

**Utilizing Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)
Analysis of English Language Institute****Article info****Article Type:**

Original Research

Authors:Faezeh Amandadi¹,
Neda Fatehi Rad²**Abstract**

Most organizations including English language institutes require an assessment system that collects and analyzes data to evaluate and improve their performance. One essential technique to conduct such an assessment involves a discussion of an organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, commonly known as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis. The aim of the present study was to analyze the framework of Shokuh language institute in Kerman, Iran, by utilizing the SWOT analysis. To achieve the aims, a case study design was utilized using the SWOT analysis plan. The participants of this study included some students, teachers, parents and staff members from Shokuh language institute in Kerman. The participants were selected through purposive method of sampling. Semi-structured interview was used to collect the required data. The content of the transcribed interviews was qualitatively analyzed through coding procedures to identify the four components of SWOT analysis including strength, weakness, opportunity and threat. Based on the result of SWOT analysis, some strengths as knowledgeable teachers, good behavior of the manager, authorities, holding TTC courses, rewards, discounts, etc., and some weakness as shortage of physical facilities, no social event, lack of technological facilities, enough advertisement, and lack of credit of the certificate were identified. Moreover, some opportunities as having classes for different levels, taking advantage of virtual advertisements, using new teaching methods, etc., and some threats as using technology as well as on-line exams by the other institutes, unavailability of skilled and qualified teachers were found.

Article History:

Received: 2022/05/06

Accepted: 2022/09/02

Published: 2022/09/18

Keywords: SWOT Analysis, Case Study, English Language Institute

¹ M.A. Student in TEFL, Department of English Language, Kerman Branch, Islamic Azad University, Kerman, Iran
² Assistant Professor, Department of English Language, Kerman Branch, Islamic Azad University, Kerman, Iran
(Corresponding Author). Nedafatehi@yahoo.com

1. Introduction

Considering the present status of teaching and learning English in Iran, language institutes play a very important role in the society. As Farrahi Moghaddam, Nakhaee, Sheibani, Garrusi, and Amirkafi (2012) pointed out, the increasing number of English language institutes prepares the grounds of the increasing value of the English language in Iran. Consequently, language institute managers or supervisors who are cautious towards the quality of their performance need a continuous investigation of their language schools in order to be aware of their different and various challenges and provide an effective framework and procedure for future accomplishments. Such investigation could also be beneficial for surviving in this competitive situation where there are so many schools operating in different cities and even in small towns. There has been an increasing demand for learning English in Iran in recent years both nationally and individually (Sadeghi & Richards, 2021). Consequently, private language institutes are widely starting their business across the country. Moreover, one of the practical frameworks that can be used to optimize the function of diverse institutes and organizations including language schools and help their managers to adapt their services and activities to the needs of the population they serve is strategic planning (Bryson, 2004). A discussion of an institute's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, commonly called SWOT analysis is one of several strategic planning tools that gathers data from both internal and external factors of an organization or system and sometimes it is called internal-external analysis (Obolenskaya, Tyutyunnik, Moreva, & Simaeva, 2019). As Chan (as cited in Hashemi, Samani, & Shahbazi, 2017) points out, SWOT analysis is a helpful method for understanding the situation of a plan and preparing a fruitful blueprint for directing it.

SWOT analysis is a tool for strategic planning which collects information and divides it into two categories including internal information (strengths and weaknesses) and external information (opportunities and threats) (Obolenskaya et al., 2019). SWOT analysis serves as a helpful tool for institution managers in analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats involved in any enterprise (Krizhevsky, Sutskever, & Hinton, 2012). Specifically, SWOT is a fundamental model with the potential of assessing what a system can or cannot do, as well as its potential opportunities and threats (Ahmad, 2011). Therefore, this study planned to do a SWOT analysis of Shokuh English institute in Kerman, Iran, with the purpose of examining its performance as well as presenting ways to enhance its efficiency. While EFL learners in Iran experience six years of studying English courses at school with the purpose of learning to use English, most teachers complain about the inability of learners to properly use English. On the other hand, students themselves are not satisfied with their learning and most of them do not like their English classes at all though they were interested in English language at first (Razmjoo & Riazi, 2006). The inadequacy of English curriculum or system at schools leads learners and their parents to register in diverse language institutes branches which are popular in order to be a remedy for the learners' inability of using English comprehensively. While foreign language course is a compulsory subject in the school curriculum of Iran, the lack of informed language teachers and insufficient class hours inspire learners to look for better language learning courses and situations in private language schools (Samani, Hashemi, Shahbazi, & Sarhadi, 2017). This has made the role of language institutes more and more important in the foreign language context of Iran which requires a greater attention to the performance of language institutes and their efficiency as there are so many branches all over the country even in small cities and towns.

