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## **SWOT-АНАЛІЗ ЯК СТРАТЕГІЧНИЙ ІНСТРУМЕНТ ПРИЙНЯТТЯ ПРОФЕСІЙНИХ РІШЕНЬ У ПІДГОТОВЦІ МАЙБУТНІХ УЧИТЕЛІВ ІНОЗЕМНИХ МОВ**

Метою даної статті є вивчення функціонування SWOT-аналізу як стратегічного інструмента для підготовки майбутніх учителів іноземних мов. У зв'язку зі зростаючою значущістю стратегічного прийняття рішень у сучасній освіті, зокрема у контексті викладання іноземних мов, дослідження зосереджене на розвитку рефлексивного мислення та стратегічних підходів у майбутніх учителів іноземних мов. SWOT-аналіз застосовується як метод оцінювання, що дає змогу вивчити як внутрішні організаційні сильні та слабкі сторони, так і зовнішні можливості та загрози. У дослідженні розглядаються перспективи впровадження SWOT-аналізу в курс «Методики навчання іноземних мов», з метою визначення його ефективності в розвитку рефлексивної практики та стратегічного мислення, а також професійного зростання майбутніх учителів іноземних мов. В роботі надається всебічна оцінка впливу SWOT-аналізу на розвиток самоусвідомлення вчителів, його роль у підвищенні впевненості у прийнятті рішень і ефективності методичних підходів. Дослідження демонструє, що SWOT-аналіз може сприяти коригуванню підходів та методів відповідно до змін, що відбуваються в освітньому середовищі. В дослідженні обґрунтовуються переваги впровадження SWOT-аналізу у програми підготовки вчителів іноземних мов, що сприяє значному покращенню їх рефлексивної практики та розвитку професійного стратегічного мислення. Використовуючи цей інструмент, майбутні вчителі іноземних мов набувають кращих навичок прийняття професійних рішень і здатності адаптуватися до постійних змін в сучасній освіті. У статті також пропонуються концептуальні підходи до застосування SWOT-аналізу в підготовці майбутніх учителів іноземних мов в різних контекстах, а також конкретні стратегії, які показують, як його впровадження може підвищити якість професійної підготовки педагогів і підтримати їх безперервний професійний розвиток.

**Ключові слова:** SWOT-аналіз, стратегічне мислення, рефлексія, методика навчання іноземних мов, професійний розвиток, підготовка вчителів, критичне мислення.

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## **SWOT ANALYSIS AS A STRATEGIC TOOL FOR PROFESSIONAL DECISION-MAKING IN THE TRAINING OF FUTURE FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS**

The research aims to investigate how SWOT analysis functions as a strategic tool for the development of future foreign language teachers. Given the increasing importance of strategic decision-making in modern teacher education, especially in the context of teaching foreign languages, the study focuses on the development of reflective thinking and strategic approaches in future educators. SWOT analysis functions as an evaluation method that examines both internal organizational strengths and weaknesses alongside external opportunities and threats. The research considers the perspectives of SWOT analysis implementation in the "Methods of Teaching Foreign Languages" course to determine its effectiveness in developing reflective practice and strategic thinking, and professional growth of trainee teachers. The research delivers a complete evaluation of SWOT analysis effects on teacher self-awareness development alongside its benefits for decision-making confidence and teaching approach effectiveness. The research demonstrates that SWOT analysis can enable educators modify their teaching methods according to current educational environment changes. SWOT analysis implementation in foreign language teacher education programs leads to improved reflective practice and strategic

thinking abilities among teachers. Through this tool, future teachers develop stronger decision-making abilities while gaining better capacity to adjust to educational setting changes. The research provides teacher training dimensions of SWOT application, as well as ways and strategies that show how SWOT analysis implementation can enhance teacher education quality while supporting ongoing professional development.

**Key words:** SWOT analysis, strategic thinking, reflection, methods of teaching foreign languages, professional development, teacher education, critical thinking.

**Relevance.** The role of strategic decision-making in teacher education is significant due to the fact that the teaching process is currently undergoing substantial changes in its principles and requirements. The teaching of foreign languages requires not only language and teaching competences but also teachers' ability to work in different teaching environments. The modern educational environment is dynamic, and the ability to adapt is therefore essential. This paper aims at the development of the strategic thinking and the ability to reflect in future foreign language teachers.

