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THE INVESTIGATION OF THE STRATEGIC THINK TANK IN ISLAMIC AZAD UNIVERSITY OF GAEMSHAHR

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ABSTRACT

The present research is aimed to investigate the Strategic Think tank in Islamic Azad University of Gaemshahr so that in the light of it, the understanding about think tanks status in the studied organizations can be gained. In terms of aim, the study is functional, and in terms of research methodology, it is cross-sectional and descriptive scanning. The study population has been two groups, the first of them consisted of 12 faculty members of the university's Think Tank; and the second group consisted of all 300 faculty members of the university; that the size and the population of the second group, according to Cochran method, were determined 160 people, and samples were selected by the use of relative stratified sampling method. The data collection method has been by library and by field, that the required information were collected through questionnaire and were analyzed through the software SPSS. To investigate the questions of the questionnaire, inferential and descriptive statistics was used. The research results imply that the think tank exists, but it has a performance within very weak-weak, the most important causes of which respectively are: 1) the highest rating on the fifth items: the performance of the think tank in offering appropriate solutions and strategies in order to take appropriate decisions with the average rating 6.95; 2) the second priority on the sixth items: how to improve the quality of the determined public policies and its feedback on the society with the average rating 6.45; 3) the third priority on the third items: the performance of the think tank in solving the problems of the education system with the average rating 5.95; and on the eighth items: clear understanding and nobility of the authorities on the positive functions of the think tank formation in the university with the average rating 5.95; 4) the fourth priority on the first items: the quantity of holding the meetings and sessions monthly and seasonal with the average rating 5.45; on the fourth items: the performance of the think tank in solving the management and administrative macro-problems with the average rating 5.45; and on the seventh items: the flexibility of the senior upstream officials and allocation of the specific and determined budgets to practice the determined strategies by the think tank with the average rating 5.45; 5) and finally, the last and the least important priority on the second items: the quality of holding the meetings and sessions and discussing various issues with the average rating 4.45; on the ninth items: the extent of your satisfaction with the specified budgets in the university to form the think tank with the average rating 4.45; and on the tenth items: the interaction and consultation between the senior authorities and faculty members of the university with the average rating 4.45. In addition, from the viewpoint of the faculty member, the think tank with the average rating 2.95 is within the weak-middle range. Finally, the suggestions are offered.

INTRODUCTION

In the developing countries, the weakness and lack of effective think tank and the existence of often incomplete, inaccurate or processed information make statesmen and politicians with a downfall which is mentioned as "wrong decision" (Danaeifard et al., 2001). In general, the objectives of the above tanks formation are to develop the strategic think, provide data analysis context, process ideas, and give expert opinion to facilitate administrative decision-making (Bromley, 2006). The role of the think tank is important because it could provide politicians and managers with being influenced by intellectuals and professionals (Starkey, 2002).

Different definitions have been proposed for strategic think tank and the way of their organizing. The idea of developing the strategic think tank was first proposed by Thomas Clarkson, the founder of the Anti-Slavery Association in Africa in 1782. In this idea, he portrayed, with high accuracy, the conditions of slaves trading and transferring them from Africa and ethical principles governing on it [10].

Most researchers believed that to survive in the competitive environment, the think tank should adopt the strategies that lead to increasing the management allocations and improvement of the network. However, according to Astaraki (2002), [11],[12], and Tanert (2006), a useful and effective attempt is that the think tank should reconsider its organizing every few years; work in the realms of idea and thought; have further attention on Applied Sciences; show more flexibility to employ professional, expert, and efficient researchers in projects and research teams; have more attention on early-return plans than long-term plans; and understand audiences' identities in the successful tanks. The tanks should be aware that the important ideas are not always affective on the attraction of audiences and do not lose the intelligence and tact to use opportunities and situations [5]. Also, McGann considers that the funding strategy from multiple resources is critical for the think tank and emphasizes on the importance of financial transparency and effective communications with media, and believes that in order to guarantee the independence of the think tank, it is necessary to have transparency about the way of financing and the quality of communications. Also, the necessity of transparency or a similar degree of transparency compared to the successful tanks and the other leading counterparts is considered (McGann, 2005). The think tank as databases classify the research findings and make them available to the policy makers and politicians, which are used in the preparation of the agenda for the policy makers (Danaeifard, 2008). McGann, who has conducted extensive researches for the American think tank, is considered as an expert with international experience in this field. According to his personal experiences in a survey conducted in 20 European countries, he has identified three different kinds of the think tank; and based on this study, he considers that the think tank have four functions: 1) to conduct short-term and long-term researches; 2) publication of books or articles that focus on short-term pragmatic issues; 3) consideration of public, policy