One of the ways that can be an efficient way of analyzing the performance of an organization or an institute is using SWOT analysis. Consequently, the researcher planned to examine the performance of one of the institutes in Kerman, Iran, with the purpose of finding ways to enhance its performance as well as help increase its efficiency. This is really important because the inefficiency of the language institutes not only can waste the learners' time, energy and money, but also may cause more negative effects on their English proficiency. SWOT analysis can be a helpful strategy for preparing an outstanding plan or strategy for a better management of language centers. The researcher of this study tried to analyze the framework of Shokuh language institute in Kerman, Iran, by utilizing the SWOT analysis and through the following research questions:

1. What are Shokuh English language institute's strengths?
2. What are Shokuh English language institute's weaknesses?
3. What opportunities can be provided for Shokuh English language institute?
4. What factors can be considered as a threat to the performance of Shokuh English language institute?

By doing such research, language institutes' managers and syllabus designers can be informed about the internal and external factors of language programs in institutes and their managers can be able to employ diverse range of strategies to maximize the strengths and minimize the weaknesses of their institutes. They would be aware of the possible opportunities to use and possible threats to prevent. Furthermore, the results of the present study could provide a great template for the authorities to have a more in-depth supervision over the increasing number of English institutes in Iran. Moreover, different stakeholders in Shokuh Institute including the authorities, teachers, students, parents, etc. can use the results in improving the status of the institute in different aspects. In addition, the authorities of the other language institutes can also benefit from the results of this SWOT analysis in order to upgrade the state of their institute. Finally, the authorities of the other educational settings such as language institutes and high schools can take useful insights from the results of this study and conduct SWOT analysis in their institute.

2. Review of the Related Literature

English is expanding quickly as an international language and different people are learning English because of different reasons around the world such as continuing studies, connecting to the Internet, traveling, and communications. English language status as "world English" has become a controversial subject of discussion (Thomas et al., 2014). English is known as the "world-wide lingua franca" (Brown, 2007). English is spoken as a first, second or foreign language all over the world. It is the official language in the USA, Canada, Australia, and England, while in India and Philippines it is spoken as a second language (Brown, 2007). The difference between ESL and EFL has always been important in language pedagogy. As the context between the ESL and EFL is different, the teaching method is different too. Since the EFL learners use the English language just in the classroom environment, the learners have more difficulty for gaining and grasping fluency in the language. Learners are exposed to their native language as soon as they leave their English classes. As a result, students may attempt for learning a second language only when it is required. On the other hand, some people learn a foreign language for "integrative" purposes (Joukoulian, 2016).

English is considered as an important tool of communication with the world beyond Iran's border and as a tool for providing access to necessary information such as technical and scientific texts in this globalized digital world (Kiany, Mahdavy, & Ghafar Samar, 2011). English is regarded as a cool or modern language in Iran and a tool of preparing information for tourists and visitors who do not understand Persian (Sadeghi & Richards, 2015). According to Bailey et al. (2013), Iranian EFL learners consider that they consider English language learning either important or somewhat important to their lives. English is of great importance for Iranian because they regard it as a cool and modern skill. In the official plan of public education in Iran, learners start their English courses at the age of twelve. However, their formal literacy education starts at the age of seven. Although English courses at school and universities are compulsory, most Iranian graduated students are unable to communicate in English. As Dahmardeh (2009) revealed students who graduate from school are not able to communicate in English. Kheirabadi and Alavi Moghaddam (2014) stated that high school students graduate from high school while they have passed general English courses for six years at school but they are not able to introduce themselves in English easily unless they have passed English courses in private language schools too. So, there is a requirement for private language schools in Iran.

Sadeghi and Richards (2021) pointed out that there is a high demand for learning English in Iran, both at the national and the individual levels. As a result, the number of private language institutes is increasing across the country. However, Mirhosseini and Khodakarami (2015) mentioned directors

and managers of language schools do not have a clear or obvious understanding of what communication in English means. Furthermore, Sadeghi and Richards (2015) revealed that most of language institutes have not been successful in teaching English language orally. The reasons could be attributed to the curriculum and the teaching materials and lack of different teachers or the classrooms limitations. In another study, Nouhi Jadesi, Razmjoo, and Ahmadi (2016) utilized SWOT analysis for analyzing and prioritizing the TEFL curriculum in Iran. Fifty students and fifteen instructors were the research participants. The weaknesses which were mentioned and prioritized in their study included untrained or poorly trained teachers, poorly designed materials, low quality of the system, low speed internet, inefficient teaching applications, and lack of human interaction. In addition, SWOT analysis was used by Razmjoo and Nouhi (2011) for evaluating junior high school English program in Iran. The participants were twenty experienced teachers and members of educational program. The findings showed that the program more suffered from weaknesses and threats than it enjoyed the strengths and took advantage of opportunities.