SWOT analysis is a multifunctional tool that can help in the development of these skills as it gives a clear way of checking on the internal strengths and weaknesses of the subject under analysis as well as the external opportunities and threats. Although SWOT analysis is a widely used concept in business and management, its application in the field of teacher education is not well studied and documented, which determines the relevance of this study.

### **Problem Statement**

Strategic training of future foreign language teachers is one of the key issues of modern teacher education. In today's globalized educational space, teachers need to learn how to make decisions that are balanced and research-informed. The application of SWOT analysis in foreign language education is crucial because teaching methods need to be suitable for various learner types and needs, as well as curriculum requirements and educational institution settings.

Through self-reflection and strategic planning SWOT analysis helps future foreign language teachers identify their strengths and weaknesses while developing targets for their upcoming career. SWOT analysis receives recognition for its importance in management and business yet its application in educational settings, particularly foreign language teaching, remains underdeveloped in research.

### **Literature Review**

#### **1. Historical Overview of SWOT Analysis**

SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis emerged as a strategic planning tool in the 1960s when Albert Humphrey introduced it at the Stanford Research Institute (SRI). The tool aimed to help organizations make strategic decisions through internal strength and weakness assessments alongside external opportunity and threat evaluations. The SOFT approach developed at SRI's Long-Range Planning Service evolved into SWOT, which was utilized to obtain operational manager insights during the definition of business objectives (Puyt et al., 2020, p. 15). SWOT analysis

has grown into a widely applied strategic planning tool that extends beyond its initial corporate use into fields such as education, healthcare and public policy.

## 2. Application of SWOT in Various Contexts

SWOT analysis exists for use in different fields including business, healthcare, marketing, agriculture, education and technology. Business organizations frequently apply SWOT analysis to plan strategies and make decisions through evaluating internal strengths and weaknesses together with external opportunities and threats, which researchers demonstrate by combining SWOT with performance-based tools like Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) in organizations (Phadermrod et al., 2016, p. 2). The framework enables organizations to determine which factors need attention through customer satisfaction assessment, which helps them develop better market-driven strategies. Healthcare facilities use SWOT to evaluate their current situation, which enables managers to tackle resource distribution challenges together with regulatory requirements and technological implementation needs. SWOT analysis remains versatile because it enables customized strategies for different industry challenges across numerous sectors.

## 3. Application of SWOT in Education

SWOT analysis started gaining popularity in educational institutions during the 1980s and 1990s because of rising environmental demands from technological, financial, and demographic changes. Educational institutions find SWOT analysis exceptionally useful when planning strategic educational programs and establishing educational institutions. SWOT analysis helps scholars assess different educational settings including curricula and teaching methods and administrative structures to improve these systems.

The evaluation of internal institutional elements in higher education such as faculty strength and student performance as well as external factors consisting of governmental rules and market competition and technological progress utilizes SWOT analysis. Balamuralikrishna and Dugger (1995) employed SWOT analysis to evaluate new program feasibility in vocational schools and showed how the framework helps determine educational initiative strengths and weaknesses. Miguel Romero-Gutierrez et al. (2016) used the same method for the evaluation of the programme of a joint online/onsite master's degree in environmental education through the students' perceptions (Benzaghta et al., 2021).

Higher education institutions have experienced significant technological and demographic and financial changes during the past ten years (Sharifi, 2012). The modifications reshaping university roles in modern society emerged from globalization together with IT and learning technology advancements, and government funding accessibility. The resulting transformation led to multiple institutional problems (Akhavan-Kazemi, 2005). The higher education sector has adopted SWOT analysis as a solution to address its problems while developing strategic plans.

SWOT analysis has gained wider acceptance in academic institutions primarily within the United States than in other nations. The United States universities – California

State University and Montana State University and Iowa State University and Ball State University have used SWOT analysis to analyze their market position in academia (Balamuralikrishna & Dugger, 1995; Helms & Nixon, 2010).

#### 4. SWOT Analysis in ESL Teacher Education and Training

SWOT analysis applies to educational institutions particularly through teacher training programs, especially for English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction. The training of ESL teachers represents a critical educational field dedicated to teaching English to students whose first language is different from English. The development of teacher education programs for ESL teachers represents a complex system that engages three essential stakeholder groups which include students alongside faculty members and educational policymakers. Multiple perspectives from students and educators benefit from SWOT analysis in the evaluation of these programs.

