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STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR FOOD INDUSTRY AN APPLICATION ON NESTLE: INTEGRATING SWOT/TOWS AND AHP METHODS

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ABSTRACT

This research employs both AHP and SWOT/TOWS techniques to perform a strategic assessment of the food industry (Lee & Carter, 2012; Khan & Hackney, 2015; Zhang, 2019). The idea is to provide the broadest perspective of the organization and the environment to recognize significant strategic priorities that will increase sustainability and competitive advantage of the industry. SWOT analysis is considered basic and provides an overview of the state of the industry based on various aspects. To move beyond simple identification, the TOWS matrix is applied to translate the SWOT findings into concrete strategic options by matching internal strengths and weaknesses with external opportunities and threats. This framework helps in formulating actionable strategies aligned with different scenarios, thus enhancing decision-making effectiveness. For a critical evaluation of the priorities based on real data, the study utilizes the AHP technique. AHP decomposes the evaluation into a logical hierarchical structure that allows for a comprehensive comparison of the factors relative to each other. This combination of qualitative and quantitative research offers insights on the issues and prospects impacting stakeholders of the food industry. Main strategic areas discussed include supply chain management for improvement, product development and innovation, dealing with regulatory frameworks, and meeting consumer preferences. In summary, this study stresses the significance of strategic management in remediating the challenges inherent in the food industry. Thus, using the SWOT, TOWS, and AHP methodologies, the participants obtain the information necessary to make decisions and improve the performance of the entire industry. Apart from benefitting the identification of key issues, this approach also helps in the development of issue-specific strategies for growth and competitive advantage in a changing market context.

KEYWORDS: Strategic Planning, Food Industry, SWOT/TOWS, AHP, Nestle.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The food industry plays a pivotal role in the global economy since it influences food production, food processing, food distribution and food consumption (Lee & Carter, 2012). This is a diversified sector that comprises of agricultural production, food processing, wholesale and retail trade, and catering which is essential to human life- therefore there is necessity of developing new products and services that would satisfy the emerging tastes, health considerations and technological improvements in the market.

The purpose of this paper is to provide a more in-depth examination of the food industry in order to assist major stakeholders in the industry including governments, producers, retailers, and consumers to make relevant choices that will enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of the industry in future. Such quantitative methods implemented in this broad evaluation procedure are SWOT, TOWS, and Analytic hierarchy Process (AHP). Such methodologies assist stakeholders in attaining objective-based management by ranking business operations in critical internal facilitators of operational performance and external forces, such as market opportunities and regulatory risks, that could define industry performance (Khan & Hackney, 2015).

Specifically, the analysis uses the SWOT-AHP model of strategic evaluation and involves the TOWS matrix as the balance between analysis and action. Whereas SWOT reveals internal weaknesses and strengths and external threats and opportunities, TOWS puts the results of the analysis into strategic choices by logically combining internal and external variables. This assists in the development of adaptive, market defensive, aggressive or corrective policies (depending on the interaction of these factors) to enable a more initiative reaction to market behaviour.

This study focuses on using the SWOT/TOWS-AHP model and conducting an extensive analysis of the food industry. The study provides both quantitative and qualitative approaches in an attempt to present a balanced view of this industry, and the way it can evolve in future. The results obtained in this study are very insightful and will assist in developing processes and methods that can be instrumental in attempting to open up and utilize economic opportunities, improve the quality and safety of the foods delivered in the marketplace, and ensure that all producers and sellers fulfill established legal requirements to allow growth to be sustainable along the entire food chain (Zhang, 2019).

In general, it should be stressed that strategic analysis is an essential aid to solutions to food industry problems. SWOT, TOWS and AHP could be regarded as the methodologies that complement each other and assist stakeholders in realizing the dynamics in the industry, developing the effective initiatives to minimise the threat and to take advantage of the
opportunities, which leads to the sustainable development and competitive advantage in the global food market.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Food industry has been changing a lot owing to increased consumer demands, technology and changes in regulations. Strategic planning has been found to play a critical role in enabling food companies to cope with these changes and still be able to be competitive. Kurttila et al. (2000) also suggest that Qualitative tools, such as the SWOT, when incorporated into quantitative approaches to decision-making, such as the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) enhances the credibility of the strategic evaluations. The hybrid scheme enables a decision-maker to arrange and rank internal and external factors more objectively. Kangas et al. (2003) also point out that the use of AHP in SWOT brings about strategic transparency especially in environments that are complex like in the food industry.

Nestle being the largest food and drink company in the world presents an interesting study case in the application of these strategic frameworks. Financial strength, diverse products and broad distribution channels have enabled the firm to attain a global market leadership. Nevertheless, in spite of the above strengths, Nestlé has been criticized strategically. During the tenure of the former CEO

Mark Schneider, Nestlé placed substantial emphasis on the improvement of operating margins, which was allegedly achieved at the cost of innovation and brand building. Reuters (2024) further reports that the company lagged behind its peers, such as PepsiCo and Unilever, in volume growth because it decreased its investments in product innovation and marketing. In 2024, when Laurent Freixe took over as CEO, he began a new organic growth drive that involved simplifying the business operations, revitalizing core brands and embarking on more research and development (Reuters, 2024).

Along with financial strategy, Nestlé has built a lot of investment in sustainability and digital transformation as well. According to Voytovych and Tereshchuk (2021), the use of AI, big data, and IoT in its marketing and production has facilitated operational efficiency and customer interaction in Nestlé. Sustainability measures have been taken by the company, as well as developing zero-water factories or reducing water withdrawal by 41% per tonne of product since 2005 (Nestlte, 2023). Such initiatives not only help lessen the environmental burden, but it also helps build a strong brand among the environmentally-aware consumers. In spite of these strategic initiatives, Nestlé is not spared of the ethics, safety and reputation related challenges. The Indian Maggi noodles crisis (2015) when the products were detected to have high amount of lead in them, really hurt the consumer confidence. Also, the company has been accused of child labor in cocoa supply chains, deforestation, and illegal aggressive marketing of infant formula (Schrempf-Stirling & Palazzo, 2016). These image problems explain why managing weaknesses and threats should be done in a systematic way- hence the applicability of models such as TOWS and AHP in generating strategic responses.

Last but not least, the literature on competitive strategy also justifies a mixed mode of approach to companies such as Nestlé. The combination of cost leadership and differentiation is discussed by Salavou (2015) as allowing firms to adjust to the competitive environments and maintaining innovation. Pertusa-Ortega et al. (2009) also confirm this when they say that strategic agility, customer focus, and process innovation are the requirements in a dynamic industry like the food and beverage industry. Thus, Nestlé will have to keep juggling between operational efficiency and long-term innovation and ethical brand keeping. To conclude the combination of SWOT, TOWS and AHP is quite applicable in strategic analysis of Nestle. It facilitates a systematic decision-making process which takes into consideration the internal strength and the external market forces. Considering the financial and global capabilities of Nestlé, as well as its weak aspects related to innovation and reputation, this hybrid model would provide a valid structure to prioritize strategic initiatives and stay ahead of the competition in the changing and challenging industry.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

