International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews

SWOT-TOWS Analysis for Effective Strategies of the International Foreign Language School (IFLS) in Banteay Meanchey Province, Cambodia

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.55248/gengpi.5.0524.1267

A B S T R A C T

This research paper addresses how the leadership and management strategies of an organization have significant effects on its effectiveness. This can be accomplished by using SWOT and TOWS analysis concepts involving internal and external factors (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) to evaluate the issues and optimize the benefits. The previously stated approaches are applied in this research study to examine the International Foreign Language School (IFLS), located in Serey Sophorn, Banteay Meanchey Province, Cambodia. This research aims to provide this local international school (IFLS) with a useful instrument for assessing the business contexts needed to achieve and reach the school's potential.

Keywords: SWOT, TOWS, Analysis, Effective Strategy

1. Introduction

A successful educational institution benefits from effective management. This indicates skilled leadership that fosters student learning, sets a supportive and cooperative environment, and sets a clear goal. To gain valuable and effective management in an educational institution, according to [1] Johnson et al., (2017): Companies obtain a full understanding of their external environment (opportunities and threats) and their internal abilities (strengths and weaknesses) with this logical study. Strengths can be used to gain revenue, boost customer loyalty, and build a strong brand reputation. Setting up strategies is necessary to address weaknesses like company-lacking techniques or unnecessary personnel turnover to enhance efficiency and satisfaction among staff members [2]. By implementing SWOT and TOWS analysis, the institution leader has the capacity and expertise to achieve the goal and reach its full potential.

SWOT Analysis is one of the fundamental methods of strategic planning and management. SWOT is an acronym that symbolizes S-strength, W-weakness, O-opportunity, and T-threat. Organizations can evaluate external factors (opportunities and threats, O & T) and internal factors (strengths and weaknesses, S & W) that influence their achievement with this approach [3]. While SWOT analysis is a fundamental component of strategic planning, TOWS takes it a step further. To discover possible strategies, TOWS analyzes the connections between internal (Strengths & Weaknesses) and external (Opportunities & Threats) components.

TOWS was founded by Heinz Weihrich, who published a paper titled "The TOWS matrix: - a tool for situational analysis" in Long Range Planning in 1982. Weihrich is acknowledged for creating the concept of TOWS. This research study applies a SWOT analysis approach, a widely used strategic planning method [4], and a TOWS analysis approach relying on SWOT by creating a strategic plan to examine the international school (IFLS) in Banteay Meanchey Province, Cambodia, in terms of its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. By critically examining these internal and external issues, the research attempts to highlight the possibilities for improvement and develop effective strategies for implementation that will strengthen the school's reputation as an inspiration in the local market for an outstanding educational institution.

2. Methods

In this research study, the research method chosen to study and understand was a qualitative case study method. The research method provides a complex understanding of how participants act that cannot be expressed in statistical analysis alone. Likewise, since qualitative methods are adaptive and flexible, researchers can modify the strategy based on the interview and potentially uncover helpful information. Qualitative research method is particularly effective for a new research study or under-researched topics. Researchers can be able to discover interesting concepts and thoughts that may occasionally be neglected by quantitative methods by letting contributors share their own experiences in original words [5]. On top of that, researchers can gain insight

into the experiences and points of view of participants by using this method. The "why" behind behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs can be examined by researchers using discussion forums, open-ended interviews, and the field of ethnography [6]. In short, this research can offer the IFL School useful data for strategic planning with this effective research method.

Sampling Size

The Quota of Non-Random Sampling was decided and chosen, which involved the selection of the general director to have interviewed and surveyed the management teams, administrative manager, educational manager, staff members, and professional teachers with a sampling size of approximately 80% of the total population, with the purpose of meeting specific criteria related to our research questions. The use of questions included 4 questions relevant to the IFL School's SWOT among the 14 main questions. The data was recorded and examined to gain a deep understanding of the entire interview. The IFL School was the site of the research, located in Serey Sophorn, Banteay Meanchey Province, Cambodia.