SWOT analysis was also used by Praveen (2020, p. 29), Ağçam, R., & Babanoğlu, M. (2020) to assess the NEP (National Education Policy) impact on ESL teacher training programs in India and Turkey. The evaluation revealed that the new curriculum design offers potential benefits for India but the system faces problems with insufficient professional development for ESL teachers across different regions. The research demonstrated that SWOT analysis revealed possibilities for integrating technology and enhancing teacher preparation programs to match global educational standards. The implementation of SWOT demonstrates how SWOT analysis helps identify critical areas for improvement within ESL teacher training through the assessment of complex systems.

The SWOT analysis technique also helps teacher education programs evaluate their current ESL curriculum effectiveness and student needs fulfillment. The SWOT analysis helps ESL programs identify their current program strengths such as new teaching approaches and student support systems while revealing weaknesses including insufficient training in culturally responsive teaching and insufficient teaching practice opportunities. The analysis serves to enhance ESL teacher education programs while enabling teachers to meet the needs of their entire student body.

Furthermore, Almarwani (2020, p.741) suggested that SWOT analysis can be a useful tool in pedagogy to foster critical thinking in educators. The application of this technique in ESL teacher training programs enables the development of reflective and analytical thinking which is crucial for teacher development and curriculum modification to meet ESL student needs. The framework used in teacher education enhances both teacher professional competences and classroom decision-making abilities. This framework when used in teacher education not only improves the teachers' professional competences but also enables them to make appropriate decisions in the classroom. This approach, as Miguel Romero-Gutierrez Almarwani recommends, helps teachers evaluate their teaching practices and modify their approaches to create a more inclusive and effective learning environment.

#### 5. SWOT Analysis: Strengths and Weaknesses

The use of SWOT in educational contexts, specifically in ESL teacher training, is advantageous because it is simple and can accommodate both qualitative and quantitative data. According to Thomas et al. (2013, p. 45), SWOT is a useful tool in educational settings that enables institutions to identify their internal strengths and weaknesses and external opportunities and threats. This is especially important for institutions that are in the process of change or are required to change due to new technologies or new educational policies.

However, SWOT is not without its limitations. Some of the critics have pointed out that the analysis is not very detailed since it only categorizes factors without explaining the causes or the relationships between the factors. For instance, Hill and Westbrook (1997, p. 211) pointed out that SWOT is a very simplistic approach to strategic management of issues, and it may not offer solutions to the problems without further evaluation.

Despite some drawbacks, SWOT remains a widely used framework in education which proves to be beneficial for creating detailed analyses that focus on specific contexts, particularly in ESL teacher training to identify learner needs.

### **Research Aims and Objectives**

The research aims to study SWOT analysis as an essential strategic tool for future foreign language teachers' professional development. This research investigates the implementation of SWOT analysis in the “Methods of Teaching Foreign Languages” course to evaluate its impact on reflective practice development and strategic decision-making, self-awareness and continuous professional growth of teacher trainees.

The research aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. to consider different application dimensions and strategies to integrate SWOT analysis into the curriculum to improve student learning and prepare future teachers for teaching challenges;
2. to investigate how SWOT analysis can enable future teachers discover their teaching practice strengths and weaknesses together with their available opportunities and potential threats;
3. to evaluate the impact of SWOT analysis on strategic thinking and decision-making in teacher training;
4. to explore the advantages of adding SWOT analysis to the foreign language teacher training curriculum;
5. to clarify how SWOT analysis can be used for ongoing professional development throughout a teacher's career.

### **Presentation of the Main Research Material**

SWOT analysis can be used to considerably improve ESL teachers' reflective and strategic thinking when introduced as a training tool. In the framework of this research study, we suggest the following list of strategies to apply SWOT analysis in different

dimensions of ESL teacher education, which we assume will appear to be effective if realized consistently and appropriately.

### ***Suggested Dimensions and Strategies for SWOT Analysis Application in ESL Teacher Education***

*Application Dimension 1.* Personal SWOT Analysis for Enhancing Reflective Practice in Prospective ESL Teachers

*Strategy 1.* A good starting point for incorporating SWOT analysis in ESL teacher training is a personal SWOT analysis. Have students examine their teaching skills and their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in relation to teaching. This activity can be done at the beginning of the course and the same should be done at the end of the semester to see how the students have grown and the areas that still need development. It also enables the students to appreciate their teaching style and areas that they need to work on to improve on.