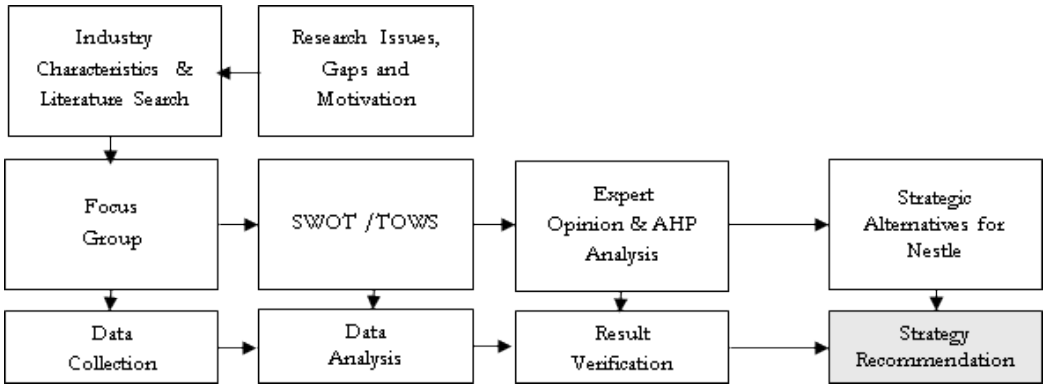
The research design of the present study takes the form of three major stages: (1) identification of the objectives of the research, (2) data collection and analysis, (3) assessment of the findings using strategic planning tools. The steps are initiated with defining the main objective of the analysis - to evaluate the strategic positioning of Nestledge in the food industry with the help of an integrated model of SWOT, TOWS and Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP). On the basis of this purpose, the following research objectives are derived, such as to identify key internal and external strategic factors, and prioritise these on the basis of their strategic significance.

The second phase involves the gathering of relevant secondary information; this includes company reports, peer-reviewed journals and market intelligence. This information is further utilized to create a SWOT matrix in which the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats affecting Nestlé are categorized. After this the TOWS matrix is applied to come up with strategic alternatives by pairing internal and external factors. In order to offer a more formal and measurable analysis, the Analytic hierarchical Process (AHP) is used. AHP allows pair-wise comparisons of the elements of SWOT and the TOWS strategies and gives weighted scores, which indicate their relative importance in strategic decisions.

The evaluation and interpretation of the results are done in the last stage through the consistency ratios and a general strategic framework is prepared with the reference to the prioritised strategies. The nature of this study as a document analysis and expert-informed weighting did not

need any physical location or recruitment of participants. Nonetheless, all the data sources were purposely chosen to ascertain relevance, credibility, and study objective concordance. This design is systematic in the sense that it combines qualitative and quantitative wisdom in strategic planning with food industry. Figure 3 shows the flow of the study:

Figure 3.0: Flow of the study



3.2 Analysis of SWOT

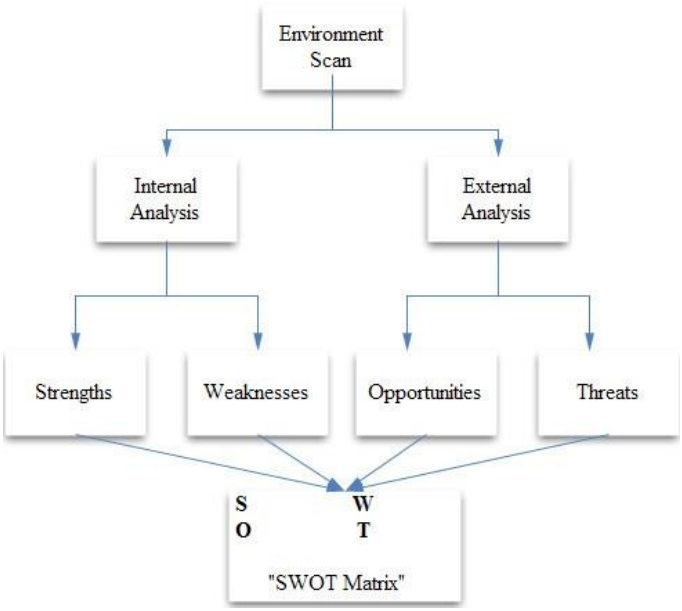


Figure 3.1: SWOT analysis framework (Kahraman, 2008)

SWOT analysis can be regarded as one of the most influential techniques that is commonly used across different industries, including the food industry, to perform the assessment of firm's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (Kurttila et al. , 2000; Kangas et al. , 2003; Yüksel & Dağdeviren, 2007). In essence, it categorizes these factors into four distinct groups: known as SWOT analysis that stands for strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat and provides a framework for decision-making process.

In the context of the food industry, strengths include factors within a firm's control that provide it with competitive advantage, including; supply chain management, reputation, and unique food technologies. On the other hand, weaknesses refer to internal shortcomings including inefficient production systems, lack of product diversification or inability to meet certain regulations. Threats on the other hand are external factors like new entrants, threats in new markets, and shifting customer preferences and demands for healthier and organic food products, which the industry can leverage on for its development. While threats include environmental factors that may be external such as economic fluctuations, change in customer preferences, and regulatory policies which may be a challenge.

The primary reasons for using SWOT analysis as part of the strategic planning for the food industry are to match the internal strengths with the external opportunities in the operating environment and to minimize the threats that stem from weaknesses. It makes it easier for the various stakeholders to design a set of strategies that seeks to build on the existing strengths, capitalize on the existing opportunities, manage the existing threats and overcome the existing weaknesses. In this way, companies are able to adapt and even create new strategic models in the face of a challenging economic environment and global competition.

For instance, Figure 3.1 borrowed from Kahraman et al. (2001) shows how SWOT analysis fits into an environmental survey thus showing its pragmatic usefulness especially when making strategic choices and managing operations in the food industry. This system does not only make decision making easy but also allows for forward planning in order to actively manage uncertainties and capitalize on opportunities which are paramount to the sustainability of the food business.\

3.3 SWOT-AHP Hybrid Methodology

In this study, the AHP structure results from the SWOT matrix and is separated in three parts:
(a) goal to be achieved by the decision, (b) the SWOT groups and (c) the factors included within each SWOT group (sub-criteria). The hierarchical representation of the SWOT structure is shown in Figure 2.

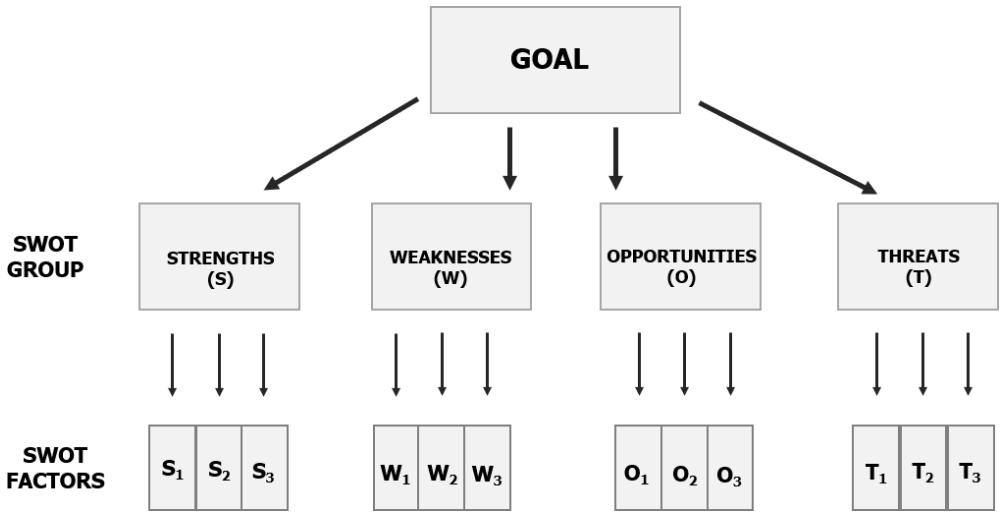


Figure 3.2: Hierarchical Structure of the SWOT Matrix

Nestlé S.A. is a Swiss company that operates in the food and beverage industry and has a diverse range of products. Its main office is located in Vevey, Switzerland. Founded in 1867, this corporation has the title of being the largest food company globally, based on its revenues and other indicators like market capitalization. Nestlé offers a diverse array of products in its portfolio, encompassing several categories such as infant nutrition, packaged water, breakfast cereals, coffee, tea, sweets, dairy products, ice cream, frozen food, pet food, and snacks. Nestlé has a presence in 189 countries around the world, demonstrating its wide-reaching global presence.