In a study by Samani et al. (2017), a SWOT analysis and strategic planning for Iranian language institutions development was conducted distributing a questionnaire among four language institute teachers in Chabahar. Some of the four items of SWOT were similar to the present study. Based on the obtained results, the individual instructors' reputation and competency for teaching English as well as warmth, helpfulness and efficiency of administration staff were identified as two strengths of language institutes. The flexibility of payment and giving discounts were among the opportunities proposed by the participants. Finally, tuition fees and easy access to the institute were among the threats and weaknesses, respectively. Hashemi et al., (2017) conducted research about teaching English in state-run and private language school in Mashhad, Iran. He focused on three major levels: teaching approaches, instructional designer, and pedagogic procedures. A total of 299 EFL teachers were selected by using cluster sampling strategy for conducting the research. The data analysis revealed significant differences at the sublevels of educational objectives, teachers' evaluation criteria, teaching-learning activities, and teacher-learner roles. Although the two contexts were similar in testing techniques and formats but they differed in assessing English language skills and sub-skills. The findings pointed out more form-focused, mechanical and translation methods are used in state-run schools while more interactive-communicative techniques which concentrate on learners autonomous learning are employed in private language schools. Sadeghi and Richards (2015) conducted research about issues and options of teaching English in Iran's private language schools. Eighty-nine EFL teachers were the participants of their study while they used classroom observation as the supplement at their study. The results revealed that institute courses reflect a poor understanding of the nature of spoken interaction. In the same year, Mohsenian, Rezai and Abdolmanafi-Rokni (2015) conducted research for investigating the criteria for selecting English language institutes' teachers in Iran. The managers of 100 institutes were selected randomly in four cities in Mazandaran province. The most import criteria were English skills, discipline, interaction, degree, appearance and teaching, living abroad, distance, and personal attributes were among the less influential factors in the process of teacher selection in private language institutes.

3. Methodology

In line with the nature of objectives of the present study, the design of the study was case study. Case studies are generally used in qualitative techniques of research. The greatest advantage of a case study is its in-depth aspect, since it attempts to understand one case in regards with the whole environment (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, & Sorensen, 2010). The researcher used the SWOT analysis plan for conducting such research. SWOT is an acronym which stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threatens. SWOT is one of different systems for examining different educational systems. "SWOT is a powerful and sometimes highly successful technique that can be applied to individuals, groups, teams, organizations, or even plans" (McGee & Crowley-Koch, 2021).

This study included 30 participants of four groups including 10 students (5 males & 5 females), 10

teachers (3 males & 7 females), 5 parents (3 females & 2 males) and 5 staff members (4 females & 1 male) from Shokuh English Language Institute in Kerman, Iran. The students were selected based on their study history. That is, those with more than three years of study experience in Shokuh English Language Institute were selected since they had enough experiences and were aware of the weaknesses and strengths of the current system. The instructors were voluntarily selected from those having more than 5 years of teaching experience in Shokuh institute so that they would have enough knowledge about the advantageous and disadvantageous of the current plan. The parents were voluntarily selected from among those who were in touch with the language institute so that they had enough knowledge of its policy, aims and different aspects of performance. The final group, staff members including the manager, and the managing educational directors of the institute, was voluntarily selected.

Semi-structured interview between the researcher and the participants was the main instrument in the present study. As Ary et al. (2010) mentioned, a personal interview could be used in a setting while the interviewer reads the questions and the interviewee answers the questions in a face-to-face situation. The interview of this study included 5 open-ended questions which were handed to the participants in advance since at the time of interview, the participants were able to declare their responds and opinions freely without hesitation. Each interview session lasted for about 30 to 60 minutes according to the participants' willingness for expressing their ideas or thoughts about each question. In addition, the interviews were done in Persian as all the participants might not be proficient enough to speak English fluently. The number of interviews continued to the point where no new information was obtained and data saturation was reached.

As explained earlier, the instrument in this study was a series of semi-structured interviews. The researcher utilized semi-structured interview in order to gather participants' responds and experiences with the present system of Shokuh Language Institute. A series of questions were designed considering the background of SWOT analysis as well as the previous literature, experts' opinion and the researcher's own experience. The questions were designed to concentrate on the participant's ideas or experiences about the advantages or disadvantages of Shokuh Language Institute as well as the opportunities and threats of it. The researcher distributed the questions in advance (about two to five days before conducting the interview) in order to establish a warm relationship with the participants and make them aware of the purpose of the study and give them enough time for collecting their opinions about each single question. The researcher held the interview session in Persian. Each interview session lasted till the participants responded all questions completely and data saturation was reached. The data collection procedure lasted about a month and all data was tape recorded with the consent of the participants. They were also assured that their ideas and views toward the language school would stay completely confidential and would only be used for research purposes.