*Application Dimension 2.* SWOT Analysis of Teaching Methods

*Strategy 2.* SWOT analysis is not only a tool for personal use but can also be used in teaching methods. Have students discuss and analyze different teaching methods including the communicative language approach, task-based learning, and the direct method, and their merits and demerits, threats and opportunities. This exercise enables the students to develop a critical thinking about different teaching strategies and be able to choose the most suitable strategies for application in learning situations.

*Application Dimension 3.* SWOT-Based Action Plans for Professional Development

*Strategy 3.* SWOT analysis can be effectively applied to the development of a professional action plan. In the light of the SWOT analysis results, students can establish their development plan, focusing on the areas they have discovered. These may involve enhancing some form of teaching, seeking new teaching materials, or working on the area of weakness. Students will be able to achieve their career objectives with the help of SMART goals that have been developed based on the SWOT analysis results and track their achievement over time.

*Application Dimension 4.* Collaborative SWOT Analysis for Peer Review

*Strategy 4.* A good way of using SWOT analysis is the use of collaborative SWOT analysis. Arrange group discussions that can help students analyze and discuss the teaching methods or lesson plans of their peers. This approach encourages group work, group decision making, group problem solving, and group learning. Students can benefit from their peers' successes and failures in teaching by looking at the advantages and disadvantages of their peers' teaching strategies.

*Application Dimension 5.* SWOT Analysis in Teaching Practice and Feedback

*Strategy 5.* The use of SWOT analysis in teaching practice gives students a way to evaluate the effectiveness of their actual teaching practice. Before the start of the teaching practice, ask students to forecast possible difficulties and prospects for self-improvement. They can also use SWOT analysis to evaluate their performance after each teaching session and find out what is done well and what can be done better.

Supervisors can also give feedback using the SWOT framework and thus give constructive suggestions that are related to the student's personal views.

#### *Application Dimension 6. SWOT for Curriculum Design and Classroom Management*

*Strategy 6.* SWOT analysis can also be used in both curriculum design and classroom management. Involve students in the evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the curricula, teaching materials and classroom management techniques. This helps them to come up with ideas on how they can improve their lesson plans. In addition, it makes the learners understand how the context in which the teacher is teaching such as the student's culture, class size, teacher's role and the available resources may affect the teaching and learning process.

#### *Application Dimension 7. SWOT analysis for the strategies of Classroom Management*

*Strategy 7.* Teacher trainees can apply SWOT analysis to assess classroom management strategies such as group work, individual tasks or behaviour management. Invite them to examine which strategies fit their strengths and weaknesses, determine the potential gaps they may encounter while executing them, discover the possible ways of increasing student involvement, and forecast the potential risks (such as a student's misbehaviour or lack of attention). This way trainees can create a plan that is both effective and flexible for classroom management.

#### *Application Dimension 8. SWOT Analysis of Language Assessment Tools and Methods*

*Strategy 8.* By incorporating SWOT analysis into the language assessment training, teacher trainees are able to assess different assessment tools like quizzes, projects, or presentations and determine their usefulness. Instruct trainees to determine the advantages and disadvantages of each assessment tool, determine the student needs and find the potential challenges such as biases or limitations of the assessment method. This reflection assists future teachers in making wise decisions when developing and administering assessments.

#### *Application Dimension 9. SWOT Analysis of Teaching Materials and Resources*

*Strategy 9.* Trainees can perform a SWOT analysis on the teaching materials and resources used in the class such as textbooks, digital tools, and teaching aids. Through the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of certain resources, trainees can determine which resources are the most suitable for their teaching contexts and student needs. This strategy fosters critical thinking on the appropriateness of resources and assists trainees in making the right decision on the materials that should be incorporated into their lesson plans.

#### *Application Dimension 10. SWOT Analysis for Personal Development in Language Teaching*

*Strategy 10.* When using SWOT analysis for personal development, the trainee teachers can examine their language teaching skills and characteristics. This self-assessment might include an assessment of language proficiency, teaching methods,

students' interest, or integration of technology into teaching. Knowing the trainees' strengths and weaknesses enables them to set achievable development goals and concentrate on the areas that require improvement in order to improve teaching and learning processes and have a positive attitude towards professional growth.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### *Findings*

#### **1. Reflective Practice Impact of SWOT Analysis**

SWOT analysis is a great tool for teacher education that improves reflective practice. SWOT analysis enables future teachers to develop a clear understanding of their personal characteristics, including their capabilities and areas for development. This procedure helps teachers identify their professional development goals and self-assessment skills. Students become capable of identifying their development needs and implementing the necessary actions to enhance themselves.

