

Think Tanks in Malaysia and Their Attributes

Mohd Harridon^{1,2,3}, Farhan Abdullah³, Nurhayati Mohd Nur¹

¹Aviation Physical Fitness Cluster Universiti Kuala Lumpur Malaysian Institute of Aviation Technology,

²Malaysia Civil Defence Force,

³Sky Orbital Centre for Human Advancement (SOCHA)

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Abstract- The role of a Think Tank is to advocate certain policies and areas where the Think Tank would actuate research and analysis upon those particular areas of interest. It is common at the end of the analysis, results that were gained would be published in a form of academic or working papers. In Malaysia there exist numerous Think Tanks and this paper explored their attributes.

magnitude of the economy and Harridon stated that optimum productivity of workers is vital in fabricating a vibrant economy [3]. Harridon further noted that there are numerous reasons and parameters that accord productivity its degree of intensity [3]. One of them is the proper molding of workers in order to produce desirable traits in them.

I. INTRODUCTION

Think Tanks have a role in creating the appropriate ecosystem to alleviate knowledge and understanding toward contemporary issues that behold society. Think Tanks are bodies or organizations that bridge the gaps between academia and industry. Hence their working papers or policy papers usually touched upon predicaments face by industries as a whole but within the analyses framework of academia. Industrial predicaments are normally associative with socio-economic realm where we can observe an example of oversupply of workers tend to introduce or increase unemployment since available employments are scarce. Within this context, it can be seen in the results that we had compiled, all Think Tanks that we had listed in this paper have actuated works, research, and analyses upon Domestic Economics (refer to Figure 3 of this paper).

For this paper, we had employed the Classification Method to classify the areas that are indulged or partake by the Think Tanks in Malaysia. Nanba and et al considered Classification as an approach that organize entities into structured matters where this is helpful in analysis and search pedagogy [4]. They also stipulated that the process of reviewing subjects is made easier via the utilization of cataloging or classification and they even recommended clustering for the purpose of rearrangement of subjects [4].

Kandimalla and et al asserted that categorization or classification is a process that is akin to knowledge extraction where intended knowledge is extracted from a pool of sources [5]. An efficient knowledge extraction process ensures information or data is readily available to be utilized and used. Kandimalla and et al suggested an integration between neural network dan data in order to gain swift extraction of knowledge from different sources [5].

According to Hurst, there should be collaborative efforts between academia and society in order to bring society into manners that are progressive and sustainable [1]. Hurst pointed out that in Canada there are gaps that are needed to be filled to achieve this seamless connection between academia and society [1]. We agreed with this notion and our paper had addressed this issue in collective fashion via the accumulation of relevant data and information.

Numerous academicians and researchers had studied Think Tanks and their attributes. For example, Tarango and et al had discerned Think Tanks in Latin America and they stipulated that most Think Tanks have the tendencies to be inclined towards neoliberalism [6]. Tarango and et al also mentioned that Think Tanks are tools to disseminate knowledge and information for the good of society [6]. Most Think Tanks are egalitarian in nature and are supportive of fair distribution of sources, resources, and knowledge to the masses.

This is in contrast with Snider which claimed that Think Tanks do not bestow credits upon ideas or solutions that were used or stated in their publications [2]. This had led to false assumptions that Think Tanks were the originator of these ideas and this conjecture can be passed on and distributed widely which in hand had robbed the credits from the originator [2].

Most Think Tanks regularly actuate investigations into many issues and areas where these investigations led to several working papers that provided solutions to myriads problems. Most investigations followed a defined methodology which are portable across various subjects. For example, Harridon had utilized a structured approach to investigate issues or incidents related to Aviation and the approach is dynamic in nature and it is adaptable

As stated earlier, much of the concentration of Think Tanks are within the realm of Economics which denotes holistically the livelihood of the population. Several factors contribute to the

for several scenarios [7]. The importance of investigation had been consistently pointed out as the core of the predicament is dissected to reveal the underlying crux.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

There existed a notion that Think Tanks are in existence to promote and influence the society towards certain views. Zhang and Guo asserted that Think Tanks, through their publications of papers and reviews, have the ingrained power to sway opinions of the masses and this is critical if a collective effort is required to achieve a singular vision of a nation [8]. Zhang and Guo had evaluated Think Tanks in China in terms of orientation and inclination and they found out their orientations and inclinations varies and different from each other although there are similarities in some sense [8].

Christensen and Holst concurred with Zhang and Guo. Christensen and Holst had assessed Think Tanks in Norway and they delineated the commitments of each Think Tank in their study [9]. Christensen and Holst made relative comparison among these Think Tanks in terms of their positions in various issues and subjects and also the methodology used in gathering pertinent data [9].