2.1 Data Collection

Based on the research qualitative method, the data collected includes the results of the research, depending on the 14 main research questions, and some secondary data relevant to school strategic plans and archive records from the general director of the IFL School. The process of collecting the data involved conducting a semi-structured interview face-to-face with the general director. In addition, structured questions were also designed to survey the management teams, administrative manager, educational manager, staff members, and professional teachers by asking critically about internal and external factors related to the school's SWOT. All the information was requested to access the voice recording of the entire interview. The benefits of voice recording include helping the conversation's exact words and nuances reduce the possibility of misunderstandings or memory difficulties [7], and further analysis and classification can be facilitated by transcribing recordings for a written record of the interview [8]. This helped researchers easily revise and identify the specific segments. The collected data was organized, and the key information was quoted and permitted to be examined in the relevant school documents, like strategic plans and students' learning outcome data to support the interview.

2.2 Data Analysis

Data analysis transformed raw data into insightful information. The first process started with gathering the collected data into different types of information and using Microsoft Excel for statistical analysis as a basic tool to store the data. Next, it also involved coding the data, all the data must be coded before it can be classified. Coding is "the process of organizing the data by bracketing chunks (or text or image segments) and writing a word representing a category in the margins" [9] (Rossman & Rallis, 2012, cited in John W., J. David, 2018, p. 269). Then, after coding, we grouped the data and continued to classify each category of data. In addition to coding, examine existing information documents to comprehend the perspectives and experiences stated in the content, including letters, journals, historical records, or posts on social media platforms [10]. Lastly, the classified data was then processed with the descriptions to make it usable and to concisely match the research questions related to the IFL School's SWOT. The above-mentioned processes were in accordance with the concepts of the qualitative research method, which allowed researchers to address the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the school.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 SWOT-TOWS Analysis

The SWOT-TOWS analysis implements to reduce weaknesses and threats that need to be solved to struggle with the challenges. In fact, SWOT can help in evaluating and understanding the connection between internal and external factors, but TOWS provides an innovative approach that advances on the model used in SWOT. It helps transform concepts into effective strategies. Furthermore, TOWS gives a helping hand to the IFL School to build new bridges over the weaknesses to reach new opportunities, harden the strengths as a barrier against threats, and even take advantage of the threats to convert into new opportunities through the below recommendation strategies. TOWS can not only help the IFL school overcome challenges and become more powerful, but it can also take the school's quality to the next level with its approach.

Table 1 - SWOT-TOWS Analysis of the IFL School

TOWS	INTERNAL FACTORS	
	STRENGTHS (S) **S1:** Quality, discipline, and morality. **S2:** Potential location. **S3:** Reasonable price. **S4:** Quality curriculum	**WEAKNESSES (W)** **W1:** Lack of enhanced employee training. **W2:** Lack of implementing technology. **W3:** Significantly reducing the number of students enrolled in the ESP courses.

		S5: Good relationship with the parents of the students. **S6:** Qualified employees.	
EXTERNAL FACTORS	**OPPORTUNITIES (O)** **O1:** Good relationship with local authorities and some other international institutions. **O2:** Capable of capturing a variety of local markets.	**S–O** **SO1:** Should strengthen building capacities on quality, discipline, and morality. **SO2:** Should foster advertising to target customers. **SO3:** Parents should be acknowledged for the quality of the school curriculum. **SO4:** Should enhance a positive relationship with parents. **SO5:** Should formulate an effective strategy to handle competitive forces.	**W–O** **WO1:** Building staff capacity should be strongly encouraged. **WO2:** Should ask for technical training from the relevant government officials. **WO3:** Should enhance and develop ESP courses procedures. **WO4:** Internal strengthening should be maintained for the purpose of increasing the number of ESP courses students.
	THREATS (T) **T1:** Economic crisis. **T2:** Rising fresh competitors. **T3:** Amendments to the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport's policy. **T4:** Staff Turnover.	**S–T** **ST1:** Internal expenses considered unnecessary should be minimized under the economic crisis. **ST2:** Additional strategies should be developed to overcome competition from competitors. **ST3:** Stand strong positions despite major amendments to Ministry of Education policy.	**W–T** **WT1:** Should search for reasonable or free training courses for employees. **WT2:** During the crisis, opt for a low-cost software system to help save on expenses. **WT3:** Prioritizing and maintaining the concerns of departing employees should come prior to further investments in technology. **WT4:** The market should conduct research related to the causes of the reduction in EPS courses. **WT5:** It should be flexible to sustain itself against fresh competitors. **WT6:** Should concentrate more on providing employee potential.