4. Results and Discussion

1. Strengths

Analyzing the content of the interviews, the following strengths were identified for Shokuh English Language Institute:

- **Appropriateness of the courses**

As perceived by the interviewees, the courses covered in Shokuh English Language Institute are appropriate for different levels. For example, one of the interviewees stated that:

The courses of the institute are good to me..... specifically, the adolescent and adult are very good and useful. Also, the courses present with different approaches and focus on the language skills/sub and skills appropriately.

Another interviewees remarked that:

I think that the courses are very suitable for different levels. Indeed, the courses can respond to the needs of the learners at different levels because diverse books are taught at the institute. Furthermore,

they provide organized lessons with pre-planned syllabus.

- **Enhancing Learners' English Conversation**

A common perception of the interviewees was that Shokuh English Language Institute has been successful in enhancing the learners' English conversation. In one of the interviewees' saying: Our main mission has been improving the conversation ability of the students. According to my experience, I think that we have performed well in this regard. They will be able to make the English language more widespread and improve their communication.

As put by another interviewee:

The books which are taught in this institute can improve conversation of the students. The books are new and different from those used in the other institutes.

- **Appropriateness of the Fees**

Almost all the interviewees were satisfied with the fees. Given that financial matters are important in decisions of families, this is considered as a strong point of the institute. In the words on an interviewee:

To me, compared with the fees taken in the other institutes I know, here, the fees are appropriate.

As stated by another interviewee:

That the institute takes lower fees from top students or those with financial problems is a good point. There is also discount during special events.

- **Good Location and Decoration**

As perceived by many interviewees, the new location of the institute is very good. Besides, compared with the previous one, new decoration of the institute is beautiful.

As stated by one of the interviewees:

New location of the institute is good since it is at the center of the city and the students can easily go there.

As put by an interviewee:

Recently, decoration of the institute has changed and this has made the space of the center very good. In the past, the chairs had been arranged in an inappropriate way.

- **Good Behavior of the Manager, Authorities, and Teachers**

Almost all the respondents were satisfied with the manager's, authorities' and teachers' behaviors and judged their behavior and relationship with the students and the parents as good. In one of the interviewees' saying:

Mr.'s behavior with the students is very good. He respects them and has friendly relationship with his students.

As stated by another interviewee:

The manager behaves well. The authorities and teachers also have a good and respectful behavior. I am satisfied with their behavior. In fact, they really motivate the language learners.

- **Knowledgeable Teachers**

A common perception of the interviewees was that teachers teaching in Shokuh English Language Institute are knowledgeable and their education is related to the field of English Language Teaching (ELT). According to one of the interviewees:

Most of the teachers who teach in this institute are M.A in TEFL and this is a good point. I think that the education level of teachers leads to higher quality teaching.

As put by one of the other interviewees:

Shokuh teachers are educated and they have academic degrees in teaching.

They are fluent teachers and teaching with new collaborative methods.

- **Holding TTC Courses**

The fact that Shokuh English Language Institute holds regular TTC courses for teachers was perceived as a strong point according to the interviewees. As put by one of them:

We should participate in TTC courses and this causes us to better understand teaching methodologies.

Or as mentioned by another interviewee:

Each summer, TTC courses are hold for teachers and this helps us upgrade out teaching knowledge.

- **Rewards and Discounts**

A strong point of Shokuh English Language Institute, as perceived by the interviewees, was giving rewards to the students. In addition, they stated that the institute had some fee discounts for the students.

As mentioned by one interviewee:

The institute gives pens, pencils and notebooks as rewards to the top student.

As stated by another interviewee:

I got a discount (30000 tomans) because my sister also studies in this institute.

2. Weaknesses

Some quotations in the interview targeted the participants' perceptions regarding the weakness of the institute. The following weaknesses were identified for Shokuh English Language Institute:

- **Low Emphasis on Writing Skill**

According to the interviewees, in Shokuh English Language Institute, the emphasis is more on speaking and listening skills than writing skill. In a respondent's saying:

Listening and speaking skills are much emphasized, but no emphasis is on writing skill. Given that writing skill is also necessary for those pursuing their education, this skill should also be taken into account.

One of the other interviewees stated that:

Listening and speaking skills of the students are enhanced but their writing skill not. If writing skill is also practiced, it becomes much better.

- **Shortage of Physical Facilities**

A weakness stated by the interviewees was that the educational facilities of the institute including computer, library, etc. are not enough. In one of the respondents' wordings:

We don't have computers and library in the institute. I think these things are necessary. Some other institutes which I know have these things.

Another interviewee said that:

I don't see any facilities such as computer in Shokuh. There is no rest room in the institute. We don't have library.

