



Cross-border economic impacts on the socio-economic development of vietnamese northwestern border provinces

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Abstract The concepts of Border Gate Economy (BGE) and Border Gate Economic Zone (BEZ) have been demonstrated in many studies. Most studies have mainly mentioned and described the activities of border economic zones rather than analyze economic affects on the socio-economic development of the northwestern border provinces at present. This paper has given out the research model and assessment criteria on cross-border economic affects in order to find out the correlation and “fundamental” constraints of the variables of the local socio-economic development of the northwestern border provinces.

Keywords border gate economy, border gate economic zone

1. Overview and theoretical framework

1.1 Overview of foreign and Vietnamese researches

- *Trade and commercial activities (b1)*, in the 2000s by **Nguyen Manh Hung** (2000) [1] has highlighted roles and position of trade and commercial relations related to border gate economies. The paper by **Nguyen Van Lich** (2005) [2] has emphasized on influences upon ASEAN-China Free Trade Area of the China-Vietnam trade relations through cross-border economic activities in Lao Cai Province and Kunming – Lao Cai – Hanoi economic corridor. The paper titled “*A Study on Cross-Border Trade Facilitation and Regional Development along Economic Corridors in Cambodia*” by **Sau Sisovanna** (2012) [3] has studied the cross-border trade facilitation in Cambodia to apprehend advantages and disadvantages in the commercial relations.

- The section of “*The economic growth and economic structure shift*” (b2), in the Report of **Vietnam Ministry of Planning and Investment** (2012) [4] on “*20 years of building and developing industrial parks (IPs), export processing zones (EPZs) and economic zones (EZs) in Vietnam*” has assessed contributions of manufacturing into the economic growth and shifting the economic structure. The latest paper of “*Special Border Economic Zone (SBEZ) in the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT)*” by **Lord & et.** (2014) [5] has researched in Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT) through cross-border economic activities to find out recommendations to support and attract investment as well as create values to promote the economic structural changes, trade and economic growth.

- *About the availability of infrastructure and urbanization (b3)*, the research of “*Regional Economic Impact of Large Project: A General Equilibrium Application to Cross Border Infrastructure*” by **War and et.** (2010) [6] has stressed that the highway network and infrastructure at border gate areas play an extremely important role in reducing time and costs of the shipment and delivery at border gate economic zones. The paper by **Nguyen Minh Hieu** (2011) [7] has given more details in the local social and technical infrastructure, but has not evaluated effects on the local socio-economic development. The article by **Dang Dinh Hao** (2013) [8] has pointed out Logistics of Quang Tri Province on the East–West Economic corridor, but not deeply analyzed the specific subject as Lao Bao Border Gate Economic Zone. The paper titled “*Development of the Northern border economic zones of Vietnam in the international economic integration*” by **Dang Xuan Phong** (2012) [9] has



focused on the urbanization (or development of suburban areas) associated with Border Gate Economies in Vietnamese northern border provinces.

- *Policy on cross-border economic development (b3)*, have been developed in the latest research of “*Investment Promotion Policy in Potential Border Zone*” in the **International Conference on Applied Economics (ICOAE)** (2014) [10] about the Chiang Khong Border Gate, Chiang Rai province, Thailand. This research aims at inspecting the effects of promotion policies in potential border zone and affirming that policies on economic and investment promotion should be made on the basis of the development of the border economic zones. Previously, Nguyen Manh Hung (2000) [1] have mentioned the commercial investment promotion policy into Vietnamese border economic zones, but not studied relevant economic policies such as ones on investment attraction, services, tourism and finance, etc.

- *About the environment and economic institutions relating to business and Entrepreneurship (b5)*, the paper “*Cross- Border Planning at the US-Mexico Border: An Institutional Approach*” by **PeNa & et.** (2007) [11] has supposed that local economic and urban development requires a new institutional approach to plan and manage cross-border flows of “*labours, goods, services and information*” with exchanging differences between countries. The paper of “*Vietnam-China Border Gate Economic Zones and their influences on the economic development of goods in Vietnam*” by Pham Van Linh (2001) [12] has specified the market economy at provinces with border gate.