We utilise Nestle as a benchmark corporation in food industry to assess the SWOT analysis employing AHP methods. The comparison scale is used to conduct pairwise comparisons and ascertain the relative significance between each pair of SWOT variables. Following the digitization of the SWOT framework using the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP), the aggregated matrix was used to determine the vector weights or priority for the studied groups and components.

In order to develop a strategic management model based on SWOT/TOWS-AHP, we have devised a three-phase model consisting of the following steps: establishing the starting tasks, adjusting the components, and constructing an evaluation model (refer to Figure 1). Firstly, a SWOT analysis is conducted, and a matrix is constructed. The SWOT matrix incorporates and outlines the pertinent elements and internal conditions.

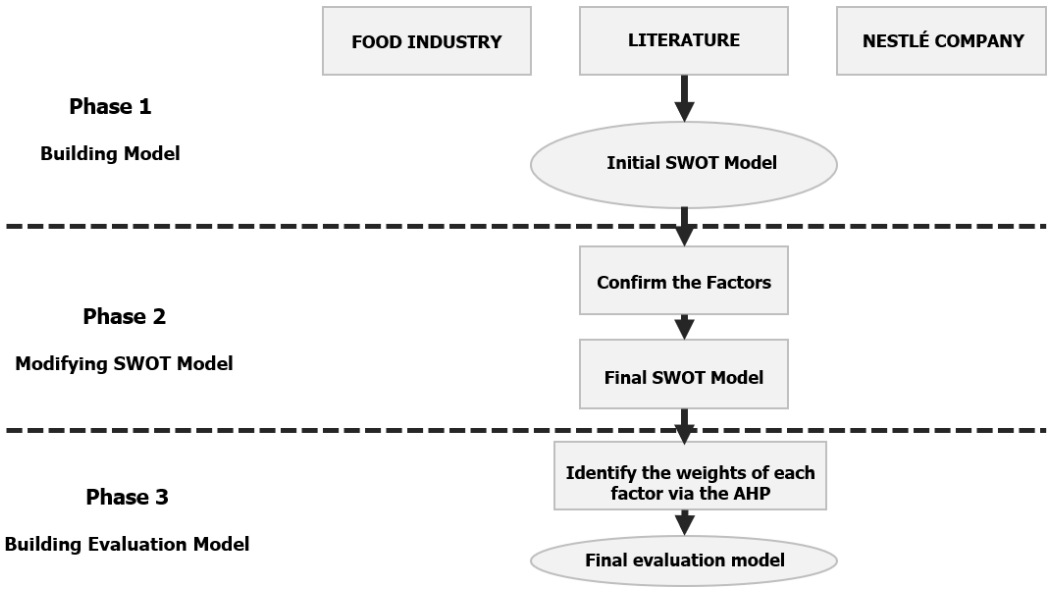


Figure 3.3: Phase of Proposed Methodology

Table 3.0: Pairwise Comparison Scale

Expert opinion on pair-wise ranking of importance of two sub-criteria with reference to the main criteria in tree hierarchy	
If option A and option are equally important	1
If option A is moderately more important than option B	3
If option A is strongly more important than option B	5
If option A is very strongly more important than option B	7
If option A is extremely more important than option B	9
If option A and option B are equally important	1

The AHP scale that is commonly utilized in making pair-wise comparisons is well represented in Table 3. In decision-making models, like AHP, a pair-wise comparison scale, is required to measure the relative significance of two criteria or sub-criteria concerning a higher-level goal or master criterion. Once all the important factors have been determined in each of the SWOT categories, a process of pair-wise comparison is conducted on them to determine which ones are more important than others in each group. An example is the comparison of one strength with a strength. In addition, comparisons of a higher level are undertaken to establish the weight of each SWOT category against others. As an illustration, the significance of strengths over threats. The eigenvalue computations are applied to produces the quantitative weights of all the SWOT factors and ranks the factors according to their strategic importance. The pairwise comparison scale is founded on a series of values outlasting 1-9. Consistency is guaranteed by this scale and it enables decision-makers to mathematically assess subjective judgements that are further processed to determine weights of the main factors of SWOT categories. Moreover, the weights allow a quantitative basis to priorities in strategic analysis.

3.4 Analysis of TOWS

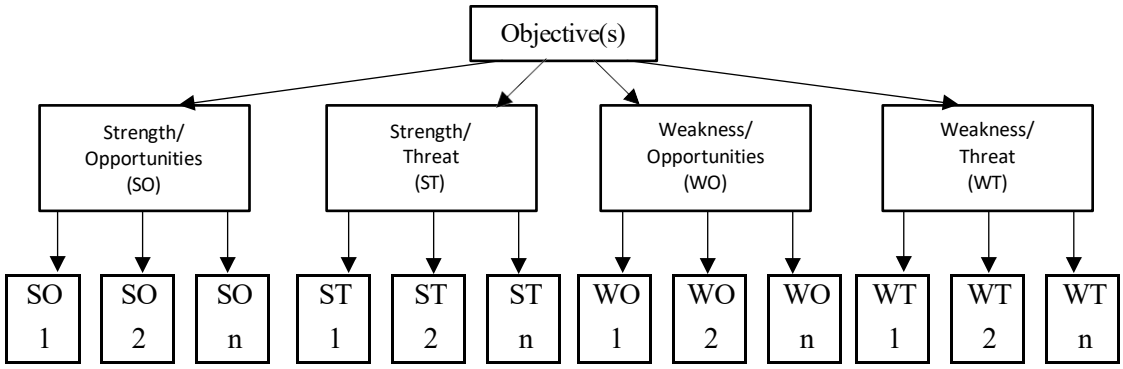


Figure 3.4: Hierarchical structure of the TOWS matrix
Source: Gallego-Ayala & Juizo (2011)

TOWS matrix is based on the SWOT framework and assists companies in matching their strengths and weaknesses with possible external opportunities and threats and generate particular strategies. TOWS is an extension of SWOT in that it assists managers in choosing how to employ what the company excels at to take advantage of new opportunities (SO strategies), how to guard against threats by employing those strengths (ST strategies), how to manage weaknesses by taking advantage of new opportunities (WO strategies) and how to respond to both weaknesses and threats (WT strategies) (Weihrich, 1982). Because of this orientation, TOWS proves useful in industries like food, as there the companies must constantly be able to react fast to sudden changes in the market as well as health and rules changes.

TOWS analysis helps business in the food industry to organize their response to what they can do (internally) and to what is going on (externally). As an illustration, a firm that has achieved high levels of supply chain efficiency can take advantage of this by initiating operations in locations where demand of ecologically friendly and superior food products are on the rise. In the case of companies with outdated technology, becoming a member of partnerships or investing in innovation can allow them to grasp incentives or subsidies offered by the government to encourage digital transformation (WO strategy). As an illustration, when a person begins to purchase more healthy food, or the regulations regarding food safety become more severe, it can be effective to count on the good quality control of the company, as well as on its recognized brand name (ST strategy).

Consequently, the TOWS matrix enables individuals to formulate concise strategies out of the concepts of the SWOT analysis to use in decision-making. Dyson (2004) has observed that TOWS assists organizations to link the internal capacities they have with the external world that builds flexibility and enhances resilience. Fair practices, healthiness and sustainability have become essential in the food business because an increasing number of customers would like to know what they are consuming. TOWS assists stakeholders to manage their problems strategically and act to acquire competitive advantage over their competitors and facilitate sustainable growth in the international market.

