

Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, and Risks (SCOR©): A Strategic Tool for Business, Personal and Case Analyses

Ann T. Neulicht

Rehabilitation Consultant / Raleigh, NC, USA

Although developed as a business management tool, SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis can be used in any situation requiring strategic planning to reach an objective. Adapting SWOT for personal, case, and evaluatee issues, SCOR© (Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, Risks) is introduced as a method which can be utilized to visually synthesize information as a strategic step in case conceptualization for earnings capacity analysis. Specific questions for consideration are provided as well as a schematic for use in report writing.

Keywords: Strengths, Challenges/Weaknesses, Opportunities, Risks/Threats; case conceptualization; business/practice planning; career/vocational development; earnings capacity analysis.

History and Uses of SWOT Analysis

The exact origin of SWOT analysis is unclear. While some scholars credit Stanford University Professor Albert Humphrey who led a research project funded by Fortune 500 companies to determine problems with corporate planning and create a system for change management, others cite Harvard Business School academics such as George Albert Smith, Jr., C. Roland Christensen, and Kenneth Andrews as playing a pivotal role in developing SWOT for the analysis of case studies (e.g., Panagiotou, 2003; Chermack & Kasshanna, 2007; Helms & Nixon, 2010; Madsen, 2016). Regardless of genealogy, SWOT has had high levels of usage over the past half-century and has impacted academic circles, organizational practice, and social context at different levels. SWOT has been utilized internationally in countries such as Finland, UK, Australasia, Czech Republic, and China (Madsen, 2016), and there are multiple variations of the acronym including USED, TOWS (Wehrich, 1982), WOTSUP, SOFT (Panagiotou, 2004), and SORF (Shadfar, 2013). Based on affinity diagrams to group and classify studies which utilize SWOT analysis, Helms and Nixon (2010) found that SWOT is frequently applied to organizational assessments for strategic planning not only for individual organizations (e.g., healthcare, government, not-for-profit, for-profit companies), but when comparing (two or several) companies, as well as in the study of industry(s), country-wide analyses, and as a teaching tool for strategic analysis (e.g., business case study, tool for student decision-making, political correctness). SWOT has also been utilized and applied outside a pure business domain. Rizzo and Jounghyum (2005) point out that SWOT analyses have been used for urban-renewal projects, website design, youth sports programs, and the evaluation of academic research centers. SWOT has also been used in human service settings to develop a social science evidence base (Huxley, 2001), analyze adapted physical activity (Hutzler, 2007) and nursing management (Pearce, 2007), to examine issues that face career counselors (Savickas, 2003; Hansen, 2011), analyze the field of counseling psychology (Leong & Leach, 2007), as a coding mechanism to identify how rehabilitation counselors viewed anticipated changes (Barros-Bailey, Benshoff, & Fischer (2008), and provide career self-awareness (Shurden & Shurden, 2013). Personal applications include Personal SWOT (Ilott, 1997), and Self-SWOT (Addams & Alfred, 2013).

SWOT analysis has been criticized for being vague, (overly) simplistic, mechanistic, and subjective with confusion regarding categorization of variables and a lack of strategic direction (e.g., Helms & Nixon, 2010; Chermack & Kasshanna, 2007; Panagiotou, 2003; Pickton & Wright, 1998). Thoroughness of brainstorming, quantity/timeliness of information and use of other strategic methods is suggested to add focus for decision makers (Helms & Nixon, 2010). Because SWOT may sometimes be used to justify a previously decided course of action rather than as a means to open up new possibilities, Chermack & Kasshanna (2007) suggest that the proper use of SWOT is as one component of a larger strategy system.

What is SWOT Analysis?

SWOT is a planning tool used to understand Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats involved in a project or business. As an instrument for strategic planning, SWOT is used as a framework for organizing and using data and information gained from situational analyses of internal and external environments. Factors internal to an organization can be classified as strengths (**S**) or weaknesses (**W**), and those external to a firm can be classified as opportunities (**O**) or threats (**T**). Internal factors (Strengths/Weakness) can include human/physical resources, finances, activities/processes, and past experience. External factors (Opportunities/Threats) can include future trends, the economy, funding sources, demographics, legislation/legal decisions and local, national or international events.