KEY WORDS

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makers, and media opinions; and 4) to provide the government with stable personnel (McGann, 2005). In the recent years, the role of think tank in improving the quality of public policies has become more important; because the think tank affect the adoption of better policies, and in the viewpoint of experts and scholars, understanding this impact could be affective on taking base decisions in order to revise and improve their participation in the cycle of public policies (preparation of agenda, development, implementation, and evaluation) (Alavani, 2007).

In today universities, the process of policy-making and decision-making at various levels needs specific organizing. Rapid enhancements of the world and growing dimensions of improvement are factors that determine the necessity for rapid development of policies and patterns of decision-making; something that is not possible without the use of new ideas, and documentation and summarizing the experiences and opinions of experts and creative peoples. The speed of local developments and the emergence of cross-sectional requirements in the new era, in most cases, have led to consumption of predecessors' intellectual assets of by universities in the country; and due to the lack of investment in the intellectual foundation, inadvertently, the past capital is spent widely and universities are involved in routines. For example, it can be acknowledged that in health education, research, and ... systems, there is nothing but copying, and also in their executive areas, thought position and philosophical do not appear. The think tank is a rational strategy to strengthen the thinking and idea-processing institutions. It seems that the strategy of the think tank when faced with destructive politicization, translation, and populism mentalities in university and research tanks, can guide society towards innovation and creative decision-making.

The think tanks are environments to nurture talents and educate institution and university elites and provide the update context and the emergence of such forces. Accurate identification and description of the university issues, critical assessment of policies, current programs and issues and emerging issues and offering views, conversion of general ideas and raw suggestions into applicable policies and programs, the localization of policies derived from benchmarking and comparative studies, preparing the ground for the constructive exchange of information and opinions between experts, the identification and education of experts in policy-making researches, creating consensus among executives and conducting futurology and foresight studies are among the think tank tasks.

In addition to what was said, one of the reasons and necessities for building the think tank in university and scientific tanks is their incomplete efficiency. In addition to educating the experts in all fields in the country, universities should address developmental researches and provide a space for the development of thought and creativity. In such a situation, in addition to performing the university tasks, the think tanks could also be a space for attracting the elites of the country. However, the present study seeks to examine the situation of the think tank in Islamic Azad University of Gaemshahr.

Research literature

Theoretical bases of research

The origin of creating the think tank

By the addition of needs and the complexity of responding to them, the complexity of the existing relationships, the speed of environmental development, and dynamics of structures in all areas, the need to make right decisions and more creativity is sensed because one of the problem-solving solutions in the field of management is creativity; i.e. to find an appropriate and optimal answer to developments and events. In this regard, one of the tools for creativity and making new ideas that makes rid of the bad habit of action before thinking or thinking after action and provides an opportunity for conceptualization and making concept is the think tank; the main mission of the think tank is intellectual and advisory support for policy-makers and decision-makers and manipulation of the idea and knowledge in order to fulfill the organizational goals (Adiani, 1:2006).