- *Poverty reduction, employment creation, security and defense and border stability (b6)*, has been analyzed in the paper by **Nguyen Thi Thanh Huyen** (2005) [13] about changes in socio-economic living conditions in the development of Lao Cai Border Gate Economic Zone. The paper has not specifically studied in job creation, poverty reduction and border stability. On the other hand, the article of “*Cross-border economic development associated with Poverty reduction in Lao Cai Province, Vietnam*” by **Giang Thi Dung** (2014) [8] has given some recommendations on the employment and poverty in the modern situation.

2. Theoretical bases of Border Gate Economy and Border Gate Economic Zone

2.1 Definition of Border Gate Economy and Border Gate Economic Zone

Border gate economy is defined with two components of “economy” and “border gate”. The “border gate” is a Sino-Vietnamese term indicating the place where people, means of transports and goods cross from one country to another country in the land. The terms of border gate economy (BGE) and border gate economic zone (BEZ) are formulated from other relevant concepts. The first concept of “*cross-border economic exchanges*” has mentioned and narrowly meant *commercial transactions and exchanges of goods among people in the border areas or among small businesses in provinces with border gate(s)*. Cross-border trade activities have been performed in various forms such as exchanges of goods in border markets or exchanges under regulations of the State. Typically, these forms of exchanges are carried out with goods with low total value. The broad definition of “*cross-border economic exchanges*” consists of all types of cross-border economic and technical exchanges including commercial transactions and exchanges. In recent years, the definition of “economic exchanges” has changed and become increasingly full and comprehensive economic and technical cooperative relations. Economic exchanges not only refer to common trade activities and exchanges of goods, but also technical cooperation, export-import of services, cross-border joint ventures, investments by neighboring countries, trade in technical equipment, cross-border joint ventures in infrastructure and tourism, etc. Generally, simple forms of exchanges have developed into business transactions. The tendency has been clearer and become the main orientation of economic activities in some countries including China and Thailand, which is specified in establishment of free trade zones and regional and international economic cooperation zones in the border areas. It can be seen that the concepts of Border Gate Economy and Border Gate Economic Zone are very close and the term of “*economic zone*” appeared and began to be used in the late 1970s in China. There have been many definitions of the economic zone. It is broadly defined as geographical areas to be applied special economic policies and narrowly defined as a particular type of free economic zone like a miniature society. An economic zone is a separate geographical area to be applied special economic policies to attract foreign investments, technologies and knowledge of management to develop the economy with the comprehensive industry structure focusing on export-oriented industrial development, but not ignoring the domestic market. The economic zone



covers all different types of the free economic zone and is organized into functional areas such as industrial parks, export processing zones and port-based industries and services, non-tariff areas, urban areas, tourist resorts, residential areas, administrative quarters and other functional areas. Generally, it can be understood that an economic zone is established by the competent authorities with a separate economic space for a highly favorable investment and business environment for investors and a defined geographic boundary. For the international economic integration has become increasingly the main orientation of economic activities in many countries, trades, investments and tourism across the border are also increasingly been developed. As a result, the concept of border gate economy is defined that “*Border gate economies are economic activities associated with a socio-economic development at border gates, in which economic and commercial activities are subject to special mechanisms and policies of the State to promote external economic relations and sustainable economic development of the cross-border areas.*” The border gate economy and border gate economic zone have been mentioned and stated, but not definitely consistent in several domestic and international studies due to different conditions and development of each country. In Vietnam, the border gate economy is associated with border gates (including international and national border gates), in which residents live on economic activities under special and appropriate mechanisms and policies to maximize the socio-economic efficiency basing on planning, exploitation and use, sustainable development of local and national resources and they are established under the Prime Minister’s decision. Generally, it can be defined that “*A border gate economic zone is an identified economic space associated with a border gate with or without residents and its economic activities are subject to special and appropriate mechanisms and policies to maximize the socio-economic efficiency basing on planning, exploitation and use, sustainable development of resources and it is established under the Government’s or Prime Minister’s decision.*”

2.2 Impacts of Border gate economy (BE) on the socio-economic development

Firstly, impacts on trade and commercial activities

In the trade field, the development of border economic zone (BEZ) promotes the border provinces and other localities to expand import-export market, to reduce intermediary cost, thereby improving goods competitiveness and exchange service. BEZs promote the process of shifting the self-sufficiency economy to commodity production economy, which develops (*local*) regions, and forms a large market area to attract and penetrate other market areas. The formulation of BEZs is to closely monitor trade activities (*tariff, quality, origin...*), to timely provide information (*price, policy, policy change...*), to build a secure service system (*finance, credit...*) in order to overcome negative aspects of cross-border trade and help bilateral trade effectively.