3.5 Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP)

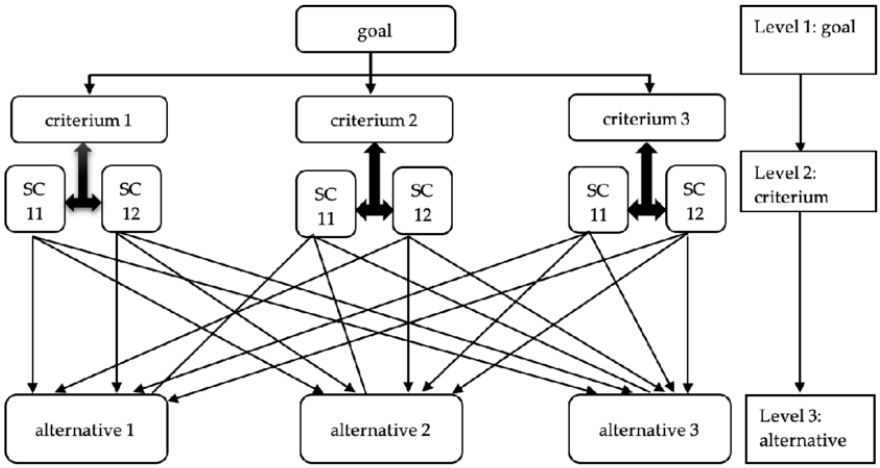


Figure 3.5: Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP)

The AHP is an indispensable tool in decision making especially where the decision maker is faced with a multiple criteria decision problem. In other words, it breaks complex choices into a list of objectives, criteria and alternatives that are arranged in a hierarchical manner (Sharma, 2008). In the context of food industry, AHP is used for numerous strategic reasons including supplier evaluation, new product positioning and supply chain management.

AHP uses the concept of pairwise comparisons whereby decision makers are able to rate the levels of importance of each criteria in the developed hierarchy. This method involves the assessment of alternatives to the lowest level of the hierarchy and makes it easier to select the most appropriate among the available options. Its advantage is that it provides a systematic approach to analyzing subjective factors alongside objective parameters (Tuzmen & Sipahi, 2011).

For the practical use of the food industry, AHP can be used to indicate critical factors such as cost drivers, product quality, sustainable practices, and company innovation capacities. In the pairwise comparison method, the stakeholders use numerical values developed on a scale of preference originally developed by Saaty known as Saaty's comparison matrix to measure the relative importance of each criterion (Saaty, 2006). These comparisons are critical in judging relevance of various factors holistically to ensure that priorities for decisions are well arrived at systematically (Sharma, 2008).

Because of its hierarchical structure, AHP is highly suitable for addressing multifaceted issues in the food sector, such as evaluating trade-offs between costs and quality in supplier management or addressing systemic interactions between environmental sustainability and consumers' preferences in introducing new products. Through the systematic assimilation of all relevant aspects, AHP improves decision making precision and enables informed choices

consistent with the strategic plan and market requirements in the complex food industry environment.

Table 3.1. Pairwise comprasion scale

Importance	Explanation
1	The objective is equally influenced by two criteria.
3	An individual's judgment and experience are marginally more favorable than another's
5	One is greatly favored over the other by experience and judgment.
7	The criterion is highly favored, and its dominance is evident in practice.
9	The utmost conceivable order of importance is established for each. 2,4,6,8 Employed to symbolize the compromise between the aforementioned priorities

Source: Yüksel (2007); Saaty(1996)

The Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) is a decision-making methodology built on three fundamental principles: the mapping of priorities, the comparison of criteria and/or alternatives, and the nesting of the model. AHP has been widely used to solve different decision-making problems and is seen as a strong approach for problem solving (Lee, 2011). The first process in employing AHP is to develop a hierarchical structure of the decision making problem by categorizing the objectives, decision attributes and alternatives in the form of a family tree (Dağdeviren, 2009).

AHP can be particularly applied in the food industry to solve strategic problems like the choice of suppliers, improvement of production lines, and creating new products. The hierarchical framework typically consists of at least three levels: the top level describes the goal (e.g., supply chain efficiency), the middle level consists of the factors that affect the decision (e.g., costs, quality, sustainability), and the lowest level lists the options (e.g., different suppliers or production methods).

The application of AHP in the food industry involves developing this hierarchical model, and then making pairwise comparisons to identify the relative weights of criteria. These criteria at each level are compared pair wise in terms of their impact and relevance with the criteria at the higher levels. These comparisons are made systematically using a nine-level comparison scale adopted from Saaty (1980) so that efficiency of the comparisons can be quantified (Albayrak & Erensal, 2004).

By using AHP, the decision makers in the food industry are in a position to systematically rank the parts of the strategy decision. For example, when choosing a supplier, they may assign a specific numerical value to the criteria like cost, reliability, and sustainability to determine their significance. Such a structure ensures consideration of all aspects, which makes the decision more coherent and less prejudiced.

AHP's ability to integrate both qualitative and quantitative criteria makes it particularly suitable for the food industry, where decisions often involve complex trade-offs. By employing AHP, stakeholders can enhance their strategic planning and operational efficiency, ultimately contributing to improved performance and competitiveness in the market.

For the pairwise comparison matrix A to be perfectly consistent, it must have a rank of 1, and the maximum eigenvalue (λmax) must equal the number of criteria nnn. When this condition is met, the weights can be derived by normalizing the rows or columns of A (Albayrak & Erensal, 2004;

Borajee & Murat, 2011; Wang & Elhag, 2007). The quality and reliability of the AHP's results are highly dependent on the consistency of the pairwise comparisons. The consistency of the matrix A is verified by examining the relationship between its elements. Specifically, $A = W \times W^{-1}$, where W represents the vector of weights (Dağdeviren, 2009).

To quantify the level of consistency, Saaty (1980) proposed the Consistency Index (CI), which is calculated using the formula:

$$C1 = \frac{\lambda max. - n}{n - 1}$$

This index helps measure how consistent the pairwise comparisons are. To further validate the consistency, the Consistency Ratio (CR) is computed by dividing the CI by the Random Index (RI). The RI is an average CI obtained from randomly generated matrices of the same size. The formula for the CR is:

$$CR = \frac{CI}{RI}$$

A CR value of 0.1 or less is generally deemed acceptable, indicating that the inconsistencies are within a tolerable range, and the weight derivation is reliable (Saaty, 2006). This thorough approach ensures that the pairwise comparisons in the AHP are consistent, enhancing the robustness and credibility of the decision-making process. Such rigor is particularly important in complex and multifaceted industries like the food sector, where decisions must balance multiple criteria and stakeholders' interests (Vargas, 1990; Forman & Gass, 2001).

Table 3.2: Random of index

n	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
RI	0.00	0.00	0.58	0.90	1.12	1.24	1.32	1.41	1.45	1.49

3.6 SWOT/TOWS-AHP Model

In the complex environment where the food industry operates, combining SWOT analysis with the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) is particularly useful for informed decision-making and for determining strategic priorities among multiple competing factors (Gallego, 2011). This hybrid approach begins with a traditional SWOT analysis to identify internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats specific to the food sector (Kurttila et al., 2008). These elements are then organized hierarchically based on overarching objectives—such as improving market competitiveness, enhancing food safety, or advancing environmental sustainability.

The next step involves pairwise comparisons using the AHP method, whereby each SWOT factor is systematically compared with others in terms of its relative importance and influence. This allows for numerical weighting through eigenvalue calculations, producing a structured and quantifiable prioritization of strategic factors (Kangas et al., 2003; Kajanus, 2004). AHP brings objectivity into the otherwise qualitative SWOT framework by offering clear indicators of which strategic elements deserve more attention or resources.