The Think tanks, with the goals they have ahead, invite somehow to self-esteem and self-awareness, following it self-reform is achieved as well. To achieve an agreement on the vote, debate occurs and thus creativity also shows itself. The think tank is an institution or organization that offers ideas or advices about political, trade, social, military, and etc. issues based on collective and hierarchical action; In other words, organizations that employ theorists and thinkers to provide policy-makers with analyses and guidelines for macro issues. The think tanks are the strategic research and thought-making tanks that conduct applied research by basic meditations and generate thoughts, ideas, and knowledge for universities and research tanks and make them operational for politicians and executives. The think tank, by engaging in issues and challenges that are beyond the abilities of individuals or average specialist groups of shows its role well. Long-term and in-depth study is the wok style of the think tanks. The think tanks have had a good development but in different names that their substance is the think tank; Different names such as institution, foundation, think club, policy-making tank, and other names that by referring to process of their activities, it could be received that they act in the form of think tanks. The think tank members can be classified in the two groups of intellectual elites and instrumental elites. Theoretical (intellectual) elites are those who have academic experience; or in other words, they know the science and theory of the topic, have understood the human thought theoretically, and also have the necessary information about interdisciplinary concepts. The second or instrumental groups are those who have had activity experience in different fields in the past and have enough experience to thinking.

The think tanks could originate from basic and important issues or stem from an individual's or a small group of experts' mind. In general, two main reasons for creating these tanks are mentioned:

First, the need for building a national institutional had been sensed so that it does qualified research in national and international subjects, in particular the subjects related to the foreign policies, because there were not any constitutions in this context. Second, there was no institution that can bring together professionals and experts in these subjects. As a result, think tanks obviate these needs by the help of brainstorming techniques.

Understanding the nature of think tank

Think tanks as the substrate shaping public opinions and decision-making for community managers, in some communities, have an affecting mission. This mission is getting deeper and more effective. In future societies that cultural, social, political, scientific, technological, and economic movements will not be formed exclusively in terms of time and thought of a government and the party forming that government, those are strategic think tanks that could be the guiders for these movements based on their own knowledge and value. In the not too distant future, the think tanks would be the mechanism for applying the knowledge of scientists in practice and society, specially, for playing the role of humanities and social sciences in policy-making and decision-making area. The way of organizing the think tanks also plays an important role in the richness of their research and activities. Experts believed that the members of the think tank group might offer effective returns and work results. Nevertheless, it should be noted that adoption of more appropriate tactics by management in order to organize think and research groups and form the strategic think tanks will make achievement of results and finding more effective and satisfactory. As such, Strachan (2002) believes that the review of groups' performance and organizing are considered as an opportunity, so three tasks should be considered: first, there are several options, based on which the think tank activities can be organized; second, it is necessary that some information about the way of doing operations in different conditions are offered by groups in the think tank; third, senior managers of groups in the think tanks should be offered helpful advices, so that in the assessment of the nature of existent organizing as the best and the most appropriate situation for doing the considered activities, they could attempt effectively (Raymond, 2002).

In some viewpoints such as McGann and Boucher (2005), tanks have been divided into different groups of research institutions that do activities on the university think tanks like advisory think tanks based on the contract and for-profit, and the interest groups of party think tanks and parties-affiliated research tanks; while Pohan (2008) notes that in general, discussions on the think tanks have witnessed major changes, such as changes based on public specialization in the recent years. This insight change differs widely from what was common in the literature of America and Europe in the past. In other words, some kind of mergers and acquisitions in the past views and what exists today towards these tanks has been done. The research conducted through comparing the think tanks in different countries including Europe and America imply the high influence of the way of organizing in effectiveness of their activities (McGann, 2007).

The theory and components of the think tank

The theory of think tank is to open mind in the fundamental areas of thought. This theory has three components:

1. A room for think-making and thinkers' conceptual thinking;
2. A room for providing think-makers and planners a recognition to promote the thinking culture in the society and organization;
3. A workshop for think-making and the revival of fundamental thinking based on the studies that these workshops are as the seat of thought and the extract of the think tank. In other words, the think tank has a research and education instruction and does local shaping, so that in all organizational areas, those who have the background of think-making and understanding the think, enjoy the necessary facilities and opportunities in scoring their thoughts (Hart and Vromen, 2006).