Strengths. A strength is a resource or capacity that is effectively used to achieve objectives. Strengths are positive tangible and intangible attributes internal to an organization or practice. They are the characteristics of a business or team that give it an advantage over others in the industry, organization or setting. Strengths can be process capabilities, financial resources, products/services, customer good will/loyalty, business culture, a well-known brand name, economies of scale, superior talent, marketing skills, and/or committed employees with certifications, reputation and leadership capabilities. Identification of strengths involves asking questions such as:

- What gives your business an advantage or disadvantage over others in achieving objectives?
- What do you do that is unique in the marketplace?
- What do your referral sources/evaluatees ask you to do over and over again?
- What tools/resources do you have to accomplish your tasks?

Weaknesses. A weakness is a limitation, fault, or defect that prevents the achievement of objectives and/or detracts from an ability to attain goals. Weaknesses are characteristics that place an organization or practice at a disadvantage relative to others. Factors that do not meet established standards can also weaken an organization. Examples of weaknesses include limited financial resources and undertrained employees. Identification of weaknesses involves asking:

- Which areas might the organization improve?
- What do you not feel comfortable doing?
- What needed resources, staff, or skills do you lack?

Opportunities. An opportunity is a favored situation for an organization. This may be a trend, change or perhaps a previously overlooked opportunity that allows the possibility of increased demand for a product or service. Opportunities are external attractive factors that represent the reason for an organization to exist and develop. Opportunities are factors that exist in the environment which will propel the organization; they rise when an organization can benefit from conditions in its environment to plan and execute strategies that enable more profitability. Examples include rapid market growth, rival firms that are complacent (or retiring), changing needs, and new areas of expertise. Identification of opportunities involve asking:

- Are there new situations coming down the road?
- Are there new tools/skills available to you?

- Are there gaps in the market that you can fill?
- Are there partnerships that might be fruitful?

Threats. A threat is any unfavorable situation in the organization's environment that is potentially damaging to its strategy. The threat may be a barrier, a constraint, or anything external that might cause problems, damage or injury. Threats are external factors, beyond an organization's control, which could place the organization's mission or operation at risk. The organization may benefit by having contingency plans to address them if they should occur. In analyzing a perceived threat, the probability of occurrence and seriousness of each threat should be assessed by an organization or individual. Identification of threats involves asking questions such as:

- Who is your competition and what do they offer that you can't do as well or at all?
- Are there environmental changes or situations that could cause problems for you and your products?
- What other roadblocks are being thrown in your path?

While a basic SWOT analysis template consists of a grid with 4 quadrants, as illustrated in Figure 1, the design can easily be graphically enhanced as evidenced with an online search for "SWOT images."

Action Planning. In addition to the identification of Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats, a SWOT analysis may involve preparation of an action plan to examine how external opportunities and threats are related to internal strengths and weakness in order to determine whether an objective is attainable and to create a strategy for moving forward. For example, a strategic objective for Strength-Opportunity analysis would involve pursuit of new opportunities that fit the strengths of an organization. A strategic objective for Weakness-Opportunity analysis is to eliminate weaknesses to exploit new opportunities. Strength-Threat strategic objectives involve using strengths to ward off threats while the objective for Weakness-Threats is to develop defense strategies in order to keep existing weaknesses from becoming targets of threats. In developing goals and objectives, organizations

Strengths	Weaknesses
Opportunities	Threats

Figure 1. Basic SWOT analysis grid.

must capitalize on strengths, overcome or minimize weaknesses, take advantage of new opportunities and respond to threats. Organizations must be realistic about their strengths and weaknesses to distinguish between where the organization is today and where it could be in the future. Analysis must occur in relation to an organization's core values, mission, mandate, goals, and vision. Members of a strategic planning team should be analytic and specific, record all ideas, think outside the box as well as be open to change. While complexity and over-analysis should be avoided, team members must try not to disguise weakness, merely list errors or mistakes, lose sight of external influences/trends or allow the SWOT analysis to become a blame laying exercise. Pitfalls of SWOT are that it can be very subjective thus, SWOT should be used as a guide, not a prescription.

Who Needs SWOT?