To further strengthen this model, the TOWS matrix is integrated into the analysis as a practical tool to formulate specific strategies based on the ranked SWOT elements. Unlike SWOT, which is primarily diagnostic, TOWS focuses on strategic synthesis—matching internal strengths to external opportunities (SO strategies), using strengths to counter threats (ST), mitigating weaknesses through opportunities (WO), and minimizing both weaknesses and threats (WT) (Weihrich, 1982). This matrix provides a logical framework for translating the weighted SWOT factors into concrete strategic actions tailored to the dynamic challenges of the food industry.

The inclusion of TOWS within the SWOT-AHP framework enhances the model's strategic applicability by bridging analysis with actionable planning. It not only assists stakeholders in prioritizing their objectives based on quantifiable data but also helps them develop coherent strategies that align with both internal capabilities and external market conditions. The model has been effectively applied in various sectors such as forestry policy planning, tourism strategy development, and resource optimization (Wikramasinghe, 2010; Lee, 2011). In the context of the food industry, this integrated approach enables businesses to better adapt to shifting consumer trends, regulatory demands, and competitive pressures while pursuing sustainable growth.

4.0 APPLICATION AND RESULTS

4.1 SWOT/TOWS-AHP

Table 4.1: SWOT Matrix

STRENGTHS (S)	WEAKNESSES (W)
S1: Financial Strength (Smith,2023) **S2**: Research and Development (R&D) (Johnson, 2022) **S3**: Global Presence (Brown, 2021) **S4**: Quality of the product (Taylor, 2022) **S5**: Strategic Acquisitions and Partnerships (Anderson, 2022)	**W1**: Negative Publicity (Wilson, 2021) **W2**: High Operational Costs (Davis, 2023) **W3**: Dependency on Certain Products (Lee, 2023) **W4**: Product Recalls and Safety Issues (Garcia, 2022)
OPPORTUNITIES (O)	**THREATS (T)**
O1: Expansion in Emerging Markets (Martinez, 2023) **O2**: Health and Wellness Trends (Harris, 2022) **O3**: Sustainability Initiatives (Walker, 2022) **O4**: Digital Transformation (Nelson, 2023)	**T1**: Intense Competition (Mitchell, 2022) **T2**: Regulatory Challenges (Parker, 2023) **T3**: Economic Uncertainty (Evans, 2022) **T4**: Changing Consumer Preferences (Roberts, 2023)

Table 4.2: TOWS Matrix

S-O Strategies	W-O Strategies
1. **SO1**: Use financial strength to invest in expansion into emerging markets. (S1, O1) 2. **SO2**: Leverage strong R&D to develop health-oriented products aligned with wellness trends. (S2, O2) 3. **SO3**: Use global presence to drive sustainability initiatives in multiple regions. (S3, O3) 4. **SO4**: Improve product quality through digital transformation and technology upgrades. (S4, O4)	1. **WO1**: Rebuild brand image through sustainability campaigns to counteract negative publicity. (W1, O3) 2. **WO2**: Reduce operational costs by adopting digital transformation and automation. (W2, O4) 3. **WO3**: Diversify product offerings to align with health and wellness trends. (W3, O2) 4. **WO4**: Improve product safety standards in response to market expansion and health trends. (W4, O2)

S-T Strategies	W-T Strategies
1. **ST1**: Use financial strength to weather economic uncertainty and market fluctuations. (S1, T3) 2. **ST2**: Strengthen R&D to stay ahead of intense competition and evolving regulations. (S2, T1, T2) 3. **ST3**: Use global presence to hedge against changing consumer preferences in specific markets. (S3, T4) 4. **ST4**: Maintain high product quality to stand out in a highly competitive environment. (S4, T1)	1. **WT1**: Address negative publicity through proactive communication and compliance to reduce regulatory risk. (W1, T2) 2. **WT2**: Cut high operational costs to increase flexibility amid economic uncertainty. (W2, T3) 3. **WT3**: Decrease product dependency to adapt to shifting consumer preferences. (W3, T4) 4. **WT4**: Implement strict quality control systems to avoid recalls and strengthen public trust. (W4, T1, T2)

The TOWS matrix is analysed using the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP). First, a comparison of the TOWS groups is made in pairs according to the comparison scale of 1 to 9. This study utilized the TOWS Matrix as a strategic planning tool to help come up with, list and rank the most important strategies the company must pursue in a very competitive and dynamic business environment. As compared to the conventional SWOT analysis where internal and external factors are merely identified, the TOWS matrix goes an extra mile further to pair these factors in order to develop strategic alternatives. The integration allows making the process more action-oriented, especially when used in conjunction with Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) in making decisions.

The TOWS analysis started with the investigation of internal strengths and weaknesses of the company and external opportunities and threats. Secondary data was used to rate each component and strategic combinations were produced in four major categories; SO (Strengths Weaknesses-Opportunities), WO (Weaknesses-Opportunities), ST (Strengths-Threats) and WT (Weaknesses-Threats).

Within the SO strategies, the company will utilize its financial capability (Smith, 2023) and international reach (Brown, 2021) to enter into emerging markets (SO1), where consumer-purchasing power and demand of modern products are increasing (Martinez, 2023). Besides, its strong research and development capabilities (Johnson, 2022) can help it create health-focused products (SO2), which is also a trend in the global wellness (Harris, 2022). The international presence of the company also allows it to employ sustainability initiatives
(SO3) that are appealing to environmentally conscious consumers, and its technological capacity works to improve the quality of its products via digital upgrades (Nelson, 2023).

Regarding WO strategies, the company focuses on internal weaknesses converting them into strategic actions. Indicatively, it neutralizes bad publicity (Wilson, 2021) with sustainability campaigns (WO1), which swiftly normalizes its standing with the people and the regulators. The company faces the challenge of high operational costs (Davis, 2023) and implements the digital transformation of workflow to optimize it and earn more money (WO2). As well, the business diversifies its products (WO3) to ensure that it is less dependent on a specific product (Lee, 2023) and to meet the needs of the expanding segment of health-conscious consumers (Harris, 2022). There is also priority on improved product safety standards (WO4) to conform to the growing needs in the expanding markets.

The ST strategies are based on using the strengths to cushion against the external threats. The financial foundation of the company (Smith, 2023) would enable it to survive the economic turbulence (Evans, 2022) and adjust to the changes in the market (ST1). It accelerates product innovation cycles and beefs up R&D to address high competition rates and shifting regulatory demands (Mitchell, 2022; Parker, 2023). The presence in the global market (Brown, 2021) allows it to diversify market risks and deal with the changing preference of consumers (Roberts, 2023) (ST3). In the meantime, the company ensures a high level of products quality (Taylor, 2022) and thus it is prominent in a saturated market (ST4).

Lastly, the WT strategies provide counter-measures against vulnerability of the business. As an example, the company manages negative publicity and possible regulatory risk (Wilson, 2021; Parker, 2023) by being communicatively active and legally compliant (WT1). Cost-cutting programs (WT2) are beneficial to reduce the effects of an economic recession (Evans, 2022), and the decreased product dependency (WT3) is connected to the necessity to respond rapidly to shifts in customer behavior (Roberts, 2023). Moreover, severe quality control measures (WT4) are established to prevent the recall of the product and maintain brand image (Garcia, 2022).

A combination of AHP and TOWS matrix allows the systematic prioritization of these strategies. Each strategy is individually rated, in quantitative terms, with respect to its relevance, impact and feasibility using a pairwise comparison model (Saaty, 1980). This systematic process is needed to make sure that the management concentrates on the actions with high priority, which have the best ROI and fit the strategy. Finally, the TOWS-AHP technique helps the firm to make resource allocations within the dynamic business environments in the most effective manner (Kurttila et al., 2000; Kangas et al., 2003; Gallego & Rodríguez, 2011).