The tasks of the think tank

Three-task Strategy:

Organizing the activities of the think tank;

Promoting the knowledge of the think tanks group in the way of doing operations in different situations;

Offering useful advices for senior managers of groups in the think tanks to assess the nature of organizing used by the think tank and prepare the best situation and the most appropriate way for the think tanks. To do the considered works, another important factor that have attracted the attention in the tanks organizing is the impacts of the funding suppliers' decisions on the way of selecting the researchers by the think tanks.

Hart and Vromen believe that easy and sufficient funds are not always available for the think tanks, therefore in the case of funds shortage, the first part of activities that are usually excluded from the budget is the issues related to the scientific research and investigations in the body of governmental organizations. Hence, most suppliers of financing in the private sector request that the think tanks

address issues based on the applied projects rather than producing new ideas. At the present, most think tanks are under this pressure that firstly, they should be more flexible in the researcher selection; secondly, rather than offering long-term programs and ideas, they should address issues, effect of which will be short-term and early-returned; thirdly, thoughts and imagines based on the knowledge, relying on the professional reputation and scientific rating of its provider might not be applicable, or the applicant or client, exclusively with emphasis on the scientific and professional status of the theory and idea owner would not be interested in accepting the idea, but in such cases, with the critical attitudes stated towards such ideas, they would prefer to reach their considered achievements by conducting research that personally provides their financial resources (Hart and Vromen, 2008).

Barriers to organizing the effective think tanks

One of the important challenges that always preoccupy the minds of policy-makers and politicians is the investigation of different alternatives of different combinations of possibilities and the selection of the best existing objects for decision-making based on data and information. In the developed countries, with regard to the time element, the above tasks have been devolved to the groups consisted of knowledgeable, experienced, outstanding, and renowned researchers, so that after their reviews, they present the best existent options to policy-makers and managers for decision-making. Now, the above tanks, which have been mentioned as the strategic think tanks, have significant application in most countries of the world. Also, in our country, according to the Fourth Economic, Social, and Cultural Development Program, the establishment of the think tanks has been placed on the government agenda. In the industrial countries, the tasks of data collection, their processing, and decision-making based on the provided information have been devolved to the groups consisted of researchers with scientific experiences in policy-making and management, so that after the investigation of different alternatives and combinations of various possibilities, they offer the best existent options for decision-making to managers. Hart and Vromen introduce a new kind of think tanks that always at the time and place, to evolve ideas, seeks to hold seminars and meetings to increase discourses. In most cases, the world of think tanks differs somewhat from other emerging professions. In a wide range, the strategic think tanks are increasingly shaping horizontally or by operating beyond geographical boundaries and other directions. This means that equations related to the principles priorities of the think tanks formation are changing, and at the present, the serious attention of the strategic think tanks is focused on building expertise to manage complex networks of the policy-making process (Hart & Vromen, 2008).

The strategic think tanks in Europe, with the participation of a large number of institutions and researchers in different areas, have been structured. The existent of various sources of funding for the think tanks has led to the formation of a more effective organizing for these tanks. For example, the increased scientific validity for the studies of the tanks is provided through appropriate financing for each project. In this regard, McGann and Boucher, with emphasis on numerous obstacles being faced by think tanks, especially the existent conflicts and tensions between financing and scientific validity as well as the challenges shaped by interactions between decision-makers and the media, believe that the capabilities and capacities of some think tanks are practiced only if the conflicts between scientific validity on the one hand and the need to create effective consultations to reach decision-makers on the other hand are managed in the best way (McGann & Boucher, 2008). Bell et al. believe that the strategic think tanks now have had successful activities in most major decision-making bodies and even in the private companies in the industrial countries of the world, so that it could be claimed that the rapid development of these activities are somehow related to the human enhancements in the different fields. In general, the objectives of these tanks formation are development of the strategic thinking, creating the context for analysis, ideation and presenting the professional and expert opinion to facilitate administrative decision-makings. Identifying the characteristics of the think tanks has a high impact on the way of their organizing; including the identification of objectives and visions of the think tanks in organizations and different countries that can be affective in identifying their specifications (Bell et al, 2005).