- **Lack of Technological Facilities**

Another weakness mentioned by the respondents was that technological facilities are not much used in the institute. As put by an interviewee:

If mobile applications which are useful in language learning are used in the classes, the quality of the classes is increased. As far as I know, there are many new applications which can improve language

learning.

In the saying of another interviewee:

Teachers do not use internet in their teaching. This is while internet and virtual space and social networks have many advantages in English learning.

- **Lack of Enough Advertisement**

Almost all of the interviewees believed that Shokuh advertisements are weak in newspapers. According to one of them:

I saw no Shokuh advertisements in newspapers. In fact, I saw no specific advertisement for Shokuh Language Institute.

As mentioned by a respondent:

Since there is no advertisement in the newspaper, many people are not familiar with the services of our institute. We should broaden the scope of our advertisements.

- **Lack of Credit of the Certificate**

The interviewees believed that the certificate issued by Shokuh is not credible compared with the other institutes. According to one of them:

Although the manager says that the certificate issued by the institute is under supervision of Shokuh Institute, I think it is not credible compared with the other language centers.

Also, as mentioned by a respondent:

I have heard that the certificate of Shokuh is not valid. Maybe, the certificate is just appropriate for those who want go from a city to another one.

- **No Parking Place in the Institute**

The fact that the institute has no parking is considered as a weakness. One of the students stated that:

Here, we should park our bicycle or motorcycle outside and this is not pleasurable.

Another interviewee mentioned that:

When my son goes to Shokuh, he should park his bicycle outside of the institute.

- **No Social Event Held (e.g., Debate sessions)**

A weakness of the institute, as mentioned by the interviewees, was that no debate session is held in the institute. As stated by an interviewee:

The institute does not discuss about the problems with the parents and students. These meetings can help them solve the problems more quickly.

One of the other interviewees mentioned that:

No meeting session is held to better identify the problems. These sessions can reveal the problems to the authorities. The empty place of such meetings is felt.

3. Opportunities

- **Having Classes for Different Age Levels**

As stated by the interviews, if Shokuh courses become more diverse in terms of age levels of the students, this encourages the students to register also their children at this institute. As pointed out by one of the interviewees:

Shokuh should have classes for different age groups. My son is 4 years old and the authorities have told me that I can also bring my son to the institute because they are going to have classes for him.

- **Taking Advantage of Virtual Advertisements**

Many interviewees acknowledged that they have seen the advertisements of the institute in Instagram. But in other social networks, Shokuh does not have advertisements. Given that today many people use virtual space, this can be a good opportunity for the institute. As said by one of the interviewees:

I have seen Shokuh advertisements in Instagram. The page of Shokuh has many followers. And this is good in my idea. I myself follow the page of Shokuh in Instagram. But I have not seen any advertisement in the other social networks.

Or as put by another student:

I follow Shokuh in Instagram. Shokuh has broad ads in Instagram. The interesting point is that the materials posted in Instagram are very diverse. If Shokuh has advertisements in the other social networks, it becomes much better.

- **Increasing the Scope of Advertisements**

An opportunity extracted from the interview data was that Shokuh should increase the scope of advertisements beyond newspaper. In one of the interviewees' sayings:

If different advertising techniques including SMS, billboards, etc. are used, more individuals become familiar with the services of the institute and it has many advantages for the mentioned institute.

As mentioned by another interviewee:

To make Shokuh more popular, I think that the authorities should make use of different advertising methods. For example, they can use banners in the crowded parts of the city.

- **Using Standard and Up-to-date Books**

As another opportunity identified in the interviewees, using standard and up-to-date books can be considered as an opportunity for the institute. One interviewee stated that:

In my opinion, if more books which are standard and new are used in addition to the already used books, the quality of education is increased. Although the books which are now used are good, it is better to use more books.

Or as said by another interviewee:

I believe that using supplementary materials in the form of new books in line with global standards increase the motivation of students to learn English and this in turn can lead to popularity of the institute.

- **Holding Social Events**

In the words of the interviewees, the authorities can hold debate sessions in an attempt to identify the challenges and problems of the institute. As mentioned by an interviewee:

The institute can discuss, about the problems which exist, with the parents and students. This can help them solve the problems more easily. At present, no such meetings are held.

One of the other interviewees said that:

In order to better identify the problems and difficulties of the institute, it is better for them to hold meeting sessions. These sessions can reveal the problems to which the authorities are blind.

- **Using New Teaching Methods**

Another opportunity for the institute which was put forth by the respondents was using new teaching methods. As stated by a respondent:

If teachers teach English using new teaching methods, students learn better. Because new methods take the needs of students into account, they can be beneficial for them. Therefore, teachers should use new teaching methods in their classes.