Table 4.3: Pairwise Comparison of TOWS Factors

TOWS Group	SO	WT	ST	WT	Importance Degrees of TOWS Groups
SO	1.00	3.00	6.00	9.00	0.58
WO	0.33	1.00	3.00	6.00	0.25
ST	0.17	0.33	1.00	5.00	0.12
WT	0.11	0.17	0.20	1.00	0.04
CR=0.06					

The TOWS matrix analysis of the strategic priorities of the company gives a systematic understanding of the contribution of various combinations of strategies to the overall strategic planning. The pairwise comparison analysis shows that the SO (Strengths-Opportunities) strategies have the greatest degree of importance of 0.58 indicating that these strategies are imperative in stimulating the long-term growth of the company. Such heavy weighting corresponds to the strategic positioning to utilize internal capabilities, including financial muscle, R&D capability, global market presence, brand strength, and strategic alliances, to fully exploit external opportunities, including emerging markets, health and sustainability macrotrends, and digitalization (Smith, 2023; Johnson, 2022; Brown, 2021; Taylor, 2022;

Anderson, 2022; Martinez, 2023; Harris, 2022; Walker, 2022; Nelson Such strengths-opportunities synergies are viewed as the key to the sustainable competitive advantage and subsequent growth. Closely behind is the WO (Weaknesses-Opportunities) strategy group with a degree of importance of 0.25. This weighting means that although internal weaknesses present respectable challenges, including high operational costs, products recalls, and reliance on a few products, they can be addressed by pursuing the external opportunities actively (Wilson, 2021; Davis, 2023; Lee, 2023;

Garcia, 2022). As an example, automation and digital technologies can be considered to align with operational inefficiencies reduction, and the health-focused consumer trend can be considered to expand the product range. The WO strategies embody the corporate ability to turn its weaknesses into competitive strengths in the case where it matches the progressive external trends.

Ranked third are the ST (Strengths-Threats) strategies with an importance value of 0.12, indicating that they are moderately relevant in the strategy formulation of the company. These plans focus on leveraging the company core strengths to cushion against outside threats posed by regulatory changes, economic turmoil, and the ever-changing consumer tastes (Mitchell, 2022; Parker, 2023; Evans, 2022; Roberts, 2023). The reduced weighting is an indication that although the company is not ignorant of these threats, it is fairly confident that it can curb their effect using its own strength. The strategy has strategic resilience, although its calculated emphasis is on growth rather than on a defensive position.

Finally, the WT (Weaknesses-Threats) strategies have the least level of importance of 0.04, which means that they have little strategic impact. The given category that presupposes defensive measures aimed to decrease the number of internal vulnerabilities and prevent the external threats at the same time can be seen as the least important in the given situation. The company considers the market fluctuations and regulatory risk as the threats, though they are not so urgent as in other strategic directions. This implies that these combinations are not urgent combinations that the company is currently focusing on perhaps because the company believes that its house is in order and that its external positioning is also firmly in place.

The Consistency Ratio (CR = 0.06) affirmatively indicates that the pair-wise comparisons involved in this TOWS-based AHP study are consistent and acceptable, and thereby the importance degrees obtained are valid. Finally, the analysis permits a logical base to be used when placing bets on strategic resources - concentrating on building and exploiting internal resources to pursue growth options, overcome internal constraints via innovation, and sustain flexibility with regards to market conditions.

Table 4.4 Comparison Matrix of SO Group

SO	SO1	S02	SO3	SO4	Importance Degrees
SO1	1.00	3.00	6.00	8.00	0.59
S02	0.33	1.00	2.00	5.00	0.22
SO3	0.17	0.50	1.00	3.00	0.12
SO4	0.12	0.20	0.33	1.00	0.05
CR=0.02					

The presented data allow specifying the essential S-O strategies of the company and determining the degree of their relative importance in terms of strategic decision-making based on an Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP). According to the determined importance degrees, the financial strength (SO1) is the most important strategic factor, as it has the importance degree of 0.59. This is indicative of its bases in maintaining operational steadiness,
supporting growth that is capital-intensive, and making the company more nimble in seizing the emerging chances (Smith, 2023). Capital generation and management is a pillar of strategic mobility and resilience of the company.

Research and Development (R&D) (SO2) is next in the priority list with a degree of importance of 0.22. This highlights the central importance of the innovation as the factor of market competitiveness preservation (Johnson, 2022). Although it is not as overriding as the financial might, the sustained investment into the R&D is needed to power the product innovation, meet the shifting

needs of consumers, and maintain the technological progress.

Global presence (SO3) has a moderate strategic value, and the degree of importance is 0.12. The solid global presence helps the company to spread the risk and to claim a broader market share. Nevertheless, it also requires focusing on the local regulations, cultures, and economic conditions (Brown, 2021). The company should weigh the advantages of global presence against the challenge of operating globally.

Lastly, the product quality and strategic partnerships (SO4) has the least level of importance of 0.05. Although these are sources of customer satisfaction and growth opportunities, they are considered as supporting and not main sources of strategic direction. The fact that they are comparatively less weighty implies that though they are significant, they are not the main concern of the contemporary strategic docket of the company.

Consistency Ratio (CR = 0.02) assures that the process of weighting was very consistent and trustworthy, and there is no doubt that these factors should be prioritized. This strategic analysis helps the corporation to make smart deployment of its strategic resources - capitalizing on the strongest strengths to create the most valuable impact and making sure that the less significant aspects are still handled effectively. The focus on financial might and research and development permits the company to build a strong strategic backbone, at the same time retaining its ability to be flexible and evolve when facing a changing market environment.

Table 4.5: Comparison Matrix of WO Group

WO	WO1	W02	WO3	WO4	Importance Degrees
WO1	1.00	2.00	7.00	6.00	0.52
WO2	0.50	1.00	4.00	6.00	0.32
WO3	0.14	0.25	1.00	2.00	0.09
WO4	0.17	0.17	0.50	1.00	0.06
CR=0.03					

The table above lists the critical W-O strategies of the company and compares their importance as a strategy using the Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP). Against each weakness, there is an importance degree which is the relative effect of the weakness to the strategic decision-making.

The most serious weakness is negative publicity (WO1) with a degree of importance of 0.52. It shows the vital importance of a good reputation and how it may greatly affect consumer confidence, brand equality, and market performance when damaged (Wilson, 2021). In the contemporary open and networked marketplace, the control over the perception of the masses and the elimination of the negative publicity is an essential part of the sustenance of the competitiveness and the client base in the long term.

Close behind with an importance degree of 0.32 are high operational costs (WO2). These factors of operational inefficiencies and increased costs have a substantial impact on the bottom line of the company, making it less profitable and quasi unable to invest in its strategic growth (Davis, 2023). The optimization of processes and costs, as well as the effective allocation of resources, are the key factors that should address this issue, and therefore lead to better financial health and competitiveness.

The dependency on some products (WO3) is assigned with the lower yet significant level of importance of 0.09. Product concentration is also a strategic weakness although it is not as urgent as

the other factors already mentioned. Dependence on a limited product range predisposes the firm to market dynamics, changes in consumer preferences, and innovation by the competitors. Diversifying the offerings of the company, therefore, may cushion against the abrupt declines and enhance resilience (Lee, 2023).

Finally, product recalls and safety issues (WO4) are of the least significance with a degree of 0.06. Although it carries relatively less weight, this aspect is also quite dangerous, particularly with regard to possible legal risks, regulatory measures, and reputational damage. The quality control and risk management ought to be proactive in the understanding and avoiding the further development of these issues into significant threats (Garcia, 2022).