Secondly, promoting the economic growth and economic structure shift

- *About the economic growth*, many studies show that BEZ development directly affects economic growth, and thanks to border gate, most countries (*or more specifically, localities with border gate(s)*) obtain high and stable economic growth over many years. BEZ is in fact the territory where the main activities are goods import-export through border gate. The relationship between import-export and economic growth has been extensively studied, and proved to be a casual relationship. The East Asian successfully outward-oriented development model over the past decades is a powerful evidence of the import-export role as a driver of economic growth in this region.

- *Structure of economy*, the formation of BEZ creates the labor division by transferring labor from agricultural sectors to non-agricultural sectors, facilitating the local economic structure shift to develop trade, service, tourism and industry. Therefore, the wider scope of influence is, the more greatly BEZ develops, which creates a strong impact on restructuring economy, promoting labor division, smoothing market throughout the country and maximizing the strength and potential of the region.

Thirdly, affecting the availability of infrastructure associated with the urbanization of border zones.

The most obvious impacts of the BEZ development on border provinces’ socio-economy are in term of urbanization: Constructing infrastructure to meet the requirements of developing BEZ such as traffic system to BEZ, as well as from BEZ to auxiliary border gate, localities near the border; Developing the supermarket systems, trade centers, border markets to fulfill the trading demand in BEZ, and developing the related services and tourism; Building functional areas to meet the demand of production, business, product processing, goods storage for businesses in BEZ.



Fourthly, affecting policies on economic growth in BEZs

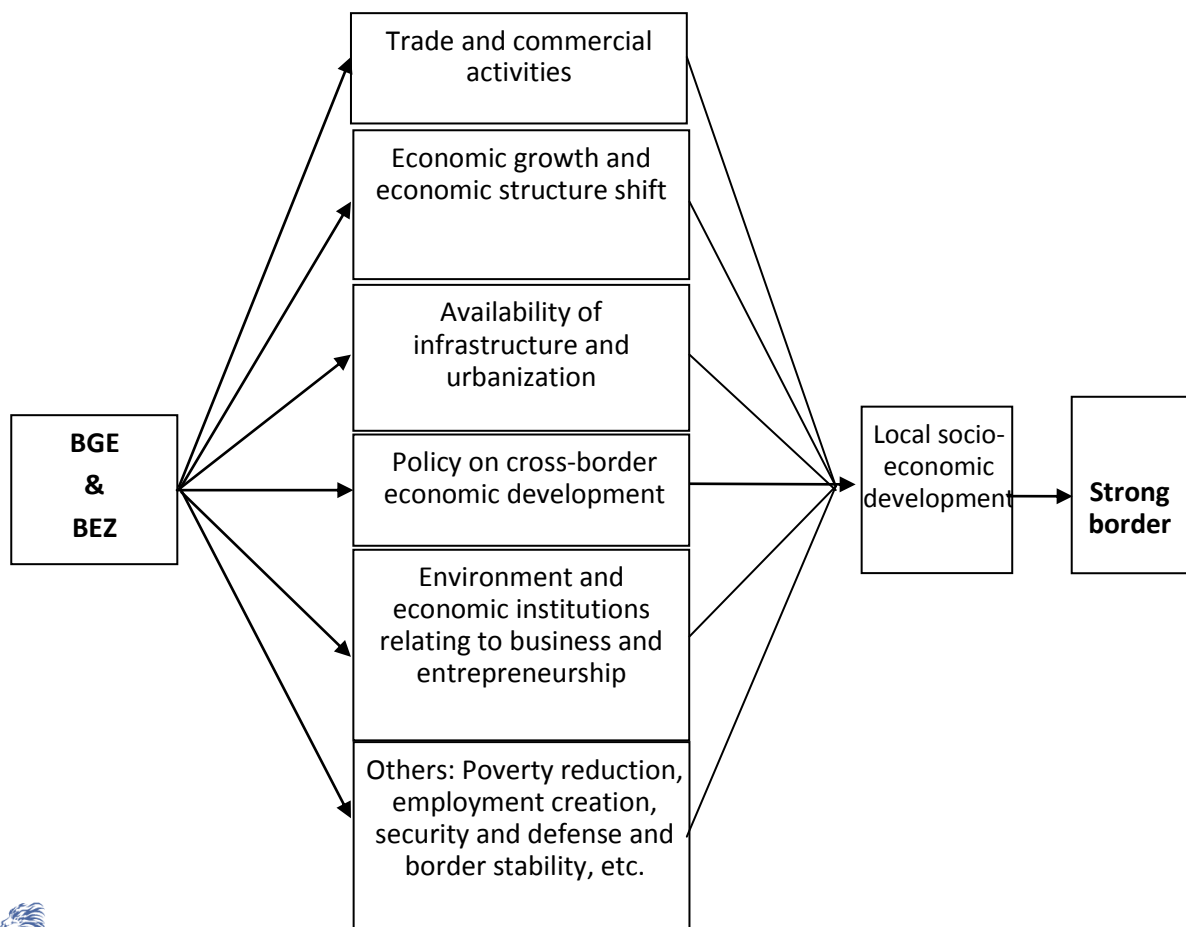
The implementation of import-export activities is the focus of trade development policies, including direct import-export, temporary import for re-export, temporary export for re-imports, goods transit, processing, etc. Therefore, countries around the world and Vietnam have many related trade policies (*like exemption and reduction of turnover tax, import tax, personal income tax...*) to facilitate cross-border trade activities. BE development has a spillover effect on the local socio-economic development; thus, the policy not only focuses on trading activities through border gate, but promotes the development of BE, and attaches BEZ to the local economic development (*such as investment and technology transfer policy; interdisciplinary and interregional development policy and so on*).