Research history

Sharifi in 2012 in his study on the investigation of the role and the importance of strategic thinking in the organization investigates the real sample in applying these think tanks in the organization. In the study conclusion, the author emphasizes on the importance of strategic thoughts in the organization in order to prepare long-term programs in the organization, and in his opinion, for competitive and complex environment, having practical and applicable thoughts is an appropriate solution which depends on having new think tanks. In a study by Danaeifard et al. in 2011 under the title of "the promotion of policy-making capacity for the country: typology of the role of the think tanks", the study results show fourteen classifications of opinions and beliefs of participants in both public and private sectors. The classified views have pointed out to the different roles of the think tanks in public policies of the country; and these roles respectively are interpretable as policy-makers, recommenders without role, conservatives, supporters, low-oriented critics, negativists, independent tank, uncoordinated actors, policy critics, ineffective fanatics, responsibility-escapers, efficient influencers, positive amplifiers, and unknown capacities. The roles evaluated by the participants in groups were similar, selected and evaluated have been considered as "the new roles" of the think tanks in the field of public policies which has been obtained by Q-like analysis, the attention to the magnitude of the operating load in the analysis, the importance of job positions of the group participants, the number of group members, and the factors that have expressed a large percent of the total variance. In a study by Lajavadi, KharfElahi and Mottaghi in

2010 under the title of “barriers to effective organization of the strategic think tanks”, the study population has consisted of the management faculty members of State Universities across the country. The study results obtained by t-test and Friedman test showed that some barriers have had the most significant impact on the effectiveness of organizing the think tanks. Also, there is a direct and strong relationship between organizing the tanks and their effectiveness. On the other hand, three factors also have not been considered as the barriers to effective organization of the think tanks and have not been approved. Bauer in his article in 2011 under the title of “the role of information technology in the establishment of the strategic think tanks” has investigated the organizations that have used information technology as a more competitive advantage than competitors and have benefited from the formation of the creative and innovative think tanks in order to fulfill the goals of the organization in accordance with new technologies; viewing the profiles of three senior managers of the study organizations are seen: identifying the organization situation; identifying gaps or unfulfilled opportunities; and tracing the environmental factors. Bauer considers these components as the output result of the think tanks in successful organizations that, relying on the latest technologies while facilitating the realization of their goals, try to ensure a continuous growth. Pohan in his study in 2008 about the creation and development of think tanks considers the emergence of a large number of problems and also the existing issues in the inter-organizational communications as a result of poor management of the think tanks and emphasizes that in many cases, the implementation of the ideas and attitudes within and between independent firms, as a management method, has not enough accuracy, delicacy, and firmness, devotes much time to build trust and attract others, and especially in the absence of governance structures and contractual arrangements with effective and appropriate usage to ensure the real and special cases, it lacks the necessary decisiveness.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research methodology

This research is Applied-Res in terms of the aim and is descriptive-scanning and cross-sectional in terms of method; and in terms of information gathering, it can be considered as a kind of field research.

The study population is two groups, that the first consists 12 faculty members who are members of the think tank of Islamic Azad University of Gaemshahr, and the second consists of all 300 faculty members of the university; so that the volume and the sample of the second group, according to the Cochrane method, was determined 160 people, that the samples were selected by the relative stratified sampling method. The tool for gathering the required data on the investigation of the situation and performance of the think tank in Islamic Azad University of Gaemshahr has been a questionnaire based on [6] study. This questionnaire includes three parts of: 1) general questions, 2) 10 specific questions to investigate the performance of the think tank from the viewpoint of the think tank members, and 3) 19 specific questions to evaluate the think tank situation from the viewpoint of the faculty members.

Validity of this study questionnaire is of formal and content validity kind; that in this regard, the content of the questionnaire was analyzed by honorable supervisor; and after identifying and declaration of their opinion, the used questionnaire was recognized as appropriate and in accordance with the model. To determine the stability, the method of Chronbach’s alpha calculation has been employed, so that the amounts of the calculated alphas for the variables of the think tank performance and the think tank situation equaled to 0.85 and 0.87, respectively, have been used.