In this part, the recommendation strategies for the IFL School are based on the SWOT-TOWS analysis indicated above. Most of these recommendation strategies concentrate on curriculum, marketing, HR, and other management strategies. To create SO, WO, ST, and WT, these formulations are formed by integrating two elements of the SWOT analysis. The T, O, W, and S are acronyms that symbolize the SWOT. The IFL School's SWOT analysis descriptions are also presented in the SWOT-TOWS **(Table 1)**. To help readers comprehend the above recommendation strategies in **Table 1**, the following explanations are provided:

3.2 Strengths (S) – Opportunities (O)

SO1: Should strengthen building capacities on quality, discipline, and morality: For students' progress and achievement, as well as the school's standard, it is necessary that teachers, staff, and students keep retaining the school's strengths, which include quality, discipline, and morality. The integration of this school's strengths with the existing curriculum can help students understand the significance of these elements. It assists in building a learning environment that encourages and shapes them into moral, responsible citizens who make a beneficial impact on society.

SO2: Should foster advertising to target customers: To increase the number of students, outreach to target customers must be promoted more forcefully. The school seemed to make use of one of the most effective social media platforms known today, Facebook ads. Additionally, school leader should take into consideration the following strategies:

• A free, organized social exhibition program called "Open Houses and Events" is offered to attract students to inquire about new course programs and other relevant school information.

• Encourage involvement among the school's former students in volunteering to become school ambassadors, allowing previous learners to share their personal experiences, advance the quality of the school, inspire other learners, and increase student enrollment.

SO3: Parents should be acknowledged for the quality of the school curriculum: Engaging students' parents with detailed information about the quality of the school's newly developed curriculum or program as well as its current curriculum can offer benefits since the rate of dropouts increases if students' parents have a clear understanding and trust in the standards of the school. Thus, there will undoubtedly be an increase in student enrollment.

SO4: Should enhance a positive relationship with parents: Strengthening the connection between the school and the students' parents is a duty of the school. The school must continue to apply and notify them by providing detailed information on the learning process, results, and assessment of the students' learning.

SO5: Should formulate an effective strategy to handle competitive forces: Effective management to succeed in a competitive market and gain the school's credibility requires a functional strategy that involves different kinds of strategies. In fact, prior to focusing on competitive external markets, the school should maintain its internal quality to gain external trust. The school should provide beneficial services to students, including advice, guidance, and job opportunities, to help them succeed and meet their satisfactions. Thus, market competition is no longer a concern when the school has high internal quality.

3.3 Weaknesses (W) – Opportunities (O)

WO1: Building staff capacity should be strongly encouraged: Staff capacity building is key to an organization's growth and success. Investing in staff training not only improves their skills and knowledge but also boosts job satisfaction and creates a more positive work environment. Creating a culture of continuous learning and offering professional staff training is beneficial to developing skills and increasing staff potential. In addition, matching staff members by collaborating with newly hired and experienced staff can provide one another with orientation, advice, and support during the process. Motivation like this not only helps the organization's long-term achievement, but it can also reflect the commitment of leadership to staff with caring responsibilities.

WO2: Should ask for technical training from the relevant government officials: Proposals to educational officials and professional trainers from other institutions participating in skill-based staff training to encourage staffs to learn more about new technological innovation applications, such as Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams, etc. This training is an innovative idea, and it is vital for teachers to be able to improve their knowledge and expertise in technology to integrate new technology into their teaching effectiveness and efficiency.

WO3: Should enhance and develop ESP courses procedures: Collaborating with local officials and educational organizations to organize conferences or workshops that involve TESOL or ELT, as well as other related sharing programs, with the purpose of making the ESP courses procedures more efficient and promoting its short courses to attract students' interest. It is also one of the most effective strategies for increasing student enrollment.

WO4: Internal strengthening should be maintained for the purpose of increasing the number of ESP courses students: The focus on internal reinforcement is also necessary to improve the curriculum's attractiveness and effectiveness. On top of that, it also helps to lower the rate of student reduction in ESP courses.