Fifthly, affecting the improvement of living standards, poverty reduction, employment creation, security and defense, and border zone stability

- *Improving the living standards, reducing poverty, and creating jobs:* Developing BEZ improves living standards, reduces poverty and creates jobs in the region. In addition to goods trade, BE and BEZ create opportunities for employees to have more job choices, thereby enhancing income, which leads to reducing poverty and improving living standards. This can be clearly seen through the province's annual GDP and GDP per capita, living amenities, the decrease of poor households, as well as the increase of jobs.

- *Affect security and defense, and border stability:* Developing BE and BEZs in border provinces has raised issues such as: (i) Security, social order and safety (*like residence, traveling, production, business of agencies, organizations and individuals*) in border areas have been complicated; (ii) Smuggling, illegal transportation of goods, drugs, inflammables, explosives and harmful cultural products, etc. have happened frequently; (iii) Violations of regulations on management, controlling entry and exit, trade activities in BEZs, industrial parks, manufacturing zones, etc. have still continued. However, the formation of BEZs will create residential areas, some border urban cities, increasing the economic potential and border security

Research model



2.3 Research methodology and assessment criteria

2.3.1 Research methodology

- *The method of sociological investigation*: the investigation method is taken from: (i) Opinions of businesses operating in the province; and (ii) Opinions of officials at the provincial authorities. The study combines a variety of techniques to gather comprehensive and accurate information for specific research purposes, specifically:

- Directly interview businesses;
- Participate in discussions with businesses and officials;
- Interview officials from provincial and district authorities.

- *The methods of statistic, comparison, model and econometrics in data systematic way*, forecasting the impact of factors in particular:

+ Reliability analysis is used to measure the reliability and effectiveness of criteria. Based on the Likert scale (from 1-Very bad to 5-Very good), the estimation method eigenvalue and only those with eigenvalue > 1 will retain the analytical model.

+ Bi-variate correlation is used to test pairs of variables needed controlling and multiple regression analysis to determine a relationship between dependent variables and independent variables. Based on the Likert scale (from 1-Very bad to 5-Very good), the reliability tested through Cronbach Alpha coefficient is used to exclude “junk” variables < 0.6 and corrected item-total correlations < 0.4 .

+ Factor analysis is used to group variables through multiple correlation analysis into groups of factors to be adjusted in the analytical model. The factors retained to analyze correlates closely with the remaining variables only when they have the coefficient > 0.5 in the Rotated Component Matrix table, and based on Chi-square with the value P-value < 0.005 , TLI và CFI > 0.8 .