One of the methods of assessment is the usage of Threats and Opportunities to dissect issues. Harridon had utilized the Threats and Opportunities Method to review several scenarios which showed vast differences among them [10]. The Threats and Opportunities Method is generally modifiable in accordance to the subjected scenario where the method, in terms of gist and simplicity, lists down components of Threats and Opportunities pursuant to the scenario [10].

As mentioned earlier, Classification Method is a good approach to evaluate the attributes of Think Tanks. According to Rivest and et al, several classification methods existed and they recommended Deep Learning Classification Technique to

categorize entities in order for assessment to take place in an optimum manner [11]. They had tried out this method with success and stipulated that the performance of the Deep Learning Classification Technique is similar to manual classification [11].

Classification Method is universally adaptable to myriad scenarios and it is engageable for various circumstances. Harridon had utilized the Classification Method to gauge the intricacies of uniforms and attires where functionalities, aesthetic beauty, and other prominent entities of the attires were classified and this had aided the evaluation and assessment process [12]. The good disposition or trait of the Classification Method had made this method popular among researchers and academicians where evidently its usage is wide and across the globe.

Loures and et al had also use the Classification Method to categorize the skillsets and expertise of academicians in Brazil and their purpose is to match these skillsets and expertise to the relevant subjects taught at universities [13]. They reckon if the matches are excellent, the taught subjects would be consistently updated and enhanced with materials that are abreast within a contemporary framework [13].

It is imperative to assess Think Tanks since their roles are vital to the alleviation of society. Hauck mentioned the abstractness of Think Tanks and stated that their functionalities are bordering between political movement and academia [14]. Hauck stipulated that Think Tanks tended to influence the political sphere while remaining steadfast to the economical cause and social equality [14]. Venturing into social equality is perhaps a venture that is most favorable among the masses, and throughout an infinite time frame this is a popular social cause.

III. METHODOLOGY

The assessment of Think Tanks in Malaysia was done through a defined structure which is shown in Figure 1.

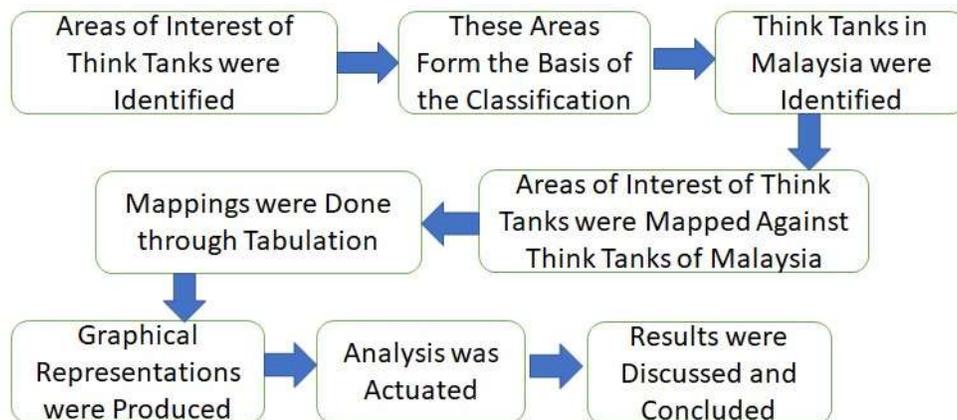


Figure 1. The Approach to Assess the Attributes of Think Tanks in Malaysia

Several areas that were indulged or researched by Think Tanks were identified. This is an arbitrary process since the list is not exhaustive in nature and there might be a small chance that some areas were left out. But if one looks at Table 1, the areas defined were somehow prominent among Think Tanks. Our classification is thus via areas of indulgence of Think Tanks. We then proceeded in identifying Think Tanks that existed in Malaysia. The Think Tanks in Malaysia were then mapped against the areas of interest. The mapping process is through tabulation and this is shown in Table 1.

Graphical representations of Table 1 were produced where the representations showed the trends among Think Tanks. This is useful to gauge the inclinations of the Think Tanks in Malaysia. Several pointers were then discussed and conclusions were made.

IV. RESULTS

The results of our methodology are shown in Table 1 and Figures 2 and 3.