The theoretical framework of the research

The think tanks which have been formed informally nearly in 1800, and in 1960, after World War II, they have been recognized and noted; and also, as the substrate shaping public opinions and decision-making for community managers, in some communities, they have an influential mission. To investigate the status of the think tank in Islamic Azad University of Gaemshahr, the previous studies conducted on the think tanks were studied. So far, limited in the country studies have addressed the “think tank”. Most of these studies lack a comprehensive conceptual model to investigate the status of the think tank. Of the few good studies conducted in this regard has been the study by [7]. In their study, these researchers investigated the barriers to effective shaping and organizing the think tanks by employing the comments of the management faculty members of the State Universities in Iran and identified the barriers. By referring to the contents of the interviews and the gathered articles and scientific resources of the study, they identified 16 factors as the study indices to identify the barriers to effective organizing in the think tanks and compared and analyzed these factors by statistical tests. Due to the proximity of the present study subject to Lajavardi’s et al study as well as the sameness of the study population members in both studies, in this study the pattern used by the mentioned researchers is used and the status of the think tanks in Islamic University of Gaemshahr is addressed.

The research questions

1. Is there the think tank of Islamic Azad University of Gaemshahr?
2. If the answer to the question 1 of the research on the existence of the think tanks in Islamic Azad University of Gaemshahr is positive, from the tank members view, how is their performance and how are prioritized their ratings?

3. From the viewpoint of the faculty members, how is the status of the think tanks in Islamic Azad University of Gaemshar?

Using descriptive statistics methods such as drawing frequency distribution, frequency percent, relative cumulative frequency, mean, median, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum tables and charts, the data were described; and inferential statistics methods such as Kolmogorov-Smirnov, one-sample t-test, and Friedman test were used to analyze the data. The software SPSS was used to evaluate the research questions, and Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to assess the normality of the data obtained from the study variables.

Data analysis

Descriptive findings

In the descriptive assessment, of 10 members of the think tank, the all were male, and of 169 faculty members, 136 were male (80.5%) and 33 were female (19.5%); in the marital status of 10 members of the think tank, all were married; of 169 faculty members, 22 were single (13%) and 147 were married (87%). In the age ranges, of 10 members of the think tanks, 2 (20%) were 31 to 40 years old, 6 (60%) were 41 to 50 years old, and 2 (20%) were above 50 years old; and of 169 faculty members, 66 (39.1%) were 31 to 40 years old, 60 (35.5%) were 41 to 50 years old, and 43 (25.4%) were above 50 years old. Finally, in the work experience discussion, of 10 members of the think tank, 2 (20%) had 6 to 10 year's experience, 2 (20%) had 11 to 15 year's experience, 4 (40%) had 16 to 20 years experience, and 2 (20%) had above 20 years experience; and of 169 faculty members, 16 (9.5%) had less than 5 years experience, 51 (30.2%) had 6 to 10 years experience, 55 (32.5%) had 11 to 15 years experience, 34 (20.1%) had 16 to 20 years experience, and 13 (7.7%) had above 20 years experience.

Analytic findings

After gathering the data related to the study variables, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was carried out, the results of which showed that the study variables were normal; therefore parametric tests were used to assess the questions and respond to them.

The first question of the study: is there the think tank of Islamic Azad university of gaemshar?

According to the conducted investigations and follow-ups, it is indicated that in Islamic Azad University of Gaemshahr, 12 faculty members were appointed under official verdicts as the think tanks members of the university, so the think tank exists in Islamic Azad University of Gaemshahr.

The second question of the study: If the answer to the question 1 of the research on the existence of the think tanks in Islamic Azad University of Gaemshar is positive, from the tank members view, how is their performance and how are prioritized their ratings?

To answer the second question, a questionnaire consisted of 10 questions has been used to assess the performance of the tank from the viewpoint of its members.

As noted above, to answer to this question, the questionnaire was distributed among the think tank members of the university, and by continuous pursuits, 10 questionnaires were completed and collected.

