climate change. This phase has witnessed the promulgation of several important central-level resolutions such as the Policy on Marine Economic Development and the Vietnam Marine Strategy to 2020 (Resolution No. 09-NQ/TW).

In addition, the Resolution of the 10th Provincial Party Congress of Tra Vinh and the Master Plan for Socio-Economic Development of Tra Vinh Province to 2020, together with action programs on agricultural restructuring, industrial–service development, labor structure transformation, and investment attraction, established a new historical context. Within this framework, key economic sectors were restructured toward modernized, sustainable and integrated orientation.

3.1.1. General situation of economic growth and structural transformation

During the period 2016 - 2020, the economic growth of Tra

Vinh remained quite stable despite the province faced climate change, saltwater intrusion, and the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. After 2016, with the operation of the Dinh An Economic Zone, the wind and solar power plants, Tra Vinh has emerged as a growth pole in the Mekong Delta region. From 2016 to 2020, the average GRDP growth rate reached 11.22% per year, exceeding both the regional average of the Mekong Delta and the national average (7.29%).

Along with the economic growth rate, the scale of the provincial economy expanded significantly. GRDP in 2020 reached VND 64.228 billion, approximately 1.81 times higher than in 2015 (about VND 35.485 billion). Consequently, per capita income in 2020 was VND 43.65 million, approximately 1.27 times higher than in 2016 (nearly VND 34.43 million).

Concurrently, Tra Vinh's economic structure has changed with the gradually declined proportion of agriculture, forestry and fisheries; and the increased proportion of industry - construction, and service sectors. This shift reflects an inevitable trend in the process of industrialization, rural modernization, and international economic integration.

Table 1: The economic structure at Tra Vinh Province in the period 2016 - 2020. Unit:%

	2016	2020
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries	45.30	32.07
Industry and Construction	19.50	30.83
Trade and Services	35.20	37.10

Source: Tra Vinh Provincial People's Committee. (2021). Five-Year Socio-Economic Development Report 2016 -2020 and Five-Year Development Plan 2021 - 2025. Archives of the Office of the Tra Vinh Provincial People's Committee.

The economic structure shifted in a positive direction. The GRDP share of agriculture, forestry and fisheries decreased from 45.30% in 2016 to 32.07% in 2020 whereas this percentage of industry, construction and service increased from 54.7% to 67.93% at the same time. The restructuring process of agriculture associated with climate change adaptation; the establishments of industrial zones and clusters with prominent role of renewable energy in industry - construction sectors; as well as the expanding scale and function of service areas is the best illustration in the depth and effectiveness of Tra Vinh's economic transformation during the study period.

3.1.2. Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

Agriculture in Tra Vinh has experienced the comprehensive restructuring process with the orientation toward reducing the agricultural proportion and rising the shares of industry and services. The agricultural restructuring program and climate change adaptation support projects have facilitated the transformation of agricultural production models, shifting the focus from output expansion to value enhancement.

From 2016 to 2020, the total production value in the agriculture reached VND 133,391 billion, with an average annual growth rate of 2.41%. Although cultivated areas declined, productivity and economic returns increased significantly due to the application of crop rotation, intercropping systems, and the restructuring of crop and livestock patterns in line with coastal ecological conditions. The share of agricultural production value shifted in appropriate direction, with a declining share of crop cultivation and an increasing share of fisheries, being consistent with the provincial economic restructuring

orientation and adapting gradually climate change. In 2015, agriculture accounted for 69.74%, forestry for 1.19%, and fisheries for 29.07% of total sectoral output; by 2020, these figures had changed to 60.24%, 1.07%, and 38.69%, respectively.