Table 1. Tabulation of Think Tanks and their Areas of Interest

Think Tank	Areas of Interest									
	Foreign Policy	Social Policy	Education Policy	Security	E'ment	Energy & Resource Policy	Science & Technology	Int. D'ment	Int. E'mics	Domestic E'mics
ASLI	√	√	√					√	√	√
CPPS	√	√	√					√	√	√
IDR		√	√							√
IR		√								√
IDEAS	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
IDS		√	√		√	√	√			√
IKIM	√	√	√		√		√		√	√
ISIS	√	√	√	√	√		√		√	√
IAIS		√	√	√	√		√			√
KRI	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√
MSRI		√	√							√
MIER	√	√							√	√
MIM	√			√	√	√			√	√
PI	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√
SOCHA	√	√	√	√			√	√	√	√
SDI		√	√		√		√		√	√
SRTC									√	√
SERC		√	√			√	√		√	√
KSI	√	√	√	√	√	√	√			√
TWN	√	√			√	√			√	√

Denotations :
 E'ment – Environment, Int. D'ment – International Development, Int. E'mics – International Economics, Domestic E'mics – Domestic Economics
 ASLI – Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute, CPPS – Centre for Public Policy Studies, IDR – Institut Darul Ridzuan, IR – Institut Rakyat, IDEAS – Institute for Democracy and Economic Affairs, IDS – Institute for Development Studies Sabah, IKIM – Institute of Islamic Understanding, ISIS – Institute of Strategic and International Studies, IAIS – International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies Malaysia, KRI – Khazanah Research Institute, MSRI – Malaysia Social Research Institute, MIER – Malaysian Institute for Economic Research, MIM – Maritime Institute of Malaysia, PI – Penang Institute, SOCHA – Sky Orbital Centre for Human Advancement, SDI – Sarawak Development Institute, SRTC – SEACEN Research and Training Centre, SERC – Socio-Economic Research Centre, KSI – KSI Strategic Institute for Asia Pacific, TWN – Third World Network