Table 1: The statuses of responds to the performance indices of the think tank by its members

Statements	Very low	Low	Middle	High	Very high
1 The quantity of holding meetings and sessions monthly and seasonally	6	4	-	-	-
2 The quality of holding meetings and sessions and discussing different issues	8	2	-	-	-
3 The think tank performance in solving the education problems	5	5	-	-	-
4 The think tank performance in solving macro management and administrative problems in the university	6	4	-	-	-
5 The think tank performance in offering appropriate solutions and strategies to take appropriate decisions	3	7	-	-	-
6 How to improve the quality of the determined public policies and its feedback on the society	4	6	-	-	-
7 Flexibility of the senior upstream authorities and allocation of the specific budgets to exercise the determined strategies by the think tank	6	4	-	-	-
8 Clear understanding and full control of the authorities on the positive functions of the think tank formation in the university	5	5	-	-	-
9 Your satisfaction with the specific budgets in the university for the think tank formation	8	2	-	-	-
10 Interaction and consultation between the senior authorities of the university and the faculty members	8	2	-	-	-

Table 2: The descriptive indices of the variable of the thinks tank performance from its members view

Research variable	Number	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
The think tank performance	10	1.41	1.40	1.40	0.18	1.10	1.80

The think tank performance variable from its members view has the mean 1.41, the median 1.40, the mode 1.40, the standard deviation 0.18, the minimum 1.10, and the maximum 1.80, that the mean 1.41 over the theoretic mean 3 lays within very low-low.

According to the results, the members of the think tank in Islamic Azad University of Gaemshahr evaluated the performance of this tank as low and very low. However, by the lack of holding the tank meetings, this result seems reasonable. Naturally, when meetings are not hold regularly and in presence of members, the tank would not have any performance or have a very low performance.

Also, according to the assessment of the statements (indices), the priority of each of them through Freidman test is presented in [Table 3].

Number	Statements	Average rating	Priority
1	The think tank performance in offering appropriate solutions and strategies to take appropriate decisions	6/95	First
2	How to improve the quality of the determined public policies and its feedback on the society.	6/45	Second
3	The think tank performance in solving the education problems	5/95	Third
4	Clear understanding and full control of the authorities on the positive functions of the think tank formation in the university	5/95	Third
5	The quantity of holding meetings and sessions monthly and seasonally	5/45	Fourth
6	The think tank performance in solving macro management and administrative problems in the university	5/45	Fourth
7	Flexibility of the senior upstream authorities and allocation of the specific budgets to exercise the determined strategies by the think tank	5/45	Fourth
8	The quality of holding meetings and sessions and discussing different issues	4/45	Fifth
9	Your satisfaction with the specific budgets in the university for the think tank formation	4/45	Fifth
10	Interaction and consultation between the senior authorities of the university and the faculty members	4/45	Fifth

According to [Table 1] and Friedman ratings, the highest rate is for the fifth index: The think tank performance in offering appropriate solutions and strategies to take appropriate decisions with the average rating 6.95; and the lowest rate is for second statement: The quality of holding meetings and sessions and discussing different issues with the average rating 4.45; ninth: Your satisfaction with the specific budgets in the university for the think tank formation with the average rating 4.45; and tenth: Interaction and consultation between the senior authorities of the university and the faculty members with the average rating 4.45.

The third question of the study: from the viewpoint of the faculty members, how is the status of the think tanks in islamic azad university of gaemshar?

Before examining the research question, we do the descriptive investigation of the variable. [Table 4] presents the descriptive indices such as mean, median, mode, standard deviation, maximum, and minimum.

Table 4: The descriptive indices of the research variable from the faculty members view

Research variable	Number	Mean	Median	Mode	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
The think tank status	196	2.95	2.84	2.42	0.54	2.00	4.42

As shown in [Table 4], the think tank variable has the mean 2.95, the median 2.84, the mode 2.42, the standard deviation 0.54, the minimum 2.00, and the maximum 4.42; which in terms of descriptive, the calculated mean (2.95) is less than the theoretic mean, so the think tank status in Islamic Azad University of Gaemshahr, from the faculty members view, is less than average.