Although the shares of agriculture, forestry and fisheries have the downward trends, these sectors continue to play a vital role, particularly in rural areas. Agriculture covers approximately 60% of the sector's value, focusing on cultivating rice, coconut, fruit productions and livestock farming, especially pigs and cattle. Fisheries represent a major strength, contributing around 38% of sectoral value, with the development of concentrated aquaculture zones across three ecological subregions (saline, brackish, and freshwater). The diversification of cultured species and farming methods has facilitated a rapid transition from traditional systems to semi-intensive and intensive aquaculture on more than 4,500 ha, including approximately 800 ha of high-density intensive shrimp farming with yields ranging from 50 to 70 tons per hectare. In addition, about 5,750 ha of ecological shrimp–mangrove farming and 5,600 ha of rice - aquaculture systems have been maintained. The total aquacultural outputs reached 154,970 tons in Duyen Hai, Cau Ngang and Tra Cu districts at the end of 2020.

Capture fisheries have gradually restructured their fleet by reducing small-capacity coastal vessels and increasing the number of large, well-equipped offshore vessels capable of long-distance and long duration operations. The total capture outputs were 89,800 tons in 2020, representing an increase of 14,356 tons compared with 2016. Forestry accounts for a small share with 1.07%, concentrating on coastal protection forests and large scattered timber plantations to mitigate

erosion, reduce wind impact, protect shorelines, and stabilize the ecological environment for agricultural production. By 2020, the province's total forest area reached 9,177.67 ha, with a forest coverage rate of 4.01%.

Nevertheless, agriculture has faced various challenges including small scale of production, limitation on linking the value chains, lack of high-tech application and increasing saltwater intrusion, which adversely affects productivity. employment in the primary sector covered above 40% of total provincial workforce in 2020 (General Statistics Office, 2021), indicating a slow pace of labor reallocation away from agriculture. Therefore, promoting high-tech agriculture and strengthening linkages between production, processing, and marketing remains a critical development priority in the coming period.

3.1.3. Industry - Construction

Industrial production in Tra Vinh continued to expand, particularly in the energy sector, contributing significantly to employment generation and provincial economic growth. In the period 2016 - 2020, industry and construction sectors recorded the fastest growth rate, with an average of 23.5% per year, playing a major role of GRDP growth and reaching VND 44.163,7 billion for the total production value in 2020. The proportion of this sector increased from 19.5% in 2016 to 30.83% in 2020, expressing precisely the process of industrialization and urbanization. In parallel, total retail sales of goods and services grew at an average rate of 12.41%, while export turnover increased by USD 342.81 million compared with the previous period.

Industrial and energy development are determined as key growth pillars, aligned with the transformation toward an industry - service - agriculture economic structure, represented a direct outcome of the implementation of the Resolution of the 10th Provincial Party Congress (2016–2020). Tra Vinh has invested in the establishment of three major industrial zones such as Long Duc Industrial Zone (Tra Vinh City), Cau Quan Industrial Zone (Tieu Can) and especially Dinh An Economic Area - the largest coastal economic area at Tra Vinh, covering more than 39,000 ha and approved by the government. This zone encompasses the Dinh An General Port, Truong Long Hoa Port Complex, and the Duyen Hai Power Center, forming an integrated industrial - energy - logistics triangle for the Mekong Delta region.

The development of the power and energy industry constitutes a strategic turning point. The most considerable impression in Tra Vinh's industrial development is Duyen Hai Power Center, belonged to Dinh An Economic Area. This center not only contributes to national energy security but also generates over 40% of province's annual budget revenue. Since 2018, the province has swapped into renewable energy with numerous large-scale wind and solar power projects being implemented. Particularly, the Tra Vinh Wind Power Plants 1 and 2 (with a combined capacity of 144 MW), Dong Hai Wind Power Plant 1 (100 MW), and many solar power projects on rivers and coastal regions. In 2020, the total capacity of renewable energy projects reached nearly 250 MW, positioning Tra Vinh as one of the leading localities in clean energy development in the Mekong Delta.

