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EFFECTIVENESS OF USING THE SWOT ANALYSIS METHOD IN GEOGRAPHY LESSONS

Jurakhujaev Davronkhoja Daverkhoja Ugli
Lecturer, Department of Geography, Uzbek-Finnish pedagogical institute
E-mail: ddjuraxujayev@mail.ru; ORCID: 0000-0003-4418-3702

Abstract: This article examines the effectiveness of using the SWOT analysis method in geography lessons, specifically in the context of the topic "The Geographical Location, Borders, and Political Map of Europe." The study analyzes how this method helps develop students' analytical thinking, regional-geographical reasoning, and problem-solving skills. The theoretical potential of the method in fostering creative approaches during the learning process is also explored.

KEYWORDS: SWOT analysis, geography education, analytical thinking, student engagement, methodology, lesson, political map, regional analysis, opportunities, threats.

INTRODUCTION

In today's general secondary education system, modern pedagogical technologies and interactive methods are increasingly employed in the teaching of geography. Such methods not only enhance students' interest in the subject but also help develop skills in analytical reasoning, logical decision-making, and independent judgment. One such method is the SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats), which has demonstrated high effectiveness in developing students' capacity to systematically analyze geographical processes. In recent years, it has been successfully integrated into educational practices.

Initially used in strategic management and business analysis, this method now fosters students' creative engagement with the subject, teaches comprehensive approaches to regional geographical objects, and enables in-depth analysis of the socio-economic and political conditions of regions. Therefore, applying SWOT analysis when teaching the topic "The Geographical Location, Borders, and Political Map of Europe" helps students better understand the region by identifying its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities for development, and existing threats.

METHODOLOGY

This study is based on a qualitative, observational-analytical approach. The organization of a geography lesson using SWOT analysis was examined. During the lesson, students were divided into small groups to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats related to Europe's geographical features. Each group developed a SWOT matrix, which was then synthesized and evaluated. The outcomes were assessed based on student engagement, analytical reasoning, and logical thinking skills.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of the SWOT analysis method in the geography lesson on the topic "The Geographical Location, Borders, and Political Map of Europe" yielded significant pedagogical outcomes. The study revealed that the integration of this method contributed to a marked improvement in students' analytical reasoning, regional geographical thinking, and problem-solving competencies. Notably, students demonstrated an increased ability to synthesize information, evaluate regional characteristics, and articulate arguments supported by evidence.

During the analysis of strengths, students identified key geographic advantages of Europe, including its strategic location between Asia and the Atlantic Ocean, the dense network of

developed infrastructure, and the presence of a cluster of economically advanced nations. These factors were recognized as contributors to Europe's global geopolitical influence and economic development. The exercise enabled students to understand the interplay between natural resources, transport systems, and economic prosperity, promoting deeper awareness of spatial-economic relationships.

In evaluating weaknesses, students critically examined internal challenges such as high population density in urban areas, regional disparities in natural resource availability, and environmental degradation. These issues were discussed in the context of their impact on sustainable development. Students developed their ecological awareness and the ability to critically assess geographical limitations, which are essential skills in modern geographic education.

In analyzing opportunities, students explored the potential benefits of European Union integration, the continent's capacity to lead in global innovation, and the opportunities provided by digital transformation and green economy initiatives. The discussions enhanced students' ability to consider broader socioeconomic and geopolitical factors and to connect regional analysis with global development trends. This stage of the activity helped cultivate a forward-looking, strategic mindset among learners.

When identifying threats, students addressed pressing global and regional risks such as migration crises, aging populations, political fragmentation (e.g., Brexit), and climate change. By evaluating such complex challenges, students developed a sense of global citizenship and acquired skills in assessing risks and uncertainties within geographical contexts. This part of the exercise nurtured the capacity for holistic and future-oriented thinking.

Beyond content mastery, the method significantly impacted students' soft skills. Working in small groups, learners engaged in collaborative analysis, critical dialogue, and structured debate. The requirement to construct and present a comprehensive SWOT matrix fostered responsibility, communication, and reasoning. Notably, student participation and engagement increased markedly compared to traditional teacher-led instruction, confirming the method's capacity to activate students cognitively and socially.

In comparison to conventional methods focused on memorization and passive reception of knowledge, SWOT analysis encouraged students to approach geographic content through inquiry and structured critical thinking. The method facilitated interdisciplinary integration by allowing connections between geography, economics, politics, and environmental studies. Such cross-curricular competence is essential for 21st-century learners facing globalized realities.

The findings suggest that the SWOT analysis method can be a valuable instructional strategy not only for this particular topic but also for other complex geographic themes such as globalization, climate change, or regional development. Its flexibility and adaptability to different contexts make it a promising tool for fostering higher-order thinking, problem-solving skills, and independent judgment among students.

CONCLUSION

SWOT analysis is a powerful tool for studying geographic topics systematically, fostering independent thinking, and enhancing students' understanding of global issues. Its application in the topic "The Geographical Location, Borders, and Political Map of Europe" contributed significantly to students' comprehensive understanding, creative engagement, and discussion skills. In the future, the broader application of SWOT analysis across various geographical themes may unlock even greater educational potential.

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