2.3.2 Criteria for assessing the impact of BGE on socio-economic development

[1]_ *Criteria for assessing the impact on commercial activities and services*: Growth in trade and services (effecting the increase in the quantity):

- "Intensity" of goods and services clearance through the border
- Scale of cross-border export and import (Volume and value of goods are exchanged at the border gate economic zone)
- Total cross-border import-export turnover
- Diversification of import and export goods
- Diversification of participants, mode of exchange and payment for goods

[2]_ *Criteria for assessing the impact on the economic growth and economic structure shift*: Contributions into the economic growth and economic structure shift:

- Gross domestic product in the locality (Local GDP)
- Proportion and shifting speed of agriculture, industry and services;
- Scale and speed of development of economic sectors in the province;
- Scale and connection of expanded economic zones;

[3]_ *Criteria for assessing the impact on the development of infrastructure and urbanization*: Contributions into the economic growth and economic structure shift:

- "Completion" of BEZ since the time of establishment and in the development;
- Expanding the planning of the BEZ in all districts with border gates;
- Enhancing investments in infrastructure in BEZs;
- Development of warehouses, yards, wharves, trade and related services;
- Development of industrial zones, business centers, etc.;
- "Availability" of infrastructure in general and of BEZs in particular;
- Urbanization of land use change, transportation projects and new urban areas

[4]_ *Criteria for assessing the impact on policies on economic growth in BEZs*: Improvement in policies on the development of BGEs and BEZs and socio-economic development of border provinces:

- Policies on encouraging and attracting investments in the provinces;
- Policies on trade development;



- Policies on financial and credit support;
- Policies on human resource training;
- Policies on investments in infrastructure in BEZs and other areas in provinces;
- Policies on supporting production and business activities;
- Policies on immigration and travel

[5]_ Criteria for assessing the impact on the environment and economic institutions relating to the economic development: As an objective assessment criteria from the perspective of businesses, traders and households:

- Pressure on capital, technology and expansion of production and business activities;
- Market and market information;
- Customs, import and export procedures;
- Infrastructure (transportation, border gate, warehouses, yards, wharves, ect.);
- Competitiveness of products;
- Access to resources with the support of the State;
- Human resources and labor training;
- Investment in office equipment;
- Digitization and technology in management;
- Simplification of administrative and customs procedures;
- Development of human resources (professionals, integration, foreign languages)
- Publicity and transparency of information related to import and export (posted online or traditionally)

[6]_ Criteria for assessing the impact on poverty reduction, employment creation, security and defense, and border zone stability: As criteria for reflecting the impact of BEZs.

- Employment creation and income increase for employees;
- Employment and income increase supports for the population;
- Per capita income of the population;
- Immigration and travel;
- Living amenities (TV, refrigerator, phone, etc.);
- Transnational crimes;
- Social evils and prostitution;
- Conspiracy of expansion and confiscation of territories;
- Enticement and sabotage;

3. Assessment of the impact of the BGE on the socio-economic development of the Northwestern border provinces

➤ *Independent variable:* Socio-economic development of the Northwestern border provinces (in aspects of economic growth and economic structure shift; employment creation and income increase supports; policies on the development of BGEs; the development of infrastructure and urbanization; crimes and national security; etc.)

➤ *Dependent variables:*

- (1)_q2.1.5a: Average growth rate of local GDP per year;
- (2)_q2.1.5b: Average economic growth rate per year;
- (3)_q2.1.5c: Economic structure shift;
- (4)_q2.1.5d: Scale and speed of development of economic sectors in the province;
- (5)_q2.1.5e: Connection of expanded economic zones;
- (6)_q2.1.4a: Scale of cross-border export and import;
- (7)_q2.1.4b: Intensity of goods and services clearance through the border;
- (8)_q2.1.4c: Diversification of import and export goods;
- (9)_q2.1.4d: Diversification of participants, modes of exchange and payment
- (10)_q2.2.2a: Employment creation and income increase for employees;
- (11)_q2.2.2b: Availability of infrastructure in residential areas;
- (12)_q2.2.2c: Immigration and travel;