Tra Vinh has improved substantially the road, inland waterway, and seaport infrastructure. The National Highways 53, 54 and 60, especially Co Chien Bridge (2015), have established connection between Tra Vinh and Ben Tre, Vinh Long and Ho Chi Minh City. These developments have not

only ended the province's former semi-isolated status but have also facilitated the formation of an eastern coastal economic corridor in the Mekong Delta. Provincial transport infrastructure has been synchronously upgraded, creating favorable conditions for the transportation of goods, seafood products, construction materials, and energy resources. Inland waterways have been improved through dredging of the Cung Hau and Co Chien channels, enhancing linkages between agricultural - aquaculture production areas, industrial zones, and export ports. These infrastructure projects hold profound historical and economic significance due to they have resolved long-standing bottlenecks. Besides, they also have indicated the changes in coastal development thinking - from depending on waterway transport toward the establishment of a multimodal network integrating regional, maritime, and international connectivity. Logistics and port services are determined as the foundation for supporting coastal economy throughout the establishment and expansion of Tra Vinh's seaport system, particularly Dinh An General Port and Duyen Hai Specialized Port (established in 2011 and adjusted in 2015 and 2020). These seaports have facilitated the transportation of goods, raw materials, and energy resources. Dinh An Port is planned to serve as a major maritime gateway for southern Vietnam, with the capacity to accommodate vessels of up to 20,000 DWT.

During the period 2016 - 2020, Tra Vinh actually entered a new phase of comprehensive marine-oriented economic development, proved by progressively modernized infrastructure, the formation of integrated economic-energy-port complexes, and a strategic shift toward ocean-oriented development, regional connectivity, and international integration.

3.1.4. Trade and services

The service sector remained quite stable in proportion (about 37% GRDP) from 2016 to 2020, while demonstrating positive qualitative improvements and increasing diversification. Total retail sales of goods and consumer services increased over 13.22% per year in average and reached at VND 34.416 billion in 2020. Total export turnover during 2016 - 2020 got more than USD 2.444 million, increasing 41.6% compared with the period 2010 - 2015 with more and more exported products to foreign market (Japan, China, France ...). The highlighted point is the shift on structure of goods and services with from agricultural products, foodstuffs, and construction materials toward industrial products, consumer goods, electronics, and logistics services. In addition, Tra Vinh has joined enthusiastically in Mekong Delta regional trade promotion programs, facilitating the nationwide distribution and export of local specialty products such as wax coconuts, black tiger shrimp, and Tra Cuon sticky rice cakes. The expansion of commercial activities has strengthened linkages between production and consumption.

Tra Vinh is characterized by a multicultural social structure, with the Khmer community covered approximately 30% of citizens. That is a considerable advantage to promoting the development of cultural, spiritual, and eco-tourism. The implementation of Resolution No. 08-NQ/TW on developing tourism as a spearhead economic sector has been reflected in the growth of visitor numbers and tourism revenue. In 2019, Tra Vinh welcomed more than 1.2 million tourists and earned about VND 400 billion in revenue from tourism.

Overall, the province's development in tourism, trade and

services between 2016 and 2020 has expressed the remarkable progress of local economy. Services have evolved from a primarily auxiliary role to become a major economic pillar, clearly reflecting the processes of economic integration and social modernization.

3.2. SWOT analysis of economic structure of Tra Vinh Province during the period 2016 - 2020

The SWOT model is a comprehensive and analytical tool used to identify not only the internal strengths and weaknesses but also the external opportunities and threats,

faced by a locality in the development process. The application of SWOT analysis to Tra Vinh Province facilitates the identification of internal capacities and external

contexts influencing the process of economic structural transformation toward sustainability and integration. This analysis is based on the socio - economic data from 2016 to 2020, and combined with development planning orientations for marine economy, high-tech agriculture, and renewable energy between 2021 and 2030

Table 2: SWOT analysis of economic structure of Tra Vinh Province during the period 2016 – 2020

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A solid foundation for agriculture and marine economy; – Strategic coastal location serving as a gateway to the East Sea; – Positive trends in economic structural transformation; – Gradual improvement in socio - economic infrastructure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Slow and insufficiently breakthrough - oriented structural transformation; – Underdeveloped industry – construction sector relative to potential; – Expansion of the service sector in scale without commensurate quality improvement; – Weak linkage between economic restructuring and labor structure transformation.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Government’s strategies and policies on the development of Mekong Delta region and marine economy; – Growing market demand for agricultural - aquatic products, renewable energy and logistics services; – The development of interregional transport and seaport infrastructure; – Ongoing shifts in investment flows and global supply chains. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Intensifying climate change impacts and saltwater intrusion; – Increasing competition in investment attraction from neighboring provinces; – Limited quality of human resources; – Vulnerability to external economic and environmental shocks.