As recommended by another interviewee:

Using new teaching methods is very important because some methods are old and cannot materialize the aims of the students. Teachers can help students reach their goals, using new teaching principles.

- **Holding International Exam Preparation Classes**

Another opportunity, as mentioned by interviewees, for Shokuh Institute is holding international exam preparation classes. According to a person:

Because migration has been recently increased, Shokuh can hold preparation classes for TOEFL or IELTS exams. Many people welcome such classes.

According to another person:

For the purpose of higher education purposes or migration abroad, many people need IELTS certificate. If Shokuh Institute can hold preparation classes, we welcome it.

4. Threats

The following sentences were extracted from the students' interviews. All were identified as threats to the performance of Shokuh English language institute:

- **The Use of More Advanced Technology in the Other Institutes**

One of the threats which can jeopardize the status of Shokuh Institute was that the other institutes benefit technological advancements in their teaching methods. In this regard, one of the interviewees said:

I have heard that some institutes in Shiraz use popular sites for English learning to help their students learn English better. But these things are not used in this institute.

Or as mentioned by another interviewee:

As you know some applications such as Duolingo can help students in learning English. If these applications are used by teachers, their methods of teaching become more up-to-date and this is a merit for them.

- **Holding On-line Exams by the Other Institutes**

Another threat identified in the responses of the interviewees was that some institutes already hold final exams through on-line procedures. According to one of the interviewees:

One of my relatives who studies in ILLI told me that their final exams are held in an on-line way. I think this is very good and saves time of students. If Shokuh can also hold its exams through on-line procedures, it becomes much better.

- **A More Ideal Location of the Other Institutes Considering Their Parking Lot**

Another threat extracted from the interviews was that the other institutes have a parking place. According to a respondent:

Shokuh Language Institute has a parking place and it is a merit, I think. If Shokuh can provide us with such a place, its status improves in my view.

As mentioned by another person:

We have problem with parking our cars. But this is not the case in the other institutes. If this problem is solved, we can go to the institute by personal car.

- **Unavailability of Skilled and Qualified Teachers**

Another threat which was identified in the responses of the interviewees was that there are few qualified teachers in it, and the institute should try to absorb them.

As put by a respondent:

Authorities should take appropriate measures to hire as much qualified teachers as possible to improve

the quality of education.

According to another person:

As far as I know, there are not many good teachers in this institute. Accordingly, the authorities should try to keep the experienced teachers.

As mentioned above, this study aimed at analyzing Shokuh English Language Institute using the SWOT analysis procedure. Through SWOT analysis, the following strengths were found for Shokuh English Language Institute: Appropriateness of the courses; enhancing learners' English conversation; appropriateness of the fees; good location and decoration, good behavior of the manager, authorities, and teachers, knowledgeable teachers; holding TTC courses; and rewards and discounts. Similarly, in Samani et al. (2017) SWOT analysis, the individual instructor's reputation and competency for teaching English was identified as a strength for Shokouh Language Institute. Moreover, warmth, helpfulness and efficiency of administration staff were identified as a strength in their study. Moreover, the weaknesses identified for Shokuh English Language Institute were as follows: Low emphasis on writing skill; shortage of physical facilities; lack of technological facilities; lack of enough advertisement; lack of credit of the certificate; no parking place in the institute; and no social event held (e.g., debate sessions). Consistently, Hashemi et al. (2017) identified institute advertising in mass media (radio, television, and newspaper) as a weakness. In addition, Rajablariani, Hassankhan, and Rafezi (2012) mentioned low speed internet and inefficient teaching applications as the weaknesses of the language institutes. Furthermore, the following opportunities were extracted for Shokuh English Language Institute: Having classes for different age levels; taking advantage of virtual advertisements; increasing the scope of advertisements; using standard and up-to-date books; holding social events; using new teaching methods; and holding international exam preparation classes. Palfreyman's (2006) research suggested that a variety of materials in the new books as well as applying the recent teaching methods can lead to increasing students' motivation, engagement, participation, and inspiration. Also, the findings of Pazhouhesh (2014) showed the need for the new teaching methods in private language schools. Finally, the threats identified for Shokuh English Language Institute were as follows: The use of more advanced technology in the other institutes, holding online exams by the other institutes, a more ideal location of other institutes considering their parking lot, and unavailability of skilled and qualified teachers. Similarly, employing English experienced teachers in spite of unavailability of skilled teachers has been pointed out in Hashemi et al.'s(2017) SWOT analysis. In addition, improving training and educational programs related to teaching and learning was mentioned as a development strategy. Consistent with this, increasing institute publicity by mass media and brochure distribution has been enumerated as a conservative strategy. In the same vein with this study, Samani et al. (2017) referred to increasing the technological facilities of the institute as a competitive strategy from which language institutes can benefit. Moreover, similar to the present study, Hashemi et al. (2017) suggested offering distance learning courses with the possibility of interaction among learners and teachers and learners themselves as a competitive strategy. Finally, consistent with this study, Samani et al. (2017) mentioned choice of suitable location for institute with easy access as a defensive strategy.