After the normality test and proving the descriptive indices of the research variable, the third question of the study has been investigated. To investigate and analyze the study question, the one-sample t-test was used. As the statements are with five-option Likert responses, the resulted mean for each variable was compared with the theoretic mean with the value 3, the null hypothesis in this test is the mean less than or equal to 3, and when the value of the computational t is large or the value of sig. is less than 0.05, that

means that the level of that variable is higher than the average, and if the value of sig. is higher than 0.5, that means that the level of the considered variable is less than or equal to the average.

Table 5: The investigation of the think tank status in University of Gaemshahr from the viewpoint of the faculty members using the one-sample t-test

Variables	The constant value of the test 3					Test result	Status
	Mean	Standard deviation	t-statistic	Degree of freedom	Probability		
Strategic think tanks (whole questionnaire)	2.95	0.54	-1.09	168	0.95	Null hypothesis confirmation	Inappropriate

To investigate the status, the following hypotheses are used.

H0. The think tank status in Islamic Azad University of Gaemshahr is not sociable from the viewpoint of the faculty members.

H1. The think tank status in Islamic Azad University of Gaemshahr is sociable from the viewpoint of the faculty members.

$$\begin{cases} H_0 : \mu = 3 \\ H_1 : \mu \neq 3 \end{cases}$$

As it can be seen, the research variable, i.e. the think tank has the mean 2.95 and the standard deviation 0.54, and with regard to the t-statistic value -1.09 and the probability value 0.05, the null hypothesis of the research is confirmed; so the think tank status lays in less than the average 3. Therefore, the think tank status in Islamic Azad university of Gaemshahr has not a sociable status.

CONCLUSION

First, Kolmogrov-Smirnov test was used to investigate the data distribution of the quantitative variables; and the results showed that the research variables have normal distributions; and after conducting this test and achieving this result, we were allowed to use the parametric test in order to investigate the research questions.

The results indicate that the think tank exists, but it has a performance within very low-low range, and the most important causes of it, respectively, are: 1) the highest rating on the fifth items: the performance of the think tank in offering appropriate solutions and strategies in order to take appropriate decisions with the average rating 6.95; 2) the second priority on the sixth items: how to improve the quality of the determined public policies and its feedback on the society with the average rating 6.45; 3) the third priority on the third items: the performance of the think tank in solving the problems of the education system with the average rating 5.95; and on the eighth items: clear understanding and nobility of the authorities on the positive functions of the think tank formation in the university with the average rating 5.95; 4) the fourth priority on the first items: the quantity of holding the meetings and sessions monthly and seasonal with the average rating 5.45; on the fourth items: the performance of the think tank in solving the management and administrative macro-problems with the average rating 5.45; and on the seventh items: the flexibility of the senior upstream officials and allocation of the specific and determined budgets to practice the determined strategies by the think tank with the average rating 5.45; 5) and finally, the last and the least important priority on the second items: the quality of holding the meetings and sessions and discussing various issues with the average rating 4.45; on the ninth items: the extent of your satisfaction with the specified budgets in the university to form the think tank with the average rating 4.45; and on the tenth items: the interaction and consultation between the senior authorities and faculty members of the university with the average rating 4.45.

Suggestions based on the research findings

Based on the obtained data and the results of the present research questions, some suggestions for improving the statuses of the strategic think tanks in Islamic Azad University of Gaemshahr and other universities are offered as follows:

1. The allocation of a suitable budget and various financial suppliers in the university plays a positive role in the formation and the appropriate status of the think tanks.
2. To exploit the professional views in the university plans by the enjoyment of all scientific capabilities and the experience human forces of the university.
3. The existence of flexibility, understanding and consultation between members (faculties) to take common decisions in the think tanks undoubtedly will be effective in upgrading the place of the this tank to create thought.
4. The practical believe of the senior authorities of the university to the participative management system and the extent in which suggestions and critiques are welcomed by the faculty members in order to achieve the university goals and programs.

5. The transparency and explicit, real, and suitable accountability of the senior authorities of the university.
6. To introduce the role and the place of the strategic think tanks in generating thoughts to create tendency among the faculty members to join in such a tank in the university will be effective.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no conflict of interest.

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None

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