In addition to strategic planning a SWOT analysis can be useful in workshop sessions, brainstorming meetings, product evaluation, personal development planning, decision making, product launch and job changes. A job holder may utilize SWOT when a supervisor has issues with work output, when assigned to a new job, at the beginning of a new financial year with fresh targets or if seeking to improve job performance. SWOT analysis may be helpful to a business unit when the team has not met its targets, customer service can be better, when launching a new business unit and/or when a new team leader is appointed. A company SWOT analysis can be utilized when revenue, cost, and expense targets are not being achieved, market share is declining, industry conditions are unfavorable or when launching a new business venture. A personal SWOT analysis can be useful for reaching a personal goal, improving performance at work, applying for a new job, or other situations requiring an honest and detailed look at what factors may be supporting an individual or holding them back. Strengths may lead to opportunities, while weaknesses could make an individual vulnerable to certain threats. In a career change SWOT analysis, one examines professional strengths as well as any weaknesses that may need to be addressed before switching careers. This allows an individual to take into account external factors such as networking opportunities, new market trends, quality of life issues, and competitors. Weighing key factors can help clarify the steps needed in order to successfully transition to a new career.

Personal Analysis/Career Assessment using SCOR©: Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, Risks

Making the most of one's talents and opportunities in a business context helps an organization or practice carve a sustainable market niche. Used in a personal context, this strategy can help develop a career in a way that takes best advantage of talents, abilities, and opportunities. With thought, one can uncover opportunities that one might not have otherwise spotted. By understanding weaknesses (or challenges), one can manage or eliminate threats that might otherwise impede an ability to move forward. Looking at oneself using an established framework can enable an individual to separate themselves from peers and further develop specialized talents and abilities needed to advance career and personal goals ... to "score" in a career or life change. Adapted from the SWOT mnemonic, SCOR© was developed as a process for individuals and evaluatees to consider Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, and Risks from a personal perspective as well as from an integration of formal/informal assessment results. Analysis of personal Strengths involves questions such as:

- What advantages do you have that others don't have?
- What sets you apart? (e.g., skills, certification, education, specialized training, connections)
- What do you do better than anyone else?
- What personal resources can you access?
- What do other people (i.e., colleagues, co-workers, supervisors, referral sources, evaluatees) see as your strengths?
- Which of your achievements are you most proud of?

- What values do you believe in that others fail to exhibit?
- Are you part of a network? What connections do you have with influential people?

Challenges must also be considered from personal/internal as well as external perspectives:

- What tasks do you usually avoid because you don't feel confident doing them?
- What do people around you see as your weaknesses? (Do other people see weaknesses that you don't see? Do co-workers consistently outperform you in key areas?)
- Are you completely confident in your education and skills training? If not, where are your weaknesses?
- What are your negative work habits? (e.g., often late, disorganized, poor at handling stress?)
- Do you have personality traits that hold you back? (e.g., if you have to present to groups meetings on a regular basis, a fear of public speaking could be a major weakness)

A look at strengths or elimination of Challenges may open up new Opportunities. Useful opportunities may be found in networking events, educational classes and conferences. If a colleague is going on extended leave, additional responsibilities could be reassigned to gain experience as taking on a new role may enhance skill development. If public speaking is not a preference, online teaching/seminars may provide similar exposure. Relevant questions for uncovering Opportunities include:

- What new technology can help you?
- Can you get help from others or from people via the Internet?
- How can you take advantage of a growing market?
- Do you have a network of strategic contacts to help you and offer advice?
- What trends (management or otherwise) do you see in your company/field and how can you take advantage of them?
- Are any of your competitors failing to do something important? If so, can you take advantage of their mistakes?
- Is there a need in your company or industry that no one is filling?
- Do your referral sources, customers, or vendors complain about something in your company or industry? If so, can you create an opportunity by offering a solution?
- If your company is expanding, do you have specific skills that could help with the process?

Identification of Risks involves questions such as:

- What obstacles do you currently face at work?
- Are any of your colleagues competing with you for projects or roles?
- Is your job (or the demand for the things you do) changing?
- Does changing technology threaten your position?
- Could any of your challenges lead to threats?

Application of SCOR® to an Eevaluee

Much like a personal application of SCOR®, similar questions can be asked of an eevaluee to bring together relevant Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, and Risks for consideration in an earnings capacity analysis. Information can be pulled from medical/educational/vocational records, assessment results as well as a directed Vocational Diagnostic Interview. Identification of Strengths involves asking questions such as:

- What do you do well?

- What are your skills? Talents? Personality Traits? Achievements?
- What unique resources can you draw on?
- What do others see as your strengths?
- What type of support do you have – people that can help you?
- What are documented strengths from medical/academic/vocational records and pre/post assessment results?