- (13)_q2.2.2d: Employment supports and income increase for the population;
 (14)_q2.2.2e: Per capita income of the population
 (15)_q2.2.2f: Living amenities (TV, refrigerator, phone, etc.);
 (16)_q2.1.8a: Policies on encouraging and attracting investments in the provinces;
 (17)_q2.1.8b: Policies on trade development;
 (18)_q2.1.8c: Policies on financial and credit supports;
 (19)_q2.1.8d: Policies on human resource training;
 (20)_q2.1.8e: Policies on investments in infrastructure in BEZs and other areas in provinces;
 (21)_q2.1.8f: Policies on immigration and travel
 (22)_q2.1.7a: Supermarkets and business centers
 (23)_q2.1.7b: Markets
 (24)_q2.1.7c: Traffic system
 (25)_q2.1.7d: Industrial zones
 (26)_q2.1.7e: Warehouses, yards and wharves
 (27)_q2.2.3a: Transnational crimes
 (28)_q2.2.3b: Social evils and prostitution
 (29)_q2.2.3c: Conspiracy of expansion and confiscation of territories
 (30)_2.2.3d: Enticement and sabotage

➤ *Analysis results:*

It is easily seen that the index $KMO = 0.922 > 0.5$ is eligible to analyze factors in the integration of factor, specifically

KMO and Bartlett's Test	
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	.922
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square 4350.411
	df 435
	Sig. .000

The data are combined to find out the final analysis result of factors in the research model in the rotated correlation matrix as follows:

Pattern Matrix^a					
	Factor				
	1	2	3	4	5
q2_1_5b	.894				
q2_1_4b	.867				
q2_1_4d	.857				
q2_1_4c	.849				
q2_1_5a	.837				
q2_1_5d	.815				
q2_1_4a	.780				
q2_1_5c	.777				
q2_1_5e	.718				
q2_2_2e		.946			
q2_2_2d		.920			
q2_2_2f		.693			
q2_2_2a		.692			
q2_2_2b		.669			
q2_2_2c		.614			
q2_1_8b			.876		
q2_1_8e			.830		
q2_1_8c			.784		
q2_1_8f			.782		
q2_1_8a			.757		
q2_1_8d			.722		
q2_1_7b				.929	



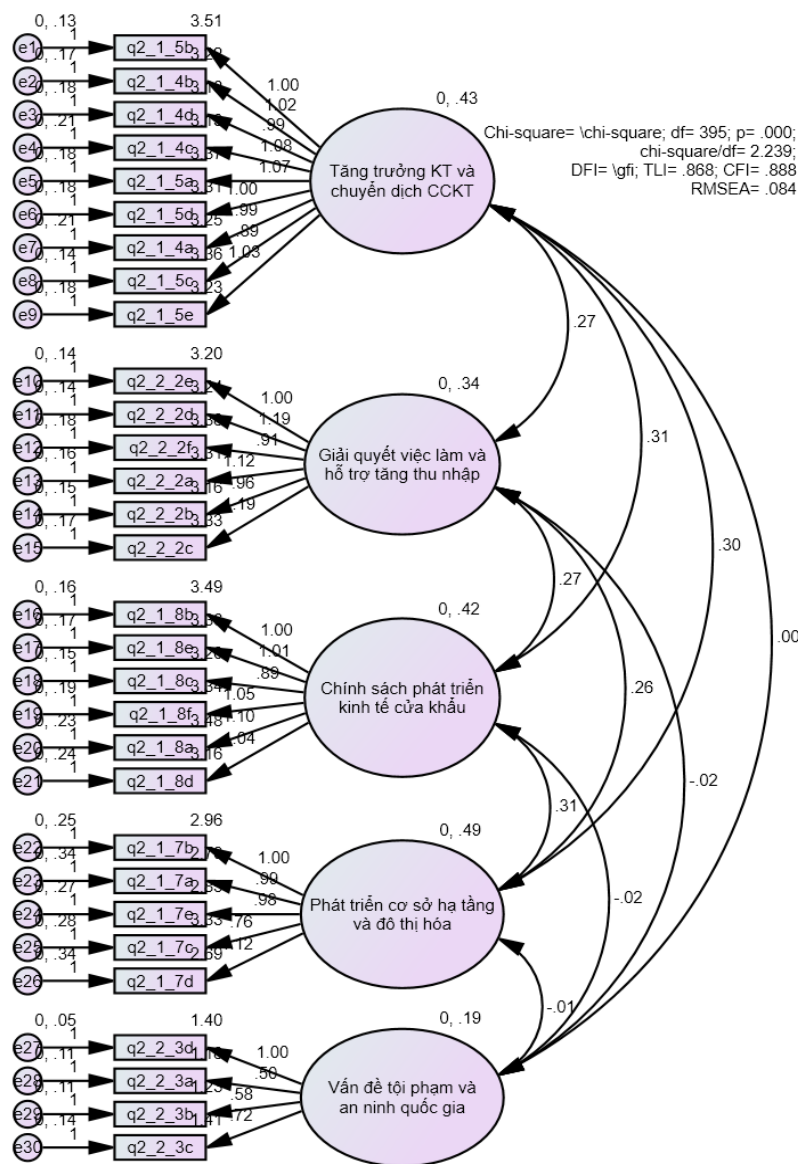
q2_1_7a	.787
q2_1_7e	.735
q2_1_7c	.701
q2_1_7d	.606
q2_2_3d	.863
q2_2_3a	.636
q2_2_3b	.617
q2_2_3c	.580