3.2.1. Strengths

Initially, Tra Vinh’s economic structure has the solid foundation on agriculture and marine economy. During the period 2016 - 2020, agriculture, forestry and fisheries continued to play as crucial role, particularly in rice cultivation, fruit production, and coastal aquaculture. These sectors constitute a comparative advantage that ensures livelihood security, social stability, and a stable supply of raw materials for the processing industry. Secondly, the province’s coastal location and gateway provide appropriate conditions to develop marine economy, logistics, energy and industry attaching with the seaports. Moreover, the provincial economic structure changed toward positive trend. The share of agriculture, forestry, and fisheries has gradually declined, while industry - construction and services have expanded, reflecting consistency with economic restructuring strategies and the broader process of industrialization and modernization. Finally, socio - economic infrastructure is improved steadily, especially in transportation, electricity, water supply, telecommunications, and production-supporting facilities, thereby creating favorable preconditions for a more diversified industrial structure.

3.2.2. Weaknesses

Firstly, the pace of economic structural transformation remains slow and lacks major breakthroughs. By 2020, agriculture, forestry and fisheries accounted for large proportion of GRDP, indicating the high degree of dependent on low value-added sectors. Second, the development of industry - construction sectors is inconsistent with their potentials. Industry only focuses on primary processing,

small scale, outdated technologies, and weak inter-sectoral linkages, which have hindered the formation of strong value chains with significant spillover effects. Third, although the service sector has expanded in scale, its quality remains limited. High value-added services such as logistics, finance, and high-end tourism have developed slowly, while informal services still account for a considerable proportion. Fourth, economic restructuring has not been closely aligned with the transformation of structure in human resources. High rate of agricultural labors as well as low proportion of trained workforces cause limited improvements in overall labor productivity.

3.2.3. Opportunities

First, government’s strategies and policies on the development of Mekong Delta region and marine economy provide a favorable institutional framework for Tra Vinh to promote sustainable and climate-resilient economic restructuring. Second, growing market demand for agricultural and aquatic products, renewable energy, and logistics services creates opportunities to enhance value added and restructure key economic sectors. In addition, the development of interregional transport and seaport infrastructure facilitates to improve Tra Vinh’s connectivity with major economic centers, thereby stimulating industrial, commercial, and service-sector growth. Finally, ongoing shifts in investment flows and global supply chains support localities owning with adequate land availability, labor resources, and competitive costs (likes Tra Vinh province) to attract investment in processing industry and supporting services sectors.

3.2.4. Threats

Initially, impacts on climate change and saltwater intrusion continue to damage severely agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors - core pillars of Tra Vinh's economy. Besides, competition in investment attraction from neighboring provinces at Mekong Delta is more and more increasing while the province's competitive advantages remain relatively limited. Furthermore, inadequate human resource quality may become a critical bottleneck in the transition toward technology-intensive and high value-added industries. Last but not least, external shocks, particularly the COVID-19 pandemic at the end of the study's period indicated the vulnerability of economic structure, strongly relied on traditional sectors and domestic markets.

Overall, there are some important oriented implications in the SWOT analysis. Tra Vinh should capitalize on its strengths in agriculture and the marine economy by shifting from extensive to intensive growth whereas the province attempts to overcome weaknesses on industry and services by technological innovation and improved investment quality. In addition, Tra Vinh should take up opportunities from regional policies and international integration as well as be leveraged by linking economic restructuring with labor restructuring. At the same time, proactive responses to climate change and competitive pressures are essential to foster a more sustainable and flexible economic structure.