The consistency Ratio (CR) value of 0.03 shows a very high consistency degree of the judgment process, which adds to the credibility of these importance degrees. The result of this systematic assessment will provide the company with a complete picture of its weaknesses in order to enable the leadership to dedicate their strategic resources towards reducing the impact of the most dangerous weaknesses. The company may position itself in a better place to be able to grow sustainably in the competitive business environment by focusing on management of its public image and efficiency of its operations, as well as dealing with the problem of product dependency and safety.

Table 4.6: Comparison Matrix of ST Group

ST	ST1	ST2	ST3	ST4	Importance Degrees
ST1	1.00	4.00	9.00	9.00	0.65
ST2	0.25	1.00	3.00	6.00	0.21
ST3	0.11	0.33	1.00	3.00	0.08
ST4	0.11	0.17	0.33	1.00	0.04
CR=0.05					

The listed S-T strategies offer the company very useful growth, innovation, and competitive positioning avenues. These S-T strategies have undergone Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP) in which a degree of importance has been modified to depict the relative impact (strategic) of the same.

Expansion in emerging markets (ST1) is the most important opportunity, with the degree of importance of 0.65. This heavy weighting reflects the enormous opportunity in emerging economies wherein increasing consumer spending power and economic expansion provides additional sources of revenue and targets (Martinez, 2023). Investing into these areas will enable the company to diversify out of the crowded markets, minimize the risk and improve its long term competitiveness.

Next, the degree of importance of personal health and wellness trends (ST2) is 0.21. That indicates the rise in demand among consumers towards healthier lifestyle choices, such as healthy food options and wellness-oriented products (Harris, 2022). The company could capitalize on this trend and create and promote new health-focused products that are in line with consumer values, allowing better brand differentiation and customer loyalty.

Sustainability initiatives (ST3), having the degree of importance of 0.08, are a moderate strategic opportunity. Actions like carbon-reduction emissions, enhanced waste management, and environmentally friendly production processes not only build better brands but also fulfill the increasing stakeholder requirements, as well as regulatory ones (Walker, 2022). Although it is not the most urgent opportunity, sustainability is a critical portion of long-term strategy and social responsibility.

The least significant degree of importance is 0.04, which belongs to digital transformation (ST4). It may be noted that although technology has the potential to transform the company by making operations more effective, allowing it to innovate, and making customer experiences more memorable, it is a lower priority in the current strategic focus of the company (Nelson, 2023). This could imply that the initial digital investments have been done or that there are more imminent opportunities that are more critical in the contemporary business setting.

Consistency Ratio (CR) of 0.05 shows that there is a high degree of reliability in the process of assessment and the judgments made are sound. With a resource and strategic planning concentration on its high-priority opportunities, especially geographic expansion opportunity, and health-focused innovation, the company will be able to maximize growth potential, market positioning, and responsiveness to emerging global trends.

Table 4.7: Comparison Matrix of WT Group

WT	WT1	WT2	WT3	WT4	Importance Degrees
WT1	1.00	2.00	4.00	9.00	0.50
WT2	0.50	1.00	3.00	5.00	0.29
WT3	0.25	0.33	1.00	6.00	0.15
WT4	0.11	0.20	0.17	1.00	0.04
CR=0.06					

The W-T strategy analysis helps to turn up a number of possible risks that can either derail business operations or impede strategic developments. These W-T strategies will be assessed based on the Analytical hierarchical Process (AHP), whereby the degree of importance will determine the influence of each strategy to the decision-making and long-term planning.

Intense competition (WT1) is the most serious threat with the degree of importance of 0.50. This indicates the significant amount of pressure that firms have to deal with when they are operating within a highly competitive industry, as competitors can eat into the market share, decrease pricing power, and lower customer loyalty (Mitchell, 2022). The company should counter this threat by engaging in constant innovation, building a strong value offering and be nimble footed in adapting to market changes and competitor actions.

Regulatory challenges (WT2) follows with a degree of importance of 0.29, indicating its high impact on the business continuity, particularly among different jurisdictions that have dynamic or strict regulations (Parker, 2023). It is critical to ensure proactive compliance with the law and create dynamic regulatory approaches that will ultimately prevent imposition of fines or operational interference or reputational losses.

The degree of importance of economic uncertainty (WT3) is 0.15 indicating that it has a moderate influence on the strategic planning. Unstable economic factors like inflation, recession, or exchange rate can reduce consumer spending trends and cost of operations (Evans, 2022). What companies ought to do in reaction is to ensure that their financial plans are flexible and create resilience by way of cost effectiveness and revenue diversification.

Fluctuations in consumer preferences (WT4) are the least influential threat, according to the AHP outcomes, and their level of importance is 0.04. This factor is also relevant in the long-term, even though it is secondary in the present strategic environment. changing patterns of customer needs and behavior Shifting customer needs and behavior patterns demand a continuous market research and rapid product development, as well as focused marketing to maintain relevance (Roberts, 2023).

Consistency Ratio (CR) of 0.06 indicates a high degree of consistency of judgment which is reliable when prioritizing these threats. To ensure greater defensibility and market resilience in an environment of external volatility, the company should proactively manage the most immediate threats, especially competition in the industry and regulatory compliance.

Table 4.8: Overall Priority Scores of TOWS Factors

TOWS Group	Group Priority	TOWS Factors	Factor Priority within the Group	Overall Priority of Factor
SO	0.58	**SO1**: Use financial strength to invest in expansion into emerging markets. (S1, O1)	0.59	0.3422
		SO2: Leverage strong R&D to develop health-oriented products aligned with wellness trends. (S2, O2)	0.22	0.1276
		SO3: Use global presence to drive sustainability initiatives in multiple regions. (S3, O3)	0.12	0.0696
		SO4: Improve product quality through digital transformation and technology upgrades. (S4, O4)	0.05	0.029
WO	0.25	**WO1**: Rebuild brand image through sustainability campaigns to counteract negative publicity. (W1, O3)	0.52	0.13
		WO2: Reduce operational costs by adopting digital transformation and automation. (W2, O4)	0.32	0.08
		WO3: Diversify product offerings to align with health and wellness trends. (W3, O2)	0.09	0.0225
		WO4: Improve product safety standards in response to market expansion and health trends. (W4, O2)	0.06	0.015

ST	0.12	**ST1**: Use financial strength to weather economic uncertainty and market fluctuations. (S1, T3)	0.65	0.078
		ST2: Strengthen R&D to stay ahead of intense competition and evolving regulations. (S2, T1, T2)	0.21	0.0252
		ST3: Use global presence to hedge against changing consumer preferences in specific markets. (S3, T4)	0.08	0.0096
		ST4: Maintain high product quality to stand out in a highly competitive environment. (S4, T1)	0.04	0.0048
WT	0.04	**WT1**: Address negative publicity through proactive communication and compliance to reduce regulatory risk. (W1, T2)	0.50	0.02
		WT2: Cut high operational costs to increase flexibility amid economic uncertainty. (W2, T3)	0.29	0.0116
		WT3: Decrease product dependency to adapt to shifting consumer preferences. (W3, T4)	0.15	0.006

		WT4: Implement strict quality control systems to avoid recalls and strengthen public trust. (W4, T1, T2)	0.04	0.0016

The data is presented in a format that groups strategic factors into four priority TOWS groups of SO (Strength-Opportunity), WO (Weakness-Opportunity), ST (Strength-Threat), and WT (Weakness-Threat) with both group and individual priority scores that can be used to help make strategic decisions. This systematic analysis shows which are the strategies that the firm must focus on to achieve sustainable competitive advantage and growth.