Determining Challenges involves asking:

- What do you see as challenges for you?
- What are others likely to see as challenges for you?
- How could you improve?
- Do you need additional skills?
- Are there personality issues or traits that concern you/hold you back?
- Where do you have fewer resources than others?
- What are documented challenges from medical/academic/vocational records and pre/post assessment results?

Analysis of potential Opportunities involves asking:

- What opportunities are open to you?
- What trends can you take advantage of?
- How can you turn your strengths into accomplishments?
- With your strengths, what could you do that you're not doing already (future studies/education? career change?)
- Are there accommodations or interventions that can accentuate strengths and/or alleviate challenges?

In evaluatee may not realize past, present or future Risks without consideration of questions such as:

- What external obstacles could stop you from your goal? (peer pressure? Drugs?, family/community environment?)
- What threats could harm you?
- What threats do your challenges expose?

Using a schematic first developed by this author in 2017, the above questions are provided in Figure 2.

Case Study¹

“Kate” is an 18 year old woman who was injured in a 2017 vehicular crash (summer prior to her senior year in high school). Past medical history includes arm, wrist, elbow, and knee (sports) injuries with no required surgeries and no recorded functional limitations. There is no pre-accident history of psychiatric treatment, or drug/alcohol consumption. Pre-injury, “Kate” enjoyed everything about water including swimming and boating. She was very involved in sports including softball (MVP, high school team), tennis, horseback riding/competition (Western Pleasure), and volleyball. She also enjoyed dancing and participating in beauty pageants. She was a member of the Wildlife Club and volunteered with a group of fisherman who are visually impaired. She loved to paint.



Figure 2. SCOR®: Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, Risks (Neulicht, 2019)

On arrival at The Medical Center, a Glasgow Coma Scale of 14 is documented. Ms. C was hemodynamically unstable and required life support as well as a medically induced coma. ICU stay was complicated by ventilator associated pneumonia, new developing hemothorax, intraperitoneal abscesses, fistula, extreme anxiety, and UTI. MRI results reveal spinal cord infarct at the levels of T2 through conus medularis. CRRT was initiated and Insulin was required for hyperglycemia. Resolved problems at discharge included right pleural effusion, liver shock, thrombocytopenia, adrenal insufficiency, excessive incisional edema, coagulopathy, left hemothorax, hypothermia, hyperkalemia, and lactic acid acidosis. Due to her splenectomy, Ms. C received Pneumococcal and Meningococcal Vaccines. Ms. C transitioned to the Kennedy Krieger Institute for Spinal Cord Rehabilitation for further medical management and a comprehensive intensive activity-based program. She has subsequently participated in outpatient physical, occupational, aquatic, and equine therapies (including successful use of a ReWalk Exoskeleton). She has been evaluated by Driver's Rehabilitation and the family has purchased an adapted truck per recommendations. She is followed by a Psychiatrist, Urologist and Vascular Surgeon for

paraplegia (T9 ASIA-B SCI), neurogenic hostile bladder, recurrent UTIs, and aortic dissection/Thoracic Endovascular Aortic Repair (TEVAR).

"Kate's" pre-injury (unskilled) positions required at least Light exertion as well as Occasional Stooping and Crouching. Her immediate/extended family and role models have held a variety of Skilled positions requiring Sedentary to Heavy exertion as well as Occasional crawling and Occasional to Frequent Climbing, Balancing, Stooping, Kneeling, Crouching. Tasks have required Very High General Learning Ability, Verbal/Spatial Aptitude, Form Perception, Finger/Manual Dexterity, Color Discrimination; High (above average) Numerical/Clerical Aptitude, Motor Coordination; and at least Average Eye-Hand-Foot Coordination. Job duties have required the ability to direct/control/plan, perform a variety of duties often changing from one task to another of a different nature without loss of efficiency or composure, deal with people beyond giving and receiving instructions, influence people, express personal feeling, perform under stress when confronted with emergency, critical, unusual or dangerous situation or situations in which speed/sustained attention are make-or-break aspects of the job, and attain precise tolerances. Reasoning demands have required the ability to apply principles of logical or scientific thinking to a wide range of intellectual and practical problems, comprehend the most abstruse classes of concepts and make judgements/decisions based on a variety of abstract and concrete variables where only limited standardization exists.