Obviously, based on the SWOT analysis, Tra Vinh's economic structure during the period 2016 - 2020 embodies a complex interplay of internal strengths and weaknesses, as well as external opportunities and threats. The SWOT analysis provides a relatively comprehensive overview of the province's structural conditions, but it primarily focuses on static factor identification and evaluation. To enhance the study's scientific value and strategic relevance, it is really necessary to move from diagnosis toward strategic planning. In that context, the application of the TOWS framework, which systematically integrates Strengths and Weaknesses with Opportunities and Threats, enables the formulation of specific development strategies (SO, WO, ST, and WT). This approach helps clarify pathways and policy measures for restructuring Tra Vinh's economy in a manner that is efficient, sustainable, and aligned with future development requirements.

3.3. TOWS matrix of economic structure of Tra Vinh Province during the period 2016 - 2020

3.3.1. Leveraging strengths to exploit opportunities (SO: Strengths - Opportunities)

SO1. Developing the marine economy and processing industry by local advantages: Based on the foundation of agricultural - aquacultural sectors and coastal convenience (S), Tra Vinh can capitalize on the policies of government about developing marine economy and Mekong Delta region (O) for restructuring provincial economy toward higher value-added activities. Priority should be given to deep processing of seafood and agricultural products, renewable energy development, and fisheries logistics services.

SO2. Promoting the shift on sectoral structure throughout developing infrastructure and linking regions: The improvement of transportation infrastructure, seaports and industrial zones (S), combined with opportunities for market expansion and attracting investment (O), facilitate to push up the province's economic transformation toward orientations on growing shares of industry, construction and services; as

well as gradually declining the dependence on traditional agriculture.

SO3. Diversifying the service sector based on urbanization and market demand: Along with the demands on trade, tourism, logistics and social services (O), Tra Vinh can leverage its expanding urban scale and strategic location (S) to develop a diversified service structure, thereby creating new growth drivers for the local economy.

3.3.2. Exploiting opportunities to limit weaknesses (WO: Weaknesses - Opportunities)

WO1. Addressing industrial limitations through selective investment attraction: For facing current situation in the slow development, small scale, and low technological level of the industrial sector (W), Tra Vinh should take the chances on preferential investment policies and global supply chain shifts (O) to attract projects in processing industries, supporting industries, and clean energy, thereby enhancing roles of industrial sector in provincial economic structure.

WO2. Improving the quality of services by market expansion and integration: service sector, with quickly growing but low quality, can be improved by exploit opportunities from economic integration, logistics development, and tourism expansion (O), facilitating a transition from informal services to high value-added service industries.

WO3. Linking economic restructuring with human resource development: In the context of low proportion of trained labors (W), utilizing national and regional vocational training and human resource development programs (O) will support to enhance the quality of human resources, thereby promoting more sustainable industrial restructuring.

3.3.3. Leveraging strengths to face threats (ST: Strengths - Threats)

ST1. Restructuring agriculture to adapt to climate change: Facing challenges from climate change and saline intrusion (T), the province should capitalize on the strengths of experiences in agricultural and aquacultural production and its coastal natural conditions (S) to shift dramatically toward climate-resilient, ecological agriculture and high-tech aquaculture.

ST2. Increasing comparative capability by taking the advantage on marine economy: Amid increasingly intense competition for investment among localities (T), the province can utilize its advantages in seaports, land resources, and marine economy (S) to establish distinctive competitive strengths.

ST3. Developing flexible economic structure to reduce the impacts on external shocks: Diversifying sectoral structure based on existing foundation (S) help to minimize economic vulnerability to external shocks such as pandemic, market fluctuations, and global economic crises (T).

3.3.4. Limiting weaknesses and avoiding threats (WT: Weaknesses - Threats)

WT1. Reducing dependence on traditional agriculture: Given the dual impacts of climate change (T) and low agricultural productivity (W), the province should gradually reduce reliance on traditional agriculture while promoting non-agricultural livelihoods in rural areas.