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

The result of the CFA of the impact of the BGE on the socio-economic development of the Northwestern border provinces is considered in the correlation among factors and extracted into the following model:



In the Chi-square/df model, the indexes including CFA = 2.239; TLI = 0.868; CFI = 0.888; and RMSEA = 0,084 demonstrate that the model is consistent with the collected data and the correlation in the model.

[1]_ Authorities at all levels (from the Government to local authorities) should pay more attention to “starting and spreading” impacts of the improvement of infrastructure systems in the BGE and local urbanization (0.49), especially transportation, business centers, intensive areas, projects of transportation infrastructure and new urban areas, etc. on the BGE development in particular and on the socio-economic development in general. Furthermore, it is extremely essential to set synchronously policies on the BGE development (including policies on trade, investment promotion, business supports, financial and credit supports, etc.). The policies have a great influence on improving the employment and income for employees and promoting the economic growth and shift of the provinces.

[2]_ It can be seen that it exists the "inverse relationship" in the development of BGE and BEZ and control of crimes and national security (-0.1) in order to find out strategies for management of BGEs and BEZs. Hence, policies to be made must restrict and prevent crimes (such as enticement and sabotage, Transnational crimes, Conspiracy of expansion and confiscation of territories and so on). It can be realized that the development of BGEs and BEZs integrates the "harmony" of interests and "equality" among the participants, control cooperative relationships and facilitate the development of all participants.

4. Recommendations on the development of BGEs and BEZs to be associated with the socio-economic development of the Northwestern border provinces

Firstly, the development of BGEs and BEZs must be included in the local socio-economic development strategies and matched with objectives in each period. At the same time, the development of BGEs should be considered as an "emphasis", "satellite" and "urbanization" in the development of facilities, functional areas, customs services, logistics services, banking and financial services, etc. in order to consolidate and strengthen the socio-economic development of the Northwestern border provinces.

Secondly, it should be highly focused on sectoral and inter-sectoral, regional and inter-regional, occupational and inter-occupational development strategies in the border provinces together with the cooperation for exchanges of commercial services, technologies and others cross the border. It is noticeable that the development of BGEs is attached with objective rules (*including rules of supply and demand, of production and economic restructure, etc.*) through directions of the State with researches and forecasts for the development of BGEs and BEZs.

Thirdly, to achieve set goals, it is necessary to strengthen the communication and awareness of BGEs, knowledge of market economy, production, etc. in order to integrate and apply creatively advantages of BGEs and BEZs into the local socio-economic development.

Fourthly, it is essential for the Government and authorities at all levels to balance the budget from public investments in local economic development and pay more attention to difficult border provinces before developing the BGE. At the same time, the Government and authorities at all levels should make special and appropriate policies on mobilizing and using all resources involved in the development of BGEs and BEZs.

Last but not least, the commodity economy should be more concerned and promoted at difficult border provinces through policies on the cross-border exchange of goods, rights to natural resources and land, market economy institutions (such as rules of value, prices, supply and demand, etc.) and plans for the development of related areas/territories/sectors to make differences (in products, production processes, etc.) towards exporting goods cross the border.

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