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Identifying and Determining the Relationships between the Pillars and Components of the Fourth Generation University in the Islamic Azad University

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Abstract

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Purpose: The universities play an important role in regional dynamics and growth, and fourth generation universities play a more effective role in this regard than the first to third generation universities. Therefore, the purpose of this study was identifying and determining the relationships between the pillars and components of the fourth generation university in the Islamic Azad University.

Methodology: The present study in terms of purpose was practical and in terms of implementation method was mixed (qualitative-quantitative). The population of qualitative part was the professors and educational managers of Islamic Azad University of Alborz province in the academic years 2021-22, which according to the theoretical saturation principle number of 12 people of them were selected as a sample by purposeful and snowball sampling methods. The population of quantitative part was the professors of Islamic Azad University of Alborz province in the academic years 2021-22 with number 620 people, which according to Cochran formula number of 273 people of them were selected as a sample by stratified random sampling method based on the gender. Data were collected with a semi-structural interview and researcher-made questionnaire and their validity and reliability were evaluated properly. Also, for data analysis in the qualitative part were used from theme analysis method in MAXQDA-2020 software and in a quantitative part were used from exploratory factor analysis and structural equation modeling methods in SPSS-25 and Smart PLS-3 software.

Findings: The qualitative findings showed that 48 indicators, 16 components and 4 pillars were identified for the fourth generation university in the Islamic Azad University; So that the pillars were included organizational level (with 3 components of competitors analysis, financial resources and human resources), macro level (with 6 components of strategic management, internal environment analysis, external environmental analysis, making culture, futurism and futures and policy making), middle level (with 2 components of technology and independence and freedom) and micro level (with 5 components of applied training, assessment and content changes, opportunity recognition, creativity and skill-based). Also, the quantitative findings showed that all components had a factor load above 0.70, the average variance extracted above 0.50 and reliability above 0.70. In addition, all four organizational, macro, middle and micro levels had a significant positive effect on the fourth generation university and each component had a significant positive effect on related dimensions ($P < 0.05$).

Conclusion: Regarded to the identified pillars and components in the present study, to improve the status of the fourth generation university can be improved the basic to improve the pillars and components of the fourth generation university through the indicators of each of them



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Detailed abstract

Purpose: In today's world which is called the world of organizations, capable, efficient, and competitive advantage creating human resources is the main indicator of the superiority of one organization over another; So that such forces cause a significant increase in the performance of the relevant organization compared to other organizations in achieving the goals. The requirements and necessities of human societies have caused change and transformation in the functions and missions of the university system and have caused universities to move towards the real responsibilities of today's society. Today's societies have universities as a valuable institution and a center of creative activities for progress and development in order to respond to the real needs of society in various scientific, cultural, political, environmental, social and economic dimensions. In the fourth generation university division, first generation universities are called education-oriented universities, second generation universities are called research-oriented universities, third generation universities are called innovative and entrepreneurial universities, and fourth generation universities are called entrepreneurial, value-creating and wealth-creating universities. The fourth generation universities complement the previous three generations and in addition to education, research and entrepreneurship, they seek wealth creation, identity creation and value creation and local and regional development. The most important organizational goal of the fourth generation universities is entrepreneurship and innovation and local and regional development, and such universities are defined based on strategic partnership, entrepreneur training, and the amount of attracting income from foreign sources and the amount of guidance and leadership of students towards entrepreneurship and innovation. Also, fourth generation universities are called community-building and service-oriented universities that seek to improve the quality of services and create technological systems that are compatible with the environment and society. The fourth generation university seeks to create local and regional knowledge and contribute to local and regional sustainable development, and relates the curriculum to local and regional human and social issues and challenges, and education is conducted based on the needs of students and society. The universities play an important role in regional dynamics and growth, and fourth generation universities play a more effective role in this regard than the first to third generation universities. Therefore, the purpose of this study was identifying and determining the relationships between the pillars and components of the fourth generation university in the Islamic Azad University.

Methodology: The present study in terms of purpose was practical and in terms of implementation method was mixed (qualitative-quantitative). The population of qualitative part was the professors and educational managers of Islamic Azad University of Alborz province in the academic years 2021-22, which according to the theoretical saturation principle number of 12 people of them were selected as a sample by purposeful and snowball sampling methods. In the purposeful sampling method, the samples were selected according to the criteria, which these criteria were included the minimum rank of assistant professor and a minimum work experience of 20 years. In the snowball sampling method, the samples of the purposeful sampling method were asked to introduce other professors and educational managers who met the criteria for the study to the researchers. The population of quantitative part was the professors of Islamic Azad University of Alborz province in the academic years 2021-22 with number 620 people, which according to Cochran formula number of 273 people of them were selected as a sample by stratified random sampling method based on the gender. In the stratified random sampling method, first the number of professors of Islamic Azad Universities of Alborz province was investigated and their ratio or percentage was calculated, and then according to the sample size of 273 people, the same ratio or percentage was sampled from university units. Data were collected with the demographic information form including gender, age and work experience, a semi-structural interview with 12 questions and researcher-made questionnaire with 48 items and their validity and reliability were evaluated properly. Also, for data analysis in the qualitative part were used from theme analysis method in MAXQDA-2020 software and in a quantitative part were used from exploratory factor analysis and structural equation modeling methods in SPSS-25 and Smart PLS-3 software.

Findings: In the current research, in the qualitative part there were 12 people and in the quantitative part there were 273 people; So that in the qualitative part most of the professors and educational managers of Islamic Azad University were men (9 people equal to 75%) and have an age of 51-60 years (8 people equal to 66.67%) and work experience of 26-30 years (6 people equal to 50%). Also, in the quantitative part most of the professors of Islamic Azad University were male (160 people equal to 58.61%) and have an age of 41-50 years (137 people equal to 50.18%) and work experience of 11-20 years (181 people equal to 66.30%). The qualitative findings showed that 48 indicators, 16 components and 4 pillars were identified for the fourth generation university in the Islamic Azad University; So that the pillars were included organizational level (with 3 components of competitors analysis, financial resources and human resources), macro level (with 6 components of strategic management, internal environment analysis, external environmental analysis, making culture,

futurism and futures and policy making), middle level (with 2 components of technology and independence and freedom) and micro level (with 5 components of applied training, assessment and content changes, opportunity recognition, creativity and skill-based). Also, the quantitative findings showed that all components had a factor load above 0.70, the average variance extracted above 0.50 and reliability above 0.70. In addition, all four organizational, macro, middle and micro levels had a significant positive effect on the fourth generation university and each component had a significant positive effect on related dimensions ($P < 0.05$).

Conclusion: Regarded to the identified pillars and components in the present study, to improve the status of the fourth generation university can be improved the basic to improve the pillars and components of the fourth generation university through the indicators of each of them. For this purpose, at the organizational level can be analyzed the competitors and can be strengthened financial and human resources. At the macro level can be use the strategic management, optimal analysis of the internal and external environment, foresight and future research and by appropriate policies create a favorable culture. At the middle level can be while having independence and freedom of action, you can benefit from modern, efficient and practical technologies. At the micro level can be use applied training, assessment and environmental changes, improving opportunity recognition, increasing creativity and skill-oriented.

Keywords: University, fourth generation university, Islamic Azad University.