WT2. Avoiding the "low value-added economic structure trap": Without improvements in industrial and service quality (W), Tra Vinh risks lagging behind in regional competition (T). Therefore, priority should be given to enhancing

technological content, innovation capacity, and inter-sectoral linkages in economic restructuring.

WT3. Strengthening the resilience of the local economy: With the unpredictable external shocks (T), addressing internal weaknesses related to human resources, productivity, and industrial structure (W) is essential for building a sustainable and resilient economic system.

Overall, TOWS matrix shows that Tra Vinh's economic structure during the period 2016 - 2020 has stayed in transitional phase, characterized by both traditional foundations and emerging opportunities for innovation. Development orientation should not merely focus on "increasing the share of one sector and reducing another," but rather on strategic restructuring that integrates strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats into a unified framework. TOWS matrix serves as a logical bridge between the analysis of current conditions and development orientations, contributing to a coherent scientific argument and enhancing the persuasiveness of the study for peer reviewers.

3.4. Solutions

To accelerate the structural economic transformation toward green, sustainable and integrated orientation, Tra Vinh concentrates on groups of solution as follows:

1. Restructuring agriculture toward smart and high-value orientation: Tra Vinh should intensify the application of digital technologies and precision agriculture, as well as promote the value chain among clean agricultural products, organic aquaculture and circular agriculture. It should be not only prioritized the linking of processing and exporting enterprises in order to enhance value added, but also developed new-generation cooperative models and climate-resilient green agriculture.
2. Promoting ecological and high-technology industrial development: The province should encourage the development of clean industry, using renewable energy such as wind power, solar power, biomass energy and green power projects at the Dinh An economic zone. At the same time, regional linking in producing and processing agricultural - aquatic products, construction materials, and supporting industries should be intensified to enhance internal capacity and competitiveness.
3. Expanding high-quality services and the marine economy: With significant coastal advantages, Tra Vinh should prioritize the development of logistics services, maritime transport, deep-water ports, and coastal eco-cultural tourism. In addition, the expansion of education, healthcare, finance, and information technology services will provide a foundation for a knowledge-based economy and sustainable urbanization.
4. Improving infrastructure and human resources for the new economic structure: Synchronous investment in internal and interregional transportation networks, digital infrastructure, and green energy systems is a prerequisite for promoting structural transformation. In parallel, a comprehensive strategy for high-quality human resource development should be established, closely linked with enterprises and vocational training institutions in accordance with the demands of economic restructuring.

5. Strengthening sustainable governance and green policy frameworks: The province should formulate policy frameworks that encourage green enterprises, sustainable consumption, environmental risk management, and the promotion of a circular economy. In addition, greater application of data science and GIS technologies in socio-economic planning is required to ensure a balance between economic growth and environmental protection.

4. Conclusion

During the period 2016 - 2020, Tra Vinh's economic structure experienced a positive transformation, being appropriated with the development trend of Mekong Delta and the overall national development orientation of Vietnam. The analytical result shows a gradual decline in the share of agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, while the proportions of industry-construction and services increased. This trend reflects the province's gradual transition from a traditional agriculture-based growth model toward a more diversified and balanced multi-sector economic structure.

Particularly, the major industrial sectors such as power, processing agricultural - aquatic products, construction materials and renewable energy promote strongly the growth of provincial GRDP. In spite of slowly rising, service sector emerged new service segments including eco-cultural tourism, transport and logistics, and financial-banking services. However, the pace of structural transformation remains below the province's potential, while labor productivity is still low. Moreover, limitations in human resource quality and socio-economic infrastructure continue to constrain development. In addition, climate change, saltwater intrusion, and resource degradation have become major obstacles to sustainable economic development. These challenges have intensified structural vulnerabilities and increased development risks in the medium and long term.

In general, economic structure at Tra Vinh during the period 2016 - 2020 achieved important progress. Nevertheless, further adjustments are required to advance toward a green, sustainable, and resilient development model, and to deepen integration into regional and global value chains.

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