The SO strategies have the highest group priority of 0.58, which depicts that the company has the capability of taking a proactive role in utilizing its internal strengths in exploiting the exterior opportunities. SO1: Invest in expansion to emerging markets using financial strength comes out as the most critical strategy in this group having an overall priority score of 0.3422 which is the highest among all the factors. The crucial nature of financial resources in expanding to new markets and increasing operations is highlighted (Smith, 2023). The second SO strategy is SO2: Using solid R&D to create health-focused products to tap into the wellness trend with a score of 0.1276, which drives innovation to identify changing customer demands (Johnson, 2022). Such strategies as SO3: Driving sustainability initiatives through global presence (0.0696) and SO4: Improving product quality via digital transformation (0.029) reflect the wider attempts to integrate sustainability and technology improvement into the functioning.

Then there are WO strategies, whose group priority is 0.25 that aims at turning the weaknesses into opportunities. The most important strategy in this category is WO1: Rebuilding brand image through sustainability campaigns to counteract negative publicity with a priority of 0.13, emphasizing the fact that reputation is crucial and needs to be managed and ESG-aligned (Wilson, 2021). WO2: The cost saving on operations through automation and digital tools has a score of 0.08, which reflects the cost efficiency as a major priority. The rest of the lower-ranking strategies such as WO3: Product diversification in line with health trends (0.0225) and WO4: Increasing the safety standards of its products (0.015) are also valid, especially as the company enters the markets of health-conscious customers.

ST strategies proceed, and the group priority is 0.12, or the attempt to leverage the strengths to limit the threats. The strongest in this case is ST1: Leveraging financial power in times of economic doubt, with a score of 0.078, which supports the idea of financial might in volatile market situations (Evans, 2022). ST2: Enhancement of R&D to keep ahead of competition and regulations comes next with 0.0252, which demonstrates the strategic importance of innovation in the environment of external challenges. ST3 and ST4, involving global presence and product quality as a measure against threats such as changing preferences and competition, are lower, at 0.0096 and 0.0048 respectively, though they too will assist in long-run defensive positioning.

Lastly, the group priority of WT strategies is the lowest (0.04), which is rather reactive in its nature (minimizing weaknesses and external threats). WT1: The priority of proactive communication and compliance with regulations as a way of addressing any negative publicity is the greatest here, with 0.02, showing the importance of brand protection and legal compliance. WT2: Reducing high operations cost in an uncertain economy has a score of 0.0116 which highlights flexibility of costs. WT3 (0.006) and WT4 (0.0016) are niche strategies like enhancement of less reliance on individual products as well as better quality controls.

A Consistency Ratio (CR) of 0.06 is an indication of a high level of logical consistency of the prioritization process that adds to the credibility of these strategic recommendations. To summarize, with the help of the strategy of using the strengths to realize the opportunities, particularly in the part of financial expansion and innovation, and responding effectively to the core weaknesses and threats with

a set of efficient measures, the company is going to be in a position of sustainable growth and competitive survival in a rapidly changing global market.

5.0 LIMITATION

The study is limited to one firm in a large and diversified industry- Nestlé in the world food industry. Even though Nestlé is an excellent benchmark because of its size and international scope, the results are not necessarily representative of the strategic environment or challenges of smaller food companies or those active in other market contexts. Moreover, structured strategic tools; SWOT, TOWS and Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) are used in the analysis in order to identify, match and rank internal and external factors. Its ranking methodology is based on the expertise and secondary data (reports of companies, scholarly articles, and news analyses). Though the method offers a more systematic and structured approach, the reliance on secondary data and subjective comparisons could reduce the variety of the considered perspectives and real-time information. Irrespective of these limitations, the combined approach predetermines a well-rounded and analytically rigorous assessment of the strategic footprint of Nestlé in the context of the global food sector.

6.0 CONCLUSION

Based on the conducted TOWS-AHP analysis of Nestle in the food industry, there are a number of strategic implications that could be drawn on the position and movement of the company in a dynamic global market. SO strategies were found to be the most critical of all the four TOWS strategy groups with a group priority of 0.58. It is interesting to note that the SO1: Using financial strength to invest in expansion into emerging markets (overall priority: 0.3422) was the most influential strategy. This provides an indication of the financial strength of Nestlé and its ability to generate growth by geographic diversification (Smith, 2023; Martinez, 2023). SO2: Using robust R&D to develop health-focused products (0.1276) is also vital since it follows the shifting global trends towards health and wellness (Johnson, 2022; Harris, 2022). Other actions like increasing sustainability by being globally present (SO3: 0.0696) or advancing product quality with the help of digitalization (SO4: 0.029) contribute to the competitive advantage and brand strength of Nestlé as well.

On the weakness -- opportunity (WO) side, the group priority being 0.25, the first issue is negative publicity. The rebuilding of brand image via sustainability campaigns (Strategy WO1) has a high priority (0.13), as it is crucial to focus on reputation management on a regular basis (Wilson, 2021; Walker, 2022). Another option available to achieve enhanced internal efficiency and market adaptability includes operational cost reduction (WO2: 0.08) and product diversification (WO3: 0.0225) (Davis, 2023; Lee, 2023).

ST strategies, group priority 0.12, are focused on the defensive operations based on internal strengths. The highest of them, ST1: Having financial strength to withstand economic turbulence (0.078) reminds us once again of the importance of liquidity and maneuverability in uncertain markets (Evans, 2022). ST2: Long-term resilience is also supported by ST2: Enhancing R&D to counter competition and regulation (0.0252).

Lastly, WT strategies have the lowest group priority (0.04) which implies they are reactive. WT1: Managing the negative publicity with the help of proactive communication (0.02) and WT2: Mitigating costs in the face of economic risk (0.0116) are secondary yet critical measures to protect the brand and operational adaptiveness of Nestlé.

In general, the Consistency Ratio (CR = 0.06) ensures that the evaluation is reliable, which supports the idea that these priorities have been identified in a logical and systematic way. The strategic position of Nestlé should be maintained with a focus on further consolidation of the leading financial performance, enhanced innovative research and development, and capturing the growth in the new markets along with the enhancement of internal efficiency and management of reputational risks. With a proper balance between opportunity exploitation and risk reduction, Nestlé stands a

good chance to continue dominating the global food market well into the future, facing the emerging challenges with swagger and innovation.

7.0 FUTURE RESEARCH

The competitive and dynamic global food industry is ever changing based on the pressure of the ever-changing consumer demands, technology and regulation pressures. Then, upcoming studies on strategic planning in this sector and especially those focusing on organizations such as nestlé ought to explore further such subjects as supply chain resilience, sustainability plans, and ethical sourcing. These aspects will likely become even more crucial when environmental issues and social responsibility become more prominent in consumer society.

There is also the need, given the digital transformation that is redefining consumer interaction, to investigate in future research how ai, blockchain and data analytics can be strategically used to achieve transparency, traceability and personalization in food products and services. Other strategic assessment models that could be used by the researchers to supplement the SWOT/TOWS-AHP frame work to better address long term strategic fit include the IE matrix (internal-external matrix), space matrix (strategic position and action assessment) or QSPM (quantitative strategic planning matrix).

In addition, the use of primary data collection techniques namely interviews, surveys, and focus group discussions with executives, consumers, and supply chain partners would help to supplement the findings due to the provision of real-time and multi-stakeholder thinking. This would make strategic recommendations more practicably relevant and would lead to more flexible planning in a turbulent international market. Finally, the potential of upcoming health trends, plant-based food development, and practices of a circular economy should also be investigated in future research as they are likely to determine the future state of the food industry and the position of Nestlé in it.

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