"Kate's" High School transcript indicates that she is a 2018 graduate with a weighted cumulative GPA of 2.6189 and class rank of 77 out of 109. She was in the Future Ready Core course of study and earned Level III scores on all high school End of Course testing (consistent mastery of grade level subject matter, well prepared for the next grade level). Test scores on the ACT ranged from 14 to 21 with a composite score of 17. Veterinary Medicine was listed as a planned educational major. On the SAT, "Kate" scored a 420 in Reading and 410 in both Math and Writing.

Although "Kate" started college post-injury, as planned, "Kate's" pre-injury goal was to follow in her sister's footsteps, with an athletic scholarship as a member of the WC softball team (and per the coach would have been recruited). Her SCI has now precluded this option. None-the-less, she has completed her 1st semester at WC with a 2.9 GPA. She is a member of Delta Phi Epsilon Sorority and was recently crowned Ms. Wheelchair in a state pageant; she will compete for Ms. Wheelchair USA in July 2019 on a platform to "be an advocate for younger children and all persons with disabilities." Intra and inter-generation family/role model educational history is significant for completion of career-technical education (parents: Criminal Justice, Cosmetology; sister: EMT), graphic design certificate (aunt), BS in Environmental Science (sister), and medical school (aunt, uncle, godmother). Two cousins have completed BLET training; another cousin is finishing a bachelor's degree and has applied to law school. One sister did not finish high school and is currently in a drug rehabilitation program.

Pre-injury, "Kate" expressed interest in becoming a large animal Veterinarian, and remain in her home county, a very rural part of the state. While she is now considering a major in Psychology, she is not sure of how she wants to utilize her degree (has thought about Rehabilitation and Neuropsychology). Vocational assessment results indicate that Ms. C has the cognitive ability, academic skill, and aptitude for occupations in multiple career groups; notably Science (Medical-Life), Outdoor (Nature), and Service (Social-Health); areas of expressed interest. Her performance on a non-verbal measure of intelligence is solidly in the high Average range and her *Wonderlic* score is statistically linked to post-graduate education. Per a personality inventory/non-cognitive assessment, the most distinctive feature of Ms. C's personality is her standing on the factor of Conscientiousness. Women who score in this range work toward their goals in a deliberate manner. They have a relatively high need for achievement. They are well organized and reliable and carry through on their commitments. They have good self-discipline and take their obligations seriously. Raters describe such people as careful and hardworking. Her style of learning is best characterized as a "good student," meaning that individuals with similar responses on the *NEO* demonstrate a real love of learning with the diligence/organization to excel as well as a high aspiration level. These individuals are often creative in their approach to solv-

ing problems and are likely to go as far academically as their gifts allow. Similarly, on the *Grit Scale*, Ms. C's responses indicate a total score of 4.08 which is indicative of a high level of grit (70th percentile as compared to a sample of American adults). An analysis of her responses reveals that her Perseverance score is a 5 (maximum possible score of 5) and Passion score, a 4.8. Indicative of her determination to success, Ms. C states "What pushes me to keep going now is showing others it's OK. You can live in a wheelchair. You can do everything you did before, just differently."

"Kate" is in the exploratory stage of career development, a tentative phase in which choices are narrowed but not finalized. During this period, she is transitioning to the recognition of work requirements/rewards, awareness of interests, abilities, values, and responsibilities accompanying a career choice.

"Kate C's" deficits are consistent with Spinal Cord Injury which includes exertional and functional limitations in walking, standing, lifting, carrying, pushing/pulling, climbing, balancing, stooping, kneeling, crouching, crawling, and operating foot controls. As a result, residual function should be adjusted to reflect a reduced capacity for accommodated work in the Sedentary to Light exertion categories. Assistance with career skills preparation, problem solving/planning, accommodation, and selective job placement with follow-up during periods of transition/career changes is recommended.

Based on her first semester grades, there is no expectation that "Kate" will not be able to succeed in college, although it may take her longer due to the need for a flexible schedule, lowered endurance/stamina, rehabilitation and/or medical issues. Vocational Counseling in conjunction with careful consideration of physical capacity, adaptive equipment, and ergonomic considerations is highly recommended to assist "Kate C" with career choices and maximize capacity throughout her career.

A visual depiction of the case study (and report elements) is provided in Figure 3.

Conclusion

Adapted from a business management tool, this article introduces SCOR© (Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, Risks) for as a method to visually synthesize information as a strategic step in case conceptualization for earnings capacity analysis.