3.4 Strengths (S) – Threats (T)

ST1: Internal expenses considered unnecessary should be minimized under the economic crisis: Implementing strategies to reduce unnecessary internal expenses during an economic crisis provides an opportunity for school to carefully evaluate the costs and prioritize necessary expenses. Reducing wasteful internal expenses can help school management maintain financial stability and efficiently deal with economic crises. These savings require a detailed examination of all costs related to office supplies, additional service packages, and other irrelevant entertainment expenses.

ST2: Additional strategies should be developed to overcome competition from competitors: Focusing on developing a strong school's reputation is a powerful strategy to sustain itself against competitors and retain the rate of student reduction. Another strategy is to keep seeking out new techniques that make the school unique by offering unique programs or activities. In addition, continue conducting market research to identify target customers. The school should also ask for regular feedback from students to improve the school curriculum and services so that students' requirements are satisfied.

ST3: Stand strong positions despite major amendments to Ministry of Education policy: Retaining the core values of quality, discipline, and morality, which have served as the school's major strengths since the beginning, indicates the school's commitment to adapting the amendments to Ministry of Education policy. Regardless of this issue, building close connections with relevant officials in the Ministry of Education may help school get updated on upcoming modifications, which can help the school management have advance preparations against any modifications that are applied.

3.5 Weaknesses (W) – Threats (T)

WT1: Should search for reasonable or free training courses for employees: To reduce expenses, school management should seek out low- or free training courses like online training platforms, including short courses or seminars relevant to the skills of both experienced and new staff members, with the aim of providing them with the new skills and knowledge to boost their job performances more effectively. Training courses build more talents, and they may lead to higher-quality work and improve problem-solving and risk management skills to maintain a safer work environment on their own.

WT2: During the crisis, opt for a low-cost software system to help save on expenses: Using the lowest-cost option to reduce software costs, such as selecting low-cost or free and open-source software (FOSS) to control and store temporary data for the entire school, it could be beneficial and productive for the school to save during the economic crisis.

WT3: Prioritizing and maintaining the concerns of departing employees should come prior to further investments in technology: Focusing on the implementation of strategies that address the issue of staff turnover by keeping an eye on building potential staff members to become the resource person of the school prior to further making investments in technology. HR should conduct a research survey regularly to question staff members who wish to leave to understand the reasons behind them. To reduce staff departures, creating a more positive work culture that promotes and inspires them to keep staying excited about their jobs is paramount.

WT4: The market should conduct research related to the causes of the reduction in ESP courses: Continuing to track and analyze the market potential in detail will help figure out the causes of the increasing rate of student reduction in ESP courses. Discovering students' learning needs and preferences is essential for updating an effective and good-quality curriculum to meet the high standard.

WT5: It should be flexible to sustain itself against fresh competitors: Developing strategic flexibility with competitors is a must to cope with local challenges, such as offering an affordable school fee, full scholarships for low-income students, job opportunities for outstanding students who have completed a certain level, and so on. This flexible strategy not only benefits students, but it may also restrict the arrival of new competitors that recently entered the market, as it puts the startup competitors, or the lack of capital competitors give up eventually.

WT6: Should concentrate more on providing employee potential: Effective and efficient recruitment is an essential weapon for core resources to help improve and develop the quality of teaching procedures, reduce staff turnover, and attract more students to enroll in ESP courses. Furthermore, providing paid time off (PTO) and other incentives for staff and teachers is also a powerful tool for motivating and allowing them to be well-being and satisfied with their own jobs.

4. Conclusion

This research study seeks to address effective strategies for the IFL School with the purpose of discovering new tactics and recommendation strategies for sustainable growth. By applying SWOT-TOWS analysis concepts involving internal and external factors (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) to evaluate the issues and optimize the benefits, we discovered that, based on the SWOT-TOWS analysis in **Table 1** and the provided explanations, we have identified a variety of strategies to build more strengths. By integrating two elements of the SWOT analysis to identify SO, WO, ST, and WT, the results indicated that strengths could take advantage of opportunities, weaknesses can be used to explore new opportunities, threats can be converted into strengths, and weaknesses can be reduced to minimize the harmful effects of threats. Our research study provides essential insights for the IFL School to consider and propose new knowledge for further research.

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