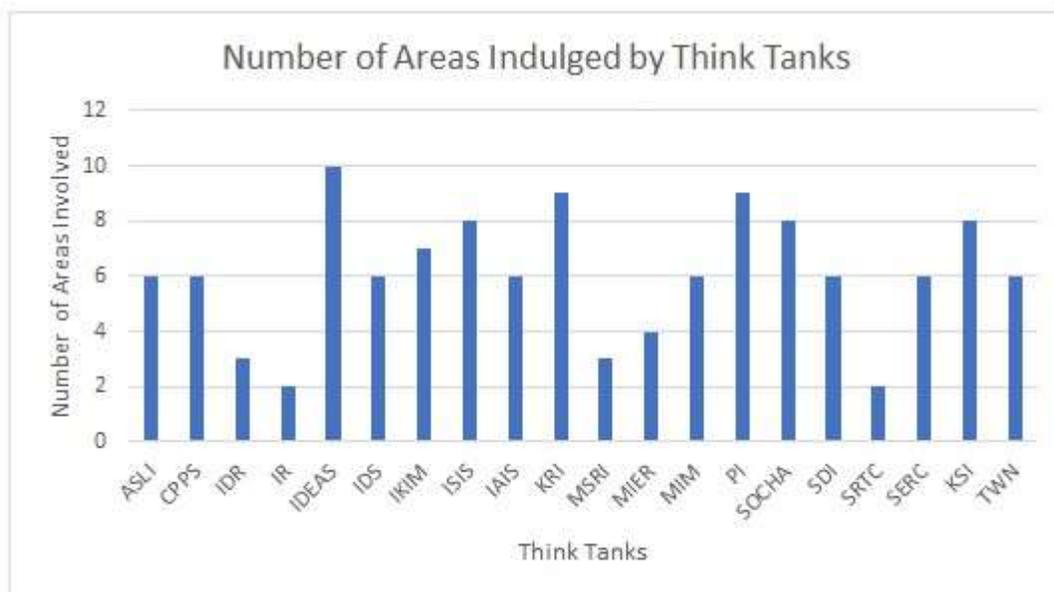


Figure 2. Number of Areas Indulged by Each Think Tank

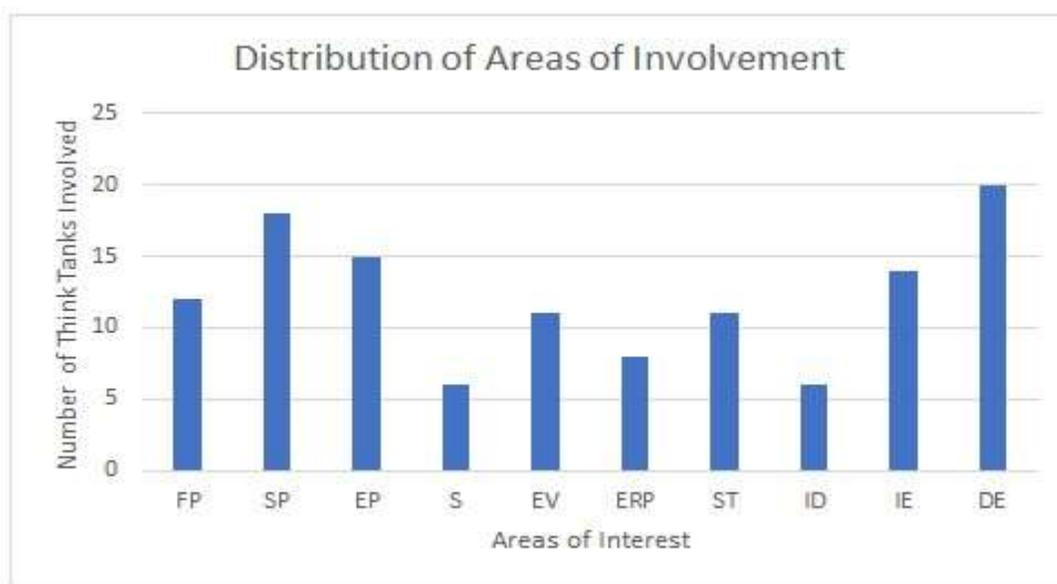


Figure 3. Distribution of Areas of Involvement

In Figure 3, the denotations are as follow : FP – Foreign Policy, SP – Social Policy, EP – Education Policy, S – Security, EV – Environment, ERP – Energy & Resource Policy, ST – Science & Technology, ID – International Development, IE – International Economics, DE – Domestic Economics

V. DISCUSSION

With regards to Table 1, it is noted that not all Think Tanks in Malaysia are involved in all the areas that were presented. A proper observation can be done by utilizing Figure 2. It is interesting to note that SEACEN Research and Training Centre is inclined to actuate research and works upon 2 areas only where those 2 areas are International and Domestic Economics. This is

understandable as the organization is under the tutelage of the Central Bank of Malaysia.

Another notable observation is Institut Rakyat which emphasized upon Social Policy and Domestic Economics only. The propensity towards those 2 areas is perhaps due to its linkages with a political party in Malaysia which concentrates primarily upon social causes and the well being of the masses or population. Concentration upon niche areas would somehow be beneficial as a majority of the effort and advocacy is focuses upon a small set and thus more could be accomplished with regards to the intended areas.

This however does not indicate lesser efforts by other Think Tanks that focused upon various and numerous areas. A

good example would be the Institute for Democracy and Economic Affairs (IDEAS) which indulged upon 10 areas of interest. Although the institute's indulgence is wide, it had produced formidable analyses, reports, and papers within the areas it had partake. The ASEAN Integration Report 2021, published by IDEAS, is a comprehensive report that touched upon several issues in South East Asia. The report is thorough and it gave an in-depth overview of the contemporary scenarios in South East Asia. This shows that the performances of Think Tanks are not solely based upon the number of areas that they had partake.

Pertaining to Figure 3, it can be seen that Domestic Economics is the most popular area to be researched and partake upon with 20 Think Tanks involved in this area. The livelihood and daily activities of the population are impacted by the national economy and hence this field is heavily analyzed by all Think Tanks in our list. We can duly state that the well being of the masses are critical and is the subject of concern by all Think Tanks.

Security and International Development are areas which only a minority of Think Tanks were involved. Its plausible that such areas require amassment of data in enormous fashion from international and domestic sources and thus making them challenging in terms of analyses and postulations. We do however reserve our comments as such areas are complex and intricate in nature and several factors come into play with regards to analyses and elucidations. Harridon mentioned that the entities related to security are tortuous and their capital resources are intertwined and shared where in the case of Search & Rescue missions the organization that is responsible for the security of a nation was also tasked to actuate Search & Rescue missions [15]. This was concurred by another paper of Harridon that mentioned issues that were in existence were due to factors related to management which plausibly occurred as the organization has multi roles and not only focuses solely upon security [16].

VI. CONCLUSIONS

There are quite a number of Think Tanks in Malaysia and they functioned as institutions of knowledge, providing views, opinions, and stipulations based upon myriad subjects and issues. The bulk of their stipulations is driven by comprehensive and meticulous analyses of data and information that were gathered, be it primary or secondary sources. All of the Think Tanks in Malaysia, with regards to our non-exhaustive list, are inclined towards issues and entities related to national economics and this in hand portray a sense of civic duty among all of them.

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AUTHORS

First Author – Mohd Harridon, Aviation Physical Fitness Cluster Universiti Kuala Lumpur Malaysian Institute of Aviation Technology, mdharridon@unikl.edu.my

Second Author – Farhan Abdullah, Sky Orbital Centre for Human Advancement (SOCHA)

Third Author – Nurhayati Mohd Nur, Aviation Physical Fitness Cluster Universiti Kuala Lumpur Malaysian Institute of Aviation Technology