References

- Addams, L., & Allfred, A. T. (2013). The first step in proactively managing students' careers: Teaching self-SWOT analysis. *Academy of Educational Leadership Journal*, 17(4), 43–51.
- Barros-Bailey, M., Benshoff, J. J., & Fischer, J. (2008). Rehabilitation counseling in the year 2011: Perceptions of certified rehabilitation counselors. *Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling*, 39(4), 39–45. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0034355208324262>
- Chermack, T. J., & Kasshanna, B. K. (2007). The use and misuse of SWOT analysis and implications for HRD professionals. *Human Resource Development International*, 10(4), 383–399. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/13678860701718760>
- Hansen, S. S. (2011). Career counselors as advocates and change agents for equality. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 52(1), 43 – 53. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.2161-0045.2003.tb00626.x>
- Helms, M. M., & Nixon, J. (2010). Exploring SWOT analysis – Where are we now?: A review of academic research from the last decade. *Journal of Strategy and Management*, 3(3), 215–251. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1108/17554251011064837>
- Hutzler, Y. (2007). SWOT analysis of adapted physical activity: A rehabilitation perspective. *Sobama Journal*, 12(1), 48–57.



Figure 3. SCOR©: Strengths, Challenges, Opportunities, Risks (Neulicht, 2019)

- Huxley, P. (2001). The contribution of social science to mental health services research and development: A SWOT analysis. *Journal of Mental Health, 10*(2), 117–120. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/09638230123886>
- Ilott, I. (1997). The research assessment exercise: A personal SWOT analysis. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy, 60*, 167–168. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1177/030802269706000407>
- Leong, F. T. L., & Leach, M. M. (2007) Internationalising counseling psychology in the united states: A SWOT analysis. *Applied Psychology, 56*(1), 165–181. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1464-0597.2007.00283.x>
- Lyon, D. W., & Kirby, E. G. (2000). The career planning essay. *Journal of Management Education, 24*(2), 276–287. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1177/105256290002400209>
- Madsen, D. (2016). SWOT analysis: A management fashion perspective. *International Journal of Business Research, 16*(1), 39-56. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2615722>
- Panagiotou, G. (2003). Bringing SWOT into focus. *Business Strategy Review, 14*(2), 8–10. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8616.00253>

- Pearce, C. (2007). Ten steps to carrying out a SWOT analysis. *Nursing Management*, 14(2), 25. doi: 10.7748/nm2007.05.14.2.25.c4343
- Pickton, D. W., & Wright, S. (1998). What's SWOT in strategic analysis?. *Strategic Change*, 7(2), 101–109.
- Piercy, N., & Giles, W. (1989). Making SWOT analysis work. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 7(5/6), 5–7. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1108/EUM0000000001042>
- Rizzo, A., & Jounghyum Kim, G. (2005). A SWOT analysis of the field of virtual reality rehabilitation and therapy. *Presence: Teleoperators and Virtual Environments*, 14(2), 119–146. Available at <http://doi.org/10.1162/1054746053967094>
- Savickas, M. L. (2003). Advancing the career counseling profession: Objectives and strategies for the next decade. *The Career Development Quarterly*, 52, 87–96. Available at <https://doi:10.1002/j.2161-0045.2003.tb00631.x>
- Shurden, M., & Shurden, S. (2013). The first step in proactively managing students' careers: *Teaching self-SWOT analysis*. *Academy of Educational Leadership Journal*, 17(4), 42–51.
- Wehrich, H. (1982). The TOWS matrix—A tool for situational analysis. *Long Range Planning*, 15(2), 54–66.

Footnote

¹ Only abbreviated highlights of medical, rehabilitation, educational/vocational history/status are provided. Original report included a full PEEDS-RAPEL© analysis as well as a summary of peer-reviewed studies regarding aging with a Spinal Cord Injury, the relationship between education /employment after SCI, and longitudinal Spinal Cord Injury research. A Life Care Plan was also developed for Ms. C.

Author Note

Author can be contacted at Ann T. Neulicht, PO Box 98914, Raleigh, NC 27624, aneulicht@gmail.com

No financial gain has been made from the copyright of SCOR©. The reader, without written permission, may freely use the SCOR© model for professional, educational, or training purposes, with appropriate APA-style citation applied for any portion or portions used, including giving reference to the name of the developer.