#### **2. Enhanced Strategic Thinking**

The students become strategic in their approach to teaching when they use SWOT analysis exercises in their learning. Future teachers who assess internal and external factors, such as teaching methods, institutional expectations, and emerging educational trends, learn to actively take charge of their professional paths. The process helps students establish realistic and implementable goals to ensure they make decisions that support their personal goals and the educational environment.

#### **3. Increased Confidence in Professional Decision Making**

SWOT analysis enables future teachers to determine their capabilities and available resources while also detecting potential obstacles. This process leads to enhanced decision-making confidence when it comes to career development and teaching methodologies. The students gain the power to choose their professional development activities wisely, thus enhancing their readiness for teaching responsibilities.

### *Discussion*

The research demonstrates that SWOT analysis implementation serves as a fundamental tool for developing reflective practice and strategic thinking abilities among pre-service foreign language teachers. The SWOT analysis helps students identify their strengths and weaknesses and opportunities and threats, which allows them to assess their personal and professional development. The students gain self-awareness about their abilities and limitations, which helps them develop practical career development plans and adapt to education environment transformations.

Teacher preparation shifts towards proactive thinking because of SWOT analysis. The identification of internal and external factors affecting their teaching enables students to acquire strategic thinking capabilities which are critical for managing the teaching profession's changing environment. The strategic insights enable future teachers to foresee obstacles and seize development possibilities while developing their career plans in an organized way.



SWOT analysis enables an all-embracing comprehension of how teaching methods interact with classroom management and professional growth. Students can improve their teaching methods through self-assessment while analyzing their teaching strategies, which helps them adjust to different teaching settings. Foreign language teaching requires specific approaches that need to be customized according to students' cultural and educational backgrounds.

SWOT analysis provides pre-service teachers with increased decision-making confidence to choose appropriate teaching methods and educational career routes and professional growth plans. Students gain essential career management skills through the evaluation of their internal strengths and weaknesses together with external opportunities and threats. This approach also provides prospective teachers with important competences which include planning, flexibility and the capacity to adjust to evolving educational contexts. SWOT analysis should be included in teacher training programs to ensure that future teachers are well prepared for professional challenges, which leads to better foreign language education.

### **Conclusions and Further Research**

SWOT analysis demonstrates its effectiveness in developing reflective practice and strategic decision-making capabilities of pre-service foreign language teachers. The inclusion of SWOT analysis in teacher education programs allows students to assess their internal capacities while also considering external factors that affect their career development. Future teachers acquire better understanding of their teaching methods and develop specific targets for their professional growth. The strategic thinking skills developed through SWOT analysis help students handle teaching profession complexities better.

SWOT analysis helps future teachers develop fundamental competences through its structured system, which evaluates teaching methods alongside classroom management strategies and personal development. The framework enables teachers to develop essential competences for the educational environment through proactive planning and critical reflection and flexible teaching methods, which adapt to diverse educational needs.

To properly execute SWOT analysis teachers must dedicate attention to practical implementation details. The tool demonstrates promising results but its effectiveness depends on its particular use and educational context within teacher training programs. The application of SWOT analysis for personal development stands apart from its implementation in teaching methods evaluation and classroom management strategy evaluation. The framework requires educators to make appropriate modifications when addressing different teaching contexts because teachers need to meet the specific requirements of each case. The process can achieve greater alignment with real-world teaching challenges by incorporating empirical data collected from surveys and interviews, and classroom observations further on.

The implementation of SWOT analysis in teacher training programs has major potential to enhance the quality standards of foreign language education. The tool

prepares future teachers to address their professional challenges while helping them adjust to teaching environments that change and make career choices based on evidence. The tool supports teacher professional development by providing essential preparation during initial training while continuing to promote growth throughout their entire teaching career. The practical use of SWOT analysis demands a customized approach to specific contexts, while empirical data collection will serve as a vital step for validating its effectiveness across various educational environments.

Further research should analyze the enduring effects of SWOT analysis on future foreign language teachers. Upcoming studies should analyze how SWOT analysis-based skills transfer to practical teaching settings to enhance classroom practice improvements. Further research should also examine how SWOT analysis can be applied in other areas of teacher education, including curriculum development and assessment practices, as well as student-teacher interactions. Empirical studies about SWOT application in different educational settings will enhance understanding of its total potential while providing evidence-based guidance for teacher training implementation.

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