5. Conclusion

This research analyzed the framework of Shokuh language institute in Kerman by utilizing the SWOT analysis. As a result of SWOT analysis, concerning the first research question 'What are Shokuh English language institute's strengths?', the following strengths were found for Shokuh English Language Institute: Appropriateness of the courses; enhancing learners' English conversation; appropriateness of the fees; good location and decoration, good behavior of the manager, authorities, and teachers, knowledgeable teachers; holding TTC courses; and rewards and discounts. Regarding the second research question 'What are Shokuh English language institute's weaknesses?', low emphasis on writing skill; shortage of physical facilities; lack of technological facilities; lack of enough advertisement; lack of credit of the certificate; no parking place in the institute; and no social event held (e.g., debate sessions) were identified in the interviews. On the third research question 'What opportunities can be provided for Shokuh English language institute?', having classes for different age

levels; taking advantage of virtual advertisements; increasing the scope of advertisements; using standard and up-to-date books; holding social events; using new teaching methods; and holding international exam preparation classes were the opportunities identified for Shokuh English language institute. As far as the last research question 'What factors can be considered as a threat to the performance of Shokuh English language institute?' was concerned, the following issues were identified as the threats to Shokuh English language institute: The use of more advanced technology in the other institutes; holding on-line exams by the other institutes; a more ideal location of other institutes considering their parking lot; and unavailability of skilled and qualified teachers.

It is recommended for the authorities of the institute to hold debate sessions with the presence of knowledgeable teachers in order to identify the problems and challenges of the institute and find some practical solutions for them through combining the strengths and the opportunities identified. Moreover, the institute should seek newly developed and effective language programs and textbooks which are responsive to learners' needs. Also, it should put more emphasis on writing skill, using standard and up-to-date books. Furthermore, using some instruments such as brochures and text messaging, the scope of advertisements should be broadened if increasing the fame of the institute is sought. If the institute is going to use new teaching methods, the range of facilities should be increased. It should be noted that those teachers having a higher quality of teaching should be given rewards and extra salary to encourage other teachers to use better teaching methods. In seeking appropriate ideas for increasing the technological facilities of the institute, the institute should give rewards to the stakeholders who can provide good ideas. Modeling the other institutes, Shokuh Institute should try to hold online examinations and classes and improve the required facilities and training. The present lack of essential facilities of the institute should be examined deeply so that the shortage of facilities can be removed or illuminated. Finally, the virtual facilities of the institute should be increased so that final exams can be held online like the other popular institutes. It is necessary for Shokuh Institute to find a solution for the problem of parking lot such as considering changing the place of the institute.

In line with the findings of the present study, the following implications can be mentioned for the present study: Firstly, some appropriate measures including holding debate sessions with the presence of knowledgeable teachers, improving the present training and educational programs of teachers, looking for newly developed and effective language programs and textbooks can be taken by the authorities to develop Shokuh Institute and similar institutes and add to their efficiency in the global village where learning English is a must for human being. Secondly, some strategies including giving rewards and extra salary to the teachers, having a higher quality of teaching, giving rewards to the stakeholders who can provide cost-effective ideas for increasing the technological facilities of the institute, improving the required facilities and training to hold online examinations and classes can be selected and implemented to help Shokuh Institute and similar institutes compete with their competitors in today's competitive market. Thirdly, in order to survive, Shokuh Institute and similar institutes should take some conservative strategies including more emphasis on writing skill, using standard and up-to-date books, increasing the scope of advertisements, taking the advantage of debate sessions through combining the existing weaknesses and opportunities. Fourthly, to defend against the competitors, the authorities of Shokuh Institute and similar institutes should try to take appropriate actions including examining the present lack of essential facilities of the institute, increasing the virtual facilities of the institute, and finding a solution for the problem of parking lot through merging the weaknesses and threats.

