



MODULE: SWOT ANALYSIS (STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, & THREATS)

OVERVIEW

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this module, you will be able to:

- Interpretation: Define the elements that make up a SWOT analysis
- Interpretation: Review a sample publication and its related sample SWOT analysis
- Analysis / Application: Conduct a SWOT analysis on the research article you are studying
- Evaluation: Create suggestions for future research based on your SWOT analysis

Checklist

Prior to meeting with mentor

- Review associated materials, including the research article and the SWOT example worksheet provided
- Using a research article specific to your research project, complete a SWOT analysis of the article
- Complete Five Minute Reflection

Discussion with mentor

- How might a SWOT analysis be applied to everyday research?
- Five Minute Reflection



Mentee Deliverables

- Deliverable 1: Deliverable 1: Bring a printed copy of your SWOT Analysis (Word worksheet file) to the next meeting.**
- Deliverable 2: Bring a printed copy of your responses to the Five-Minute Reflection to the next meeting.**

Materials for this Module

- SWOT_Analysis_Handout1_Sample_Publication (Note that the publication is also available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28986723> , but access will depend on your institution's journal subscriptions.)
- SWOT_Analysis_Handout2_Sample_SWOT_Analysis
- SWOT_Analysis_Handout3_Worksheet

Introduction

A SWOT analysis is an evaluation tool used in a variety of settings (businesses, big projects, small projects, large company strategic planning, small company strategic planning, research projects, etc.) that helps one identify the **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **T**hreats associated with the particular initiative. A SWOT analysis is a very helpful tool that can be used in planning or after completion of a project. A SWOT analysis can be used to evaluate a research project described in a journal publication. It is often helpful for someone not involved in the project to perform the SWOT analysis as they will easily see the WOTs. Most projects have many SWOs but only one or very few Ts.

- Strengths: aspects of the project (or initiative/business/etc. being evaluated) that give it an advantage over others.
- Weaknesses: correctable aspects of the projects that place it at a disadvantage relative to others.
- Opportunities: elements or angles that are unrealized and could provide an advantage to the project.
- Threats: elements or realities that could cause irreversible, serious problems for the project.

Determining the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of previously conducted research is a great way to begin thinking about how your work can fit into the research field. Remember, all research has some kind of limitation. Your job is to discover what those limitations are and see if you can build on the concepts that other researchers have started. Most research studies are not based on crazy new ideas, they are iteratively built concepts on which lots of people are building. So to be able to build efficiently, it's really helpful to analyze papers and topics using a SWOT analysis.

First define the strengths and weaknesses of the paper. Did they define the problem? Does their solution fit the problem? What did they do well? What did they do poorly? Were their techniques effective?

Assess if there are any opportunities that you could create from their ideas. Could different techniques be applied to the same concept? Are there any other ideas that are similar to this concept?



Lastly, determine if there is any threat to the validity of the papers conclusions. Is there any reason to believe that this research is biased or skewed? Are their samples large enough?

Assignment(s) for this Module

Assignment(s)

Read the sample publication provided and review the SWOT analysis handout for that article. After you understand the analysis of this article, complete your own analysis of an article using the Word worksheet file as a template. You can use an article you have already studied, an article provided by your mentor.

Deliverable 1: Bring a printed copy of your SWOT Analysis Worksheet (Word worksheet file) to the next meeting.

Five-Minute Reflection

Synthesize one question to discuss with your mentor (maybe a concept you are unclear on, something you found interesting, etc.).

What information did you feel was the most informative in this module? Least?

Deliverable 2: Bring a printed copy of your responses to the Five-Minute Reflection to the next meeting.