Comments on Neulicht's SCOR©s

Mary Barros-Bailey

Intermountain Vocational Services, Boise, ID

Research methods frame how I approach the usefulness of any new tool introduced into my practice as a vocational practitioner, expert witnesses, life care planner, case manager, or educator. For a tool like SCOR©, I explore how it was developed, what empirical or evidence-based constructs it rests upon, and its face validity – that is, if and how it can help me triangulate vast amounts of primary or secondary data that becomes the evidence-based knowledge base (Barros-Bailey, 2018) supporting findings, conclusions, or opinions in any of my areas practice.

In research methods, data reduction methods are defined as “the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data” (Berkowitz, 1997, para. 10). Dr. Neulicht takes the Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) model familiar to program evaluation and organizational development and transforms it to assessing a single individual, what she and I coined the N=1 in Opinion Validity© (Barros-Bailey & Neulicht, 2005).

A review of the literature found other applications of the SWOT analysis. It has been used as a tool in helping individuals to assess their strengths and challenges when considering personal transferable skills and traits to advance their careers (“How to . . . find your strengths and weaknesses,” 2008). SWOT has also been used as a self-assessment in determining decision passages (Stimac, 1977). The use of SWOT for data reduction in a forensic setting, however, is novel and was not found among any discipline.

Other data reduction models as applied to individuals exist. For example, Power’s (2013) Vocational Functioning Model is a model to reduce data into strengths and challenges in topical areas such as Physical Characteristics, Intellectual Characteristics, Emotional Characteristics, Environmental Characteristics, and Special Considerations when determining placeability and employability. SCOR© takes Strengths and Challenges within the Power model and adds the concepts of the Opportunities and Risks from SWOT as associated with various personal and environmental factors in an individualized analysis.

SCOR© adds to the rehabilitation literature as a model that considers ecological systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1992), or personal attributes combined with the impact of various types of environments (micro, meso, exo, macro) over time (chrono). The ecological system that is easily considered through the SCOR© framework also serves as the underlying construct in the International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (2013) that enjoys considerable international scholarly support for nearly two decades.

Ultimately, SCOR© comes at data reduction in rehabilitation from a strengths-based world view, instead of focusing on a deficit-based ideology. Such approach has been found to have better outcomes over time (Littman-Ovadia, Lazar-Butbul, & Benjamin, 2014). Consequently, Dr. Neulicht has SCOR©ed in her introduction of a mnemonic model for data reduction that assists the user in considering the many theoretical and practical factors of a case, whether in clinical or forensic practice.

References

- Barros-Bailey, M. (2018). An evidence source model for clinical and forensic practice. *The Rehabilitation Professional*, 26(3), 117–128.
- Barros-Bailey, M., & Neulicht, A. (2005). Opinion Validity©: An integration of quantitative and qualitative data. *The Rehabilitation Professional*, 13(2), 32–41.
- Berkowitz, S. (1997). Analyzing quantitative data. In J. Frechtling & L. Sharp (Eds.), *User friendly handbook for mixed methods evaluations*. Alexandria, VA: National Science Foundation, Direc-

- torate for Education and Human Resources, Division of Research, Evaluation, and Communication. Retrieved from https://www.nsf.gov/pubs/1997/nsf97153/chap_4.htm
- Bronfenbrenner, U. (1992). Ecological systems theory. In U. Bronfenbrenner, *Making human beings human: Bioecological perspectives on human development* (pp. 106–173). New York, NY: SAGE.
- How to . . . find your strengths and weaknesses. (2008, February). *Occupational Health*, 60(2), 24.
- Littman-Ovadia, H., Lazar-Butbul, V., & Benjamin, B. A. (2014). Strengths-based career counseling: Overview and initial evaluation. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 22(3), 403–419.
- Power, P. W. (2013). *A guide to vocational assessment*. Austin, TX: PRO•ED.
- Stimac, M. (1977). Model for evaluation of decision passages: A facet of self-assessment. *Personnel & Guidance Journal*, 56, 158–163.
- World Health Organization. (2013). *How to use the ICF: A practical manual for using the International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF)*. Geneva: WHO. Retrieved from <https://www.who.int/classifications/drafticfpracticalmanual2.pdf?ua=1>

Author Notes

May Barros-Bailey may be contacted at barrosm@protonmail.com