References

- Ahmad, R. O. (2011). Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis for farming system businesses management: Case of wheat farmers of Shadervan District, Shoushtar Township, Iran. *African Journal of Business Management*, 5(22), 9448–9454.
- Ary, D., Jacobs, L., Razavieh, A., & Sorensen, C. (2010). *Introduction to Research in Education*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Bailey, V., Meshkat, T., Reiter, M., Morzinski, K., Males, J., Su, K. Y., . . . Mamajek, E. (2013). HD

- 106906 b: A planetary-mass companion outside a massive debris disk. *The Astrophysical Journal Letters*, 780(1), 1–7.
- Brown, L. (2007). Ten. "A Most Irregular Traffic": The Oceanic Passages of the Melanesian Labor Trade. In *Many middle passages* (pp. 184–203): University of California Press.
- Bryson, J. M. (2004). What to do when stakeholders matter: stakeholder identification and analysis techniques. *Public Management Review*, 6(1), 21–53.
- Dahmardeh, M. (2009). *English Language Teaching in Iran and Communicative Language Teaching*. University of Warwick.
- Farrahi Moghaddam, J., Nakhaee, N., Sheibani, V., Garrusi, B., & Amirkafi, A. (2012). Reliability and validity of the Persian version of the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI-P). *Sleep and Breathing*, 16(1), 79–82.
- Hashemi, S. M., Samani, F. S., & Shahbazi, V. (2017). Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) analysis and strategic planning for Iranian language institutions development. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 4(2), 139–149.
- Joukoulian, A. (2016). Teaching English as a foreign language today integrated approach versus communicative approach. *CALR linguistics Journal Center For Applied Linguistics Research*, 7(2), 122-143.
- Kheirabadi, R., & Alavi Moghaddam, S. (2014). New horizons in teaching English in Iran: A transition from reading-based methods to communicative ones by "English for Schools" series. *International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World*, 5(4), 225–232.
- Kiany, G. R., Mahdavy, B., & Ghafar Samar, R. (2011). Towards a harmonized foreign language education program in Iran: National policies and English achievement. *Literacy Information and Computer Educational Journal (LICEJ)*, 2(3), 462–469.
- Krizhevsky, A., Sutskever, I., & Hinton, G. E. (2012). Imagenet classification with deep convolutional neural networks. *Advances in Neural Information Processing Systems*, 1(1), 1–9.
- McGee, H. M., & Crowley-Koch, B. J. (2021). Behavioral systems analysis in organizations. In *Applied Behavior Science in Organizations* (pp. 99–127): Routledge.
- Mirhosseini, S.-A., & Khodakarami, S. (2015). A glimpse of contrasting de jure–de facto ELT policies in Iran. *English language teaching in the Islamic Republic of Iran: Innovations, trends and challenges*, 23–32.
- Mohsenian, M., Rezai, A., & Abdolmanafi-Rokni, S. J. (2015). An investigation into the criteria for selecting teachers in English language institutes in Iran. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 2(5), 215–230.
- Nouhi Jadesi, N., Razmjoo, S. A., & Ahmadi, A. (2016). Factors Influencing Iranian Untrained EFL Raters' Rating Group Oral Discussion Tasks: A Mixed Methods Design. *Applied Research on English Language*, 5(2), 191-210.
- Obolenskaya, L. V., Tyutyunnik, I. G., Moreva, E. L., & Simaeva, N. P. (2019). Matrix Analysis of Obstacles to Innovation for Managing a Multisectoral Complex. *Amazonia Investiga*, 8(21), 596–601.
- Palfreyman, D. (2006). Social context and resources for language learning. *System*, 34(3), 352–370.
- Pazhouhesh, M. (2014). Teaching English in state-run and private language schools in Iran: Approaches, designs and procedures. *International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World*, 5(1), 42–52.
- Rajablariani, H. R., Hassankhan, F., & Rafezi, R. (2012). Effect of colored plastic mulches on yield of tomato and weed biomass. *International Journal of Environmental Science and Development*, 3(6), 590.
- Razmjoo, S. A., & Nouhi, N. (2011). A SWOT analysis of the junior high school English program:

- A grounded theory approach. *International Proceedings of Economics Development and Research*, 26, 182–186.
- Razmjoo, S. A., & Riazi, A. M. (2006). Is communicative language teaching practical in the expanding circle. *Journal of Language and Learning*, 4(2), 144–171.
- Sadeghi, K., & Richards, J. C. (2015). Teaching spoken English in Iran's private language schools: Issues and options. *English Teaching: Practice & Critique*, 14(2), 210–234.
- Sadeghi, K., & Richards, J. C. (2021). Professional development among English language teachers: challenges and recommendations for practice. *Heliyon*, 7(9), 1–7.
- Samani, F. S., Hashemi, S. M., Shahbazi, V., & Sarhadi, H. (2017). Investigating the relationship between marketing mix elements and Iranian EFL learners' choice of language institutions. *European Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*, 2(1), 11–22.
- Thomas, F., Cosse, A., Le Panse, S., Kloareg, B., Potin, P., & Leblanc, C. (2014). Kelps feature systemic defense responses: insights into the evolution of innate immunity in multicellular eukaryotes. *New Phytologist*, 204(3), 567–576.
- Tilson, D., Lyytinen, K., & Sørensen, C. (2010). Research commentary—Digital infrastructures: The missing IS research agenda. *Information Systems Research*, 21(4), 748–759.